

Chicago Workers' Voice

Theoretical Journal Issue #3



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This issue of the *CWV Theoretical Journal* features:

- **More on the present debate**

Julie (Chicago) and Frank (Seattle) continue the polemics against the ex-MLP majority.

- **Articles on imperialism:**

Mark and Joseph (Detroit).

- **Articles on Palestine**

Mark (Detroit) debates Jason (Seattle) on the Palestinian question

- **Letters concerning the dissolution of the MLP**

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Editorial Guide to the Third Issue of the *CWV Theoretical Journal*

The debate among former members and supporters of the Marxist-Leninist Party has gone a long way since the first issue of the *CWV Theoretical Journal* in January. A very sharp division has opened between the two sides that were just forming then. Articles from both sides have been included in this issue. The Chicago Workers' Voice believes that our readers will be able to conclude what is scientifically valid, what serves the working class struggle, and what is untrue and harmful to the struggle. As a guide to readers who are not familiar with all the bloody details of this debate we have listed below the articles with a brief note on the main points in them.

A. Articles which come from the side of the debate supported by the Chicago Workers' Voice:

**Toward an Assessment of the Present Debate* by Julie (Chicago)

An overview of the debate so far. Shows that the side of Joe, Fred, etc., is clearly giving up on revolution, Marxism-Leninism, socialism, the working class, ...

**CWV May day Speech* by Anita (Chicago)

The rebellion of the peasants in Chiapas was a momentous event. What does it mean for revolutionaries? What does it mean for workers in the U.S. and Mexico?

**On Jason's stand on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: Economic schemes replace revolutionary organizing* by Mark (Detroit)

Shows how Jason (Seattle) has abandoned revolutionary goals and methods for reformism, the practical fruit of Fred's line.

**For proletarian socialist revolution (Part I)* by Frank (Seattle)

Shows how Fred has abandoned the goal of proletarian socialist revolution in favor of a program of structural reform of monopoly capitalism. Critique of Fred's major articles including Bloodbath I (reprinted in CWV TJ #2) and Bloodbath II and III (in this issue)

**Cartels and the striving for domination by monopolies* by Mark (Detroit)

Investigation and analysis into the question of cartels in the present era. Manny and Michael (members of the CC "majority") are wrong to down play or deny issues of domination and conflict over spheres of influence in the present day.

**A note on progressive imperialism* by Joseph Green (Detroit)

Is imperialism progressive or reactionary, or both, or what? A look at Lenin's analysis of the nature of imperialism versus the views of some of our former comrades on the other side such as Fred and Manny

**Against sectarianism, part 3: Again on Ultra-Imperialism* by Joseph Green (Detroit)

Shows that Joe and the Boston group are indeed advocating an analysis of the present world situation as ultra-imperialism. Critique of Joe's letter to Ben (in this issue) as well as Boston #5

B. Articles from the other side (those who side with the CC "majority"):

**Notes/outline on Palestinian presentation* by Jason (Seattle)

Analysis of the current situation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Challenges "certain long-held assumptions about foreign aid, as well as about the role of Zionism." He questions, "certain theoretical assumptions about the role of imperialism in this situation."

**Errors in the bloodbath, Part I* by Fred (Seattle)

His definitions of communism and socialism. Socialism means classes cooperate for development.

**What can be learned from the bloodbath regarding approaches to investigation, Part II, on Boston #5* by Fred (Seattle)

Praise for Boston's polemic against CWV Theoretical Journal, views on the "middle strata"; the industrial working class; class interest versus interests of stratum, ethnicity, gender, nation; does the working class have "true interests"?

**Letter on the CWV Theoretical Journal #2* from Ben (Seattle)

Complaints, a short section of "Joseph in Wonderland", more invective.

**Open letter to Ben* by Joe (Boston)

Supports Ben's polemics, such as his diatribe "Joseph in Wonderland". Gives further views on ultra-imperialism and the middle strata. [note: The CWV TJ has not printed Ben's article. We think it is mostly character assassination. If you want it, write to us.]

CWV Theoretical Journal Publication Information

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Toward an Assessment of the Present Debate

by Julie, Chicago
May 1, 1994

On December 13, 1993 the Chicago Branch issued a statement "on the dissolution of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA". Among other issues, it discussed the views of the former Chicago Branch of the MLP on the causes for the dissolution of the party. The comrades feel that the key factor was ideological and in expressing what some of the issues were it stated, "...What finally became obvious, in our opinion, was that a number of party members (particularly some Central Committee members) had developed one or more of the following views:

--that Lenin's theory of imperialism no longer applies to the current world and was, perhaps, flawed in its time

--that a perspective for socialist revolution is not valid for the developing countries until socialism is achieved in all the advanced countries

--that Leninism, and perhaps Marxism, are a burden not a tool, and that we need to start from scratch to develop class analysis and revolutionary theory, and more"

Many comrades may have found this statement shocking and thought, "Oh no, there were not such major differences dividing the MLP." "All they in Chicago want to do is assign blame." However, facts are proving that this was an understatement, if anything. The debate that has taken place since the dissolution of the MLP has shown all this and more to be true.

On the nature of capitalism and modern day imperialism

In letters written before the 4th Congress of the MLP, Manny and Jim essentially question not only Lenin's

theses on imperialism but the very existence of imperialism itself. While Jim's report contains a series of facts, these facts do not necessarily back up his views. The facts usually give only a partial picture of what is going on. Nor has either author backed up their views with any reports showing how their views operate in the real world. Nor have they given us any sources on the present day world on which they got the "facts" to back up their views. They expect us to rely on "it must be so, because we say it is so."

Now, Fred in His "Bloodbath" 1,2 and 3 waxes euphoric on the advantages of modern day capitalism:

In discussing how Lenin's views on imperialism "were proven wrong by subsequent development" he states, "Colonial monopoly was replaced with a much more accessible world market. Primitive trusts were broken up in favor of greater competition. (The big increase in state capitalism in the 30's-60's later saw some of its forms pared back, and the multinationals of the 50's are now having portions of their form pared into separate contractors.) Decay and parasitism gave way to dynamic growth. The division of labor developed a growing middle class rather than a small labor aristocracy, and colonial regions not only gained independence but some advanced to metropolitan capitalism. Imperialism did not remain reaction all along the line until revolution, but gave rise to unprecedented economic growth and political and cultural transformation of regions." (from "What can be learned from the bloodbath regarding approaches to investigation? - Part I" -in CWV Theoretical Journal March 30, 1994 p. 17)

Joe (Boston) in his letter to Ben of late March doesn't wax quite so euphoric about "unprecedented economic growth." He states in his letter "We have entered a new phase or period of

capitalist economic development. So far this phase appears to be one of relatively prolonged economic stagnation as opposed to the post WWII period of relatively prolonged world wide expansion."

But unfortunately Joe doesn't develop much discussion of this issue. This is an important issue. Are we in a period of "unprecedented growth" or a period of "economic stagnation?" But it doesn't seem to matter. As long as Fred is on Joe's side.

And Joe and the BCSG have their own views which seem to soften the nature of modern day capitalism. The BCSG statement of late March talks about "50 years of peaceful relations among the Western imperialist powers". To focus in this way on the relative "peace" among the Western imperialist powers seems to soften one's view of what is going on in the world. The Western powers have, after all, been allies for the last 50 years. But the last 50 years saw the "cold war" along with its conflicts and threats of conflict, huge build up of troops and military expenditures, the nuclear arms race, etc. It saw "the Western imperialist powers" especially U.S. imperialism brutally suppress the masses in a number of dependent countries from the Dominican Republic to Chile to El Salvador to the Congo. It saw the Vietnam war and the Portuguese war in Africa and others. And the world since the end of the "cold war" is not so peaceful. Witness the Persian Gulf war where the U.S., with the assistance of other Western powers, slaughtered the Iraqis for oil and other interests. Then there are the conflicts in Bosnia and Israel and elsewhere in which the Western powers clearly have their hands.

Replacing socialism with class collaboration and liberal-labor politics

Fred has also replaced socialism with class collaboration and liberal-labor politics.

Fred states in "Bloodbath, part 2": "Boston 5 notes that history so far has not conformed to Marx's theory of the polarization of society between a growing mass of low paid workers and a small elite, nor Lenin's adjustment of drawing out further the concept of a small labor aristocracy." He goes on to say, "I think the past assumption that this dichotomization must be taking place is tied in with a whole lot of other assumptions that may not have any basis in observable development. Such as: a) In the processes of social development, class interests must necessarily override the interests driven by other social groupings, such as of stratum, still smaller economic groupings, ethnicity, gender, nation. b) The current stage of advance of social development must take the form of something called socialist revolution. c) some poor classes have "true interests" related to this advance of stage while other beliefs or actions they manifest are the result of "deception". It is therefore essential to construct hegemony of these classes."

There are several points of note about this statement.

1. He overrides class interests with the interests of stratum, smaller economic groupings, ethnicity, gender, and nation. The fact is that modern day capitalism brutally suppresses various nations, squashes the contributions to human culture of various national and ethnic groups and is rife with discrimination against strata, ethnic groups and women. A society in which the interests of the rich are eliminated should and would struggle for an end to discrimination. It would assist a flowering of various cultures as part of human progress. It would fight for the liberation of women. The path to this lies through a class struggle against capitalism and not just a coalition of various strata, ethnic, gender or national groupings. But Fred denigrates the class struggle.

2. Fred is skeptical of socialist revolution. He forgets that bourgeois revolu-

tions took place over more than 200 years, various attempts failed, there were varying results. He essentially says that the Russian revolution, the Chinese revolution and others failed to bring about socialism (but he also equates these regimes with communism). Therefore, there are no possibilities. There is nothing to learn from in these attempts.

3. Fred denigrates the idea of class consciousness. He says that the "true interests" of poor classes don't exist. He doesn't think this can be distinguished from deception. Here Fred is questioning the idea of class consciousness. This goes along with point 1 where he questions whether class is really more fundamental than other divisions in society. This also seems to continue his skepticism about plebian revolts. He is not enthusiastic about plebian revolts, but he says that "history shows repeated examples of comfortable and elite classes revolting against higher classes."

Fred's article is also skeptical of the hegemony of the poor classes. And this seems to go along with agitation put out by the group in Seattle which calls not for the rule of the working class, but only of "a real ability of working people to participate in and influence politics."

We have to ask, "What is the difference between this conception and liberal labor politics?" Don't various politicians, especially those in the left wing of the Democratic Party also talk about increasing the participation of the working people in politics. Don't they also talk of building coalitions of various interest groups.

Then we have Joe's statement. He says that in Boston they are, "starting from the Marxist theory of the necessity of the hegemony of the proletariat." Nevertheless, they, "realize the assumptions involved and do not close our minds to facts showing other directions. We are not going to try to fit square factual pegs into round theoretical holes. " (from Joe's letter to Ben in point 1 under "On some issues of class struggle")

Boston has complained that in our Dec. 13 statement we said views exist

"that a perspective for socialist revolution is not valid for the developing countries until socialism is achieved in all the advanced countries." They only mean "many". But here Fred is throwing out socialism not only for the less developed countries but the concept of socialism altogether and Boston has not one complaint.

Same fascination with the middle strata

Fred, Ben and Joe are all enthusiastic over the potential role of the middle strata. Joe in his letter to Ben states, "As I pointed out above in the first phase of this period, the professional, managerial, and technical strata continued to grow and prosper. But since 1990 large sections from the middle and lower layers of these strata are suffering repeated unemployment. It is too early to tell whether this is just a problem of a phase of one business cycle in the period or whether it will be a feature of this whole period of capitalist development. If the latter is true it will have major repercussions on the development of the middle strata and on the consciousness of the affected layers not only in the sense of anger and rebelliousness but in overall outlook and aspirations." (In section "On some issues of class consciousness") In this Joe is talking about the professional, managerial and technical strata. At other times it seems the discussion hints at referring to the mass of low paid clerical, retail sales and other low paid service workers. So it is hard to get a handle on just what is being talked about when the term middle strata is used.

One of the strengths of the MLP was that we worked hard to develop the methods to organize in the working class and that we fought for ourselves and the movement in general to orient itself to the poorest, most downtrodden sections of the population. This included a lot of thought about not only how to organize in factories among the industrial working class but also how to organize among the non-industrial working class and among the poor and unem-

ployed.

In fact, up to now I thought it was a common analysis among comrades of the ex-MLP that a major problem facing various social movements was that the working class, the lower strata, the poor neither participated in large numbers nor placed their stamp on various movements. Take the pro-choice movement. One of its big problems is that it is dominated by the line of NOW, Planned Parenthood, and NARAL which in essence is the domination of the professional and managerial (the doctors, lawyers and such) strata over the movement. There are sections of the movement which chafe under the leadership of those forces, don't like their lack of militancy, their promotion of population control, or their use of RICO against the antis. Yet they hesitate to decisively turn towards putting forth demands in interests of poor and working class women and building the movement among them. Our tactics in Chicago were and are aimed at building the movement among poor and working class men and women. And upon until now I thought this was a common assessment of what should be done.

But throw all that assessment overboard. Let's go searching after the wonders of the middle strata. Let's make few if any distinctions between the professional and managerial strata and the mass of service workers. I have been opposing the orientation of searching after the professional and managerial strata in the movement for years and am not about to take it up now. But it seems that now that the Party is over, all constraints are lifted and some of our erstwhile comrades are ready to rush headlong into typical social-democratic politics.

Wiping out the distinction between revisionism and communism

Fred has wiped out all distinction between revisionism and anti-revisionism and communism.

"The other error is the confusion of meanings I gave to the terms communism and socialism. What I meant by

communism was the specific ideological-political trend of the world communist movement, that took power in the revolutions via Communist or Workers' parties. This is a specific historical phenomenon and I referred to it by its own name.

"I used the term socialism for a different meaning, and one a little hard to nail down. Roughly, the meaning was of progressive social revolution in the sense Marx used it, though there really isn't any definition today of what this might amount to. As opposed to the practice of the Soviet model, socialism would be progressive, revolutionary social change, that achieves egalitarian reform of society to the extent that classes cooperate for development, rather than development proceeding on the basis of oppression of the majority. The communist revolutions were progressive in the sense of advancing the civilization of various peoples, and being part of a progressive, anti-colonial stage of human social development. But they were not socialist in the above sense because, eventually and overall, the advance of their societies took place on the basis of oppression of the majority. To the extent that all varieties of social orders have contributed to progress since the earliest civilizations, this progress has been based on oppression of the majority. The Soviet model was not any exception to this rule." (From "Errors in the Bloodbath part I")

So here, Fred replaces socialism built in the course of class struggle with "socialism" built on class collaboration. As well, he labels the revisionist regimes "progressive" regimes. I think there is much to learn from in the Russian, Chinese, Cuban, Vietnamese revolutions and what path they took. But one can't deny how much the revisionist regimes which came to power in these countries oppressed the working class and, in general, retarded the development of the entire international working class movement.

What the debate of the last few months shows

So what does the debate in the last few months show. It shows that the differences which exist in former MLP circles are profound. Fred has gone quite far in denying the significance of the class struggle, denying anti-revisionism, the role of the working class and socialism. Joe and the BCSG don't go quite so far as Fred on some questions. But Joe's letter of late March endorses Fred's and Ben's fight against the CWV and Joseph. And Joe and the BCSG have developed no critique of Fred's views.

In the former Party majority there are some who ;

1. are dazzled by modern day capitalism. Fred is positively enthusiastic about "unprecedented growth." Others are dazzled by the information revolution, the technical know how of modern society. And some are impressed by the apparent triumph of the free market over state capitalism. But, in general, all are losing their perspective of going deeper than the surface, and are giving up the critique of capitalism.

2. replace the conception of the class struggle as the motive force of history. Instead they see socialism not as the product of the advance of the class struggle but as the result of class collaboration.

3. equate revisionism with communism.

4. are enthusiastic over the possible contributions of the middle strata especially the professional managerial and technical strata.

5. are going towards throwing out the conception of socialism. Fred has gone quite far in this, replacing socialism based on class struggle with "socialism" based on class collaboration, denigrating plebian revolts etc. And Joe doubts that socialism is the next stage in the development of society.

6. have developed both liberal labor and interest group conceptions of politics.

It's true that not all in the former Party majority who have written have expressed all these views. But neither have they developed any criticism of

Continued on page 25.

May 1st CWV Speech

[Below, we are reprinting the main speech given at the Chicago Workers' Voice/Voz Obrera de Chicago May 1st meeting in Chicago. The meeting was held to celebrate International Workers' Day and discussed the significance of the Zapatista rebellion in Mexico for revolutionaries in Mexico and in the United States....Editorial Staff]

Comrades

As late as the 1960's, even into the 1970's, the Indian peasants of Chiapas were not allowed to walk on the sidewalks in cities such as San Cristobal de Las Casas, but on January 1, 1994, the Indian peasants stepped hard on the sidewalks of San Cristobal and 4 other major towns in Chiapas. They stepped harder, and in a way only imagined in the worst nightmares of the bourgeoisie - in an armed rebellion, demanding an end to exploitation, an end to racism, and an end to the PRI government itself.

The sudden appearance of 1 or 2 thousand rebels - organized, armed and eloquent, sent shock waves through the Mexican capitalists and caused consternation among their brothers in Latin America. For its part, U.S. Imperialism was certainly deeply inconvenienced by the event. After all, the Reagan, Bush and Clinton administrations had spent a lot of money and effort to convince everyone that the Mexican people were awaiting the free trade agreement with smiling faces and open arms and that the PRI government, which U.S. imperialism helped to build up and shape in the proper free market image, had become a model for stability and development in Latin America.

However, probably no less surprised were those forces, even

among the left, who had predicted the death of revolutionary struggle; those who had decided for the oppressed that they only have the option of deciding how low to bow their heads. These forces range from bourgeois liberals like Cuatemoc Cardenas of the PRD, who very carefully distanced himself from the Zapatista uprising, to even some of our former comrades of the MLP, who are contemptuous of plebeian revolts, and instead promote class collaboration--those who have decided that no one knows enough to be able to decide to overthrow oppression.

I want to take a moment to give a brief update of events in Chiapas. As comrades probably know, the first phase of dialog between the EZLN and the PRI government ended the first week of March. While the government claimed an agreement was negotiated, the EZLN insists that it was the first step of a dialog to pave the way for negotiations, and that no agreement has been reached. The EZLN returned to its base areas to consult with its fighters and the civilian members of its movement regarding the results of its talks with the government. They issued a number of communiques in March and early April denouncing continuing military operations in the region by the Mexican army, harassment of Zapatista supporters in Chiapas, and the increasing death squad type attacks on peasant activists. There were 5 more such deaths in just the last week. They raised the possibility that the military was preparing another all out military attack against them. The assassination of PRI's presidential candidate, and subsequent internal party crises, seemingly distracted the PRI's attention from Chiapas momentarily. Meanwhile the EZLN continues its consultation with its base and has declared itself willing

to go back into battle if necessary.

The Zapatista rebellion is not a marxist leninist movement, it is not a proletariat movement. While the EZLN has shown really admirable political maturity and tactical sense and it obviously has learned lessons from the experiences of the guerrilla and other radical movements of the recent past, we can't say how long it will survive the treacherous ground of negotiation and repression. Furthermore, although it has had national and even international impact, it still faces all the problems and limitations of a regional, peasant movement. It also has come up against the limitations of what can be achieved within the framework of capitalism. However, it has already achieved some important victories.

The rebellion in Chiapas both exposed and deepened the political weaknesses of the PRI. There is a political crises which appears to worsen every day: Mexico is facing economic problems such as an increasing budget deficit. The PRI party factions are at each others' throats: the hard liner "dinosaurs such as Fidel Velasquez of the CTM disagreeing openly with Salinas De Gortari, supporters of Colosio booing and threatening Camacho at Colosio's funeral, Colosio's assassination itself and the subsequent assassination of the chief of police of Tijuana. All this points to a serious crises for the PRI. The rebellion has also, but to a lesser extent, exposed the crises of the so called opposition. The PRD also has its factions openly fighting for power while some of its base activists are criticizing Cardenas for his tepid approach to the Chiapas rebellion. The rebellion has united and radicalized large sections of the most militant popular movements, especially the independent Indian and peasant organizations. It has stirred up mass motion around the country.

There have been a surge of takeovers of local city government buildings in Chiapan towns and land takeovers in Chiapas and other areas. There have been marches and protests all across southern Mexico and in Mexico City. On April 10, there was an enormous march into Mexico City from many parts of the country organized by peasant and indian organizations on the occasion of the anniversary of Zapata's death. It has inspired the movement of the urban poor and sections of the workers' movement. For example on January 10th there was a demonstration in D.F. which the PRI and other so called respectable parties tried to turn into a generic march for peace, however, the attendance at the march of thousands of students, pobladores, indians, peasants and activists ensured that the march became a march in support of the uprising in Chiapas and against the PRI. A demonstration is planned for today in Mexico City, organized by left wing unions such as Frente Autentico de Trabajadores- FAT) and other independent activist organizations which while support the demands of the EZLN and raise other demands of the workers in Mexico.

So, as one Mexican commentator noted, the EZLN rebellion is like the tip of that iceberg that sunk the Titanic.

The old methods of rule of the PRI may indeed be in the process of shipwreck. The questions is in what way will it change, and will the changes further unleash the class struggle in Mexico?

The inspiration of the Zapatista rebellion has also been felt in the United States, with demonstrations and mass meetings in Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities. These achievements of the rebellion can not easily be undone.

The Zapatista rebellion has a real significance for revolutionaries in all countries, and also presents us with some challenges. The uprising shows that democratic questions,

such as the struggle of the peasantry continue to be a significant component of revolutionary struggle even in capitalist countries. The question does not seem to be, as some have framed it, that the capitalists are fighting (albeit brutally) to modernized agriculture while the retrograde peasantry clings to the past, but rather a questions of modernization for whose benefit, what kind of modernization. The Zapatista peasants seem quite conscious of the century in which they are living, many of their demands center on winning some benefits from modern life for the poor peasantry not going back to some supposedly simpler time.

The Zapatista rebellion also shows that the desire for a world without exploitation, and even, dare we say it, a desire for socialism, continues to live in the hearts of the "faceless shadow people" and to inspire action. More than one or two zapatista fighters interviewed during the height of the fighting, stated that they were fighting "for the destruction of capitalism", for "socialism like Cuba but better", for "a new world". As well, this uprising shows once again the necessity of independent class conscious organization and finally it is demonstrating that to really fulfill the demands of the poor peasantry you will have to confront the capitalism and imperialism.

The Chicago workers Voice/ Voz Obrera de Chicago believes that the rebellion in Chiapas has its own merits, as a more than just struggle, but also that it can be a part of, or the beginning of, a new revolutionary process. A process of building a national movement of all the oppressed laboring masses in Mexico. The proletariat in Mexico must be feeling the pressure to participate in and to put its stamp on this process. But, the working class has not yet determined how to act, it lacks clear orientation and organization. That is the challenge for the Mexican working class and for the revolution-

ary movement in Mexico.

For those of us in the United States, there is the task of working to hold back and disrupt any interventions by U.S. imperialism. The question for us is how to make use of the many ties between our two countries, to build a revolutionary movement united in its aim to give real meaning to the slogan, "workers of all countries unite".

I am going to end with a quote from the EZLN statement made by Subcommandante Juan at the close of the talks with the PRI government which I believe is appropriate for May 1.

"Many times in our dreams we have seen another world. A true world, a world infinitely more just than that in which we wander today. We see in that world armies were not necessary, in that world peace, justice and liberty were so common that they were not spoken of as strange things, but in the same way that we say bread, bird, air, water, as we say book or voice.

In that way good things were named in that world. And in that world it was reason and will, government of the rest, and those who led were people of good thinking, leading obediently. This true world was not a dream of the past, it was not something that came from our ancestors. It was ahead of us that it was coming. It was the next step that we were taking. This is how it was that we began to move to achieve this dream which was sitting at our table, illuminating our house, growing in our fields, filling the hearts of our children, ckening our sweat, healing our history, for all of us.

This is what we want. Nothing more, but nothing less."

On Jason's stand on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

Economic Schemes Replace Revolutionary Organizing

by Mark, Detroit
May 22, 1994

Jason in Seattle recently made public his "Notes/Outline on Palestinian Presentation" as part of the debate over controversial issues among the former members of the Marxist-Leninist Party. Jason has the unfortunate fate to find himself in a study group led by ex-MLP member Fred who has abandoned any Marxist conception of the class struggle or socialism. Fred has heard that Marxism considers the development of the productive forces to be the basis of revolutionary changes in society and has converted this into the idea that all the oppressed need do is champion economic growth. Hence, he is fascinated with schemes for structural reforms of capitalism instead of the development of a revolutionary movement against capitalism.

In his attempt to deal with the Palestinian-Israeli situation, Jason falls into this same bad habit. He presents a step-by-step utopian scheme for a supposed economic blossoming of the occupied territories through aid from Israel and international imperialism. On the grounds that some economic development may take place, Jason shoves aside the national rights of the Palestinian people, reconciles the Palestinian masses to the PLO-Israeli accord which consigns them to live in bantustan-like conditions, and generally urges acceptance of being a subjugated people. The idea of struggle against the new Palestinian bourgeois authorities is similarly ignored.

Jason tells us that he intends to challenge "certain long-held assumptions about international aid, as well as the role of zionism, which are, in my eyes at least, being proved suspect through the development of the current situation in Israel and Palestine" and "certain theoretical assumptions about the role of Imperialism in this situation." He announces he is putting for-

ward "certain theses which may be controversial in the minds of those who make up the ex-MLP trend." This is a valuable admission. It is one thing to have a sober assessment of the level of the Palestinian movement and to realize that it may not have the strength to win all its demands now. It is quite another to base one's tactics on replacing the late MLP's irreconcilable stand against imperialism and the Israeli zionist rulers. The former leads one to seek the way to build up a revolutionary movement in difficult times. The later takes one down the path of reformist tinkering with, and prettifying of, a system of murderous oppression.

Ignoring the tasks of the revolutionary movement

The Palestinian movement has long faced great hardships. But despite the harsh condition, there arose the heroic "intifada". Under the pressure of uprisings year after year, Israel was forced to end direct military rule in part of the occupied Palestinian territories. However, the Israeli authorities still rule directly in other areas, and even where the new PLO authorities have assumed the role of local police and administrators, these areas have only a limited political autonomy. Israel has promised more political rights in the future if the PLO can keep the struggle of the masses under control, but this is still a matter of the future. At the same time the second-class status of the Israeli Arab population remains.

This means that the democratic aspirations of the Palestinian toilers still largely remain unfulfilled. At the same time, the creation of a PLO administration means that the Palestinian bourgeoisie has joined Israel as junior partners in ruling over the working people. The PLO has pledged to keep the struggle against Israeli oppression under wraps.

The new status of the PLO means that dealing with the class issues that

have always existed in the Palestinian movement will be more urgent than ever. The political and economic problems of the masses will land more and more at the doorstep of the bourgeois administrators. But this does not mean the masses will necessarily be clear about how to deal with this situation. The importance of recognizing distinct class interests and goals will have to be explained even if there is a temporary euphoria over the partial relief from direct Israeli rule.

Hence, anyone interested in advancing the Palestinian movement must face the task of building up the revolutionary class organization of the toilers. For many years before assuming its present governing role, the PLO's reformist policy and bourgeois orientation has repelled many activists, creating a vacuum in organization. Over the past few years, Hamas has attempted to fill this vacuum, but they aspire to a backward Islamic fundamentalist rule. Neither group is going to lead the masses in their own interests.

The class organization of the working people independent of the PLO and Hamas is needed to push forward the battle for complete political rights, including the goal of a democratic secular state that embraces both Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. It is also needed so that the masses see their democratic and national struggles as only part of the movement toward their class liberation under socialism. And without class organization, even the immediate economic demands of the workers will largely remain a dead letter. As well, the workers must fight for better conditions for the poor in general.

The class outlook also combats the narrow nationalist influence in the Palestinian movement. It helps keep the masses targeted on the Israeli ruling class and social system rather than Jews in general. It pushes the movement to seek to build links to the Jewish workers and encourage them to break with the

zionist influence.

None of these tasks are easy. They buck the present dominant political trends. As well, the death and destruction caused by Israel has exacted a heavy toll on the Palestinian struggle. The days of sweeping victories in organizing and winning the big demands are not just around the corner. But embarking upon the path of class organization is the only way the Palestinian cause will move ahead.

Jason's presentation essentially ignores all these issues. Jason was at one time an enthusiastic supporter of the intifada. In his document, he still credits the intifada with forcing Israel to make some concessions in the PLO- Israeli accords. But now that the accords are signed, he thinks there is no point in uprooting the status quo. The only "reasonable" thing to do is concocting economic development plans to convince everyone that the present order really won't be so bad after all. Instead of encouraging struggle against the status quo, Jason frets about the possibilities of an upsurge. He argues for Israeli aid because "this will also buy the nascent Palestinian authorities some time to avoid an explosion....". Jason has replaced his faith in the struggle with faith in the old and new authorities.

Since the struggle is no longer much of an issue for Jason, neither is class analysis. Take how Jason deals (or more accurately, avoids dealing) with the PLO- Israeli accords. He offers no criticism of them at all. In his analysis, the only "sides" are those for the accords and those against. Taken seriously, this would mean lumping all critics together, revolutionary Palestinians with ultra-right Israeli politicians, or within the movement, Islamic fundamentalists with left democrats. And in fact when Jason talks about recent clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian demonstrators he lumps supporters of each side together stating the clashes "could fairly be seen as grounds for rejoicing by those who oppose the Accords between the PLO and Israel...." But the problem is not merely one of confusing Palestinian militants with Israeli troops. A class analysis

is necessary to analyze the true meaning of the accords and what this implies about the tasks of the struggle. This lack of class analysis helps smooth the way to reconciling with the present situation instead of organizing against it.

Faith in Israeli economic domination

Seeing no point in organizing to shatter present realities, Jason resorts to constructing plans to increase economic growth. This in itself will allegedly solve the problems of the Palestinian toilers without unduly upsetting the Israeli rulers and imperialism. He states he is not sure "that Palestinian incorporation into the Israeli economy is necessarily a bad thing. In order to decide this, I think it is important to examine what the immediate goals of a Palestinian economy should be." Jason then gives a list of all sorts of infrastructure projects, schools, jobs, social welfare programs and industrial/agricultural development plans that he deems proper for the Palestinians. This is followed by another list of aid that Israel and international capitalism are to provide to satisfy these needs.

But Jason's ability to dream up plans for the Israeli revival of the occupied territories proves nothing about what Israel will actually do. If the mere suggestion of a plan to save the Palestinians sufficed to prove that Israeli economic domination is the salvation of the Palestinian toilers, it is hard to understand why Jason insists time and again that demands on Israel must be very modest. On the one hand, you are to rely on this economic development. On the other you must not expect too much.

Let's take an example to see how this works. In his list of things needed by the Palestinians, Jason mentions "an immediate crash program to employ as many Palestinians as possible". But when it comes to concrete requests on the Israeli government, he pleads that Israel should merely "take back at least some" of the Palestinian workers Israel decided it no longer had work for in Israel. As well, Israel is suppose to

"employ 10,000 public/private social workers, doctors, counselors, etc." Even if Israel added the 10,000 professional-type jobs this would do little to solve the problem of the ordinary toilers (Jason says 285,000 families are living off UN food relief in the West Bank and Gaza). Taking back "at least some" ordinary workers doesn't brighten the picture much either. So "an immediate crash program" on unemployment turns out to be a mere drop in the bucket.

Well, maybe we are to believe the development of Palestinian manufacturing will spontaneously solve the unemployment problem. But even such wishful thinking runs headlong into Israeli intransigence. Thus Jason is unable to even bring himself to demand full rights for Palestinian manufacture but only "the loosening (!) of restrictions on Palestinian light manufacture."

Given the destitute position that the Palestinians have found themselves in, they have been forced to live on outside aid for some time. But there is no reason to believe that such aid will give rise to a wonderful life for the Palestinian working people. Moreover, if the Palestinian economy is dependent on Zionist-imperialist aid programs to function, it means the PLO authorities will be bound hand and foot to the enemies of the Palestinian toilers. And the prospects for the weak and tiny "mini-state" or "mini-mini-state" economy competing in the world market are none too bright. If the Palestinian bourgeoisie wants to attract foreign capital, it will have to compete as a low-wage sweatshop with many other poor countries. But even if somehow the Palestinian bourgeoisie beats the odds and eventually becomes an economic dynamo, this does not automatically mean that the common people will reap the benefits.

Meanwhile, according to Jason, the Seattle study group is discussing how Israel's privatization drive is leading to cutbacks in subsidies for kibbutzim settlements inside Israel, social services, the pro-Zionist Histadrut trade unions, and there are even attempts to cut back the huge military budget a bit. But if

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Notes/Outline on Palestinian Presentation

by Jason, Seattle
5/10/94

The following is a part of a presentation on the present-day situation concerning Israel, the Intifadah, and the prospects for a Palestinian state. The presentation was in two parts. The first part was an overview of the present situation: status of the PLO-Israeli dialogue, the Intifadah, the political situation in the occupied territories, including Hebron and the Gaza Strip.

The second part took up some of the issues behind the possible building of a Palestinian national entity. They included some of the political forces and their plans, but centered largely on economic prospects for the nascent Palestinian state, and the relationship between it and both Israel economy and international sections of capital.

There are two reasons I am putting this on E-Mail. First is that part 2 contains certain theses which may be controversial in the minds of those who make up the ex-MLP trend. There are certain long-held assumptions about international aid, as well as the role of Zionism which are, in my eyes at least, being proved suspect through the development of the current situation in Israel and Palestine. Secondly, and connected to the first, there are certain theoretical assumptions about the role of Imperialism in this situation which may not quite pan out the way they're supposed to. Palestine also raises questions about how underdeveloped countries are supposed to develop independently. I realize I am being very general here, but I would rather the talk speak for itself. Comrades should note I am not trying to set the new line on this question, but am attempting to create a arena for discussion of several key issues around both the Middle East and development as an economic and political category. I hope comrades who both agree and disagree with what is presented will give their views via E-

Mail.

PART I: THE AFTERMATH OF THE HEBRON MASSACRE

1. Since the Hebron massacre about a month ago, things appear to have returned to an earlier stage of the Intifadah, with mass protests, street battles, and ambushes of settlers, along with the accompanying casualties. The Israelis have responded in the usual fashion, with rubber bullets, Mossad hit squads, and mass curfews on large parts of the occupied territories. Although this could fairly be seen as grounds for rejoicing by those who oppose the Accords between the PLO and Israel, there are some important differences to be noted in this second phase.

2. For the first time, there was a brief spate of oppositional activity by those Palestinian Arabs living inside of Israel proper. I am talking about the 800,000 Arabs in Israel, 18 -20% of pop. This section of the Palestinians have been unprepared until now to take part in the tactics of their brethren across the Green line, though they have certainly supported the Intifadah materially and politically. The Israelis have not had to use troops against these forces however until recently, with the exception of Jerusalem. This time however, rubber bullets and street clearing tactics were used against Palestinians in the Galilee area, traditionally a high Arab population center. In Rahat, in the north of the Negev desert, real shooting took place with one death. Scattered incidents have also taken place elsewhere. Though the Israelis appear to have temporarily snuffed this out, it cannot be stressed to highly the danger this poses to the Zionist authorities. The difficulty of trying to put down a rebellion in the occupied territories and simultaneously hold in check a mass movement of Arabs in Israel proper, even one limited to the goals of full civil rights, would probably be more than the Zionists could logistically

handle. And it is highly likely they would regard a Palestinian state as a legitimate price to pay for peace with their own Arabs.

3. For the first time, the question of what to do with the settlers has been put on the table. The Israelis have tried repeatedly to pretend that all the settlements were more or less eternal, ever since they had to dismantle the few settlements on the Sinai Peninsula for the Egyptian accords in 1978. All along, their strategy has been one of creating facts as Moshe Dayan put it. Although I will go into the composition of these settlements and their possible future in the next section, their importance as a political question will be noted here. The Israelis tried to have this issue tabled for at least two years into autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza, per the agreements. The fact that Hebron has forced this issue to the table now is a significant setback for the Zionists.

In addition, the question is widening the cracks in Israeli society between those who would rather have peace without settlements and those who would rather have settlements without peace. Both sides appear to be radicalizing. The Peace Now movement and its related affiliates are holding mass demonstrations for the first time since the Gulf War, and the more militant settlers are talking about civil war.

4. Despite the stalled negotiations, in the Gaza strip, the Israelis are in fact preparing to pull out. Guard towers in some of the camps are being disassembled, patrols are being cut back, and much less activity is being carried out against certain sections of armed Palestinians, despite the recent assassinations by Mossad. *Though* militarily this is of limited significance, it is a recognition of the political reality that no matter how negotiations are carried out, a withdrawal of some kind is the only option. In fact, as one of the preconditions for negotiations to restart, Israel will pull out faster from Gaza

than was previously planned.

5. The pragmatic cooperation between factions, including between Hamas and Fatah, has returned. Although this cooperation was a hallmark of the initial stages of the Intifadah, it had severely frayed, especially in the Gaza where Hamas was traditionally strong. Now, both there and in the West Bank, joint actions are routinely carried out. In addition, both sides have formed a de facto political opposition to the Peace accords as they have been so far carried out. Although it is unlikely that this will scrap the peace agreements, it may provide impetus for more Israeli concessions.

Although these are good signs, there are also some negative ones as well:

1. Material conditions for the Palestinians have greatly deteriorated. Unemployment is around 30% in the West bank, 50% in Gaza. Employment of Arab labor in Israel is no more than half of what it was before the Intifadah. Remittances from Palestinian imigris have dropped by \$350 million since the Gulf war, which is especially serious in Gaza, where this money formed some 50% of the GDP. The PLO's loss from direct financial support by Arab countries dropped by \$480 million, though I have no estimate as to how much less that meant for territories. Families receiving food aid from UNRWA soared from less than 10,000 in 90 in Gaza to 120,000 in 92. Another 165,000 are receiving food in the West Bank.

2. Up until the Hebron massacre,

factional strife was rising greatly, especially in Gaza. Relief institutions are becoming politicized, and their charity operations are seen as the territory of one particular faction. This is expressed often in hiring policies, where administrators are pressured to hire workers of one particular group. It is also expressed in distributional policies, where avoidance of giving to specifically political groups has given way to a concentration of aid among these groups. Control over limited resources is becoming more important than what uses are made of the resources. Interestingly enough, Hamas is trusted more than any of the other PLO-type group to wisely use resources. This is partly because of the strict moral code they are supposed to have, and because they have less of a bloated infrastructure than some PLO-type groups. There is also rivalry for funds between the West Bank and Gaza, with the West Bank trying for the lions share.

PART TWO: ISSUES AROUND THE ACCORDS - THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE AS A NATIONAL ENTITY

1. Settlers Figures: There are so many figures being thrown around by everyone with an axe to grind that getting reliable figures is somewhat of a challenge. Lets assume perhaps 110,000 - 130,000 settlers in the West Bank and Gaza in some 200 settlements. These are scattered throughout a population of some 1.6 - 1.8 million

Arabs.

There are three basic types of settlements in the territories. Religious settlements inhabited by people who can't tell the difference between the Bible and a real estate contract. Then there are security type settlements, settled solely for military reasons, such as those in the Golan Heights, though there are others scattered through Gaza and the W.B. These are also peopled by a hard-core element among the settlers, though it is not clear to me whether these are as religious minded as their brethren. In any event, militant settlers make up possibly 15% of the settlers as a whole. The rest fall into a category which is either straightforwardly economic, or mostly so. It should be emphasized that no settlements do not have some strategic reasoning behind them - for instance, the new Israeli housing around Jerusalem is designed to surround the Arab side of the city and break up its connection with Arab settlements to the south and west. Nonetheless, many of this third category of settlements is designed with the idea that Israelis would work in Israel proper, then commute to communities just inside the Green Line. That is not to say that there are also some economic settlements which have their own economic base. But in any event, many of those who moved there were motivated by large government subsidies, promoted by Likud and now being cut by Labor. Some of the larger of these communi-

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For Proletarian Socialist Revolution (Part I)

by Frank, Seattle
May 10, 1994

Since December Fred has stepped up his campaign for abandonment of anti-revisionism, Marxism-Leninism and a proletarian revolutionary stance toward the monopoly capitalist world order (see the six articles comprising his "Box" and "Bloodbath" series). Comrades Joseph and Julie have already made timely and, I believe, accurate and militant critiques of these articles (see especially Detroit numbers 28, 31, 32, and Julie's May 1 article). And comrade N.C. has written a response to "The Box, part 1". So in this article I will introduce some new materials relevant to Fred's abandonment of a proletarian revolutionary stance as well as add comments on issues already raised by other comrades of the minority.

Fred contemplating a program of structural reform

In "The Box, part 2" (January 15, 1994) Fred lists 26 phrases from Joseph's "Population, technology and environmental devastation". Among them are "exploiting social system", "profit motives", "class-divided society", "world market", "classless society", "socialism" and others. He says "history has posed major questions with respect to every one" of these words or phrases and "Joseph, in all seriousness, puts them forward as if he understands them, as if there is a definite meaning to these phrases, which presumably everyone knows or is explained somewhere else. If you are not totally sealed in the MLP box, you realize that you don't understand these phrases."

This is curious talk for someone belonging to a group calling itself revolutionary socialist. If the word socialism, for example, has no definite meaning and Fred is liberated from the MLP "box" and therefore realizes this, then why did he propose using this word to

describe the Seattle study group? Does he now propose renaming the study group or is he in favor of continuing to describe it with a word which has no definite meaning, a word which we now must realize we don't understand?

Certainly we don't fully understand the meaning of such words or phrases, nor can we. But Fred is trying to browbeat us with his "you realize you don't understand these phrases" not because he sincerely wants us to struggle harder for greater clarity about them but is following a wrong method to achieve that end. No, he wants to take advantage of our humility regarding what we don't understand regarding the words or phrases he lists so as to get us to abandon what we do understand (and thereby abandon the revolutionary conclusions these understandings strengthen). Fred will then educate we poor ignorant souls regarding how terrible all that stuff about anti-revisionism, Marxism-Leninism, dictatorship of the proletariat, etc. was back there when the MLP existed. And after we've done the proper penance, sworn by the holy wonders of the market, information revolution and middle strata that we'll never never disrupt Fred's thinking again (that is criticize his views from a Marxist-Leninist framework) he'll point us toward the true road to the promised land.

Now Fred's been struggling to define what this road is for some time and he made the list I've been referring to in connection with laying the charge that the only content to Joseph's conception of socialism is the word socialism or

"the concept of 'property relations'". He says this word or this concept is counterposed by Joseph to any questions about the nature of socialism, any program of solution to any problem, "an escape from facing the need for concrete alternatives to the social problems of today".

But the party work to build resistance to the wage cutting offensive of the 80's, the work to beat back racist attacks, the work against the anti-abortion movement, the work around national health care, etc., was a concrete alternative to the "social problems" (Fred's chosen terminology for class oppression) of today. The MLP strove to lead the everyday economic and political struggles against capital while at the same time striving to bring the class content of the mass struggles to the fore, educate the masses regarding the need for a socialist revolution, build fighting mass organizations, build the party organization itself, advance the theoretical work, and so on. Thus we neither cowardly gave way in the concrete immediate struggles of today nor did we give way in concrete preparations for a socialist revolution.

So Fred has something other than this in mind when he writes of "concrete alternatives to the social problems of today", something better, the true road. In Seattle #45 (March 15, 1994) he wrote the following: "I think the past assumption that this dichotomization must be taking place is tied in with a whole lot of other assumptions that may not have any basis in observable devel-

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opment. Such as: ... b) The current stage of advance of social development must take the form of something called socialist revolution." In other words the "social development" on the agenda in an extremely advanced industrialized country like the United States might not be socialism. Well what might it be then? Fred doesn't say in Seattle #45 but in the discussions connected to the re-writing of the Northwest timber article (held in the Autumn of last year in Seattle) it became clear that at that time he was dedicated to cooking up a program for restructuring capitalism (and he came up with reformist appeals to the workers to support his program). Thus his "concrete alternative to the problems of today", "the current stage of social development" was reformed capitalism.

Let's now examine how this was so.

The article on the Northwest timber crisis which I wrote in June 1993 and

which appeared in WAS erred by at least implying that capitalist crises were caused by underconsumption as well as having what I thought were other weaknesses in need of correction. The Seattle study group decided to come out with a new version and Fred and I were among those chosen to do a rewrite. It was actually Fred who spotted the erroneous underconsumption theory in the first article and he made some suggestions on the writing itself which I also agreed with. But these things were overshadowed by the fact that he persisted in fighting for a reformist approach of restructuring the Northwest timber industry. His theory was as follows:

"The concept I'm putting forward about restructuring the timber industry revolves around a simple logic--changes that could increase productivity and match products to world demand better, along with changes to sustainable forestry, safety, recycling etc., so that the

industry is environmentally sound yet can still compete on the world market." (From a letter to me.)

The practical result of this theory was contained in his draft leaflet. (By this time I had rewritten the entire article so the drafts I refer to are counter-drafts to an article by me which was never published.) Under the demand "restructure the industry for sustainable forestry" the following was said:

"The two above demands for immediate measures are backed up by the view that the NW timber industry can be restructured for sustainable forestry and the displaced workers employed in other fields.

While the old growth must be protected from all logging to preserve its varied ecosystem, large regions already logged could be switched over to the new forestry/selective logging methods. This would allow the land to simultaneously supply wood, provide varied

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Cartels and the Striving for Domination by Monopolies

Mark, Detroit
3-28-94

Introduction

Recently I have been doing some preliminary investigation into the question of cartels and other forms of monopoly association historically and in recent years. The nature of post-WWII monopolies was one of the issues raised in the debate on imperialism at the 4th Congress of the MLP in November 1992. This investigation has just begun and other materials will help fill in the picture more. Nevertheless I hope that even the limited material I present now will be of some use in getting a picture of the ever-changing forms of monopoly associations and what their significance is.

At the 4th Congress of the MLP

At the 4th Congress, various CC members and other party members made statements that created the impression that since WWII, the capitalist monopolies had opted to leave behind the notion of monopoly domination of world markets in favor of "relatively open free markets." These were only some verbal comments, but they are all I can deal with since there has been no further public explanation of these comments.

On the surface, I find the concept of monopolies that don't strive for domination of markets a strange idea. Isn't that the whole idea of monopolies? But CC member Michael argued that, instead of Lenin's analysis that monopoly capitalism meant a striving for monopoly domination and colonies, the liberation of the colonies is "more in tune with the

requirements of capitalism and finance capital in its expansive stage." After WWII, he feels the world powers decided that "colonial spheres" and "boundaries and barriers that had existed, were barriers to finance capital" and "they didn't want that kind of world." The world "where different monopolies would make direct agreements to divide up markets among themselves" was portrayed as a relic of the cartels of Lenin's day. (Chicago Workers' Voice Theoretical Supplement, Jan. 25, 1994, p.21)

So the monopolies of Lenin's day were nasty boys, but after WWII they supposedly became enlightened and gave up their bad habits of seeking world domination, dividing up the world markets, trying to crush anti-colonial

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A Note On "Progressive Imperialism"

by Joseph Green, Detroit
May 2, 1994

What is the nature of imperialism after the collapse of the colonial system?

Some comrades have held that the political side of imperialism has all but vanished, that domination and subordination between countries is no longer an important feature of the world system, that the world market is everything, and that monopoly is only an imperfection in this market. There may be savage inequalities, but neither monopoly nor politics has much significance for the world order, and doubt is cast on whether "imperialism" is still a meaningful concept. More recently, comrade Fred of Seattle has held that imperialism has changed its reactionary and backward nature and "has transcended the old social contradictions and struggles of the past." (Seattle #47)

At one point in this discussion, in his report to the Fourth Congress, comrade Manny put forward that imperialism, as "a stage of capitalist development" is "an historically progressive phenomenon", and comrade Ray put forward that this was the ABCs of Marxism. On this basis, Manny ridiculed the idea of "imperialism as Leviathan, as the ultimate nemesis of everything progressive." (*Chicago Workers Voice Theoretical Journal*, Jan. 25, p. 8, col. 2)

In my article "On the debate over imperialism" I challenged the conception of imperialism as a progressive historical stage (see the same issue of the *CWV Theoretical Journal*). I held one had to distinguish between the further development of large-scale production and the overall social system of imperialism as a stage of capitalism. I also had started a review of how communists of the past looked at things. What I had found by the time of the article didn't show them calling impe-

rialism progressive in any sense.

In a recent meeting of the Detroit Marxist-Leninist study group we studied Lenin's articles on imperialist economism. It turns out that Lenin and others did call imperialism progressive compared to pre-monopoly capitalism-- in a certain context. But at the same time, they called it reactionary when making other comparisons of imperialism to past capitalism.

So I was wrong in holding that the past communists never called imperialism progressive in any sense. But their actual analysis appears close to the distinction between the further development of large-scale production and the overall nature of imperialism that I made in my article. Moreover, their description of imperialism and its role contrasts with the present discussion of imperialist economic development. Lenin and others repeatedly refer to imperialism as "moribund capitalism" when they point to how socialism is the next stage from imperialism, rather than saying that this shows it's economically progressive.

What is progressive about capitalism?

First, let me briefly review what I put forward about progressive imperialism in my article. Then I will pass on to an analysis of what Lenin and others said. This will require examining a number of Lenin's statements.

In my article, I pointed to three ways in which capitalism was regarded as progressive in the past discussion by Marxist communists. The first two were in comparison to pre-monopoly capitalism, and in the development of large-scale production as opposed to petty production. In both these cases, there is the development of the proletariat, of class relations that lead to a class struggle against capitalism and exploitation, of broader knowledge by and organization of the masses won at the cost of the painful contradictions of

capitalism, and also of a productive level necessary to be able to sustain a system free from exploitation.

As well, at a certain stage of capitalism, there are bourgeois revolutionary or progressive movements.

I gave a long extract from a letter of Lenin which deals with colonial policy. Lenin opposed as reactionary those measures that held back the development of large-scale economic organization, and held that liberation from capitalism would only come through the further development of capitalism. But he supported a proletarian struggle against colonial policy and held that it did not retard economic development but accelerated it, by forcing capitalism to resort to more civilized and technically higher means.

Progressive or reactionary?

Well, what about his statements in "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism"? Are they in line with this analysis or not?

Here Lenin states "Imperialism is as much our 'mortal' enemy as is capitalism. That is so. No Marxist will forget, however, that capitalism is progressive compared with feudalism, and that imperialism is progressive compared with pre-monopoly capitalism. Hence, it is *not* every struggle against imperialism that we should support. We will *not* support a struggle of the reactionary classes against imperialism; we will *not* support an uprising of the reactionary classes against imperialism and capitalism." (*Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 63, emphasis as in the original)

Hence the communists of the time did refer to imperialism as progressive in some sense. This was an analysis that apparently also appeared in Hilferding's work on imperialism (which unfortunately I still don't have). Lenin referred to this as well as Kautsky's stand as follows:

"It is not the business of the pro-

letariat,' writes Hilferding, 'to contrast the more progressive capitalist policy with that of the now bygone era of free trade and of hostility towards the state. The reply of the proletariat to the economic policy of finance capital, to imperialism, cannot be free trade, but socialism....'

"Kautsky broke with Marxism by advocating in the epoch of finance capital a 'reactionary ideal', 'peaceful democracy', 'the mere operation of economic factors', for *objectively* this ideal drags us back from monopoly to non-monopoly capitalism, and is a reformist swindle." (*Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Section 9, "The Critique of Imperialism" in the *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 289)

At the same time, Lenin and the communists of the time also held that:

"...Formerly progressive, capitalism has become reactionary; it has developed the forces of production to such a degree that mankind is faced with the alternative of adopting socialism or of experiencing years and even decades of armed struggle between the 'Great' Powers for the artificial preservation of capitalism by means of colonies, monopolies, privileges and national oppression of every kind." (*Socialism and War*, Ch. I, subsection "The war of today is an imperialist war" in *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 301)

So here Lenin says capitalism in the imperialist epoch is reactionary, and draws a comparison to a previously progressive capitalism.

Moreover, he points repeatedly in various articles to imperialism meaning a striving towards reaction, based on the development of monopoly capital. For example: "...The essence of the matter is that Kautsky detaches the politics of imperialism from its economics, speaks of annexations as being a policy 'preferred' by finance capital, and opposes to it another bourgeois policy which, he alleges, is possible on this very same basis of finance capital. It follows, then, that monopolies in the economy are compatible with non-monopolistic, non-violent, non-annex-

ationist methods in politics." (*Imperialism*, Section VII, "Imperialism, as a Special Stage of Capitalism", in *Collected Works*, vol. 22 p. 270)

A glaring contradiction?

How can imperialism both be progressive compared to pre-monopoly capitalism, and reactionary compared to the earlier capitalism? Does this show that communist theory is inconsistent? Does it say one thing in one place and another somewhere else?

No. I think the key to this is the distinction between the further development of large-scale production during imperialism, and the general nature of the social order. This is the distinction I raised in my article.

The further economic organization under imperialism is an advance on pre-monopoly capitalism. At the same time, the overall social order is decaying alive and saturated with tendencies to reaction.

But, it will be said, Lenin drew the comparison that imperialism was to pre-monopoly capitalism as capitalism was to feudalism. Well, this is only correct in a certain economic context. It is not a correct analogy as far as the entire social order. For example, Marxism regards the great French revolution against the monarchy--whose economic content was the transition to capitalism--as progressive; Marxists have studied the mass struggle, the political parties, etc. and spoken with deep respect of the revolutionaries who helped awaken the masses and bring down the old system. But where is there an example of revolutionary communists hailing the struggle bringing pre-monopoly capitalism to imperialism and talking of the deep respect owed to the people who helped bring forth the imperialist social system?

I don't think there is.

Well, Fred in Seattle now denies that imperialism still has a tendency to reaction. He outright glorifies today's imperialism. Meanwhile there has been discussion among some other comrades, opposed to Fred's love affair with impe-

rialism, about how to compare this century's social order to that of pre-monopoly capitalism.

For example, does the tendency to reactionary politics under imperialism mean that all regimes are outright tyrannies? This would conflict with the fact that many imperialist countries have bourgeois-democratic regimes.

But the reaction that is being referred to is the content of the policy of the bourgeoisie. As Lenin pointed out: "...a comparison of, say, the republican American bourgeoisie with the monarchist Japanese or German bourgeoisie shows that the most pronounced political distinction diminishes to an extreme degree in the epoch of imperialism--not because it is unimportant in general, but because in all these cases we are talking about a bourgeoisie which has definite features of parasitism." (*Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Chapter X, "The Place of Imperialism in History", in *Collected Works*, p. 301)

The bourgeois-democratic imperialist powers are just as willing to squash and exploit the majority of the world as the monarchist imperialist powers in the old days, or the revisionist tyrannies of more recent time. The bourgeois-democratic imperialists spearheaded the threat of nuclear holocaust in the cold war. They fostered reactionary regimes around the world. And today, after the end of the Cold War, racist and chauvinist ideas are springing up in the imperialist greenhouse like mushrooms. Meanwhile the overwhelmingly majority of the world's population have little to say about the key decisions that will affect world economy and politics for years to come.

But what about the fact that, say, women can vote now in the U.S., in the imperialist age, but couldn't vote during the pre-monopoly capitalist stage in America? Doesn't this show that imperialism is more democratic than the old capitalism?

This is, in essence, the same issue as that raised above about how imperialism could be said to tend to reaction

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AGAIN ON ULTRA-IMPERIALISM

by Joseph Green, Detroit
April 22, 1994

In his letter of March 26, comrade Joe of the Boston Communist Study Group praised comrade Ben of Seattle for allegedly exposing my "methods of debate". In the name of opposing some "methods of debate", Joe is actually opposed to the debate itself. He thinks it "discourage(s) comrades, undermines confidence in their ability to think, and incite(s) people against each other on a distorted basis."

No, no, no, Joe says. He really is just against my methods. And Joe's prime example of my alleged "religious style bullying and distortion of views" is that I have pointed out that the BCSG are suggesting that the present situation is ultra-imperialist. Joe indignantly denies that the BCSG "think the present situation is 'ultra-imperialistic'" and suggests that a reader should "carefully read our statement and Joseph's response side by side".

Well finally, something Joe and I still agree on. I fully endorse Joe's suggestion that the reader study the appropriate sections of the BCSG statement and of my article "Against Sectarianism, Part One". To help the reader do this, I am excerpting the relevant portions as an appendix to this article.

After making this study, let the reader ponder whether Joe has answered or even dealt with the issues I raised. Let the reader ponder whether Joe and the BCSG really have no interest in ultra-imperialism, and whether it really is just some folly of mine. The reader will have his effort rewarded by the knowledge that this study serves two purposes: examining the issue of ultra-imperialism; and seeing whether it was "religious style bullying and distortion" to point out that ultra-imperialism is being pondered by the BCSG and some others, or whether it was essential to allow this important issue to be studied and dis-

cussed by all comrades and not just decided by a few.

50 years of peaceful relations

Instead of examining the issues about the world situation I raised, Joe starts from the point of view of asking who is it that really says the world is ultra-imperialist. He is ultra-indignant.

But it is the statement of the Boston Communist Study Group (Boston #5) that asked: "How do you explain 50 years of peaceful relations among the Western imperialists?"

So there it is.

This is the main question on which the BCSG let the issue of ultra-imperialism rest. If this is indeed the key question to ponder about the world situation, as the BCSG put forward, then we are in an ultra-imperialist era. If it isn't, as I think, then we are not.

But what about the incessant warfare that has marked this 50 years? The BCSG were replying to my article (Detroit #19) in the CWV Theoretical Supplement that pointed to the militarism and bloodshed that characterized the post-World War II era. And my article pointed to the astronomical military budgets and widespread bloodshed that continue in spite of the end of the Cold War.

But the BCSG just ignored these issues. They didn't explain why this history of warfare and militarism was irrelevant. They didn't explain why the current militarism is irrelevant. They refused to discuss the issue. Instead they characterized the overall world situation by the alliance among the Western imperialists.

And that means to characterize imperialism as ultra-imperialism.

Kautsky's ultra-imperialism talked of the main imperialist powers cutting their military expenditures and becoming peaceful among themselves. When the BCSG characterize the world by the Western imperialist alliance, that's put-

ting forward the concept of ultra-imperialism. It wouldn't even matter if the BCSG call it ultra-imperialism or not: it still would be putting forward the same concept as ultra-imperialism. But, as we shall see in a moment, the BCSG are quite aware that it is raising the question of ultra-imperialism.

Well, perhaps Joe has thought things over and changed his mind in the month since the BCSG's statement? Maybe that's why he now says they don't believe in ultra-imperialism? But no, in his open letter to Ben, Joe endorses the BCSG's statement as correct. But he rephrases it. He replaces "peaceful relations" with "relative peace", and talks of "the relative peace in the Western camp". And he omits direct reference to the 50 years of this peace, and leaves this question vague.

So, without changing anything, he simply speaks more obscurely than the BCSG statement did. But he is still characterizing the world by the "relative peace" among the main Western imperialist powers.

By way of contrast, I don't characterize the world that way. I have repeatedly referred to the military budgets and the militarism, while Joe and the BCSG have exaggerated the "peaceful relations".

From this, three things follow:

First of all, Joe can be as indignant as he wants, but it is he and the BCSG who are thinking about characterizing the world situation as ultra-imperialism. It is I who have polemicized against ultra-imperialism by pointing to its gross deviation from reality.

Secondly, that he and the BCSG have glossed over the present-day militarism in the world in their discussion of ultra-imperialism.

Thirdly, that he is the one who is attempting to intimidate anyone who would raise a differing view from his. Such a person must be prepared to face a chorus of charges of being moralist, a distorter, a factionalist, of making the

“worst possible interpretations”, of using methods that “contribute nothing” to the discussion, etc. The more absurd the charge Joe lays, the more indignantly he lays it. How can he charge that I have “contributed nothing” to the discussion on ultra-imperialism when it was my articles on the question that led to the written exchange in front of all comrades even beginning!

Ultra-evasion

Moreover, despite Joe’s show of ultra-indignation, Joe and the BCSG are quite aware that they are raising the question of ultra-imperialism.

For example, in a private letter to me of Dec. 10, Joe suggested that ultra-imperialism and multi-polarism were the two future possibilities, although “in the long run” he thought multi-polarism was more likely. I wrote him privately in return, opposing the use of the term “ultra-imperialism” to describe the world situation. (See the appendix of this article, which reproduces a passage in my article “Against Sectarianism, Part one” that contains the appropriate excerpts from these letters.)

Joe then broke off correspondence with me. So the reply came in the form of the BCSG’s statement. They claimed that “real life” itself was raising the

issue of whether we have “really entered an era of ultra-imperialism.”

Now what does it mean to say that “real life” is raising the question of whether it is presently ultra-imperialism? It means that they think that the actual facts of the situation, “real life”, suggest that the present world is ultra-imperialist.

But now Joe indignantly says that the BCSG don’t believe that the world situation is ultra-imperialistic at all. Oh no. They just said that “real life” was raising the issue.

And to make it funnier, Joe’s letter to Ben goes on to state all over again that whether “the system looks like ultra imperialism but is not” is “a serious issue”. What does that mean? It means that, in his opinion, it is a “serious issue” that the world may actually be ultra-imperialist.

I say the world is not ultra-imperialist, but Joe says, no, really, you shouldn’t write off that it’s ultra-imperialism. Yet Joe is indignant that anyone would suggest he thinks the world might be ultra-imperialist.

Joe wants to take both sides of the question at the same time. To those who are upset at the concept of ultra-imperialism, he assures them with utter fervor that the BCSG doesn’t have any truck with this concept. But the BCSG also

say that “real life” is raising the issue of ultra-imperialism. Moreover, with more fervor than logic, Joe assures everyone that the only reason I polemicize against ultra-imperialism is I am supposedly “under pressure from some of (my) allies for using the term `ultra imperialism’”. If Joe really doesn’t think much of the concept of ultra-imperialism, why is he so sure that I don’t have any valid reasons to oppose this concept?

The world according to David Copperfield

Well, how does the BCSG’s idea of ultra-imperialism stand up to the facts of “real life”?

The BCSG had asked, if you remember, “How do you explain 50 years of peaceful relations among the Western imperialists?”

I had commented on BCSG’s question in my article “Against Sectarianism, Part One”. Of course, I am not a supporter of the former CC majority, so my comments didn’t count. So Joe ignored them.

But with their question about why peace has reigned in the Western alliance for 50 years, the BCSG is closing their eyes to reality in the same way that Kautsky talked of peaceful ultra-imperialism even as World War I broke out. (See Kautsky’s article, which was reproduced as reference material in Detroit #29)

The BCSG are asking us to explain a half-century of peace--but the world has been drenched with blood for this same half-century.

The BCSG accomplish this magic trick, worthy of the famous illusionist David Copperfield, by referring to relations among one bloc of imperialists, while ignoring this bloc’s struggle against a rival imperialist bloc. David Copperfield only made the Statue of Liberty disappear;

Joe and the BCSG has cast a veil over 50 years of world history.

You could make World War I into an era of ultra-imperialist peace if you

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ERRORS IN "THE BLOODBATH, PART I"

by Fred, Seattle
3/22/94

I would like to clarify two errors in the bloodbath part I. which were noted in Detroit #28.

First of all, Aristotle did not discuss the labor theory of value. What I had in mind was his discussion of the distinction between use value and exchange value. I came across this in "The Politics," did not remember the specific points Marx had made about his lack of grasp of the labor basis of exchange value, and sloppily characterized it as the labor theory. It should be clear that this distinction does not effect the analogy I made between Aristotle and Lenin.

The other error is the confusion of meanings I gave to the terms communism and socialism. What I

meant by communism was the specific ideological-political trend of the world communist movement, that took power in the revolutions via Communist or Workers' parties. This is a specific historical phenomena and I referred to it by its own name.

I used the term socialism for a different meaning, and one a little hard to nail down. Roughly, the meaning was of progressive social revolution in the sense Marx used it, though there really isn't any definition today of what this might amount to. As opposed to the practice of the Soviet model, socialism would be progressive, revolutionary social change, that achieves egalitarian reform of society to the extent that classes cooperate for development, rather than development proceeding on the basis of oppression of the majority. The com-

munist revolutions were progressive in the sense of advancing the civilization of various peoples, and being part of a progressive, anti-colonial stage of human social development. But they were not socialist in the above sense because, eventually and overall, the advance of their societies took place on the basis of oppression of the majority. To the extent that all varieties of social orders have contributed to progress since the earliest civilizations, this progress has been based on oppression of the majority. The Soviet model was not any exception to this rule.

Fantastic dreams of a socialist, egalitarian society played various roles in the Soviet model societies, but this didn't make them socialist, nor even mean that such a socialism was at issue.

The Bolsheviks and Women's Emancipation

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What can be learned from the bloodbath regarding approaches to investigation? (Part II)

by Fred, Seattle
3/15/94

II. On Boston #5

Boston 5 goes into some issues in order to help orient their research work. I think their article will be helpful for this. It is encouraging that various activists are continuing the previous work. I would hope that as the investigation work develops, coordination and labor division between different areas, including Seattle, will be seen as helpful and will develop.

The approach given to the disagreements on LDCs and social strata is quite refreshing. Instead of twisting phrases and turning linguistic somersaults, someone has tried to describe the different points of view that came up, and done a good job. Amazing. This is an important advance of culture, though actually, it is building or tapping into abilities that the majority of the mlp trend have long possessed.

Boston 5's approach is a striking contrast to the culture that Joseph was able to impose on the mlp since 1990. My guess is that Manny's and Jim's reports on Soviet history in 1990 ushered in a subtle but desperate "icon deprivation shock," and Joseph was able to play on the withdrawal symptoms and fear. In the situation of unprecedented and increasing ideological divergence within the mlp, Joseph was able to submerge the traditions of interpretation and debate. Instead, the traditions of pragmatic ROOAHbashing were applied to internal disagreements.

As I noted above, Boston 5 makes an accurate description of the activity of the Chicago-Detroit group thus far. This is also important, because without both separation from close proximity to the icon trip, and critique of it, productive investigation is all but ruled out.

One suggestion I have for the Bos-

ton and similar research is that they seek the maximum usage of cyberspace to assist their work. For example, discussion of the work or parts of it while in progress could be posted so that others may contribute comments. Similarly, a bibliography could be posted for others that might want to read on the same field of investigation. Another thing would be to post articles on internet or similar networks. This way more ideas could be gotten a hold of. I've never done anything like internet, but it seems to me one will only get out of it relative to what one puts in. So posting on internet may require higher quality material.

Boston's journal

I have only the most general thoughts on the issue of publishing. My conception is to distinguish two forms: posting, which includes cyberspace and xeroxing of e-material; and publishing, which means mimeo or printing, or more formal and costly xeroxing. It seems that posting should be the form for the vast majority of our written material. Mainly, I guess, because our learning process needs to be the bulk of our activity, and e-space is best for this because it allows ease of successive editing, communication, interaction, etc. I think there should be a very special and

clearly definable reason for freezing ideas in the printed form. E.g., there is a specific audience that is desired to communicate with that for some reason is more easily reached with print form.

Boston 5's point of describing certain types of content of material for its journal, the results of focused and disciplined study, and relatively high level analysis, is a good idea. We definitely need to set goals like this and figure out the best ways to achieve them. But how is the journal to be a tool for these aims? Boston 5 gives no ideas or indication. It gives no critique of past practice.

At least two general obstacles must be overcome before a journal of any merit can be produced. The ways and means of developing high quality investigation must be found. And the ways to assess and screen articles for the journal must be found. I would like to see some discussion of this.

how does discussion fit into investigation?

Boston 5 says that "debate over various views can only go forward and contribute something if it is tied to investigation." If this means that investigation is essential, without it we are

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Letters

To the Chicago Workers' Voice Theoretical Journal:

by Ben, Seattle
4-10-94

It is unclear to me whether your journal has readers who are unaware of our e-mail exchange but this appears to be part of the premise of your journal (with its extensive reprints of e-mail) and hence in the interest of clarity I am requesting that you print:

- a) the following letter,
- b) the accompanying chart of e-mail [ed. note: in the interest of space we have not printed this, write to us or Ben if you really want it] and
- c) the accompanying page in which I have compressed (i.e.: excerpted) the most relevant sections of my 47-page "Joseph in Wonderland".

Naturally I would prefer this to appear in the same typeface as everything else but would consider it acceptable (ie: not uncivilized inasmuch as this is a "hostile" letter) if you, in the interests of space, used a shrunken typeface as you did my March 3rd "Appeal to Comrades". I do hope the formatting on the chart may be preserved since this would increase readability for readers.

Dear CWV Theoretical Journal:

Polemics are the most civilized form of warfare. This form is civilized not simply because it makes use of the byte, rather than the bullet, but because at its best it sets as its objective the raising of the consciousness of readers. Hence this form of warfare, characterized by open debate and subject to the development of **civilized norms**, is well suited to the needs of the struggling proletariat. Furthermore, only with the development of civilized norms can we expect polemical

warfare to eventually attract a mass audience and mass participation.

In your editorial statement you protest the characterization of the Boston group concerning your orientation and state:

"If the comrades in Boston want to make this assessment now they can. But they should back it up with facts and they should not try to portray it as if their assessment was a given."

I believe you should hold yourselves to this same standard.

A scientific revolutionary culture would strive to insure that assessments are backed up with facts. Yet it appears to myself that it is in precisely this area that have been committed the greatest sins of the Chicago Workers' Voice grouping.

Of course in the open clash of viewpoints what is "obvious" to one side may be anything but to the other. But we must nonetheless strive to ensure that our "civilized warfare" develops norms that are to the benefit of our proletarian readers.

For example my politics have repeatedly been called liquidationist and social-democratic by comrades around your grouping without these charges being either backed up or explained. Are such charges serious or not? If they are serious, why can't they be backed up? Issue # 2 of your journal reprints such a charge by comrade Mark. Mark says my "trend of trends" idea is a revival of the organizational practices that allowed the flourishing of opportunism which marked the 2nd International. But nowhere does Mark back up his charge. Joseph elaborated on this at some length also but his principle argument is that I have not proven otherwise.

The concept of the development of "civilized norms" in our polemical warfare has to date produced only a "mock and grimace" (to quote your title) from the worst offenders who imply that the class struggle in the realm of ideas may not always take place in circumstances that lend themselves to such civilized norms as would discourage wild and irresponsible accusations unsupported by facts drawn from the world.

And there may be truth to this. The class struggle in the realm of ideas does not always take place in conditions of perfect consciousness and ideal circumstances. All the same, those who mock the development of a scientific revolutionary culture will find eventually that readers are drawing conclusions and will decide that those who mock a scientific culture do so because they are threatened by it.

My second beef with your journal also concerns civilized norms of debate. You reprinted comrade Gary's article in which he confuses agnosticism concerning scientific questions with philosophical agnosticism. This appears to myself to be a straightforward error on Gary's part. For example, the last time I ran across the word "agnosticism" in the *New York Times* was in the Tuesday Science section and concerned the attitude of many scientists who had not yet been won over to some emerging theory concerning the development of ecosystems.

Of course Gary may not be expected to have the time to read the Tuesday Science section of the NYT but the point here is that he made a clear error in his Jan 1st letter and I caught him on it a week later and he never replied. Does Gary still hold to his view on agnosticism? Since his article is

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reprinted in your journal the implication is that he still stands by his article. Yet nowhere are readers informed that he was refuted decisively.

One of the delicious ironies of the present struggle is that those who shout most loudly about "defending Marxism" and opposing agnosticism are in positions which are by their nature idealist. Our idealist comrades are in actual practice opposing the materialist method and for this reason will inevitably discover the ground to be shaking under their feet.

A One-Page Concentration of "Joseph in Wonderland":

... I pointed out Mark's hypocrisy in insisting that Michael have faith in Leninism when Mark himself was unable to respond to a simple question (on the minds of workers everywhere when speaking to a Marxist-Leninist) as to whether it was right or wrong for Lenin to have denied the most elementary democratic rights of free speech and association to virtually the entire population. It might be one matter for Mark to have a personal conviction ... But to insist that others must have the same faith or be accused of "attacking Marxism" crosses a fundamental line. I cannot believe that Lenin himself, who always attempted to be scientific in everything he did, would have had anything but extreme contempt and utter disgust with the proposition that anyone should be expected to accept his contributions in theory and practice as a matter of faith.

... Mark's reply (Detroit # 21, Feb 9) took the approach that he was simply expressing his view that he supports Marxism-Leninism and evaded the fact that he had attacked another comrade for being scientific and undecided ...

Crossing the Rubicon

But there is more to it than this. In the early history of our trend we upheld a set of beliefs. Our confidence in these beliefs was based on our experience in the mass movement. The Soviet revisionists advocated alliance with the liberals. So did the trots. It was China which seemed to be supporting the Vietnamese liberation struggle and standing up to both the Soviet Union and U.S. imperialism. Over time we tossed out Mao, Hardial, Enver and Stalin. At a certain point, as the problems in the actions of Lenin himself raise more questions, the method of simply accepting by default everything we had previously believed until it was proven wrong simply because it was what we had previously believed -- has shown itself with greater clarity to be unscientific. A more skeptical attitude is developing in which we question and re-examine everything. But the attitude of "questioning everything" has run smack against a section of our trend who cling to the view that it is an "attack on Marxism" to question something that has not yet been proven to be bogus. This section of our trend appears to understand little of real materialism and the scientific method. They are afraid that there are important principles developed over the last 150 years that will be "thrown out".

A scientific attitude is more courageous. We are not losing or "discarding" the intellectual fruits of 150 years of the class struggle. We are not starting completely from scratch. Marx and Lenin left trails for us to follow. We are familiar with large parts of these trails. A more careful and scientific approach can only lead us to a more profound understanding of their work -- of their brilliant successes and also of their missteps. The difference between now and 25 years ago is that we will be more careful in coming to conclusions and

more conscious of the assumptions we make. Anything less would be less than a scientific attitude. Those who oppose re-examining everything may believe they would be better served or more productive in other kinds of work. That is their right and they may be correct in many areas. But when they attack others for being skeptical and demand that faith replace science they have crossed the Rubicon and the fight is on. ...

Joseph attempts to deny that a line exists between responsible and irresponsible behavior. He claims that I wish to restrict Mark's freedom to criticize people such as myself. ... Joseph talks as if all criticism is equal. But "criticism" which consists of wild accusations unsupported by facts drawn from the world; criticism founded on religious methodology and aimed against scientific methods and discussion; criticism aimed at poisoning the atmosphere and discouraging comrades from speaking their minds -- is not the same as criticism which is based on facts ...

Which class is served by irresponsible criticism? That is the question we should ask the most erudite Joseph.

Joseph was called upon to repudiate Mark's letter equating agnosticism on Lenin with anti-Marxism. Rather than do so, Joseph has supported Mark and attempted to equivocate. Therefore let us ask them both the following questions ("The Biospheric Challenge") and request that they give answers that are direct and to the point:

----- The Biospheric Challenge: -----

1) Is agnosticism regarding Leninism equivalent to "attacking Marxism"? Is agnosticism concerning scientific questions on which investigation is in the early stages a valid example of applied materialism?

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2) Should serious charges made against comrades (such as "attacking Marxism", liquidationism or social-democratic deviations) be either solidly backed up (by materialist and not religious methodology) or withdrawn?

3) Should Mark repudiate his letter (Detroit # 18, 1-11-94) as

(a) containing charges that he cannot back up and

(b) being an impermissible attack on our revolutionary culture?

4) Is Mark's letter an example of an unhealthy atmosphere that has impeded the resolution of our contradictions and played an important role in the collapse of the MLP?

5) Is the development of the unity of the xmlp trend assisted by an atmosphere of calm discussion free from unsupported charges and guided by scientific methods in which careful investigation takes place prior to the drawing of firm conclusions.

Letter from Joe to Ben

March 26, 1994

Dear Ben,

I wanted to thank you for exposing the methods of debate that Joseph has sunk to. These methods not only obscure the issues and contribute nothing to the discussion, but they discourage comrades, undermine confidence in their ability to think, and incite people against each other on a distorted basis. When we in Boston mischaracterized your views, you called us on it and it helped us deal with the situation more objectively. Hopefully your struggle against religious style bullying and distortion of views etc. by Joseph, Mark and others will reduce the damage those methods can do and perhaps help some people who are influenced by or intimidated by these methods to reject them.

Joseph has used the same methods in responding to the statement of BCSG. Any reader who will carefully read our statement and Joseph's response side by side will see the repeated distortions, subject changes and worst possible interpretations. One of the distortions Joseph made and seems most fond of repeating was his charge that the

BCSG believes that the world system is basically ultraimperialistic. Any at all careful reader of our statement will see that we did not raise that view. What we did was 1. to question Joseph's description of the world political system. Do the institutions that he names play such a central role in world politics as he says. Is imperialism as organized as he says. 2. We raised that Joseph's statement that the system looks like ultra imperialism but is not was a serious issue. If the sharing of power among the big imperialists is a institutionalized as Joseph says then the question is really begged is this ultra imperialism or just seeming ultra imperialism. We then went on to point out that we had the beginnings of an answer in Michael's report to the Fourth Congress which showed the factors which led to the relative peace in the Western camp and the factors which are undermining this and leading to a multipolar world. We said that this research needed to be deepened. Thus we do not think the present situation is "ultra imperialistic". We were interested in the dynamics of situation and felt that our understanding still had some holes. But it seems that Joseph was under pressure from some of his allies for using the term "ultra imperialism" and wanted to shift their wrath on to us rather than look deeper into the facts and implications of

the serious and thoughtful issues which he had originally raised. Thus he seems to have become increasingly a prisoner of the moralist/factionalist atmosphere he has been generating.

Your dissection of Joseph's methods is an important contribution to breaking down the moralist atmosphere that became intense toward the end of the MLP. Any kind of collaboration in theoretical work is doomed in such an atmosphere.

On the question of your theory of trend of trends. It is not the simple Second International caricature that Joseph and Mark would have us believe. I think you are honestly trying to sum up experience and generalize the principles of party organization. There are some problems with your model, which probably reflect the problem of trying to build an overall model of the party of the future at such an early stage of investigation and development, the limits of speculation. As you try to explore the range of possible groupings that might be allowed in a future party you abstract out other aspects such as the inevitable emergence of opportunist trends, how the struggle against such trends unfolds and affects the overall atmosphere in real life etc. Such things are inevitable in model building. And there are things such as party of parties that could only

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be comprehensible as describing a situation just before a merger or just before a split. Nevertheless as far as posing some questions and stimulating some thinking your attempt to sketch a model or outline of what the principles would look like is useful. However, I tend to think that more than concentrating on a model of a party, we need more to sum up and popularize (at first among ourselves) a broad range of historical experience on these questions as reservoir of experience to draw upon.

You raise the issue of parallelism which I think has merit. In fact there was a good deal of parallelism in certain aspects of the MLP and COUSML. Weisberg accused us of being federalists due to the autonomy of our local branches in their sphere of competency. There is also the relationship of centralism to parallelism. Or as we usually speak centralism to democracy. There is a need for central organization e.g. to put out a paper etc. but also centralism is necessary to facilitate sharing of parallel work on questions. E.g. COUSML worked out its approach to work in the working class through monthly meetings of local secretaries in the 6 midwestern branches in the late 70's. As well there was simultaneous parallel work in Seattle and Providence. I am most familiar with the Midwest work. There each local area developed its own analysis of how to develop what we called the three point tactical line in its own area. The secretaries would meet monthly and present written reports developed by their branches on the work they were doing, the analysis they had made of where to concentrate, the study they were doing, the tactics they were developing and so forth. The various secretaries would critique each areas work, offer suggestions, learn from the positive and negative experience of other areas in a relatively non-moralist atmosphere. There were limitations to this

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process in that the reports were not circulated below the level of the local secretaries. But there was a great deal of cross pollination of ideas and experience. The point here is that without the discipline of the reports to the regional meetings without some centralism there would not have been much exchange of ideas or experience or development of discussion and thinking. I think the main point that can be drawn from our experience concerning your points of parallelism is the general superiority of the base being in on the full discussion and summation more rather than less, from the beginning rather than later and the need to allow a considerable degree of variation in thinking while problems are worked out and not jump in a moralist way to impose one model.

We received Fred's response to Boston 5 and wanted to let Fred and other comrades in Seattle know that we agree with the idea of posting drafts of theoretical work on the Email. Kate has already done so, and we had planned to post our drafts as we went along. I believe that such use of the Email would be useful to drawing more people into the theoretical work and helping the researchers benefit from the criticism and questions of others. We are also happy that Seattle comrades are interested in contributing to the Journal.

We do not believe that discussion has to be tied one to one to research but believe that research must go forward lest discussion stagnate into sterile speculation or bickering. We proposed the journal to provide a discipline to actually do some higher quality research. Although we had originally been more restrictive on what range of views or approaches we would allow, I think now our thinking is more that the key is not the views but the research. Articles should be judged by whether or not they contribute new information to the discussion or not. Whether or not they will

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help others develop further research regardless of the views. Articles that are just speculation or just criticism, with no research or documentation would not be accepted. Such material in my opinion could be accepted as letters but not as articles. The point being to enforce a discipline to do research.

Given the enormity of the theoretical work facing us, I think that there is a great deal of pressure for quick simple answer either in the form of dogmatism or spinning theories in dilettante fashion. I think that the best safeguard against such an approach is for people to dig deeply into one or two questions. This is not to say that there is no room for people to step back and try to contemplate, speculate on where all this is going. But if we don't insist on the research our contemplation and speculation will inevitably turn into dilettantism.

How high the standards of research that should be enforced is another question. But at this point it is probably moot. It is not like we have the luxury of picking and choosing from a ton submissions yet. Once the project gets going we think a democratically elected editorial board from among all those who support the journal would be in order. We are just offering to put out the first issue or two to get thing flying. On some issues of class structure

Fred raised a number of issues in his letter with regard to our research on class structure. We briefly discussed some of those points. I would like to relate one point from that discussion. We also discussed at the same time Pete's response to our tentative views on class structure. Pete seems to be off on a religious tangent and not wanting to deal with the theoretical problems. But he did raise one issue that deserves some explanation. That is the second point I want to deal with.

1) The issues Fred raised of a) the

CWV Theoretical Journal

Letters

possibility of socialism not being the next stage and of b) the possibility that hegemony of the lower more proletarian mass may not necessarily be required, actually go hand in hand. Our intuition is that if the hegemony of the proletarian mass is not possible, then socialism is not next stage of social development. Then it would seem that either a. there would be no revolution and human society would degenerate (history has known great setbacks before), or b. we would have to wait for a new wave of proletarianization of previously professional strata which could facilitate proletarian hegemony, or c. the leap would be less glorious than socialism. (e.g. Stalin's state capitalist model rested on the new professional/managerial strata educated after seizure of state power. Nearly 80 per cent of all Soviet officials were engineers. There is actually an academic theorist, Alvin Gouldner, who gives the view that the next stage of human development is the rule of the professional/managerial/intellectual class. He views the system they will give rise to as "state socialism" like the Soviet revisionist model without all of Stalin's tyrannical excesses. He is quite open that this will not be an "altruistic, egalitarian" society of Marxist socialism, but will exploit the lower mass in a more refined way for the benefit of the professional/managerial/intellectual class.) For our part we are starting from the Marxist theory of the necessity of the hegemony of the proletariat. We realize the assumptions involved and do not close our minds to facts showing other directions. We are not going to try to fit square factual pegs into round theoretical holes.

2.) Pete wonders how it can be that 75 per cent of the new jobs are in the low paying service and retail trade industries and yet we are concerned about a large middle strata. In actual fact not all

service or retail trade jobs are low paying semiskilled or unskilled jobs. About 2/3 are. But the point is that there have been two phenomenon developing since the late 70's. One was the growth of the professional managerial strata and up until recently its general prosperity. (Actually this first trend is a century old but was quite pronounced during the decade of the yuppie.) The other is the impoverishment of unskilled and semiskilled workers. Not only has there been a general lowering of wages, but millions of workers in large and medium manufacturing have had their jobs eliminated and been forced into either smaller, lower wage factories or more often into the lower paying jobs in the service and retail trade sectors or into relatively permanent unemployment, black market etc. This phenomenon has lately been referred to in bourgeois literature as the hour glass effect on class structure.

We have entered a new phase or period of capitalist economic development. So far this phase appears to be one of relatively prolonged economic stagnation as opposed to the post WWII period of relatively prolonged world wide expansion. This stagnation has major effects on the development of classes and their structure and their outlooks. In the post WWII period, capitalism was able to maintain a social compact not only with the middle strata and skilled workers, but the majority of the proletariat. But in the first phase of the current period the social compact with the proletarian mass began to break down and unless capitalism is able to find a new way of expanding that breakdown will accelerate. Not only are the workers wages deteriorating, not only do they face much greater insecurity of life, but the particular changes have fragmented the workers into smaller work places, and they stay in those

places much shorter periods of time. So you have a) breakdown of social compact which must breakdown illusions in capitalism, increase class contradictions and b) fragmentation of the workers which makes it harder at least in the short run for them to organize and feel themselves a force. At the same time the particular form of fragmentation, in the long run should broaden the workers view of the system.

As I pointed out above in the first phase of this period, the professional, managerial, and technical strata continued to grow and prosper. But since 1990 large sections from the middle and lower layers of these strata are suffering repeated unemployment. It is too early to tell whether this is just a problem of a phase of one business cycle in the period or whether it will be a feature of this whole period of capitalist development. If the latter is true it will have major repercussions on the development of the middle strata and on the consciousness of the affected layers not only in the sense of anger and rebelliousness but in overall outlook and aspirations.

Any analysis of class structure, if it is to be useful and up to date must keep a watch on the developments of the overall capitalist system. There is a great deal of connection between the different fields of investigation.

I am sorry to have wandered off and answered some questions raised by others in a letter to you. But I am pressed for time and hoped to kill a number birds with one stone. Once again Ben, thanks for your dogged fight against moralist and religious browbeating, and sloppy or dishonest methods. I must also say that the appreciation for your struggle is universal here.

Warmest regards,
Joe

Assesment of the Debate continued from page 5

these views. The last few months of the debate have shown that not only the issues raised in our Dec. 13 statement are at stake but further issue as well.

The legacy of the MLP

To my mind the MLP left a legacy that is much to learn from and that is very useful for any other formation that tries to organize whether that be in the near future or years from now.

What are some aspects of that legacy

1. anti-revisionism - the MLP and its predecessors came into existence opposed to revisionism. We worked to develop class struggle as opposed to class collaboration practiced by the revisionist, trotskyist and straight up social democratic groups of the various periods. We were not afraid to go out and organize among the workers and the poorest strata. We had no faith in the Democratic Party or in the trade union bureaucrats that the revisionists told us to work with. We tried to develop methods and tactics that allowed us to counter the hold of liberal labor politics that the revisionists upheld. And we worked to develop our theoretical critique of revisionism.

It's true that in our earlier period we held that Stalin was an anti-revisionist, that China and Albania had anti-revisionist regimes. We were able to develop our critiques of these and were looking deeper into the roots of revisionism when we disbanded. I think it is also true that due to our beginnings in Maoism, etc., we upheld strange organizational practices, including having no elected bodies until 1980, 11 years after the formation of the first of our predecessor organizations, a long period where a two-tier system of membership prevailed and instances of "underground" mentality that was out of touch with the times. But to me this doesn't negate the overall positive features of our anti-revisionism.

As well, certain important discus-

sions of political and theoretical questions were kept in the CC or between the CC and certain local areas. And the Party was generally not informed about debates or disagreements which existed in the CC. But in the 1991-92 IB debate, many issues were put before the whole Party. And there existed other channels besides the IB for issues to be raised to the whole Party, such as the Supplement and various Party meetings.

Many views which comrades are expressing in the current debate were clearly fairly well developed before the Party was dissolved. But these views were not put forward and debated.

To my mind a lot of the complaint against "monolithism" is not serious. It is not a discussion about how to build an active internal democratic life in a Party. It's not an attempt to look at our experience in that light. To my mind it mostly boils down to this. Some comrades no longer held the historical views of the Party. They held different views. But rather than have an open debate on the various questions, they berate the Party for "making" them have views they didn't hold.

It's not as if these comrades were trying to actively discuss their views before the Party and were being suppressed. They simply weren't discussing many of their views. And at the 4th Congress Joe and Jim were some of the most hostile to the suggestion that there might be serious differences in the Central Committee or that such differences should be reported to the Party as a whole.

2. opposition to liberal labor politics. A big brake on the development of a radical and socialist workers' movement is liberal labor politics. From the trade union bureaucrats to the NOW types to the black bourgeoisie to the left which is constantly bowing down to these forces.

3. united front tactics - extensive theoretical work done on this. I consider the MLP fairly unique among left groups

in being able to work in the movement, unite with various forces and neither be sectarian nor bow down to liberal labor politics. Locally there are examples of such work in the various coalitions re: Persian Gulf war or in ECDC. There are reports and articles which explain this work.

4. how to organize in the working class -- probably some of our best work was in last period when things were slow, slow, slow. We learned much on how to maintain contact with the masses and work to develop those low levels of struggles which existed. We developed many tactics on how to do this.

These are some of the issues I think are important about the legacy of the MLP.

But today that legacy is being dragged through the mud by Fred, Ben, and Joe. Joe and others like to deny that the "key" factor in the demise of the MLP was ideological differences. No one would deny the serious objective difficulties that the MLP faced, from the loss of forces to the ebb in the workers' movement to other problems. But if it were not for ideological differences some project would have been agreed upon to continue the core of the MLP's work.

Furthermore Joe and others are trying to drown everything in personal outrage claiming that everything is a matter of personal attack. They want to play on personal loyalties and our respect for years of hard work and self sacrifice for the Party and the revolutionary movement. I, for one, have known Joe for many years and I have personally liked and respected him. I respect the sacrifice that he and Michael and others made for the party when it was in existence. But this doesn't change my assessment that their current views are wrong.

Fred, Ben and Joe talk about serious investigation. They talk about how much the world has changed. Things are different. And no one would deny that there are areas into which serious investigation is needed in order to develop the stand of Marxism-Leninism towards the present day world. These include such

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Israel is cutting back services to their own citizens, and aggravating other sectors, it is not very likely they are going to start pumping in a lot of funds to the Palestinians.

Jason does not consider how to organize the proletariat to fight for its class interests and on behalf of all the downtrodden. He adopts the standpoint of the bourgeois "social planner" who invents schemes where capitalist economic development itself leads to the good life for all. His attitude can be seen from the fact that it takes Jason until the next to the last sentence in his nine-page document to even bring up "other vexing miscellaneous questions" such as "trade union rights," "full civil rights" and "a progressive stand toward Palestinian workers while understanding the need for the capitalist development of the economy, etc." And this one whole sentence on the subject doesn't say a thing about what attitude Jason and co. have on any of these matters.

Assessment continued

issues as

1. assessment of the politics and economy of the present day world. What do the changes since World War II and especially since the end of the cold war mean? How should we oppose the "humanitarian" face of imperialism, etc.?

2. What does the present rationalization and the changes in the working class mean for our revolutionary tactics?

3. How can we maintain a revolutionary orientation in a world where the workers' movement is in the main disorganized and there is not much of an organized revolutionary alternative?

4. What are the roots of revisionism - including what is our assessment of early Soviet history?

But to my mind the framework being proposed by Fred, Ben and Joe will not lead to deepening revolutionary theory and practice, but will lead us into the liberal-labor swamp. Pardon me if some of us do not want to go there with you.

For Jason, the actual class and democratic issues faced by the masses are an afterthought, capitalist economic planning is the key. Indeed Jason and his study group cannot even talk about the workers' interest without hastening to add that it must not contradict the interests of "capitalist development". One can imagine just how "progressive" the treatment of the workers will be when they are not supposed to damage the "capitalist development" of slave-wage workshops and international investors.

Apologizing for Israeli settlements

The preoccupation with lauding anything having to do with economic development even leads Jason to laud the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. He says a few settlements are "solely for military reasons" and some overzealous religious bigots. But the overwhelming majority are basically just economic, and therefore "may present some benefit for the Palestinians if integrated with the Arab sectors". Presumably we are just supposed to overlook that the "beneficial" settlements have robbed the land and resources of the Palestinians, that these peaceful settlements have been carved out with the help of the bullets and bulldozers of the Israeli military. Of course, in the name of "realism" Jason decides that even a number of the ultra-fanatical settlements must stay. After all, what's a few more Hebron massacres when economic development is at stake!

Jason himself has to admit that "it is not clear how this (the integration of the Israeli settlements into the Palestinian communities -- Mark) will happen, or if it will." But for Jason such day-dreaming is "realistic" because the settlements "are not just going to go away". After all, "Israel is unlikely to agree to abandon all of them." So realism in Jason's mind boils down to rejecting anything not agreeable to the oppressors.

Selling economic domination as plan against racism

In an effort to add some "progressive" window-dressing to his economic planning, Jason tells us that it will be an antidote to "nationalist hatreds." He says: "In general, it seems as if the further the two peoples come in contact with, and are tied to, each other, the less there exists an atmosphere where racist ideologies like Zionism or extreme Islamic fundamentalism can flourish." Increased contact between the Palestinian and Jewish masses would hold possibilities for breaking down national hatreds. But what has this got to do with the plans of the Zionist rulers and imperialism? Just because they may invest in or build a plant in the occupied lands doesn't mean they are going to break down the walls between the workers. Jason himself is forced to quickly backtrack from his original premise. "I am not stating this as an unalterable law. Certainly any neo-colonial type of relations in the economic and political sphere will have a negative impact on long-term cooperation between the two peoples." Essentially Jason destroys his own argument. Nevertheless, he wants to portray such wishful thinking as "realistic."

Theoretical issues

As previously mentioned, Jason is insistent that his analysis has theoretical implications that differ from the views of those held by the late MLP. I take him at his word. Unfortunately, Jason never tells us exactly what the new theoretical premises on imperialism and Zionism should be. So it is left for myself and others to try to figure out. But judging from his glorification of economic development via imperialism and Zionism, given his avoidance of dealing with the issues of building the movement of the Palestinian masses, I can only conclude that he has departed from the view that imperialism and Zionism mean oppression, that they cannot be reformed into something good, and that therefore, the cause of the masses demands getting organized to fight these forces.

Notes on Palestinian Presentation continued from page 11

ties also exploit agricultural resources as well, with crops for export being concentrated on. In addition, the larger also have some light manufacturing and construction, and of course any municipality of size has a retail and service sector.

What to do with all of these? I think we have to be realistic at this point and realize that they are not just going to go away; indeed, for reasons I will explain, maybe all of them shouldn't go away. Nonetheless, any reasonable set of demands should and will include :

a. Close most of the religious ones down, consolidate the rest.

b. Close all the security ones down, especially if peace agreements can be cemented with Syria and Lebanon.

c. The third type, the most numerous, is a different bag. The main theme is integration, which I can cover under economic connection to Israel. But it is complicated by political considerations. Its possible that these communities may present some benefit for the Palestinian economy if integrated with the Arab sectors that they are presently insulated from. But it is not clear how this will happen, or if it will. It is clear that Israel is unlikely to agree to abandon all of them.

2. Economic connection to Israel. Most analysts view any connection between Israel and the Palestinian economy as intrinsically bad. Edward Said, a leading Palestinian spokesman, and now a foe of Arafat had this to say recently in one of his many interviews: More than 80% of the economy of the West Bank and Gaza is dependent on Israel, which is likely to control Palestinian exports, manufacturing and labor... vast majority of Palestinians are impoverished and subject to the vagaries of Israel manufacturing and commercial community, which employs Palestinians as cheap

labor. Almost certainly, most Palestinians will remain as they are... Israel will effectively incorporate the territories economically, keeping them in a state of permanent dependency.

Actually, I am not sure that this scenario is necessarily inevitable at all, nor am I sure that Palestinian incorporation into the Israeli economy is necessarily a bad thing. In order to decide this, I think it important to examine what the immediate goals of a Palestinian economy should be. I see five:

A. The building of an infrastructure, both private/public. They need roads, sewers, schools, employment agencies, social service agencies, clinics, etc. An entire network has to be built to make up for the forty years of neglect. In many cases dealing with schools and clinics, this means not so much the building of new ones, as the revitalizing and re-capitalizing of old ones.

B. An immediate crash program to employ as many Palestinians as possible. With unemployment rates as high as they are, no economic or social stability can be expected to last, regardless of what system is instituted.

C. The return of Palestinian agriculture. Part of this involves returning land and water resources to Palestinians. Part of this involves canceling restrictions on land use by Israeli authorities. Part involves infusions of capital for initial planting and distribution networks. And part involves finding markets both in the Arab world and Europe for produce, olive oil and other products. A large section of agriculture should be geared to export - small subsistence plots of land will do nothing in the long term for the economy.

D. The loosening of restrictions on Palestinian light manufacture. One area in particular is in manufacture for domestic consumption. Furniture, plumbing, electrical equipment etc., could all

be put together fairly quickly with low amounts of capital, and a lessening of business taxes. In addition, food processing and textiles are possibilities for growth.

E. A switch in focus of construction industries from Israel proper and settlements building to construction of residential housing for Palestinians in the territories. The first thing is that restrictions on new housing have to be lifted. Once that happens, a boom will inevitably start from pent up demand. Up until now, it has been very difficult for Palestinians to even get permits to add on to their houses, let alone build new ones. In the Gaza especially, this has created an intolerable situation; one no longer to anyone's advantage.

So what is Israel's role in all this? In order of importance, these are the steps that should and can be taken.

a. Israel should take back at least some of the Palestinians they have trying to live without lately. The attempt to substitute out-of-work Jewish immigrants for them is not working anyhow; the Palestinians were trained for the Israeli economy. Something on the order of 100,000 is in the ball park, with at least 40,000 from Gaza, where unemployment is the worse.

b. Israel is already starting to pursue a strategy of subcontracting with the Pales in Gaza - this process should accelerate all over the territories. In Gaza its flowers for export to Europe, and that's not a bad pattern. Let Israeli capital and marketing combine with Palestinian labor - provided the Israelis in the process build up the Palestinian manufacturing infrastructure. Will this encourage dependence in the territories on Israeli capital? Certainly in the short term, the answer is yes. Eventually they will be able to strike out on their own. For now, joint ventures could serve both development in the territories and a

demilitarization of the Israeli economy. What has to be realized here is the right now the territories have no functioning economy, courtesy of Israeli occupation policies. And capital to develop them won't just fall from the skies.

c. Direct subsidies by Israel to Palestinian social services are in order. Let them pay at least a small amount for the initial infusion of funds needed to employ 10,000 public/private social workers, doctors, counselors, etc. This will also buy the nascent Palestinian authorities some time to avoid an explosion, and build up a core of state workers/managers.

d. Reform the water use policies. Although these are not being granted to the Palestinians, water rights are absolutely essential in order to revive Palestinian agriculture. Present use patterns are between 8 and 10-to-one in favor of the Settlements. Water for agricultural use has been frozen at 1967 levels by Israeli authorities. There is at present insufficient water for municipal use as well, and hundreds of village wells have run dry in the last few years. The water table has sunk to the level that many wells in Gaza are affected by sea water.

e. Return those settlements previously mentioned. Reconstruct a network of highways so as to connect those remaining up with Arab municipalities. Right now, settlements are constructed so that the highways and roads leading to and around them have as little contact with Arab villages as possible. This needs serious change. Encourage trade, commerce, and joint projects between those units and the remaining settlements.

f. There are no doubt other measures that could be taken as well. The point is that there is no point in pretending that the best solution for the development of the Palestinian state is for Israel to disappear from the occupied territories altogether.

3. Foreign aid. As part of the peace agreement, both the U.S. and Europe have promised financial aid to the nascent state. Oddly enough, despite the usual tendency for donors to decide for those governments how the money

should be spent, the situation here seems quite promising.

A. \$330-570 million is being promised the first year.

B. Another \$2.4 billion is promised over the next five years. Considering this is only a 300 million dollar economy to begin with, that's pretty hefty.

C. Immediate aid includes mostly infrastructure and institution building. No huge projects are being planned right away, but there are plenty of smaller projects that are labor intensive. The idea, apparently, is to build confidence in the nascent state apparatus.

D. Longer-term aid is designed around creating a climate for private investment. Although this sounds ominous by usual standards, the fact is that there are substantial Palestinian and Arab investors, as well as Israelis, who could develop the economy in the territories considerably more than they have been able to so far.

E. There has been substantial input from Palestinian intellectuals inside the territories themselves as to what projects are needed and where money should go. The biggest logjam here is that Arafat loyalists from the Diaspora are creating havoc with their ignorance, or bureaucratic inefficiency.

F. Most of the aid has been unconditional, and a lot is in grants. Those that are in loans are soft terms. The reason for this is ironic. Without a functioning state apparatus, and in the condition of a primitive economy, there simply hasn't been that much to squeeze out of the territories in the way of concessions. Also everyone involved feels they have a political stake in making sure that the situation is helped along as best as possible - at least for now.

That's the presentation, comrades. There was some discussion afterwards of basic changes in Israel itself that made them open to some kind of settlement of this issue to begin with. There was also some discussion of what ties Palestine should have with Israel in general for its own self-interest. Some of these revolve around some previous discussion of these same issues between Fred and myself. Those points include:

1. The Israeli economy has been going through a major transition for at least the last ten years. Prior to this, Israel was the classic case of a huge state sector, complete with many government owned corporations, a bureaucratic government/labor union/federation type of structure, a large social services network, and a highly protected internal economy. In addition, it survived due to huge international subsidies, courtesy of Uncle Sam. The nearest parallel in this hemisphere would be Mexico. The internal cost of this was somewhat offset by cheap Palestinian labor. Of course, the parallel with Mexico breaks down when you look at the huge defense establishment, soaking up at least 40% of the Israeli budget.

Recently, however, this model is undergoing some changes. It appears that the main impetus is the desire by Israeli capital to compete on the world market, as other capitalist powers are doing. In order to do that, this requires several adjustments of a fundamental nature.

a. A reduction in the huge bite taken out of the budget by the military.

b. A sell-off of inefficient government-owned structures and companies.

c. An end to the Arab boycott, which influences Israeli ability to break into the European market, let alone the Arab market.

d. A transformation of the social service sector, away from simple hand-outs, whether for settlements, kibbutzim inside Israel, religious schools, subsidies to the Histadrut, etc. Instead a service sector that concentrates on developing particular industries, trains the influx of emigration from Russia and Eastern Europe, and concentrates on subsidizing potentially profitable sections of the Israeli economy, (including arms exports.)

e. A transformation of the role of the territories in an economic sense. Previously, the West Bank and Gaza provide a pool of cheap labor, a captive market for Israeli goods, and a free government subsidy, in that taxes (inflows) from the Territories exceeded money spent on defense and infrastruc-

ture (outflows). Needless to say, the Intifadah changed all that, raising the cost of holding territories, reducing the labor pool, and lowering taxes through economic crisis and deliberate withholding. But even without that factor, the territories are seen by Israeli capital as providing a further base for the development of manufacture and agriculture for export, using the highly educated and trained Palestinian workforce as their labor.

2. Regardless of how the particular Peace Plan is going, there is going to be a peace of some sort. For now, the idea of smashing the Zionist state is over. In relation to this, it is now important to consider what is meant in a two-state solution of the term democratic, secular Palestine. It is assumed that since the goal is a Palestinian state, that the more independent the state and its economy is, the more progressive the situation is. This is not necessarily true. There are two issues here. One is what kind of development will allow Palestine to develop economically, politically and socially. Dependence of some sort, for

some length of time, seems unavoidable. There are finer points here, such as tariffs, VAT taxes, labor laws and such that need to be hammered out to the benefit of the Palestinians, but frankly we lack an analysis of how this works. The second issue is just as important though, and that is, how will integration between the two states affect nationalist hatreds. In general, it seems as if the further the two peoples come in contact with, and are tied to, each other, the less there exists an atmosphere where racist ideologies like Zionism or extreme Islamic fundamentalism can flourish. Frankly, that is all to the good. Needless to say, I am not stating this not as an unalterable law. Certainly any neo-colonial type of relations in the economic and political sphere will have a negative impact on long-term cooperation between the two peoples. But right now, both sets of peoples have currents of ideology running through them which demonize the other group, and that is fundamentally not progressive.

3. In addition, there is the issue of democracy. What kind is suited for

Palestine? Never mind the Israelis, what about various Palestinian elites attempts to grab the economic pie? What about the question of Arafat loyalists vs. other Diaspora-based groups vs. local elites vs. intellectuals around West Bank universities vs. etc., etc.? What to do with however many returning refugees there will be? How much should Hamas be worked with? Is an Islamic state a possible future, and what attitude towards that? Very complicated questions here, and very few answers.

4. Other vexing miscellaneous issues include full civil rights for Israeli Arabs, an international census for Palestinians, trade union rights for workers, open borders, citizenship issues, class structure of the nascent state, a progressive stand towards Palestinian workers while understanding the need for the capitalist development of the economy, etc.

WELL, THERE IT IS - I INVITE
YOUR COMMENTS!

For Proletarian Socialist Revolution continued

plant and animal species habitat, and serve recreational and scientific uses.

...The labor costs of new forestry would be significantly higher per quantity of wood than old growth clear-cutting. Would this mean it would be economically unfeasible to compete on the world market? No, not if the labor productivity and the marketability of the products were to rise rapidly enough to offset the higher cost of sustainable practices."

I wouldn't capitulate to this promotion of an alleged common interest between labor and capital to compete on the world market. Fred's response was that he was actually writing of the socialist stage (or a society in transition to socialism) and that therefore my arguments against his approach were unfounded. But the unclarity on whether

socialism or capitalism was being written about leads to what I think is the crux of the matter.

Fred had been scorning the "simple 'share the wealth'" agitation of the MLP for some time. I think this was connected to a search for a "minimum program" of structural reforms which would have "ultimate aims" smuggled into it... rather like CPC (M-L)'s effort of some 14 years ago but coming from Fred's own ideological motion.

Now one could argue against his approach to restructuring the timber industry from the angle that yes, we should fight for every reform of the industry which is of benefit to the masses of people and let capitalist profits be damned! But Fred had "new" thinking regarding this as well: "And generally, our demands should not be economic

drains, but instead show a rationale regarding the overall social benefit and thus economic efficiency viewed on the society-wide level" (from the letter mentioned above).

Here it seems clear that he was writing of present-day capitalism. He also wrote: "We should not fight to save particular jobs at the expense of rationalization, as this amounts to subsidization of waste by other workers." Now he did allow that "We should fight for retraining and conceivably other demands that assist the reintegration of redundant workers to productive work" (yes we should) but only because this was not an "economic drain". Thus Fred built a rationale for opposing the fight for jobs or income (economic drains!, waste!) with "economic efficiency viewed on the society-wide

level". He adopted the standpoint of an especially enlightened social planner and like a semi-anarchist he wound up on the side of the capitalists regarding the struggle for concrete (to use his word) immediate demands. And his route to this position ran through a search for magical slogans which would have socialism implicit within them. (He advocated in the Seattle study group that such a search was needed and several comrades were enchanted by the idea. It seems to me it might be useful for them to study the "old" article "Against Mao Zedong Thought! Part 5: Economist Distortions of the 'Make the Rich Pay!' Slogan", The Workers' Advocate, Vol. 11, No. 3 for more on this issue.)

But maybe I'm being unfair. After all, this was only a draft leaflet and besides, Fred did write of socialism at the end of it. Maybe Fred isn't guilty of one of the ancient sins of CPC(M-L) after all. But first we had better look at what he said regarding socialism.

"The Clinton compromise is a sign of the failure of the current economic system (with its features of corporate capital, comprehensive markets, and government regulation) to deal with the timber crisis. This system shows itself to be myopic and narrow. It pays attention to certain economic efficiencies and demands within narrow bounds--namely the immediate interests of established operations, such as to supply lumber or paper. But other considerations, like other values of old growth or even the long term supply of wood get ignored....

"The system shows itself extremely resistant to change.... The system is prone to any amount of waste and corruption--as long as the corporate elite's pocket-books don't suffer in the near term.

"The fact that the system does not pursue the solutions proposed above is partly explained by opposition to the large amount of investment that they would require. The long term benefits cannot be considered by either the corporate or the government structures.

"....Much deeper analysis is required to get a handle on the sources of the problems in the nature of the eco-

conomic system. For purposes of thinking and discussion, however, we will contribute some further views which are in the realm of assertions.

"To break down the types of vested interests illustrated in the timber crisis, to allow a rapid collection and consideration of information and adjustment of economic activities, and to develop planning that reflects the all-sided interests of the masses--would require fundamental changes in the economic and political structures. We would assert that such changes would be a form of socialism; though neither the Soviet model, the W. European, nor various other 'socialisms' came anywhere near such changes...."

(Elsewhere Fred writes of "sweeping changes in the economy" being needed as well as "more or less sweeping and basic changes in the economic and political system". He also contrasts contemporary capitalism to "a rationally-operating economic system".)

So, according to Fred, capitalism is narrow and myopic, can't see beyond immediate interests, is extremely resistant to change, prone to waste and corruption, irrational, etc., etc. Socialism, on the other hand, will break down vested interests, allow a rapid collection and consideration of information and adjustment of economic activities, develop planning that reflects the all-sided interests of the masses, be rational, broad, etc.

This agitational approach leaves out the small matter of overthrowing the presently existing social relations, i.e. proletarian revolution. Certainly every leaflet or article need not end with calls for revolution. But when Fred obscurely writes of "more or less sweeping and basic changes in the economic and political system" being needed, "sweeping changes in the economy" being needed, etc., this will more often than not be interpreted as meaning radically reforming the present set-up. Yes, Fred posed socialism (actually a "form of socialism" which is in "the realm of an assertion") as an alternative but the deliberately vague approach of "fundamental changes in the economic and

political structures" implied reforming the present structures rather than smashing them up and erecting something new in their place.

And what about the issue of phrase mongering? Remember that Fred hated the 26 phrases he listed from Joseph's "Population, technology, and environmental devastation". One of those phrases was "qualitative change in economics and politics which is to be brought about by socialist revolution". That phrase allegedly has no meaning and we should realize that we don't understand it. Now "sweeping changes in the economy"--there's a phrase everyone understands! (never mind if it might be from a reformist perspective). It has meaning too; things like "allow(ing) a rapid collection and consideration of information and adjustment of economic activities...develop(ing) a planning that reflects the all-sided interests of the masses". What a step forward from Joseph's meaningless "socially directed production for the benefit of all"! (We should hasten to add that Joseph preceded these words with some others: "qualitative changes communist revolution will bring"--emphasis added.)

This raises the issue of context. Fred leaps and dances over the phrases used by Joseph to describe capitalism and socialism in an article which was intended mainly for those already familiar with socialist theory, that is to those following party controversies in The Supplement. It's absurd to demand that such an article give an exposition on what is meant by class-divided society, Soviet revolution, classless society, profit-motives, world market, socialism, etc., etc. Fred's draft leaflet, on the other hand, was aimed at a mass audience. Hence he couldn't make the same assumptions as Joseph regarding mutual understanding regarding what different phrases mean. And it was therefore more incumbent upon him than Joseph to carefully explain the meaning of various phrases (like socialism) being used.

But Fred didn't do this. He generally eliminated all phrases explicitly denouncing the profit system and profiteering, phrases which sharply delineated capitalism from socialism, etc., (bad bad phrases those!) and in their place he substituted obtuse phrases which could mean many different (and opposing) things. At the very end of his leaflet he did talk of revolution and even abolition of classes however. This is what he said: "Egalitarian revolutions of various sorts have been launched many times in history, though as yet they have failed to materialize in the liberation of the majority, not to mention the abolition of classes. Are the possibilities of a socialist society really being developed now? Can the various 'have nots' unite to take advantage of these possibilities?"

The possibilities Fred is referring to are not in the realm of ideology, working class organization, developing crises of capitalism (including growing environmental crises), etc. Instead they have to do with "aspects of economic development, especially computers and the information revolution". These are "preparing better conditions for several key elements of a socialist revolution: accurate, comprehensive, and rapidly adjusting economic planning, technical and cultural uplift of the working class and its participation in highly skilled/creative realms of labor, 'cosmopolitan' culture (i.e., increased ethnic identity and international awareness), based on the above changes, a real ability of working people to participate in and influence politics—a broad democracy as opposed to the current narrow bourgeois hegemony."

Fred kept these sentences in the final version of the leaflet (which came out at the time of the 5th Congress) and Comrade Joseph has already commented on some of the jewels contained in them ("increased ethnic identity and international awareness" rather than proletarian internationalism, ability to "participate in and influence politics" rather than ability to organize for the politics of a particular class—the modern proletariat—and dominate society with them during the transition to socialism, etc.). Fred

says he favors working people "participat(ing) in and influenc(ing) politics" but his approach points them away from politics (for example, away from critically examining the role different ideas played in the successes and eventual failures of previous revolutionary attempts) and towards enthusing over computers and the information revolution. Well, to be more accurate, we should say his approach points them away from the dialectical materialist politics of the working class and towards sterile economic determinist politics.

Comrades, the object of discussing some of the thinking displayed in Fred's draft leaflet of 6 months ago is not to "nail him" on particular formulations made in it nor is it my intent to freeze his theoretical defenses of those formulations in time. Everyone's thinking changes in one way or another in a longer or shorter time and it so happens that Fred changed his mind regarding including some of his original ideas in the final version of the leaflet. Nevertheless it maintains the essential positions discussed above. When I began writing this article I didn't have a copy of the final version at my disposal but since then I've obtained one and it's surprising how much has been maintained. To illustrate this I'll return to one of the first issues raised above.

In introducing the topic "Long term solutions to the timber crisis" (Page 9 of the RSSG leaflet) Fred says the following:

"A real solution to the crisis would require dealing with three problems—reorganization for sustainable forestry, reform of wood usage, and structural unemployment. These needed changes imply more or less sweeping and basic changes in the economic and political system. Many of them certainly appear impossible for the present system to obtain or allow. However, development is complex and impossible to predict, so it cannot be said how many of these changes may be possible under capitalism."

This is immediately followed by the demand "Restructure the industry

for sustainable forestry" under which this is said:

"With application of current technology, the labor costs of new forestry and wood manufacturing would be higher per quantity of wood than old growth clear-cutting. Would this mean it would be economically unfeasible to compete on the world market? The world market is inherently volatile, so there can be no guarantees. But it is reasonable to assume the possibility of international trade if the labor productivity and the marketability of the products were to rise rapidly enough to offset the higher costs of sustainable practices. The American timber industry is notoriously backward in the field of innovation of products toward foreign markets".

Some quotations from a GAO report are then made in support of the last statement after which comes this conclusion:

"This GAO report gives a glimpse of the narrow profit considerations in action. The industry seeks to grab the most while putting in the least; this serves 'the bottom line' and the claim is that there are no other options. But if some of the other options were really pursued, the results could be quite different. Today, when productivity is increased, it serves the more rapid devastation of the forests here (as well as the diversion of profits to other fields), while driving down the international price of wood products, thus putting more pressure for cheap and devastating logging practices abroad. We suggest that instead, advances of techniques and products should be used to fund sustainable practices.

"The other side of the coin is the struggles abroad to save old growth and substitute sustainable forestry everywhere that logging takes place. The greater the amount of regions brought under sustainable forestry regulations, the easier it will be to achieve them."

These paragraphs were carefully written by Fred after months of division between me and him over his approach to demanding a restructuring of the timber industry. In other words there are no

slips of the pen involved in what is said. So is the result an example of what Fred means by the phrase “concrete alternatives to the social problems of today”? If it is there seems to be little concrete (and little concretely socialist) about it.

First of all the approach is an economist one--pointing toward “aspects of economic development”. It’s said a real solution would require dealing with re-organization for sustainable forestry, reform of wood usage, and structural unemployment. And “these needed changes imply more or less sweeping and basic changes in the economic and political system”. But Fred gives “no definite meaning” to what these “more or less sweeping and basic changes” are. Near the end of the leaflet he says “To break down the types of vested interests illustrated in the timber crisis, to allow a rapid collection and consideration of information and adjustment of economic activities, and to develop a planning that reflects the all-sided interests of the masses--would require fundamental changes in the economic and political structures” (emphasis mine). Thus even when socialism is explicitly dealt with all we get is more vague talk of fundamental changes in economic and political structures. I would assert that many a social democrat (when out of power) will describe his or her proposals for economic planning (to “reflect the all-sided interests of the masses”, etc., of course) as requiring fundamental changes in economic and political structures. What they generally won’t talk about in the present conditions is smashing up the capitalist political and economic structures. (Yes, for example, we may want to take over the banks during the beginning of the transition to socialism, maintain many of their present employees, etc., but only to serve the general aim of smashing up all the structures of the capitalist economy and organizing a socialist economy in its place). The question of the proletariat fighting for political power is shunted aside in favor of schemes to tinker with or reform present structures. Fred’s political trajectory with all its questioning of the “assump-

tions” of the MLP has landed him in a political position less and less distinguishable from social democracy. (Later parts of this article will dwell on this more.)

Opposing denunciation of capitalist profiteering

In April 1993 Fred came out with his article saying the agitation of the MLP was “piss-poor”, consisted of appeals to “share the wealth”, and was coming from an “essentially narrow reformist, economist type position”. And according to him denouncing capitalist profiteering is an apparent example of this evil.

My article on Northwest timber issues had denounced capitalist profiteering and the profit system throughout. Fred was against this and in his letter to me he wrote as follows:

“As far as socialist theory goes, whether we are talking about reforms under capitalism, reforms under a revolutionary transitional regime, and perhaps even under a socialist society, profit calculation of economic units or sections cannot be ruled out. Similarly, the adjective ‘capitalist’ doesn’t help because we aren’t able to define what are the capitalist aspects of profits or competition that we seek to change, and what are the other aspects that are essential for transition and perhaps socialism.” He went on to suggest that if I wrote of profiteering or competition I should write “narrow profiteering”, “narrow and myopic profiteering”, etc.

Further, Fred worried that my formulation might be misinterpreted: “One could assume that the alternative to profits and competition is losses and monopoly, and there is a strong logic in the experience of state capitalism to back this up.” But this was absurd. Whatever its flaws, the original timber article had put forward a vision of socialist society opposed to the “share the poverty” ruling class slanders of socialism. And if one wants to play with words this way look at Fred’s suggestion. Since we’re against narrow profiteering does that mean we’re for broad profiteering?

No, all Fred’s theorizing against denouncing profiteering and the profit system was just an attempt to blunt the class appeal of the article. And it was he himself who was sunk in an “essentially narrow reformist, economist type position”.

His vision of socialism included “perhaps” running the economy on the basis of profit calculations. (Joseph has already begun dealing with this and I won’t pursue it further here.) There was a logic in his presentation that this would be done bureaucratically as well. Remember that I wasn’t supposed to write against profiteering or profits because the workers might misinterpret this. But why would the working class rise in struggle for a new society if it was just going to be the same old thing? In my view for a mass revolutionary workers’ movement to develop necessitates a vanguard with the political vision of eliminating the profit system altogether. If compromises have to be made during transition, enterprises temporarily ran on a profit basis, etc. the vanguard (and as much of the class as possible) must know that these are necessary compromises, detours, in the march to socialism and elimination of the profit system. Otherwise there will be rapid disaffection from the revolution and it will turn into something else. However Fred’s approach would leave the workers without vision. It would give them some (dare I say it?) “thin gruel” instead. But if the workers are unconscious regarding the ultimate aims of their movement then who is going to make the decisions regarding profit calculations “under a revolutionary transitional regime” and who is going to decide whether it’s “perhaps” (or not) “under a socialist society”? Logic says it would be a gang of bureaucrats disguised as “experts” in economics.

The split in Seattle

In Seattle #53 Ben writes the following: “We oppose Joseph’s insinuation that the atmosphere in the study group is oppressive or blocks discussion or useful work from those who differ

from the majority viewpoints. Note: Joseph is claiming that we have 'split'. But Frank, when he quit, stated that his reasons were due to the press of his work (i.e. shortage of time) and desire to work at what he felt were more important priorities (i.e.: Tim's initiative) and did not cite an atmosphere hostile to the expression of non-conformist views." In the same document he says: "A separate notebook will be kept for private email correspondence which the recipients and/or originators would like to share with everyone else. In the event that Frank rejoins the study group, he would not have access to this non-public notebook in view of his closeness to the biospherians."

I oppose the political ideas which dominate the RSSG and have split from it. Comrade Phil also opposes those ideas and has split from it. But according to Ben there's no split in Seattle. It's just a claim by Joseph which must be placed inside quotation marks. So then why does he write that if Frank rejoins the RSSG he will only be permitted second-class citizenship because of his closeness to the "biospherians" (Ben's cutesy phrase for the minority)?

Now we all know that Ben has raised the slogan "information wants to be free" and has valiantly been fighting shadows on the question of democracy for many months. But here he would deny information to me because of my support for the minority. In other words "information wants to be free" but factional interests dictate when. And we have an admission by Ben himself that a split indeed does exist and it's so deep that he has to eat his own slogan, a slogan originating in factionalism to begin with.

Further, a word on Ben's careful framing of the question of a split in the quotation given above. He opposes "Joseph's insinuation that the atmosphere in the study group is oppressive or blocks discussion or useful work from those who differ from the majority viewpoints" and reports that I "did not cite an atmosphere hostile to the expression of non-conformist views" when I quit the group. Well actually I could give

examples of such an atmosphere but they were not my primary reason for splitting. I could still express my "non-conformist views" in November 1993. But one has to weigh much more than this in deciding whether to participate in a group or not. For example, I could continue to do "useful work" like investigating Northwest timber issues in the study group. But what would come of this work? Take my experience with the latter investigation. I pushed myself to work it into a mini-pamphlet form because no one else seemed to have the energy to do so. Because of rush and theoretical short-comings on my part I felt the pamphlet needed reworking and I did rework it. In the rewrite I included what I considered to be correct and very helpful ideas from members of the study group and I also made compromises with ideas I disagreed with. And I sent a letter to WAS explaining why I had made various changes in the article it had printed as well as indirectly polemicizing against some of Fred's ideas. (This was never printed because of the collapse of the Party.) But I refused to agree with Fred's fundamental alteration of the politics of the article along the lines dwelt on above. Well, the politics were so altered and the RSSG leaflet produced. So my original work went into something I disagreed with and did not consider useful. Of course Ben considers this "useful work" but to me it's just doing leg work for and supporting politics I oppose. I'm not cut out of that cloth.

In his articles Fred has heaped scorn on such concepts as class stand, class essence, class logic, etc. It's my belief that this scorn as well as his abuse and scorn of Marxism-Leninism, the work of the MLP, and the upholders of that science and that work is rooted in a world view which is metaphysical materialist when it's materialist. It's also my belief that the dialectics of the development of the class essence of the MLP, now concentrated in the minority, will lead to the undoing of Fred's metaphysical materialism. The form that undoing will take will be the consolidation of a small national Marxist-Leninist

organization. Whether these beliefs pan out in the near future or not I consider repeated attempts to contribute to their fulfillment as being the only worthy and really revolutionary path for former members and supporters of the MLP (as well as for those who may join with us).

"Dialectics of the development of class essence" ...let Fred add that to his list of phrases which "you must realize that you don't understand"! And while he's at it let him scorn the class stand of this avowal:

We will fight for a proletarian socialist revolution in the U.S. For Tecumseh, Crazy Horse, and the women who hacked Custer's soldiers to pieces; for Sojourner Truth, John Brown and uncounted slave rebels; for William Sylvis, the Molly Maguires and Mother Jones; for Bill Haywood and Joe Hill; for the martyrs of the C.P. and the American dead in Spain; for the heroes of the black freedom struggle and those who brought the war home; for the quiet ones, the humble ones, the innocent ones -- our sisters and our brothers -- we will fight.

And we will not fight alone comrades. From the Philippines to Mexico to South Africa the modern proletariat is growing while socialist revolution remains the historical necessity. To abandon partisan dialectical and historical materialism goes hand in hand with blindness and despair regarding the possibility and necessity of international proletarian revolution. Fred and other leaders of the majority have taken this path and everything they discover on it is new and revolutionary to them. But for the international working class the discoveries are not so new or revolutionary. Thus the exposure of the attempts by Fred and other leaders of the majority to disguise wine turned to vinegar by pouring it into new bottles must be continued. The Marxist perspective of proletarian socialist revolution must be defended.

Cartels continued from page 13

struggles, imposing dictators on the masses around the world, gun boat diplomacy, vicious battles for spheres of influence, hot and cold wars, etc.! Sure, the old-style colonial domination was, in the main, ended. But the liberation of the colonies took a whole period of wars and revolutions.

And why was it that the capitalists allegedly reversed their path of domination? No, Michael does not contend it was a moral rebirth. According to Michael, it is a requirement of post-WWII capitalism. Thus, monopoly firms still exist and compete, but they are supposedly required to behave themselves by the laws of the capitalist market. We have entered the new world of monopoly capital where any lingering desires for domination are mere vestiges from a bygone era, mere "imperfections".

Shortly after Michael made the above comments, CC member Jim stated "I agree with the point that was raised about cartels" by Michael. He added: "I think the type of cartels that were being listed (by Lenin -- Mk) was quite a specific phenomenon that he was dealing with. And something you can't just say, well, now, there's also international monopolies." (*Ibid.*, p.22) Perhaps Jim was just warning us the international monopolies were not completely identical to the cartels of yesterday. After all, he advises us that "the task for us is to see how does capitalism look today." No reasonable person can argue with that advice. But while we are all agreed that looking further into matters is wonderful, Jim nonetheless, was supportive of Michael's approach. And that approach was to present modern monopoly in rosy colors.

Meanwhile, comrade Robert from New York announced that "the level of economic integration with the global markets and so forth" means that division of the world into spheres of influ-

ence "would be impossible" and "would be a huge setback for world capitalism, would mean a shrinkage of markets for everybody." (*Ibid.*, p. 19) In other words, efforts at domination are against the economic interest of monopolies and the new spirit is all for one and one for all! While spheres of influence are impossible, Robert has to admit that, for some reason, wars over spheres of influence come up.

I believe that the series of views described above are seriously wrong. The world market is dominated, both de facto and through active collusion, by a relative handful of gigantic monopolies. Contrary to Michael's opinion, cartels are not a thing of the past but continue to play a significant role. Moreover, if we look at the actual features of cartels of the past and compare it to present phenomenon, I believe that the basic strivings of the old cartels, as well as a good deal of the particular devices of the old cartels, live on. Forms of monopoly domination have certainly changed since Lenin's time, sometimes dramatically, but not the striving to conquer the world market. And the increased regulation of international capitalist bodies over this process does not so much indicate a return to a benign form of open competition as it does a sanctioning and assistance to the lords of international monopoly.

Now I would like to present a summary of the information I have recently studied that I believe confirms this opinion.

What were the old cartels and trusts like?

For the historical development of cartels and other monopoly associations, I relied mainly on the book Webs of Power: International Cartels and the World Economy by Kurt Rudolf Mirow and Harry Maurer published in 1982. Rudolf is from a Brazilian manufactur-

ing family whose business was temporarily ruined by the international electrical cartel. When Mirow exposed secret agreements of the cartel in the late 70s, the country's military rulers considered him a threat and brought him up on charges. But Mirow is hardly a revolutionary. He merely implores the U.S. and other powers to live up to their anti-monopoly rhetoric and add a few more anti-trust laws. Despite Mirow's narrow reformist outlook, his book provides a sweeping overview of the history of international monopoly associations and one can learn much of the "nuts and bolts" of how the monopolies work, and something of their effects on the dependent countries.

Mirow notes that the youthful phase of capitalist development, the heyday of "free competition" gives rise to large companies arising on the basis of absorbing or destroying their competitors. Once companies get to a certain size, the level of capital and technology necessary to enter the market effectively precludes the "perfect competition" envisioned by Adam Smith, he notes. On this basis, the first cartels arise. He says the term "cartel" is first used to describe agreements between German rail, truck and locomotive producers in 1879.

According to the textbook definition cited by Mirow, cartels don't necessarily have absolute control over a market, but their coordinated activities give it power which "significantly affects the market". Mirow notes that "whether in the form of trusts, cartels, oligopolies, or outright monopolies, these groups had reduced competition to a minimum -- or eliminated it altogether." Once the domestic markets are monopolized in this way, international monopoly associations begin to form.

One might get the idea that the existence of cartels, trusts or other monopoly domination of markets means total elimination of competition. But total elimination of competition is impossible under capitalism, and Mirow's "textbook definition" recognizes that.

A relative **handful of firms** may dominate a market **without** much in the way of formal agreements, cartels may exist side-by-side with non-cartel monopolies, and cartels may even compete against other cartels. Mirow recounts how at one time the U.S. and European companies dominated the electrical cartel, then the U.S. firms left and competed against a Euro-Japanese dominated electrical cartel. In this sense, there was more competition although it was still a market dominated by a relative handful of monopolies. Incidentally, Mirow also notes that because the Euro-Japanese cartel made inroads in the U.S. domestic and foreign markets, some U.S. firms were forced into joint ventures while others were brought out by foreign firms or stopped competing for certain products. Mirow thinks the net result was fewer competing firms overall.

Mirow describes the main types of agreements involved in the classic-type cartel as follows:

1) There is usually "home market protection" that grants a privileged position for each firm in its home country. This may take the form of exclusive rights to the home market, locking in a percentage of the home market for foreign penetration or allowing competition in the home market provided the foreign firms don't force prices down by underbidding the home firms.

2) Members get exclusive rights to areas outside their home countries which tend to correspond to their previous spheres of influence. Other territories are jointly shared, others left for competition.

3) In the open market areas, there may be price-fixing arrangements, quotas for contracts or rigged bidding on contracts.

4) Members have technology exchange agreements. Patent rights are traded (cross-licensing) or patent pools are set up.

Depending on the cartel, one or the other of these features may come to the fore. For example, the control of patents on new technology played a prominent role in the growth of the electric monopolies and their international cartel. Mirow places emphasis throughout his book on how control of patents, and the combined monopoly powers to do research and development creates a huge obstacle to outside competition.

The list of features above is by no means a complete description of the means, legal and otherwise, that a cartel may employ. And it should be noted that these are what Mirow considers the particular features of cartels, not the more basic and general features of monopoly capitalism like the merger of bank and industrial capital which naturally play a role in cartels, too.

Cartels, trusts, etc. may last a few months, a year or two, or decades if they can adapt themselves to changing conditions. Mirow notes that economic crises often give rise to new rounds of monopoly associations. This is true. But, as is shown by information in his book, these forms of monopoly domination have a significant existence in other periods too, such as the "expansive stage" after WWII.

From the information on particular cartels in Mirow's book, it seems that cartels may involve only a couple of companies, or dozens of companies. For example, Mirow provides an appendix comparing membership in the IEA electric cartel in the mid-1930s and in 1977. In the mid-30s there were 43 companies from 8 or 9 countries, in 1977, 56 companies from 12 countries. I note this because I think it shows the mere existence of more than a couple of major firms in the world market does not mean monopoly domination has been done in. In the cartels, of course, the stronger firms dominate.

Mirow's book gives interesting information about trust-busting by the

capitalist governments. For example, he recounts some history of the Standard Oil trust. This trust formed in 1882 and took the form of having allegedly competing companies run by a single administration group called "trustees." The U.S. government, which from then to now had the reputation for the toughest anti-trust laws among the big economic powers, banned this form. But in 1889, the government loosened its regulations on companies buying stock in one another. So the oil trust reformed on the basis of the "holding company" form. This became the pattern at that time for industry after industry in the U.S. says Mirow.

In 1918, the Webb-Pomerene Act first allowed joint marketing of American goods abroad (export cartels) which had been banned by anti-trust laws. (This act is still in effect with some minor alterations.) Around this time the shipping companies were allowed to cartelize. And a 1920 Supreme Court decision sanctioned the gigantic US Steel trust. So much for the early trust-busting! In Mirow's view, the later anti-monopoly efforts may do in a particular form of monopoly domination, but monopoly domination continues on. Indeed, even as Mirow dreams of reforming the monopolies, he gives a gloomy appraisal of modern anti-trust efforts.

Mirow describes the rise of a number of cartels in the 1920s. He points out that WWI destroyed the pre-war cartels but gave rise to a new wave after the war. The coordination of industry by government had given the capitalists an increased productivity they wanted to keep after the war -- but minus the government oversight. A number of capitalists felt free to openly tout the wonders of monopoly's "orderly markets".

In 1929 however, the "orderly markets" came crashing down and the Great Depression began. The depression conditions accelerated the cartel formation once again. The 1930s were the "golden age" of cartels in international trade.

Just as WWI blew up Kautsky's dream of a peaceful "ultra-imperialism" arising from the cooperation manifested in the monopoly associations, so WWII also blew up this myth. For example, Mirow notes that in 1939, Britain and Germany concluded the Dusseldorf Agreement. This created an all-embracing joint export cartel governing both trade between the two countries and exports to third countries. Both governments helped broker this deal which was supposed to "replace destructive competition" with "constructive cooperation". Five months later, Germany invaded Poland!

The immediate post-WWII years

According to Mirow, the immediate years after the war mark a high tide of anti-trust efforts. What was behind this? Did the capitalists discover that economic growth and monopoly were incompatible? Mirow has a different answer. He notes that by the later war years, the U.S. realized it was in a position to dominate world markets. So FDR announced in 1944 that "cartel practices which restrict the free flow of goods in foreign commerce will have to be restricted." The ruined industrial base of Germany and Japan made cartels impossible or unnecessary and with little competition, American firms could easily expand markets and get "good" prices for their wares.

Mirow also explains that the U.S. national security concerns played a role in the post-WWII anti-trust climate. For example, it turned out because of a series of agreements between the IG Farben monopoly in Germany and the American giants Du Pont and Standard Oil, the U.S. was lagging in its ability to manufacture rubber substitutes when they needed this material for the war effort.

There was a fair number of anti-trust proceedings during the war years. Needless to say, Du Pont and Standard Oil were not dismantled, but at least in

1949 U.S. export cartels were forbidden from taking part in international arrangements. Some anti-cartel laws get passed in Europe too but they are milder than the U.S. laws. Anti-cartel language made its way into various international forums. On the other hand, Truman's proposed International Trade Organization (ITO) under UN auspices, which was supposed to prevent "monopolistic control in international trade," never made it off the drawing board.

Revival of Cartels after WWII

According to Webs of Power, the revival of the war-damaged economies was accompanied by the revival of cartels. But the cartels had to adjust themselves to the new legal restrictions. Thus the cartels had to "perfect their camouflage." Less formal means were found to forge technology links and patent exchanges. There were joint international research and production efforts. "Unspoken understandings" and "gentlemen's agreements" often maintain the effect of the old cartel. There are understandings not to undersell each other, with the largest firm setting the price others routinely follow ("price leadership").

In countries like Germany and Britain, international export cartels remained legal. Moreover, these export cartels became a means to regulate home markets as well. Meanwhile Switzerland was used as a haven for those companies desiring to establish secret cartels.

Among the numerous examples of how the post-war cartels operate in various industries, Mirow cites the chemical cartel. During the 30s the chemical cartel was one of the most comprehensive around. This version of the chemical cartel died. But a new one was created on the basis of thousands of separate agreements between the chemical monopolies. This has the effect of keeping patents circulating among the select few to the exclusion of outsiders. And Mirow says this leads to market control as effective as fixing prices or

quotas.

As well, in industries like oil, steel and electrical equipment, the post-war recovery witnessed the rebirth of the classic-type cartels.

The growth of transnational corporations (TNCs)

As is well known, one of the most notable features of the post-WWII era is the upsurge of what is known as multinational or transnational corporations (TNCs). He says many firms in the old cartels were TNCs in that they were parent firms that had overseas affiliates they controlled. But the TNCs of the post-WWII era are marked by a boom in direct foreign investment and the amount of production carried out by foreign affiliates. And Mirow considers this as further growth of "economic concentration and centralization". Even among the TNCs (which numbered about 10,000 in 1973), the few hundred largest ones account for the vast bulk of foreign investment.

In Mirow's book, he also demonstrates how, in an historical sense, TNCs are a further step in monopoly combination. For instance, he cites a 1929 agreement between Du Pont and ICI of Britain, two chemical giants, which amounted to a virtual merger. In this industry, cartels had often been established over specific chemicals. But the 1929 deal covered almost every product the two firms made and committed them "to exchange technical information and exclusive licenses to make, use and sell under all their patents and secret inventions, present and future." These two firms then established a relationship with the third giant in the field at that time, IG Farben, through a series of patent agreements on specific products. In 1939, there existed some 800 separate agreements between ICI and IG Farben and some other large companies.

Mirow raises a number of the practical advantages of increased central-

ization of production that accompanies TNCs. Whereas a cartel agreement means coordination between different companies, the relationship of parent firm and foreign subsidiary is closer knit and more efficient. The parent firm can more easily transmit a policy throughout a worldwide network while the local subsidiaries are in a position to transmit information on local conditions and influence those conditions. There are other handy features to being a TNC like "transfer pricing" arrangements which enable firms to dodge taxes by juggling the books between parent and subsidiary firms.

The growing concentration and centralization, by eliminating firms, makes the possibility of agreements between those remaining even easier. Mirow feels the ability to develop informal agreements with cartel-like effects is tied to the development of TNCs.

One of the more interesting examples of the relationship between TNCs and cartel-style practices cited by Mirow involves an EEC investigation of the Dutch market for nitrogenous fertilizers in 1978. Two Dutch firms had set up a third firm called CSV which effectively divided market share and production. As a result, prices in Holland for these products was much higher than the rest of Europe. Yet, surprisingly, no foreign companies seemed interested in undercutting CSV in the Dutch market. Why was this? An EEC investigation revealed that 69% of this "Dutch" company were held by an Italian firm and another 25% was held by ICI of Britain. So CSV was really a joint venture of Dutch, British and Italian capital that divided up the Dutch market to avoid competition from others.

Mirow considers such joint ventures to be a typical new form of cartel-like control of markets by TNCs.

TNCs and the less developed countries (LDCs)

Webs of Power attempts to evaluate the role of the big capitalist monopolies in the less developed countries. He says the TNCs have contributed to development by exporting capital and facilities. But he notes that the TNCs, by locating production inside a country, have tended to undermine the post-war efforts at "import substitution" by the developing countries. Less developed countries would put up protectionist barriers that were supposed to replace imported goods by fostering local companies. But by relocating inside the LDCs, the TNCs actually managed to "denationalize" various sectors of the economy in the LDCs even as there were these national protective measures.

Of course, to say the economies in the LDCs tended to be denationalized by the multinationals does not give one a complete picture of the effects of the TNCs. Nor does it mean that the salvation of the working masses in the LDCs lies with the local bourgeoisie. It does show how the TNCs tend to extend monopoly domination.

Among the other features of development via TNCs noted by Mirow are:

--while some new capital comes in with TNCs, local financiers may be the principle source of investment (Mirow says this accounts for 80% of investment in Latin America but doesn't cite the year.)

--the subsidiary firms are often just takeovers of local firms, which means new subsidiaries don't necessarily mean new productive resources (between 1958 and 1967, half of firms set up by the U.S. in Latin America are takeovers of this type, and the more advanced a country, the more this is the pattern)

--TNCs drive out local businesses and can employ cartel methods to strangle local competitors

--TNCs bring certain higher technology, but safeguard their technological superiority. They may grant technology for only one phase of production so the overall process remains in their hands. Technology exchange agreements between the big companies relieve pres-

sure to grant licenses to local national firms. In 1972, only 16% of patents in the LDCs were held by nationals of that country and some of the "nationals" were foreign-owned. 90% of foreign owned patents in LDCs are never used in the production process in those countries. When patents finally do "trickle down" the patented technology of process is often out of date. In general, Mirow considers the monopoly of patents to be a big factor keeping the LDCs from catching up to the big powers.

--often, if a TNC subsidiary does business with a local firm, that firm is prohibited from exporting its production so as not to compete with the TNC (Mirow cites one case where 92% of licenses granted to the 5 Andean Pact countries had these restrictive conditions)

Mirow's view is that while the TNCs add something to development, they do so at the cost of cementing the privileged position of the capitalist powers. On balance his opinion is the cartels and TNCs are contributing to the underdevelopment in the Third World and "exacerbating the crushing poverty of much of the human race." I should note that Mirow conveniently skirts the issue of local capital's role in poverty. For instance, he talks about how the capital intensive nature of TNCs eliminates jobs. But his desire is to see more powerful local firms which, of course, would also eliminate jobs, create poverty, etc. Further, as much as Mirow resents the TNCs, he only wants them reformed somewhat and imagines that this ill solve all the problems.

A note on the 90s

Mirow's book leaves us off in 1982. But what about after that year? For sure the multinationals continue to stalk the earth. Concentration of corporate assets are higher than ever in the U.S., so it would be surprising if the general tendency toward monopoly has gone away.

Despite what Michael says, even the particular form of monopoly known as cartels is still an important issue. Recently I read a 1993 report from the

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) entitled "Obstacles to Trade and Competition" by Ordover and Goldberg of New York University which describes the wide existence of export and import cartels and how they are limiting "free trade." (The OECD is an international organization, presently of the G-7 countries plus 17 other capitalist countries, which started functioning in 1961.)

Export cartels were created to avoid price competition among companies exporting goods. Mirow notes that export cartels of different countries can link up to dominate world markets. He also notes that they have been used to establish cartel effects on domestic markets as well. The OECD report backs this up saying: "Since it is possible for an export cartel to facilitate collusive activities in its home market, some countries do not distinguish between pure (export only -- Mk) and mixed cartels (domestic and export) in their competition laws."

In April 1991, there were 127 officially registered export cartels in the U.S. There are also unregistered export cartels but the registered ones are exempt from anti-trust legislation. One of the excuses for the export cartels was to give the small companies a chance to export, but the OECD reports that "larger firms were more likely to join a

Webb-Pomerene assisted cartel than smaller firms, thus suggesting that the original purposes of the Act were not being fully carried out, and indicating that some collusive incentives may have been present." Polite language to describe monopoly domination via export cartels! The OECD report does not give figures on cartels for other countries not because the cartels don't exist, but because they can't get enough information to determine the number.

Import cartels are designed to reduce competition by colluding over prices paid to foreign suppliers and also collude over terms of sale for domestic markets.

Final thoughts

The OECD is ostensibly for "free trade." But it has some interesting conceptions of it. For example, the report rails against import cartels restricting free trade when it impinges upon the rate of profits made by selling intellectual property rights and justifies the use of export cartels to combat this. This means defending the monopoly of the most powerful companies in patents and licensing. It considers Voluntary Export Restraints to be a hindrance to open markets, but under this banner it supports the joint Toyota-GM agreement as "pro-competition." The OECD seems

to imply that direct foreign investment is inherently pro-competition since it can get around various protectionist barriers.

In concluding, here is a description of the global economy from a 1984 study which the 1993 OECD report says is an "aptly stated" description of the present world economy:

"...Firms have grown multinational over the past few decades. The European Community, co-production, joint ventures, and ambitious development plans have all encouraged their global identity (of trade issues -- Mk). In some national markets, a small number of firms compete for a 'prize' that is essentially control of the whole nation's industry. In such oligopolistic environments, firms clearly recognize the effect that their actions have on the behavior of consumers and other firms..."

No, the trusts of 1916 aren't the international monopolies of 1994. Then again they weren't the monopolies of 1882 or the 1930s either. What is constant is monopoly: the spread of monopoly domination of domestic markets to international trade, the tendency toward domination of the world markets by the giant capitalist corporations, the "oligopolistic environments" as an organization of present world capitalism puts it.

"Progressive Imperialism"

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when there are bourgeois-democratic imperialist regimes. Here we can note that the mass struggle has continued over the years, and the class relations have developed. Capitalism both engenders democratic aspirations among the masses and frustrates them. A country's history is not solely made up of the contrast of imperialism versus competitive competition, but there is a history of the mass struggle, of the resulting changes in social conditions, of the conditions won in the intensifying

class struggle under imperialism. And on a world scale, imperialism has shown resistance to the emancipation of women. It has dragged its feet for decades in front of the mass struggle in the metropolis, supported backwardness abroad, and repeatedly fostered reactionary currents directed against women's rights.

Monopoly

Does this mean that economically

imperialism is progressive, and politically it is reactionary?

No. The different features of imperialism can't be separated that way. The progressive and reactionary aspects are features of the same phenomenon, monopoly.

Monopoly is both the basis of the development of large-scale production and consequently of the progressive nature of monopoly capitalism relative to pre-monopoly capitalism, and of the harsher conditions for the masses, the tendency toward reaction, and the increased militarism. You can't separate the "progressive" from the "reactionary", and preserve one side of imperialism while eliminating the other.

Monopoly capitalism may display certain of its features more or less in a particular country, or even a particular decade. Individual countries may grow rapidly, or stagnant painfully. War may embrace the whole world, or there may be a relative peace among the great powers. (For example, such a peace--along with an arms race--prevailed generally among the great powers of Europe during the first period of imperialism until the great smashup of World War I.) Whole theories are spun by bourgeois ideologists and academicians based on the particularities of any particular decade or country. But the basic tendencies keep coming back with a vengeance.

Well, what is this monopoly that is the basis of imperialism's features? Is it any monopoly?

When this monopoly arises from economic necessity, Marxism holds that it indicates an economic advance. Lenin states:

"We have seen that in its economic essence imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This in itself determines its place in history, for monopoly that grows out of the soil of free competition, and precisely out of free competition, is the transition from the capitalist system to a higher socio-economic order." (**Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism**, the opening of Ch. X "The Place of Imperialism in History")

This refers to not every monopoly, but monopoly that springs from economic development, "out of the soil of free competition." This is related to the distinction that Engels draws in **Anti-Duhring** between the significance of the government taking over an industry because it requires such colossal resources that it "exclude(s) all other forms of capitalist exploitation" and government takeover "has become inevitable from an economic standpoint" and government monopoly when it is introduced for some arbitrary political or budgetary reasons. (See a passage and a long footnote in the midst of Part III. Socialism. Chapter II. Theoretical.)

Usually, Lenin refers to this monopoly not as showing imperialism is

progressive, but that it is dying capitalism, "moribund capitalism", capitalism that is ripe to transition to another social order. He puts stress on the overall characterization of imperialism, that is dragging the world through catastrophe as it resists its replacement by the new and higher social system of communist society. When Lenin does refer to the "progressive" nature of imperialism with respect to previous economic organization, his point is that imperialism should be opposed from the point of view of organizing the advanced class, not of going back to dreams of competitive capitalism, pre-monopoly capitalism.

Lenin pointed out:

"...Since the specific political features of imperialism are reaction everywhere and increased national oppression due to the oppression of the financial oligarchy and the elimination of free competition, a petty-bourgeois-democratic opposition to imperialism arose at the beginning of the twentieth century in nearly all imperialist countries. Kautsky not only did not trouble to oppose, was not only unable to oppose this petty-bourgeois reformist opposition, which is really reactionary in its economic basis, but became merged with it in practice, and this is precisely where Kautsky and the broad international Kautskian trend deserted Marxism.

.....

"...But as long as all this criticism shrank from recognizing the inseparable bond between imperialism and the trusts, and, therefore, between imperialism and the foundations of capitalism, while it shrank from joining the forces engendered by large-scale capitalism and its development--it remained a 'pious wish'." (**Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism**, Chapter IX, "Critique of Imperialism", p.287)

Lenin stressed that one couldn't separate the economics and politics of imperialism. The content of this point was the need to link up with the proletariat and the class struggle in order to fight imperialism.

Nationalism and anti-imperialism

Today the picture of imperialism is quite different from the past. I think it is necessary to get a picture of what the world system is, what political domination and subordination is like today, and what class relations are, before judging the tasks of the proletariat with respect to imperialism in today's world.

Manny, however, tries in his report to derive some conclusions on the world struggle today from the general idea that imperialism is progressive as a stage of capitalism. Lenin concludes from the progressiveness of monopoly organization that there must be recognition of the bond between imperialism and the very foundations of capitalism; the struggle against imperialism must be linked to the forces engendered by large-scale capitalism; and a struggle against imperialism exists inside the metropolis as well as in the subordinate countries. But Manny concludes the struggle against imperialism is simply some sort of national struggle in subordinate countries; more generally, he implies that in today's world it is generally a backward petty-bourgeois stand in opposition to the class issues which should generally be raised.

Thus when referring to the conflict between the great powers and the subordinate countries, Manny implicitly identifies imperialism, "the leviathan", with the spread of more advanced economic relations. But this doesn't follow at all.

Monopoly capital develops on a world scale, and not just when the great powers dominate the subordinate countries in particularly abject ways. The development of capitalism in a subordinate country does not necessarily lessen the influence of world finance capital on it, or the development of monopoly capitalism, but increases it. As Lenin pointed out, the struggle against colonial policy can in fact accelerate capitalist development. And, for example, in the same article on imperialist economism where Lenin talks of the progressive nature of imperialism as compared to pre-monopoly capitalism--in fact in the sentences just following

the passage on this question--Lenin states that "a national uprising is *progressive*, ... the establishment of a separate and new state, of new frontiers, etc., resulting from a successful uprising, is *progressive*." Moreover, Lenin elsewhere points out that this struggle could be progressive despite the prejudices and backward ideas that the petty-bourgeois bring into it.

Nor should the idea of the progressive nature of economic development mean that the struggle should be reduced to judging whether an investment by this or that firm, or a particular government policy, leads to economic growth. What is at stake is the overall economic content of a social movement. The American War of Independence for example, did not result in immediate economic growth, but in an economic depression. But in the long run, it opened the door for a rapid development of American capitalism.

Meanwhile Manny doesn't give any new ideas of what a proletarian struggle in the subordinate or dependent countries would be like. In the section of his report entitled "On revolutionary orientation", Manny simply counterposes putting "the class struggle in the center of things" to "democratic and national questions" which however "does not mean" that such questions "can be simply proclaimed *passee*". (CWV, p. 41 col. 3) He thinks that he is saying something new which will distinguish from what was presumably the past practice, "framing petty bourgeois nationalist appeals to the toilers and seeking to mobilize them against the bourgeoisie on the grounds that the latter is anti-national." (Ibid.) No other conception of anti-imperialism is put forward.

Aside from denigrating anti-imperialism, this presentation is so vague that it becomes arbitrary. Manny put forward "that in 9 cases out of 10, especially in the more developed among the dependent countries", one would be led "to rejecting a national angle of agitation in favor of another, class angle." (CWV, p. 42, col. 1) But if that's the issue, why only in 9 out of 10

cases? Shouldn't the proletariat of a dependent country always have a class standpoint, and take up democratic and national issues only when this is a component part of that class standpoint? Should it ever engage in framing petty bourgeois nationalist appeals?

Moreover, Manny's views on anti-imperialism as petty-bourgeois economic romanticism rely on using the word "imperialism" in several different contexts. This is ironic, in that he warns against such a shifting of meanings, but it's true nevertheless. He regards imperialism as finance capital when he talks of it as "an historically progressive phenomenon" as compared to the past. But later in the same article, when talking about "the struggle against imperialist domination," he thinks that imperialism must have some other meaning than finance capital if anti-imperialism is to make any sense at all. And why must it have some other meaning? He argues that "Abolition of the domination of finance capital, however, can only signify socialist revolution." (CWV p. 41, col. 1) Precisely so. The point Lenin and Hilferding made about monopoly capitalism as progressive compared to the past was that the answer to imperialism had to be socialism, not a return to pre-monopoly capitalism. Manny however says that in this case anti-imperialism loses a "distinct meaning".

The key question facing the proletariat today is its disorganization. It must develop a class standpoint in judging today's world, the political movements of today, the struggles that must be organized, etc. It is the standpoint of class interests and socialism that must be supreme. But to do so, the proletariat needs a profound idea of what the class standpoint means with regard to the imperialism of today. To cite only past words about progressive imperialism, to leave out what the content of that analysis was, and to close one's eyes to the present-day world order, is--no matter what one's intention--to pave the way for prettifying imperialism.

A middle road?

Manny may well have been trying to walk a middle road between what he regarded as two extremes: those who, in his view, went too far in denying imperialism, and those who, in his view, made too much of imperialism.

Some comrades were in essence denying the existence of imperialism by advocating that there no longer was a political side to the world order: it was all just the world market. Manny made a bow toward them by saying that the world order was now basically just the world market: colonialism meant looting by political means, while the collapse of colonialism meant "the appropriation of surplus value by market rather than largely non-market means" (CWV, p. 40, col. 2). He made a bow in the other direction by saying that some part of the world order "verged on" the political. Shouldn't both sides be satisfied?

As we have seen, Manny identifies anti-imperialism with the democratic and national questions and especially the "movements against foreign investment". So he bows to one side, saying that putting "the class struggle in the center of things" is an alternative to this backward-looking anti-imperialism. But he bows to the other side, saying that democratic and national questions cannot "be simply proclaimed *passee*." Only about 9 times out of 10, that's the figure he uses.

Were some comrades becoming dazzled by economic growth figures, and losing sight of the growing gap of rich and poor in today's world? Manny bowed to one side with his attempt to separate out from finance capital, and especially from "the export of capital", those "aspects that promote social development" from those aspects that are "looting pure and simple" (CWV, p. 8, col. 3), a looting which he holds is mainly ended by the collapse of colonialism. And he bowed to the other side by referring briefly to the pain that accompanies capitalist development (CWV, p. 8, col. 3, and p. 39, col. 3).

Should one talk of imperialism at all? Manny bowed to one side and held

that imperialism was only an "appearance", not the "essence" of the matter. (CWV, p. 43, col. 30) And he bowed to the other side, identified the "appearance" as the same as the "material being", and said that "to forget that essence exists only in material being and not apart from it ... would be to forget the complexities of real life and turn away from the fullness and richness of reality in preference for the simpler outlines of its shadow." (Ibid.) So, presumably he felt both sides should be satisfied.

Are these ideas a change from the past? Manny says his considerations go beyond the past views of the MLP. And he criticizes, not so much the written word of the past, but "an unwritten subtext" (CWV, p. 39, col. 2). But on the other hand, he bows to the other side by arguing for his stand by denouncing opportunist stands which the MLP or Lenin had long repudiated.

This method of reconciling both sides meant slurring over the deep and sharp political contradictions of imperi-

alism in today's world, and it means slurring over the changes in theory and agitation that he was proposing.

Manny may well have considered that he took a middle stand, superior to both sides in his comprehensive analysis and profound generalities. But in fact he only smoothed the way for those who were dazzled by present capitalist development and who overlook its sharpening contradictions.

Dazzled by economic growth

This is not the first time that the the progressive nature of economic development has been confused with the issue of the overall social order. This happened early in this century as well. And it has been repeatedly raised whether capitalist development transcends the existence of class divisions, or whether it in fact aggravated class divisions and made social revolution more pressing. It's hardly something profound to raise this question today, rather than in the 70's or the 60's or earlier.

The mood of wonderstruck awe before development seeks support in the idea of the progressive nature of imperialism as a stage of capitalism. Yet the Marxist view of the progressive nature of large-scale production and monopoly organization compared to pre-monopoly capitalism is based on the view that such development not only increases production, but also develops the class that is destined to overthrow capitalism and the class relations that lead to this overthrow. Once one gives up (or is no longer sure about, or regards only as an assumption) the idea of socialist revolution and its proletarian basis, the basis for talking of the progressive nature of large-scale production is undermined. All that is left is the habit of calling development "progressive", which can turn from a prediction of capitalism's overthrow by the very forces it engenders, into prettification of capitalism and demands for reformist plans about how to restructure industries or countries.

Again on Ultra-Imperialism continued

simply discuss the relations between the Allies and ignore their bloody struggle with the Central Powers. And how would this differ from referring to the 50 years of peace among the "Western imperialists"? When two major imperialist blocs are clashing, threatening the world with nuclear catastrophe, and arming to the teeth, why should one characterize the overall state of world imperialism by the alliance that exists in one bloc? It makes no sense. It's Joe trying "to fit square factual pegs into round theoretical holes".

A struggle of two blocs

In fact, the last fifty years saw an astonishingly intense struggle of two imperialist blocs. How can this world conflict be ignored?

Perhaps some comrades believe that only relations among imperialist pow-

ers should be considered as far as pondering ultra-imperialism, but now doubt that the Soviet Union was imperialist? Or maybe there is another reason. Who knows? Joe and the BCSG give no reason for only talking about the Western camp, so it must be left to others to ponder why the picture has been restricted in this way.

Let's see. Fred (Seattle) now thinks that revisionist or Stalinist society was progressive although based on the oppression of the majority. Would such a progressive society be imperialist in his view? It's an interesting question, isn't it? And Joe, in his open letter to Ben, suggests there is something reasonable about Fred's new speculations about revisionist society. Well, if revisionist society is a leap from capitalist society, as Joe ponders in his letter, would it be a leap out of imperialism into something else? Joe evades this when discussing

Fred's ideas about supposedly progressive revisionist or Stalinist-style societies. In fact, revisionist imperialism was a major fact of the post-World War II world. But even aside from that, it places discussion in a never-never land of fantasy to ignore the struggle of the two blocs when discussing war and peace.

Regional powers

Moreover, in considering the issue of ultra-imperialism, one must also consider the aspiring regional powers of today. Whether one calls these powers imperialist or not, it is closing one's eyes to present realities to leave out the wars of the regional powers in assessing the world and the nature of the present world order. For example, the Iran-Iraq war and the Persian Gulf war were major wars which have to be taken into account. And they fit neither the pattern

of a war between the traditional great powers nor a colonial war. The regional powers also influence the conflicts in other states. The regional and intermediate powers are the source of some of the more immediate threats of war.

Other views on ultra-imperialism

Joe replaces analysis of these issues with the writing of political fiction. He says that "It seems that Joseph was under pressure from some of his allies for using the term 'ultra-imperialism' and wanted to shift their wrath on to us rather than look deeper into the facts and implications of the serious and thoughtful issues which he had originally raised. Thus he seems to have become increasingly a prisoner of the moralist/factionalist atmosphere he has been generating."

Joe reasoning is amusing. Since I have a political difference with him, I must be moralist and factionalist and a "religious style" bully. Since I am supposedly religious, it must be I have trouble with other religious extremists, with their moralism and factionalism. And then it is discussed elsewhere in the country, among the supporters of the former CC majority, about how the religious fanatics are burning each other at the stake.

But Joe's speculation backfires. While accusing others of being moralist, it is Joe and the former CC majority who are the ones who are inhibited and afraid of their own shadows. For example, why are Joe and the BCSG so insistent that I am the one who supposedly advocates ultra-imperialism? It is because this is the only way they dare discuss the issue of ultra-imperialism. They are scared of the word, and dance back and forth around it.

Look at how I dealt with ultra-imperialism and how Joe and the former CC majority deals with it.

I openly brought forward the issue of the inadequacy of reducing everything to the world market, pointed to the attempt to build a world political order, and discussed its relation to ultra-imperialism back in November 1992. At that

time, neither Joe nor anyone in the former CC majority said that this was a "serious and thoughtful issue"--you can read the Fourth Congress transcript in the CWV Theoretical Supplement on that. And after the Fourth Congress, they just ignored the issues I raised. Then, in an article prior to the Fifth Congress, I criticized the exaggerated multi-polarism put forward by the CC majority. And still Joe didn't see a "serious and thoughtful issue".

But earlier this year, in some of the circles around the former CC majority, there was whispering about ultra-imperialism. A flirtation began with the idea of ultra-imperialism. But no one from these circles wrote about it openly. It took my article in the CWV Theoretical Supplement, with its polemic against ultra-imperialism, before Joe and the BCSG entered the discussion. And even then, Joe and BCSG don't dare talk about it without first saying that it is an issue that Joseph raised. They are hiding behind my shirttails.

But are there among the minority, as Joe says, comrades who are upset by my discussion of the world situation in general and my characterization of the attempt to build a single world order in particular? There may well be. Unlike Joe's instructor in logic, Ben, I didn't take a poll before deciding whether to write on an issue I considered important. I put forward views concerning ultra-imperialism, multi-polarism, and the single world order because I considered them important, and knowing that they would not be universally applauded. Unlike Joe, I didn't claim that it was someone else who was raising the analysis I wanted to put forward. I simply raised issues I consider important, so that others could ponder them.

And what about other comrades in the minority?

Anyone who reviews the articles by the minority prior to the Fifth Congress will see that a number of comrades from the minority set forward their views in front of everyone. They did not worry that they would not receive universal applause. They did not hide their differing assessments of certain issues. But

they calmly discussed their views and their differences among themselves as they stood firm against the pressure of the CC majority.

Actually, between then and now I have indeed had a couple of discussions or communications with comrades who used the term "ultra-imperialism" differently than I do. Basically, these comrades used the term ultra-imperialism to describe what I call the attempt to build a single world order. One took place quite some time ago, when this discussion was still in its early days, so I don't know if the comrade involved still holds the same view. The other communication involved a comrade who thought that the term ultra-imperialism could be used to describe the situation of a lull in violent conflict among the imperialists, during which jockeying for position continued, and which is hardly tranquil, and which differs from the Kautskyite description of such a period. Both comrades pointed to the fierce militarism of imperialism and were upset at various views set forward by the CC majority.

I found these discussions stimulating, and I thank these comrades for sharing their thoughts with me. The comrades involved were straightforward about their views, didn't twist and squirm over the word "ultra-imperialism" like Joe, but sought to analyze the world, and put forward some useful questions. And indeed, a word can be used or defined in different ways. The crucial point is the analysis of the world and the political stand towards it.

Nevertheless, I don't myself see the point in trying to liberate the word "ultra-imperialism" from its Kautskyite meaning.

** The word itself is an awkward one. If one didn't know what it was supposed to mean, one might assume that "ultra-imperialism" described a situation of "ultra-warfare" and "ultra-conflict". However, Kautsky didn't distort the term, but was the one who coined it. If it is removed from Kautsky's interpretation, the term becomes even more indefinite than it already is.

** Kautsky's definition of the term raises such issues as whether imperial-

ism has become peaceful, whether it will abandon militarism out of concern for its own well-being, whether the growth of monopoly is a factor for peace, etc. And it is useful to pose these issues directly. That's the advantage of the term ultra-imperialism. And that's the importance of the BCSG raising the question "how do you explain 50 years of peaceful relations among the Western imperialists?"

** It would help precision of thinking to point directly to the attempt to build a single world order, the continuation of militarism, the new alignments of power, and other features of the present world situation, rather than to use a slogan that has to be freed of much of its usual meaning.

The polemic against ultra-imperialism

So it is Joe and the BCSG who are not straightforward about their views. Instead of welcoming discussion about the conceptions that motivate their promised future research, they are upset when others comment on them in anything but words of praise. They have developed, on a number of issues of controversy, an obscure and confusing way of discussion that slurs over differences, reconciles fundamentally different views with a phrase, and inhibits the expression of differing ideas.

On the issue of ultra-imperialism, Joe has reached new heights of obscurity. He actually assures everyone that I am the one who really believes in ultra-imperialism--or would if only I weren't intimidated by my allies--although I am the one who started the polemic against ultra-imperialism. How much further can he go in distorting the history of the discussion? How much further can he go in discouraging people from looking into the actual issues in the discussion?

Indeed, contrary to Joe's characterization of my views, I have left a paper trail of my views dating back to my letter to Manny of Nov. 1992, just prior to the Fourth Congress. (See Detroit #29) I have pointed to the attempt to

develop a world political order, and stated why I believed that was different from ultra-imperialism. I pointed, for example, to the high level of continued arming, and the continuation of world bloodshed. I have repeatedly raised that a series of the features of present-day world should be examined.

In place of analysis

Joe won't look at these features of the world. Instead he dances around the slogan of ultra-imperialism and around various stereotypes. He is still caught up in the dichotomy of multipolarism or ultra-imperialism. These are the only two possibilities that he is willing to contemplate. Much of his argument that I believe in ultra-imperialism boils down to the assertion that anyone who criticizes multipolarism and points to the attempt to build a single world order, must thereby believe in ultra-imperialism.

But why start by trying to make the world fit either Kautsky's view of 1914 or the former CC majority's multipolar view of several years back? Why not examine a series of facts about the world such as

- ** the continuing high level of militarism, warfare, and arms sales;
- ** the role of militarism in the world economy;
- ** the way in which political domination and subordination among countries manifests itself after the collapse of colonialism;
- ** the attempt to build a single world order, which is not simply the venerable institution of the world market;
- ** the growing gap between rich and poor in the world, both from country to country and between the toilers and their exploiters;
- ** the changing picture of power relations in the world, including the conflicts and war dangers from the regional powers;
- ** the growth of reactionary movements in Europe and elsewhere and what it means for future action of the

great powers;

** what bourgeois-democracy actually means in the present world order;

** the disorganization of the proletariat on a world scale, and the prospects for the reorganization of the proletarian struggle;

Etc.

After examining these factors, one might end up with something that is far different from the old multipolar vs. ultra-imperialist stereotype.

But Joe is still caught in the old stereotypes about the world and about theory that the former CC majority generated in such abundance, and he refuses to even take notice of issues raised from any other perspective. Moreover, he makes it his mission to show that nothing the former CC majority and its allies wrote is subject to criticism.

No wonder Joe wrote his open letter of support to Ben after Ben escalated his attempts to suppress discussion. He and Ben are uniting on a whole new series of stereotypes: all dissenters are biospherians, religious, moralists, factionalists (both Ben and Joe can defend the "trend of trends", or faction of factions, while denouncing critics as factionalists!!!), thought cops, demagogues, box dwellers, you name it. He is defending stereotypes about the world situation with stereotypes on the moral character of all dissenters. It's much easier than dealing with the views of the dissenters. It's much quicker than dealing with the analysis of the world.

(to be continued)

What can we learn...

continued from page 19

ignorant, then it is true. If this means that certain standards of research are required for material to appear in Boston's journal, good. But if such a formula were to be rigidly applied to investigation--that the only useful debate is that which is tied to investigation--then we would have a ghost of the old mlp monolithism. The results of such a principle would be the same as before--isolated and constipated research.

There is a role for investigation, but also for: questions and debate that are not tied to or backed up by the particular research, leadership that draws the range of membership into consideration of controversial and complicated subjects, utilization of the contributions of persons not focused on a particular topic, and various forms of interactivity with diverse points of view. None of this is easy, but it's all part of seeking to increase the competition of ideas, and thus bring about a faster and better quality of investigation and analysis.

The only criticism I have of the general approach to investigation indicated by Boston 5, boils down to the point that this sort of research needs to be supplemented by additional research in other topic areas. This will come across in part III. The rest of this section is not on the subject of approach to investigation, but miscellaneous points on the particular studies of social strata and LDCs.

the past debate on social strata

I would sum up one thrust of Boston 5's discussion of the past debate thus: the traditional views were screwed up this way, Fred's that way, neither Fred nor (implicitly) Joe's report dealt sufficiently with the issues of the middle strata, and more research is needed. This seems accurate to me and it is a good sign that understanding of the issues is progressing. However, there is a lesson in the fact of the icon people's disruption of the past debate. This is of

valid consideration for future pursuit of investigation. Therefore, I think it is useful to clarify a couple of misinterpretations of comments I made on this issue, for the purpose of stressing an accurate picture of the icon role.

It seems like Boston 5 tried to read too much formality into my views. The point was proletarianization of some white collars, not an attempt to figure out which ones or how much. Anyway, it seems to me there are two specific inaccuracies in Boston 5 on this. One is that I didn't say there was a 2 way division (managers vs. all other employees), but a 3 way (if you eliminate the "value" confusion, my statement could be paraphrased as a) upper managers, b) production and lower level office workers, and c) upper level office workers. This latter group I described as "highly skilled and highly paid...petty bourgeois sections of white collar." [WAS 2-20-92, p. 7] In terms of aerospace categories, this latter group would be comprised of engineers, professionals, and lower managers. The lower level office would be techs and general office.)

The other inaccuracy on this is that Boston 5 says that the issue of contention was professional, not clerical workers. My conception was that the issue was precisely clerical type workers. My thoughts were based on experience with the techs at Boeing, who are more like clerical than professional workers. Perhaps others saw the issue as the upper stratum of white collar. But Pete referred to low paid white collars and Joseph said, "It is quite possible for workers to recognize the specific features of the professionals and higher-paid workers, as well as the technical workers and office staff...and such recognition is needed to understand what is going on in general in the economic and political struggles." (WAS 5-20-92)

Boston 5 raises two matters on the "plebian" statement. One is that there is a "necessity to win over, draw in, the professional/technical strata that carry

the technical knowledge that is necessary to build socialism." This is the same point that I made in my statement at the 4th congress, as I recall. The other matter is on the "central, driving, and leveling role of the lower proletarian mass." I don't recall that I said anything that contradicted this. Boston 5 defines "plebian revolution" as this latter issue of plebian hegemony, but I did not speak to that one way or another. All I said was that a purely lower mass revolution is impossible to build socialism. This should have been shocking only to those who believe in such a possibility (and perhaps to those who wanted to keep such issues quiet until research could prove it to icon people).

Boston 5 raises interesting points on the social strata research. But this sort of discussion couldn't take place earlier because of the din of moralist babble about changing the class nature of the "P"arty, putting down manual workers and suppressing the underclass, etc.

Awareness of this is necessary to appreciate the point I made in "the box part 1" on the falling of the industrial proletariat vanguard catechism. I didn't mean that the issues of social strata were not complex and important fields of research. What I meant was that the initial discussion was sidetracked with moralism.

The concept of a distinctly sacred industrial stratum is fairly obviously askew with the division of labor and the general outlooks of persons in different occupations. But a lot of vested interests were riding on this icon, such as: rationale of the mlp, belief in the possibility of revolution, particular work such as river of agitation and industrial places of concentration, prestige of leading bodies, emotional stability and self-conception of individual activists. The force of all these things was embodied in the concept of the catechism. No wonder it was defended tenaciously. Our pitbull was aware of all of this, didn't want to discuss it, so he changed the subject. (There were those who held the catechism as an article of faith, not fully knowing why. And there was the stage

manager who used it as a tool of pragmatic trend-building.)

how wide is the problem of social strata?

I have some thoughts to raise on perspectives towards the social strata research. Boston 5 seems to indicate certain types of questions that need to be looked into, and these seem to indicate assumptions that are being made about other questions. Both matters may tend to narrow the research. I am probably making a caricature of the Boston researchers' views to some extent, and underestimating the breadth of their conceptions. This is just the way I can conceive of and explain the points I want to make.

I get a certain feeling from both Joe's original report and Boston 5 that what is being sought is answers to questions like how dissatisfied are particular stratum, how likely to revolt; that a one-dimensional measure of social strata is used--how angry or complacent they are. It's true that this sort of issue is a factor. It may be a strong one, but it is not overpowering of everything else. History shows repeated examples of comfortable and elite classes revolting against higher classes. And a stratum can certainly be downtrodden without revolting. Many other factors come into play in generating this revolt. Complex historical factors--economic, political, cultural--come into play and impact groups' consciousness. "Anger" is likely a reflection of these complex factors, including but not limited to relative station in life.

Study of the history of linkage between strata and social change, and study of changing labor division features today, do not require a focus on the single dimension anger/complacency as stemming directly and predominately from all-round working conditions. Such a framework won't reveal much about likely dynamics of strata. And it goes too far in the direction of seeing classes as incapable of advancing their comprehension of society and acting in response to this increase. OK, they're mad because things are bad, but what are the

factors that will or will not give them abilities to launch and carry through social change?

Diverse aspects of our work need a shift of perspective away from the contentless concept of revolution, and towards content of program. This problem is distantly related to the above issue, in the sense that focus on finding a "revolting class" tends to block all the richness of issues of social class in favor of a mere tool of revolution.

An application of this one-dimensional gauge is indicated in the various points about upward mobility, declining industrial percentage, and loss of confidence of blue collar workers in their independent force. These sound like factors for social stabilization, a decline in dissatisfaction and of propensity to revolt. But does this mean that the process is necessarily reactionary or purely so? Perhaps there is a breaking down of isolation and narrow sectional outlook and interests of blue collar, that will prove favorable for social change in the long run. After all, the struggle of industrial workers only went so far and only developed certain ideological forms.

what assumptions should underlie the social strata research?

Boston 5 notes that history so far has not conformed to Marx's theory of the polarization of society between a growing mass of low paid workers and a small elite, nor Lenin's adjustment of drawing out further the concept of a small labor aristocracy. Is this the only problem here, so that the study of social strata must merely aim to find some new groups to plug into the picture? I think the past assumption that this dichotomization must be taking place is tied in with a whole lot of other assumptions that may not have any basis in observable development. Such as: a) In the processes of social development, class interests must necessarily override the interests driven by other social groupings, such as of stratum, still smaller economic groupings, ethnicity, gender, nation. b) The current stage of advance

of social development must take the form of something called socialist revolution. c) Some poor classes have "true interests" related to this advance of stage while other beliefs or actions they manifest are the result of "deception." It is therefore essential to construct hegemony of these classes.

Contrary to assuming these to be the case, I think that part of the value of studying social strata is to contribute information that gives insight on what the nature of the social change that we are facing might be; as well as how the amalgamation of social forces may take place in this process and what sort of hegemony would be favorable. If one looks at history with the above sort of assumptions in place, one could easily miss the complex and peculiar causes and contexts of the political behavior of strata and classes in specific situations.

Boston 5 seems to consider that some sort of hegemony of the lower mass, whether a dictatorship of the proletariat or some other form, needs to be an accepted principle. I don't see why the research needs this particular assumption, and I don't see that plausible theory exists yet that can back it up. If dichotomization is not taking place, does hegemony of the lower over the middle necessarily follow? Where is the elaboration of socialist theory or state theory that would back up such an assertion?

I do not present the above views from the angle that the framework of investigation must be changed in order to proceed with research. All of our frameworks and working hypotheses are necessarily messed up one way or another. They change in the process of investigation.

on the LDC studies

The Bay Area requested sources for its study of imperialism. On the subject of LDCs, I would recommend reading of Nigel Harris' "The end of the third world," if they haven't already read it. It is an interesting comparison of the experiences of the four tigers with those of Mexico and Brazil regarding development.