

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES. UNITE!

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Build the anti-war movement, now more than ever No More Blood For Imperialism

Bush now has the war he wanted. Bombs are crashing across the Middle East.

The corporate news media are covering the war like the Super Bowl. They go into raptures over each high-tech weapon. But what they ignore is that under the bomb sights are people: soldiers and civilians, including women and children. For the first time since Viet Nam, B-52s are dumping their 50,000 lb. payloads of death and destruction.

How many bodies will be stacked up on both sides before the killing stops?

That doesn't matter to the war dogs in Washington and their media cheerleaders. They have already declared "victory."

This is an unjust war for oil and empire

The U.S. war machine may prevail in the end. But what sort of victory will this be, bought at the cost of destroying an Arab country? Will this improve the lives of the working people in the Middle East, or here at home?

No!

Bush claims he is "liberating Kuwait." Only the liars in Washington can equate freedom with restoring to the throne the hated king of Kuwait. Kuwait was a tyranny, not even a democracy in name. Most of the people who lived there, even those born there, didn't have citizenship.

The royal family made fabulous profits from oil and the sweat of foreign workers.

Bush's "new world order" is not a pretty sight either.

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Despite media censorship: Anti-war protest builds

While the Pentagon censors news at the war front, here at home the news media willingly censors news of anti-war protests. Oh yes, they carry some news; there's too much going on not to. But they try to relegate the anti-war movement to the level of an insignificant fringe. Meanwhile, any gathering of know-nothing, pro-war jingoists—no matter how tiny—gets lavish coverage.

But the truth will not be suppressed: even with the breakout of war, anti-war actions continue to build. Here we can't possibly report on every city, but just take a glance at some of what's going on:

Quarter of a million protest the war on January 19

On Saturday, Jan. 19, protests drew hundreds of thousands across the country.

100,000 took to the streets in Washington, D.C. A crowd even larger marched in San Francisco. Quite early on, Dolores Park the assembly point, was filled to overflowing. It was the biggest demonstration in this city since the war in Viet Nam.

Another 5000 marched in Seattle, 15,000 in Portland, Oregon, and 3000 in Boston. Smaller actions elsewhere.

A week of hectic anti-war organizing

These weekend demonstrations capped a series of large and small outbursts all week.

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it a good idea to suggest it to the union leadership.

But many carriers know from past experience that the union leadership is not interested in rank-and-file action of any sort. It was thought that the union leadership would either oppose the picket line outright, or that it would give lip service to the idea while doing absolutely nothing to carry it through.

For this reason, the carriers decided to take the issue to the December city-wide carriers' union meeting, since many rank-and-file carriers were expected to attend on that occasion. And to back up the proposal, and further spread the idea around, the carriers circulated a petition. Over 130 signatures were collected in just two days, with no

cooperation from any of the shop stewards. (In fact, some shop stewards openly opposed the idea, and virulently campaigned against the petition—although they ended up voting for the picket line at the union meeting.) At the meeting, the proposal was approved overwhelmingly by those present.

It was officially decided at the December Branch 36 union meeting that demonstrations or pickets would be held at every station on Thursday, Jan. 24, after work.

Carriers should plan on attending (in civilian clothes) in order to make it a spirited and lively event. Let management, the arbitrator and anyone else know that postal workers intend to stand up for their rights! □

On the collapse of revisionism

Speech at the Fourth National Conference
of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA
Fall 1990

(In this issue we continue our coverage of the Fourth National Conference. The following speech has been edited for publication.)

Comrades, at this time, let's discuss the collapse of revisionism. Since we cannot possibly go into the great variety of subjects which this covers, I will focus on the impact of the collapse of revisionism on the American left. As well, I will make some comments about Albania. Of course, the discussion following this speech can range over other topics raised by the collapse of revisionism.

The crisis, and collapse, of revisionism has proven to be a sharp test to all trends in the left. And that's no surprise, considering that everyone who claims to be socialist has always had to have some view about the systems claiming to be socialist and about what the working people who live under those systems should do. Some supported these systems as socialist or workers' states of some type or other, while others opposed them. Everyone had some explanation of what these regimes were and what role they've been playing in the world. All theories and stands have been put to the test.

The drama is yet to be fully played out. But while we cannot declare any of the left trends out of existence yet, many of them are in disarray or having a hard time dealing with the crisis of revisionism. Meanwhile, our Party has succeeded in having a revolutionary, honorable, and realistic stand towards the collapse of revisionism. We've been able to do this because our movement has from the outset been opposed to revisionism. We came into being to build a revolutionary alternative to revisionism. And for a decade now, we've been involved in a thorough-going

campaign of research, study and struggle to uncover the roots of revisionism. And though we do not have all the answers we want to our theoretical and historical questions, our anti-revisionist, Marxist-Leninist framework has allowed us to successfully meet the test.

Let me begin by reviewing how the different sections of the left have been affected. I start with the pro-Soviet revisionist forces.

The pro-Soviets

It's only just over a decade ago that the pro-Soviet groups were trying to make hay out of the crisis of Chinese revisionism and Maoism. They acted as if life had vindicated them, and the anti-revisionist criticism had been proven wrong. Singing the glories of the "existing socialism" from Moscow to Berlin to Havana was all the rage.

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Only ten years ago—but look where they are now. Over the decades, the pro-Soviet revisionist movement has gone through many a crisis, but in the latest one they stare at disaster. Now it's not just a matter of some small troubles, but their whole international movement is in disarray and falling into pieces. The result is widespread liquidation, demoralization, and fragmentation.

They were already having difficult times. But since so much of their politics was wrapped up with "existing socialism" in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, they've been hit hard by the crisis in the Soviet bloc. The whole edifice of revisionist state-capitalism on which they based their movement is in pieces. Most of those regimes have vanished, and how quickly! And the CPSU itself is staring at the loss of its country-wide power in the near future. In the course of the collapse, not only have the so-called communist parties fallen but they've been shown to be enemies of the working people, hated by them. Tons of lies about their working class, socialist, character have been exposed. And—this is significant—life has smashed up their pretensions that state-capitalism could provide economic development, job security, and other welfare measures for the toilers, never mind how bad the political system was, never mind how much the bureaucrats in power pigged out at the expense of the masses.

The result has quite naturally been liquidation. Many revisionists have simply dropped away from political life, several parties have just dissolved—such as the West Germans—and others are on the way. Those among the revisionists who want to maintain political existence have opted to drop most of their old baggage and are now born again as open social-democrats and reformists. In country after country, they are dropping the communist name and symbols. The CP of Italy, long a thoroughly reformist party, but which still wanted to claim to be a variety of communism ("Eurocommunism"), went into crisis, first named itself as "the thing", and now is calling itself the Democratic Party of the Left. The CP of Great Britain is toying with the Radical Party label. In several countries, the revisionists are seeking merger with social-democratic parties, such as in Canada. Applications for membership in the Socialist International are also a new fashion, but the revisionists have to do a few more "Hail Marys" before the social-democrats will let them in.

Intensifying the problem for the pro-Soviet parties is the fact that the collapse hasn't just had a political-ideological effect, but also a huge material impact. The Soviet bloc used its state power and economic resources to build up its trend in a big way. But the material support has dried up. The collapse of Berlin and Prague were especially painful. Their international journal *World Marxist Review* is no more. The large number of subscriptions to national CP papers bought by East Germany, Bulgaria, etc. are no more. (Why, this cutoff even found its way to affect us. We lost \$25, which we unthinkingly had sent in to renew a sub to the *World Marxist Review*. Comrades should check before sending any renewals to revisionist publications these days.)

So how's it all affected the U.S. champions of Soviet state-capitalism?

Line of March

The "Line of March" (LOM) organization has dissolved. There were other reasons for their crisis, but the emergence of Gorbachev and the exposures of reality under Brezhnev played a big part. Remember, LOM sought to be the ultra-Brezhnevites who competed with the CP for Soviet revisionist orthodoxy. Now they are ultra-liquidators. They've collapsed into a group calling itself the "Frontline Political Organization" (they debated calling themselves "Desperately Seeking Socialism" too). But they don't have their own paper any more. Instead they are putting out a magazine called *Crossroads*, along with social-democrats, other liquidators, etc.

This journal wants to "regroup" the left, a task which many a liquidator's paper has sought to do over the last years. In the name of seeking "renewal" of the U.S. left, they are campaigning hard to get "the monkey off our backs," the "monkey" being anything smacking of revolutionary spirit and ideas—both Marxism-Leninism as well as the spirit of the 60's. In the second issue of *Crossroads*, they highlight a piece by the *Guardian* writer John Trinkl, appealing that it's high time to put the 1960's into the dustbin. Why? Because we came to glorify "protests," "Third World struggles," and sought to form "toy Marxist-Leninist parties." Because "opposition to the status quo became so entrenched that being on the fringes of society itself became a virtue." Oh my, how bad that opposition to the status quo became so entrenched! Now, it's true that the 60's should be looked at critically, but Trinkl wants to throw out important positive things of the 60's—militant mass struggles, intransigence to the establishment, the turn to revolutionary theory and organization.

Trinkl quotes approvingly from Carl Oglesby, ex-SDS president, who in 1969 called for a "post-Leninist theory" and a "post-Leninist practice." Now to give you an idea of Carl Oglesby's post-Leninist ideas and practice: I heard him speak in 1974, and he was promoting that the critical issue facing the U.S. left was to rally around a national campaign to ask "Who killed Kennedy?" This would allegedly do all sorts of radical things in the society, he promised us.

Enough on LOM.

CPUSA

The grand-daddy of American revisionism, the CPUSA, is also in crisis. And even its generally stolid press is being forced to somewhat reflect this.

Everyone probably knows that the CPUSA had to turn its daily into a weekly. The subs have obviously dried up in Sofia (Bulgaria) and Prague (Czechoslovakia). They're not getting much help from the Soviet Union, but just think what the fall from power of the CPSU will mean to Gus

Hall and co. Gus complained a year ago that on his last visit to Moscow Gorbachev wouldn't see him—the first Soviet leader not to do so! But Yeltsin and his ilk will offer him even less.

A fight is brewing in the CPUSA, although both sides publicly proclaim party solidarity, and the *People's Weekly World* puts the best face on it. Gus Hall and his fellow dinosaurs want to keep the party as their private nursing home, where they can nurse their memories of trips to the Soviet Union and how they used to hobnob with the CIO bureaucrats in the 30's and 40's. Another section, largely 60's generation black leaders, apparently would rather be 90's-style reformists without the old baggage.

Well, none of the real issues are openly brought out. If you read their press, you'll see Gus Hall criticizing how some want to get rid of the "working class, class struggle, policies of our party." The other side talks about concerns over the level of struggle against racism in the party, how the black struggle for equality must be central to the CP's stand. You know that both sides are using class struggle and black struggle as code words. They have little to do with the mass struggles by workers and black people. They are simply pseudonyms for the big-time reformist forces. Gus Hall would prefer to preserve the traditional CP politics of tailing the AFL-CIO hacks and the Democratic Party politicians closest to them, while the others drool at the successes of BEO's (that's black elected officials). The Angela Davises and Charlene Mitchells are seeing their like-minded colleagues in the black petty bourgeoisie get elected to City Councils, State Legislatures, Congress, etc. and drool at the prospects that would supposedly open up to them if the CP is changed (or dissolved, although that's not yet being said). In the arguments, quite a few angry remarks are hurled at the inner-party regime of Gus Hall and they appeal for more democracy. In the face of this barrage, Gus Hall and co. appear to be on the retreat, looking for some compromise solution.

The result is that there is a strong thrust among the CP's dissidents towards outright dissolving into the larger, reformist milieu—from the Democratic Socialists of America to Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. Since there is no serious social-democratic party, such as the New Democratic Party in Canada, for these people to merge into, they are looking towards the reformist milieu on the fringes of the Democratic Party. This is where they've been anyway, but now they're headed for being part of the larger reformist milieu, without having Marxist-Leninist labels in their baggage to worry about.

The dinosaurs

Meanwhile, what of the dinosaurs? We don't know how the CP's crisis will end up, but it's not unlikely that some of Gus Hall's disciples may regroup as some type of "orthodox" holdouts. Worldwide, there have been a smaller number of parties who wanted to hold out in this fashion. For example, some Latin American parties, such as the CP

of Colombia and the CP of India (Marxist). Some had longingly looked at East Germany to back up such a new revisionist international. There were ideas of regrouping around such parties as the Chinese, Vietnamese, Koreans, Cubans, Albanians, etc. But the collapse of East Germany put an end to that dreaming. The result is not some rejuvenation of the "orthodox" revisionists, but a smaller phenomenon of small hangers-on rallying around Cuba and Korea.

But this corner of the arena already has several contenders. Sam Marcy has eagerly jumped in to play a leading role as one of the least shamefaced defenders of revisionist tyranny. There's not a discredited, bloodstained regime that the Workers' World Party (WWP) hasn't jumped to support. From Ethiopia's Mengistu to Romania's Ceausescu. But it's not that he hasn't been rewarded. This year he finally got his 30-year-long wish, an invite from the Great Leader himself, Kim Il Sung of North Korea.

But Marcy's WWP isn't the only one. The Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) is also in this corner. Its leader Jack Barnes too just made it to North Korea. The SWP has finally broken its official ties to Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat of the 4th International. Their real interest is being the franchisee of Castro, although Castro isn't handing out such exclusive franchises. Meanwhile, SWP's activity has become more and more bizarre. Besides banking on Cuba and devoting a large part of their resources to reprinting Cuban documents, they are eagerly wooing a section of the trade union bureaucrats—they make the strange claim that the Eastern Airlines strike is getting stronger and more successful. They also use the Mark Curtis legal defense campaign to chase liberals and union bureaucrats (but then, that's a long-standing SWP tradition). Abroad, they've succeeded in splitting away a few small outfits in Sweden, Canada, New Zealand, etc. from their erstwhile colleagues in Mandel's 4th International. All these groups are supposed to use the *Militant* as their newspaper, be the representatives for Pathfinder Press, etc.

The Trotskyists

The WWP and SWP, although they originated in Trotskyism, have simply merged with Soviet and Cuban revisionism. But what about those who still claim loyalty to Trotskyism?

The fact is, most of Trotskyism too has been thrown into trouble with the collapse of revisionism. Their theory of defending these countries as deformed or degenerated workers' states didn't imply the exact same degree of support for the revisionist regimes as given by the CP, WWP, and SWP, but nevertheless it provided enough support for the state-capitalist system that it too has been hit by current developments. The Trotskyists have gone into contortions to explain what these allegedly workers' states have to do with the working class.

Sparts

In particular, the Spartacist League has been put to a hard test. After all, this is the branch of Trotskyism that wanted to take its "defensism" to the wildest extremes. And as the Soviet bloc went into crisis under Brezhnev, the Sparts' cheering grew even louder. A decade ago, the Sparts decided to be the loudest cheering squad for Brezhnev's camp. They hailed the Red Army trampling Afghanistan. They cheered the crushing of the Polish workers by Jaruzelski's tanks and martial law. They hung up Jaruzelski's picture in their New York office and even put together a Yuri Andropov Brigade for an early 80's demonstration. [Andropov was briefly, until his death in February 1984 following a lingering illness, the Soviet leader after the death of Brezhnev in November 1982.]

This gave a boost to the cause of decaying Soviet revisionism, but this didn't mean that the Sparts were about to merge with them. No, the Sparts were interested in winning a section of pro-Soviet revisionists to bolster their separate international trend. They went after whoever would be even more pro-Soviet than the official CPs (loosely known as the "Afghans"). But they didn't have much success apart from a circle (who had originated as entryists in the 1950's) from the CP of France, and they reportedly lost these people in their hot air spouting campaign over sending a "fighting brigade" to Afghanistan.

Last year as East Germany went into crisis, the Sparts thought here was their golden opportunity. To counter Gorbachev's perestroika, they had held up the German Democratic Republic as an example of a successful, planned economy. And they even used to support the Berlin wall. But when the wall collapsed, Spart opportunism triumphed. They used it as an opportunity to go across into East Germany, where they set up shop as the Spartacist Workers Party. They poured in thousands of dollars and quickly set up a press. And what did they do with this apparatus? They began hanging around the edges of the collapsing East German ruling party. Every small mention they got in the press of the Socialist Unity Party, they reprinted to show off in the U.S. as proof of their success. They created in their ranks the idea that a big breakthrough was at hand. The long sought after "political revolution" was here, and the Sparts would recruit from among the so-called honest and devoted East German Stalinists. [Most Trotskyists called for a "political revolution" in Eastern Europe, intentionally contrasting it to a social and economic revolution, as they believe the economic base of the revisionist countries is socialist in some sense.—ed.] Unfortunately, things didn't pan out. They ran a big election campaign, but reportedly got less votes than the German Beer Drinkers' Union (which only ran in one city).

Since then, they're trying to put a good face on the whole thing. But it's not as if they've changed. They are still speculating about a favorable turn in the Soviet Union where they expect the workers to defend the "degenerated

workers' state" against the possibility (?) of counterrevolution. For example, in the Persian Gulf War, they see defense of Iraq as a line of defense of the Soviet Union (Why, the imperialists are tightening the noose against the USSR! The Sparts are so blind they can't see the imperialists don't need to tighten a noose against the Soviet Union indirectly via the Persian Gulf—they're already having a good ol' time inside the Soviet Union itself. To say nothing of the counterrevolution that took places decades ago.)

What about the other Trotskyists?

Now, most other Trotskyists don't go this far in their "defensism" (that's their jargon for defense of degenerated and deformed workers' states). In fact most have tried to distance themselves from the crimes of the revisionists. Nevertheless the crisis in Eastern Europe has also put them to the test.

All of them are trying to fit the upheavals there into their dogmatic schema of "political revolution" in a "deformed workers' state." Since only a political, not economic revolution, is supposed to take place (because allegedly the workers will fight to defend nationalized property), these Trotskyists are straining to show that the new regimes aren't really capitalist. Or that even if they are, the capitalist counterrevolution is still not here. They still speculate about how the workers will rise up in defense of nationalized property.

As far as their practical politics go, the Trotskyists range from support to the new, pro-Western regimes to empty, r-r-revolutionary screeching. Some of the Trotskyists are so ultra-opportunist, they have simply hitched themselves to the capitalist forces who've come to power. Or, more commonly, to social-democratic groups tailing behind the new governments. Those that didn't take this approach simply shout empty calls for political revolution, workers' councils, etc.

It is worthwhile to add a footnote that this isn't just taking place with the "orthodox" Trotskyists but also the Cliff-ites. The followers of Tony Cliff posture as oh-so intransigent against the revisionist regimes. Yes, they did oppose these regimes, but that "intransigence"—without being connected to a firm stand in favor of working class independence—has tended to lead them in the direction of merging with pro-Western bourgeois liberalism and reformism. They too have fallen into trailing the new governments, accompanied by chiding them with the necessity of becoming more pro-worker.

The Maoists

That brings us to other groupings who've also claimed to be opposed to the Soviet bloc regimes as capitalist—the Maoists and PLP, both of whom originate in 1960's anti-revisionism.

Here too, at first glance there would appear to be less impact on these forces because they haven't been politically

supporting the revisionist regimes.

With important exceptions, of course. The outright pro-Chinese groups had long taken to supporting all the Soviet bloc countries as "socialist." But there aren't many of these groups left in the U.S.

But what about those who claim to be opposed to the Soviet bloc? Such as the RCP and PLP?

The big problem RCP has had is that their dogma about the third world war emerging from US-Soviet rivalry has been thrown into shambles. They had already begun to retreat from this several years back, substituting instead the imminent specter of death-camp fascism here in the U.S. But it looks like they have run into trouble here too: they had big hopes in "Refuse and Resist" as the embodiment of the anti-fascist struggle, but there are signs that relations are strained between RCP and "Refuse and Resist." However, the Persian Gulf events may allow RCP to bring back its wild speculations about inter-imperialist rivalry (though in a different form).

As for the crisis of Soviet revisionism, RCP hasn't had much to say. They've covered some of the mass struggles favorably but, as for analysis, for them it suffices to say it's phony communism and Mao is the real thing. They theoretically believe that these countries only went revisionist in the mid-50's, but they haven't bothered to explain that theory.

The Progressive Labor Party

Meanwhile, the PLP, who proclaim their own trend of "egalitarian communism," have taken to ever-louder shouting in support of Stalin. In fact, besides the tiny pro-Albanian grouplets, PL is the loudest champion of Stalin in the U.S. today. They have a curious version of Soviet history. You see, Lenin was wrong because he made compromises with bourgeois intellectuals and bourgeois culture and didn't want to go over to communist distribution immediately. But Stalin was great—after all, years down the road what choice did he have? But what happened to the fact that the worst diatribes against egalitarianism are from JV [Stalin]? Go figure that. But consistency is not PL's hallmark.

Meanwhile, PLP has taken over hysterical predictions of World War III just around the corner. They've also come up with the strange analysis that the collapse of revisionism has already brought a Soviet-German imperialist axis into being.

Like RCP too, there is very little by way of concrete analysis of the Soviet Union from PLP. For them, shouting that it's phony communism which is collapsing suffices. Meanwhile the old dogmas, about Stalin, about these countries going revisionist in the mid-50's, all suffice.

The approach of the MLP

Let me take a minute to contrast the views of these groups to our party's attitude to the collapse of revisionism.

True, we couldn't foresee that the collapse was going to take place in this way and at this time. But we were not caught ideologically unprepared. Although we can't answer every question, nevertheless we had the framework to deal with the recent crisis. Besides our long-standing opposition to revisionism, for a decade we've been working on deepening our anti-revisionist critique.

From the outset, our movement has opposed the Soviet bloc regimes as capitalist, and we stood in solidarity with the struggles and strivings of the workers. For instance, the American Communist Workers Movement (ML) supported the Polish workers rebellion in 1970. And when the Polish workers' movement re-emerged in 1980, this time not under revolutionary slogans but under the strong influence of a negative political trend, we stood against Jaruzelski and with the workers. This approach stood in contrast to the Party of Labor of Albania who we respected and supported back then—comrades may recall that the PLA took the stand of opposing the workers movement and showed signs of softness towards the political system in Poland. Ours was the Marxist approach. We supported the workers' struggle, and at the same time recognized the limitations and problems of the movement as pro-Western forces were coming to their head. We didn't get caught up in sterile contrapositions that suggested you had to support either Jaruzelski or Walesa.

And in 1989, it was a situation like Poland in 1980 that we saw spreading across Eastern Europe. And we already had the framework to deal with it. We welcomed the collapse of the revisionist regimes at the hands of the masses. At the same time, we remained sober-minded. We analyzed the political forces concretely and saw the difficulties facing the working class. We stood with the workers but didn't jump behind the new-found apologists for free-market capitalism. We see that the old is dying out, quite painfully, but we also know that it will take a process for the new to be born. Yet we remain convinced that the workers will indeed find their way to their class independence and the cause of class emancipation.

True, we did once subscribe to the idea that these countries had become revisionist in the mid-50's. That was true, for example, when we discussed Poland in 1980. But this was not some dogma for us. We were also launching major theoretical investigations to deepen the critique of revisionism, precisely because we did not feel the old answers were sufficient. And in the course of that work over the 1980's, we have learned a great deal. The results of this theoretical work, while not answering every question, have strengthened our framework towards the Soviet bloc state-capitalist countries. Meanwhile, the collapse of revisionism itself has given impetus to the ongoing theoretical work on socialism.

Our party stands for a rigorous scientific approach based on the actual realities of history. We think our Marxist approach has been verified, rather than being undermined, by the crisis in Eastern Europe. We didn't approach the crisis in the Soviet bloc by having to fit it into some

dogmatic framework about these countries—dogmas which have little to do with Marxism. Anyone who did that has run into trouble, whether they saw these countries as socialist, or deformed workers states, or that had gone bad in the magical year of 1956.

What were the ingredients of our framework? Intransigence towards the revisionist systems. Our class instincts and sense of solidarity with the mass strivings of the workers. Our firm stand in favor of working class independence. Our ability to distinguish between the workers and leaders that come to their head. Our program of work to deepen the critique of revisionism. Altogether this meant that we could take a rigorous, scientific, honest and revolutionary attitude to Eastern Europe.

In closing this section I do, however, want to acknowledge that there is one area of dealing with the collapse of revisionism where we have only been able to make the most limited progress. At the Third Congress [of the MLP in Fall 1988] we had discussed the importance of improving our socialist agitation. And though this is a broader question, the collapse of revisionism does give it added importance because the exploiters are using the crimes and bankruptcy of revisionism to campaign against the socialist idea. Unfortunately we haven't been able to put much effort into agitation specifically promoting socialism. This isn't from a lack of framework, but I think this agitation has primarily been a victim of our working constantly at the edge of overextension. We simply have been unable to put in the necessary effort into it.

The Albanian question

Of course, had we been satisfied back in 1980 with where the PLA was headed, with the ideas and stands it was advancing, and had we closed our eyes to what's been going on in that country during the 1980's, we'd have fallen flat during the upheavals of 1989. But that was not a choice before the MLP.

What's happened to the PLA has only verified the correctness of our struggle against the new course of the PLA. Today Albania is gripped in the revisionist crisis too and there is nothing positive one can say about anything from the PLA. This of course does not mean we denounce all the current changes and prefer the status quo that existed before. For example, the rigid political system there certainly needed to be relaxed. But there's serious problems with the way the PLA is going about it. Of course, the PLA isn't carrying out political reforms for revolutionary reasons, but it appears it's super half-hearted with even the reforms it has agreed on. They've been merely designed as a flimsy sop to ward off mass dissatisfaction.

The *Workers' Advocate* has been writing on the Albanian situation, and we hope to have more. At home the PLA is going over to market-socialism while trying hard to keep the regime in power, despite being faced with dissatisfaction and unrest from the working masses. And in their foreign policy, they are drooling at the prospects that will

open up economically if they can get into the process of European integration. Meanwhile, they have dropped all pretense of opposition to imperialism. One of the last good things we had to say about the PLA in the 1980's was that they used to oppose the two superpowers. And now, they can't even take a stand against the U.S.-led imperialist war build-up in the Persian Gulf! All they have to say is in favor of the "international effort" against Iraq. Ramiz Alia was sent to address the UN this fall, the first time an Albanian leader has ever done so, but he had no words against the U.S.-led imperialist war build-up in the Gulf!

The present crisis is also offering insights into what's been happening inside Albania over the years. It now appears that in the late 1970's, when we saw a revolutionary approach from the PLA, the PLA did indeed take a left turn in not just its international policies but also in domestic affairs. Unfortunately it seems that this left turn at home had serious problems. And when the expected results did not materialize, the PLA swerved sharply to the right. What we saw taking place in Albanian foreign policy around 1980, a turn towards opportunism, coincided with a revisionist turn in domestic policy too. They undertook a rightist critique of Maoism, and the whole hoopla with the renewed championing of Stalin meant that the PLA was bankrupt in coming up with any new, revolutionary answers—they simply went back to the early 1950's model, which is the model of what much of Eastern Europe has been (prior to the introduction of market-socialism). And when they reached a new impasse, they followed in the same pattern as the other Eastern European countries and turned to market-socialism.

Of course, the Albanian experience also raises historical questions going further back. It is true that in the 60's the PLA tried to build an anti-revisionist model, and there was good reason for the interest it attracted from anti-revisionists worldwide, including our movement. It is worth studying that effort, but it's also apparent that, as in international policy, there were pluses and minuses in their domestic effort. There were many wrong things they borrowed from 1930's Soviet Union, and earlier, and never got rid of. The influence of the Soviet model, both when it wasn't revisionist and when it was, are issues that come up when looking at Albanian history.

We can't answer all these questions yet. And the study of Albania is not a high priority item for us at this time. However, many of the theoretical conclusions we come up with from our study of the Soviet experience will have immense value in making the historical assessment of Albanian experience.

We are not historical idealists. We came into political existence at a time when there was immense interest, and correctly so, in the attempts to build socialism on a revolutionary model, different than what existed in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—the efforts in China and Albania. The issues raised by these parties, despite many problems and shortcomings, also played a role in helping a new generation of activists to cast aside the pall of Soviet

revisionism, and later with the PLA, that of Chinese revisionism. These things are part of our history, but unfortunately they did not go further and also played a very mixed role. Along with the impulse their stands gave to certain activists who wanted to go left, the Chinese and Albanians also played a negative role in frittering away the energies of many activists who came up in the last big wave against revisionism. It is unfortunate that the Chinese and Albanians did not see the break with the Soviet Union as an impetus for a more thoroughgoing critique of revisionism, for a more revolutionary, workers' communism. That's a tragedy for communism, but it's a success for communism that there were others who fought to carry the struggle further and overcome the sabotage.

In conclusion: The future of some political trends

In finishing, I wanted to return to the impact of the collapse of revisionism. So what does it all add up to?

What we are seeing is the playing out of certain trends from the past. Over the 1980's we saw the collapse of Chinese revisionism. To that is now added the collapse of Soviet revisionism. Remnants of these trends of course remain, and will remain. For example, the LRS, or RCP, or WWP, or SWP may well remain alive for some time yet. This or that group may no longer exist, but some basic political trends will remain as roadblocks to the revolutionary class struggle.

First, there's social-democracy and reformism. A large part of the pro-Soviet trend is finally making the full merger into social-democracy and reformism. But does this mean a new resurgence of social-democracy? Not in the sense that social-democratic views are getting a fresh wave of recruits. No, those who are now openly proclaiming themselves social-democrats have long been that in reality. But those joining social-democracy from the liquidationist collapse are a whole new bunch with fresh grievances they lay at the door of communism and revolution. Social-democracy's been getting these people for ten years now, like ex-OLers. [OL was the Maoist October League, later the CP(ML), which ended up as champions of social-chauvinism, "striking the main blow at the Soviet Unions", and three worldism.—ed.] Now it's the turn of the Irwin Silbers and Kendra Alexanders (she's Northern California chair of the CPUSA and a big voice for dissidents in that party). So there will be much noise against revolution, militancy, and communism.

This will not however do away with a complex of groups claiming to be Marxist-Leninist. The situation will be more fluid here. Some groups will die, others will maybe even be born. And these groups will still present us with a range of political complexions—from reformism that really can't be distinguished from the social-democrats to those who will still sound and look quite left.

A particularly significant section of these forces form today, and will continue to form, part of the left social-

democracy that we have discussed several times during conferences in the 1980's. These groupings may be fragmented, and we may encounter one group in this city and another elsewhere, but they represent the same basic phenomenon. Recall our experiences with Bolshevik Tendency in the Contragate Action Committee, Earl Silbar and friends in the Anti-Imperialist Group in Chicago, and the Revolutionary Workers League in the pro-choice struggle. This includes a variety of Trotskyist groups. Left social democracy includes other forces besides many Trotskyites, but the Trotskyites have a long history of forming an important core of this broader trend. This goes back to the 30's. And Trotskyism, even though it has been hit by the crisis in Eastern Europe (and despite the fact that this or that outfit may collapse), still has adaptability.

We will also continue to encounter a variety of more "left" sounding currents. For example, sectarians like the PLP. But even more significant is the wider renewal of anarchism. Not so much in the form of this or that group, although some new groups have come up, but as an ideological influence over a whole section of young activists. It is not surprising at all that the collapse of revisionism brings new interest in anarchism as a revolutionary alternative. Frequently, though, the anarchist influence is combined with reformism, so that the anarchist-inclined currents aren't really separate from left social-democracy.

A caution

This is largely the situation we are coming out of the 80's with. I should caution that when social upheaval breaks out anew, no political force should be discounted. When the 60's emerged, the CPUSA and SWP were pretty corrupt and rightist. They even earned anew the hatred of a new generation of activists. But even they were able to recruit and grow. And new political groupings emerged out of them, as well as out of the mass upheaval generally. And we can expect similar things to recur. True, there will be the MLP also, but we shouldn't think that there will be any smooth and easy rallying by new activists around us.

The old is dying

We have an old line-up in the left dying, and a new situation still yet to emerge. You can see the old dying, and you can see some of the phenomena we will be confronting. But we can make no exact predictions and can't lay down some schema beforehand. Remember that someone in 1958 could hardly predict what the situation would look like in 1964, not to mention 1969. Still, our party's long years of struggle against opportunism—the fight against reformism, the struggles against left social-democracy, what we have learned about how to approach activists under the influence of opportunism—all these remain invaluable experience and training for our Party to face the ideological and political struggles which lie ahead. □