

MIM THEORY

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OF THE MAOIST INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT

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the

narchist Ideal & Communist Revolution



INSIDE: PanAsianism, Letters to MIM Theory, Japanese Polemics, and More...

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Back issues of MIM Theory and MIM Notes are available as well.

MIM is an underground party that does not publish the names of its comrades in order to avoid state surveillance and repression that has been historically directed at communist parties and anti-imperialist movements.

In the text, "MC" means a MIM Comrade, "MA" means a MIM Associate.

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What is MIM?



The Maoist Internationalist Movement is a revolutionary communist party that upholds Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.



MIM is an internationalist organization that works from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat; its members are not Americans, but world citizens.

MIM struggles to end the oppression of all groups over groups: classes, genders, nations. MIM knows this is only possible by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle.

Revolution is a reality for the United States as the military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony.

MIM differs from other communist groups on three main questions: (1) MIM holds that after the proletariat seizes power in socialist revolution, the potential exists for capitalist restoration under the leadership of a new bourgeoisie within the party itself. In the case of the USSR, the bourgeoisie seized power after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China, it was after Mao's death and the overthrow of the "Gang of Four" in 1976. (2) MIM upholds the Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976, as the farthest advance of communism in human history. (3) MIM believes the North American white working class is primarily a non-revolutionary worker-elite at this time; thus, it is not the principal vehicle to advance Maoism in this country.

MIM accepts people as members who agree on these basic principals and accept democratic centralism, the system of majority rule, on other questions of party line.

The theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is universally applicable. We should regard it not as a dogma, but as a guide to action. Studying it is not merely a matter of learning terms and phrases but of learning Marxism-Leninism as the science of revolution.

— Mao Zedong, *Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 208.*

MIM Theory

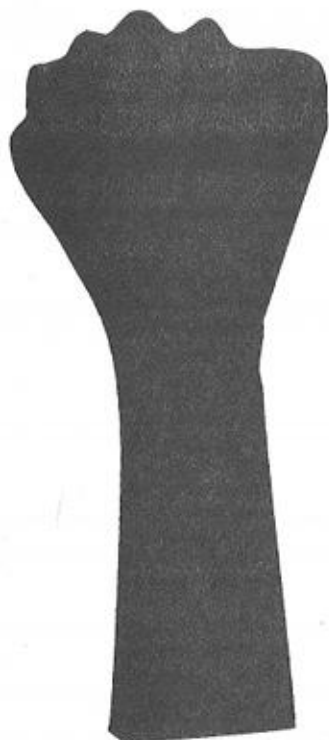
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THE Anarchist Ideal *and communist revolution*

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Editor's Introduction

MIM has often challenged anarchists to produce evidence that anarchism ever liberated anyone from oppression or offered a concrete alternative to the gains of communist revolution led by the proletarian party. In this issue of MIM Theory we offer our present and past critiques of anarchist theory and practice, specific anarchist groups, and great moments in anarchist history. We also present MIM's recent battles against anarchist ideology within our own Party — reasserting the need for an organized vanguard party as the only effective way to defeat the imperialists.

Anarchism and anti-party sentiment is largely a phenomenon in the First World, where the majority enjoys the privileges of bourgeois democracy — and “opting out” of the oppression of capitalism, imperialism and patriarchy looks like a real option. But as historical materialists and internationalists, MIM looks toward the successful times when the oppressed masses have risen up and actually created socialist production relations. These circumstances have necessarily included an organized party that was not afraid to seize and wield the power of the state to administer revolutionary change in the interests of the proletariat. The Soviet Union from 1917-1953 and China from 1949-1976 provide such historical inspirations.

Communists and the better anarchists all seek to abolish power of people over other people. That common element lends a heightened urgency to our arguments: We don't want people with that devotion wasting their time in dead-end movements. But communists know that it takes power to destroy power, whereas anarchists see power itself, independent of its conditions, as the enemy of the people. In the era of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and China, they proclaim vindication for their view that a revolutionary government is a contradiction in terms. Maoists recognize the potential of a new bourgeoisie under socialism. But rather than allowing that knowledge to prevent us from waging socialist revolution, we look toward the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China (1966-1976) — a full-blown attack on established power and the state in a socialist country — as evidence that the vanguard party can lead a society toward communism.

—MC44
May 1995

What do Anarchist, Trotskyist & Pacifist movements have in common?

- A) Their members have good imaginations and goals.
- B) They are critics of Maoism, the world's most successful communist movement.
- C) They have a success rate of 0% in transforming society toward their goals.
- D) Some of their adherents have seen the light and advanced to Maoism.
- E) All of the above.

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Take credit for your actions. We Maoists do!

- We take responsibility for J.V. Stalin's excessive executions in the USSR.
- We take responsibility for Chinese Communist mistakes in the Great Leap Forward (1958-60).
- We take responsibility for the unjust sufferings of thousands of people in the Cultural Revolution in China, led by Mao Zedong (1966-76).

We'd rather have responsibility for the bad side of revolution than have responsibility for the injustices of the established order. What we can't stand is people who think they have no responsibility for anything — e.g., anarchists, Trotskyists, pacifists: all people using pretty words to criticize real-world revolutionaries taking real-world action to end oppression.

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Letters to MIM Theory

Red Action Responds

It has come to our attention that MIM Theory 5 carries a review of our organisation and we feel that there are several points in need of rectification.



Firstly, in answer to MIM's analysis of RA (Red action) as having anarchist leanings, we would like to point out that from RA's point of view anarchism could never work. Anarchism means the principled opposition to the exercise of any authority. Accordingly, even the most perfect democracy would be regarded by anarchism as authoritarian as it means the imposition of a social decision by a majority over a minority. The answer to bureaucratic authority is democratic authority, not the abolition of authority.

Secondly, RA is by no means a focoist movement despite its support for armed struggle within England. This conflict is a necessary extension of the Irish revolutionary nationalist war against British imperialism. The IRA/INLA bombing campaigns in the financial heartland of London have allowed Irish revolutionaries to hit at imperialism's vital organs, effectively striking decisive blows on the enemy. The large Irish community in London and other major British cities makes this campaign substantially more realistic, ensuring that the policy inaugurated during the Thatcher years, of isolating the war from Britain itself is not totally successful. It is widely acknowledged in Republican circles that a bomb in England is worth ten in the occupied counties of Ireland. Red Action believes that the Irish was/is of primary importance to the advancement of the revolutionary potential within the British proletariat. As Karl Marx observed:

"For a long time I believed it would be possible to overthrow the Irish regime by working class ascendancy. Deeper study has now convinced me of the opposite. The English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is so important for the social movement in general."(1)

On the question of focoist insurrection, Scottish Red action states it's position thus:

"... (T)he 'second front' in Scotland would have to deter-

mine its own methods and tactics to achieve its goals, but as a movement, a campaign of direct action and civil disobedience rather than armed struggle are the appropriate methods. While some starry eyed tartan romantics might favour the latter, it is necessary to establish working class support for independence. There have been moves to emulate the armed struggle before, which have invariably failed because of the lack of community support, state infiltration and outright sabotage. Any move to form tartan armies would be extremely premature, if not suspect!"(2)

It would appear that on the question of the revolutionary capability of the white proletariat, RA would have fundamental differences with MIM, while RA cannot speak with authority on the situation in the U.S., as the primary driving force within Anti-Fascist Action, RA has consistently been targeting white working class youth with its Anti-Fascist Ideology because these are the very people the fascists target for recruitment as their storm troopers. This policy may be compared with the Black Panther Party's approach. As Bobby Seale points out:

"Huey (P. Newton) understood the meaning of what (Franz) Fanon was saying about organizing the lumpen proletariat first, because Fanon explicitly pointed out that if you didn't organize the lumpen proletariat, if the organization didn't relate to the lumpen proletariat and give a base for organizing the brother who is pimping, the brother who is hustling, the unemployed, the downtrodden, the brother who is robbing banks, who is not politically conscious, that's what lumpen proletariat means, that if you didn't relate to these cats, the power structure would organize these cats for you."(3)

The 26 counties of Ireland, while to some extent being a recipient of Western European Imperialism, remains a neo-colony due to the British occupation of its Northern six counties. This situation has allowed the European Community to deliberately dictate the erosion of the 26 counties' industrial base. In the past this industrial base has absorbed large sections of the urban proletariat producing a significant number of skilled and semi-skilled workers. These, together with the unskilled workforce, now find themselves in increasing numbers, joining the socially and emotionally damaging ranks of the unemployed. In rural areas the picture is as bleak for the agro-proletariat. In a sector which in the past was labour intensive, increased mechanisation has created widespread unemployment with no hope of work in the future.

This has produced a large disenfranchised, marginalised class. In Dublin alone, unemployment lies between 25%-30%.

Some inner city neighbourhoods having 80% of its population out of work. This has led to some communities being ravaged by drugs, intravenous heroin being most common.

Successive Irish governments have been continually embarrassed by the high unemployment statistics and in an effort to mask the genuine figures have set up training schemes. These schemes are essentially cheap labour cynically introduced to cosmetically lower the unemployment figures. These schemes yield no benefit of skills to the worker who invariably revert back to the ranks of the unemployed when the scheme concludes.

In an effort to escape poverty, many of those on unemployment assistance will take an undeclared work, effectively entering the black economy. This helps many to supplement their income, while providing others in the community with killed and cheap services.

In an attempt to clamp down on this ever growing black economy the government has resorted to severe Draconian methods of surveillance on the unemployed. An example of this would be forced attendance of unemployed people at the above mentioned training schemes.

Given the conditions of the Irish proletariat, and that they are the primary producers of wealth in Ireland, (when employed), exploited/superexploited as they are by the national bourgeoisie. RA views this class as the major source of revolutionary struggle in this country.

Naturally RA believes socialist revolution will not be possible in Ireland until British Imperialism is defeated. This would allow Ireland to advance to a stage where it may play its part in the inevitable world socialist system.

Notes:

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*.
2. Red Action No. 61. 3. Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time*.

—Comradely greetings,
Red Action (Ireland)
P.O. Box 3355, Dublin 7

MIM responds: We are glad to hear Red Action renounce anarchism, this is good news for the international proletariat! We must, however, reiterate our criticism of such statements as "so much then for the various vanguards" (p. 4, issue 59, June/July, 1991) as "anarchist-leaning" in the context of literature that promotes armed actions and organizing in the street (p. 2), but places no emphasis — or negative emphasis — on the party, a central tenet of Leninism.

As for launching armed struggle in the imperialist countries at this time, MIM believes imperialist country "working class support" will not be forthcoming as long as the material basis for their allegiance to imperialism remains in place. That material basis comes from the superprofits reaped from Third World labor. With that kind of subsidy, the British working class does not have a material interest in Irish independence.

In the United States, Blacks, Latinos, and indigenous people constitute internal oppressed nations. Thus, the lumpen proletariat to which Chairperson Bobby Seale referred was within the oppressed Black nation, not among the white working class. The Black Panther Party organized within the Black nation. Your analogy may very well hold true within occupied Ireland, but it does not apply to the English working class.

No amount of pressure from the righteous Irish independence movement will arouse the "revolutionary potential of the British proletariat" because no such potential exists. Bombings in London cannot create an interest in revolution among the British working class where an interest in maintaining their share of imperialist superprofits is so strong. Such attacks, before the imperialist countries are "really helpless" will result in greater repression of the people, and setback for the revolutionary struggle.

Anarchism in China

**"Anarchism in the Chinese Political Culture —
Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution."**

***Journal of Contemporary Asia*. April 1994.**

Available for \$1 from:

MIM Distributors, PO Box 29670, Los Angeles, CA 90029-0670.

Greetings from AZAPO

Hi!

My name is X. I am a black Azanian attending University [in Azania]. I belong to the Black Consciousness family whose flag-bearer is the Azanian Peoples Organization (AZAPO). I recently saw an article on our netnews from your movement. I must admit that your analysis of the situation in this country could not be more precise. I would like to know if it is possible for you to send me some of the writings of Chairman Mao.

I hope you are going to take this in the spirit of comradeship.

I'll hear from you.

Keep Strong,

—AZAPO reader

February 1995

MIM responds: Comrade, greetings!

We are glad that you got to read our



stuff even at such a great distance.

We have much in common with AZAPO's thinking.

After this message we will send an article we printed a few months ago reflecting some new work happening in this country. Then we will send a basic letter of information.

Unfortunately, the only literature we have available online at the moment is MIM Notes text. Mao, other classics, and most of our other literature is only available from us in print form.

We have started a new publication called Maoist Sojourner, to reflect the thoughts and conditions of Maoists in

exile from their countries. Please consider writing articles, letters, or reviews, for MIM Notes or Maoist Sojourner. Our ability to report first-hand on conditions and struggles outside the United States is limited. But people here are eager to read of such things! Anything you write will be very welcome.

AZAPO reader responds:
Revolutionary greetings!

Thank you so much for your positive response to my inquiry. After reading those four articles, I was pleased to note that your organization shares a common ground with my organisation (AZAPO). I promise that I'll keep in touch.

The future can only be Socialism, or there is none.

Your Comrade,
—AZAPO reader

Parent Was In RCP-USA

Hello,

I've been reading some of your messages in alt.politics.radical-left and am intrigued by your organization. Can you please send me some info on MIM? I am just beginning to learn Maoism and Marxism and so far totally agree with your ideas. [A parent] was [once] a member of the RCP [Revolutionary Communist Party-USA] so I was raised with some heavily revolutionary ideas, but I am just really beginning to realize them.

Any pointers on books to read? My [parent] gave me a first edition printing of Mao's red book ... and many other books by Marx, Engels and some RCP publications on revolution in Amerika by Bob Avakian. Anything you could rec-



ommend? I've still got a ton of stuff to read and digest, but right now I'm just trying to get a feel for the current situation in this country as far as revolutionary organizations go. Any info you could give me would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks!

—RCP-diaper baby

February 1995

MIM responds: Greetings. Thanks for writing.

If there is one thing to read to get a handle on the current situation, it would

be MIM Theory. Issue 7 (Revolutionary Nationalism) spells out our theory of the national question in the U.S. You can get that from MIM for \$5.

If there was one book to start with, it would be: *Settlers, The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, by J. Sakai, which we sell for \$10. That is a whole retelling of U.S. history from the view of the oppressed, specifically targeted to those who still want to unite white workers with the oppressed. A MIM must-read.

Please stay in touch and let us know what you think.

More Debate In MIM Theory

Dear Comrades,

You asked me to write to you if I would still enjoy receiving your paper MIM Notes. Yes, I would. Although I was



quite interested in showing your paper to my friends when I first found it none of my friends are interested in it. So I had to just get the few copies I finally asked for.

As for MIM Theory I would like to continue subscribing but I do have some criticism. First, my impression of a theoretical journal is while an issue might be dedicated to Gender Politics or Stalin, future issues are supposed to have some space put aside for replies or rebuttal to ideas proposed in previous issues. Your theoretical journal though seems to present ideas once and then future issues have no replies or discussions from their readers. One of the most interesting aspects of a "theoretical journal" is the back and forth honing of ideas and topics of a debate that the reader can follow from issue to issue. Your theoretical journal is more like a black hole of ideas. Once an issue has been dedicated to a topic, the topic is barely seen again nor do the readers seem to be able to contribute. Of course someone does contribute to your theoretical journal but they have to have the inside word on what next issue's topic is. As for readers like me who do not have the "insider's" info you have no space dedicated for replies it seems. And I did send in a letter addressing Gender Politics which though promised to be published never was. Personally, my opinion is of minor interest to me as its already quite familiar to me but I would like to read other opinions. As for your interest in publishing anti-communist letters in MIM Notes I also disagree with that. I'm personally confronted with anti-communist opinions everywhere else and I feel that you shouldn't waste space on the stuff as long as they have so many alternative outlets.

Thank you,

—East Coast Comrade

MIM Responds: Revolutionary greetings comrade. [...]

I'm going to find out exactly what happened to the letter that we promised to print and did not. ...

As for your criticisms of our literature, we do hope to put

more letters into MIM Theory. As the publication grows, it will attract more and more feedback from the masses. At some times we have held letters on a certain subject for a few issues so that we can print them all at the same time. Other times, such as in MIM Theory 4, we have printed a chapter of letters on a number of different subjects. Also, the last two issues of MIM Theory were a very dense catch-up of sorts on two important subjects for MIM. We eagerly look to seeing the masses' responses to these journals.

While there have been less letters in the last two issues of MIM Theory than in previous issues (for the reasons explained above) it's not true that we discuss a topic and then don't let people talk about it again. We printed letters about MIM Theory 1 in MT2/3 and MT4. We printed letters about MT2/3 in MT4 and MT5. This issue contains a rebuttal to MT5. While more recent printed letters may not be directly about these earlier publications, the issues of Stalin, gender or the labor aristocracy surely do not go away. If you have evidence of MIM suppressing letters, other than your one letter (which may either be somewhere in the pipeline for publication, or we may have made an honest mistake), then please bring this to our attention immediately.

As for the topics of chapters or the entire issue of MIM Theory, it is determined by what the masses inside or outside of the Party submit articles or letters on. Sometimes the topic is picked first and assignments are made, sometimes it happens the other way around, and sometimes a combination of the two. Consider this an invitation to write for MIM Theory.

As for our selection of letters in MIM Notes, we print disproportionately less anti-communist letters, hate mail and death threats than we actually receive.

We print these letters with responses because we believe we can make important political points by responding to their allegations in public. Reality is that most people, even people sympathetic to revolution, start off with a lot of anti-communist propaganda that they've been programmed with since Day One. So we aren't really trying to reach the people who mail us death threats or whatever, we're aiming at a different audience. The difference between the anti-communist mail in MIM Notes and the anti-communism you see everywhere else in your life is that MIM Notes adequately refutes it instead of encouraging it. [...]

[May 1995 postscript. Reader in the East never saw our letter because they moved without leaving a forwarding address. To Reader in the East: Get back in touch with us, and to everyone else, stay in touch!]

An Open Letter To The Better Anarchists

reprinted from MIM Notes 95
December 1994

by MC49

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) is aware that in North America today, there are a growing number of



people who simultaneously uphold anarchism and revolutionary national liberation struggles. Two leaders (gasp!) of this trend are Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

(author of "Anarchism and the Black Revolution") and Cooperative Distribution Services (distributor of works by J. Sakai, E. Tani, K. Sera, Butch Lee, Red Rover and more). The influence of these leaders (gasp!) can be seen in most of North America's anarchist press, as well as in grassroots organizing being done by anarchism's best in support of the oppressed nations.

MIM notes that the bulk of the better anarchists' work centers around North America: splitting the white nation and supporting the struggles of the Black, Latino and First Nations. Supporting the EZLN in Mexico is also clearly high on the better anarchists' agenda.

MIM says good things are good, but we want what's best. To truly support national liberation (or for that matter, to truly uphold a universal ideology like anarchism or Maoism) is to be an internationalist. To be an internationalist, you have to broaden your horizons to include the whole globe, not just half a hemisphere.

Once you look at the whole globe, the first thing you'll see is China. One fifth of the world's people live there. It's history is something any supporter of national liberation has to take seriously. If you can't go beyond one-liners copped from the imperialist media and the Beatles, then you shouldn't speak at all. But since you've already decided to engage in progressive politics, why not go all the way?

The first thing a good anarchist will notice when they study China is that anarchism has been an utter failure there. Check it out: read "Anarchism in the Chinese Political Culture/Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution" on pp. 228-233 of the April 1994 issue of the Journal of Contemporary Asia, then get back to us.

Some other things you'll see when you study China:
• Life-spans doubled under Mao, thanks to innovations in health care, education and production. Who controls the state is a life-or death matter which anarchists ignore while they

idly wish the state would disappear.

• Mao had mass support and remains popular among the Chinese people (though not necessarily among Chinese immigrants to the U.S.) today. Perhaps anti-Maoist anarchists think these millions of people were all stupid for rejecting anarchism in favor of Maoism? MIM says anarchists could learn a thing or two from these masses.

• The current regime in China is not Maoist, communist or socialist. Deng Xiaoping was the number two target of the Cultural Revolution. The current regime is socialist in words, fascist in deeds.

• The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, led by Mao Zedong, was centered around a concern prevalent among anarchists. Anarchists are fond of saying that "power corrupts." MIM disagrees that this is always so, and points to Mao as an example of someone who seized power and used it to serve the people. But it is true that the seizure of state power by revolutionary communists does create the material basis for the rise of a new bourgeoisie within the ruling communist party. Mao's greatest contribution was his recognition of, exposure of, and battle against this new capitalist class. This battle was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which kept the new bourgeoisie at bay from 1966 until Mao's death in 1976. MIM recognizes this as the highest advance of communism in human history.

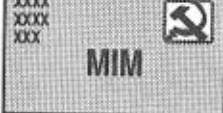
So hit the books, anarchists! MIM sells numerous books on China. Once you start studying China, it should be only a matter of time before you choose either outright anti-communist reaction or Maoism. Some have already made their choice and abandoned anarchist idealism for Maoist materialism. We expect to see some more of you soon.

Anarchism Redux (Gasp!)

reprinted from MIM Notes 98
March 1995

Dear MIM Notes,

I received your MIM Notes consistently and have not been bothered by censorship yet. Please keep me on your mailing list.



In your last issue, MC49 did a discussion in an open letter to the anarchist movement.

I think the "(gasp)" interjections detracted from the objectivity of the letter and may be interpreted as disrespect for those who are sincerely attempting to struggle against class and state oppression. Lorenzo Ervin has committed a great deal of his lifetime toward the Afro-American struggle and has served

quite a number of years in prison. He is unique in as much as he has escalated his opposition to the establishment since his release from prison. I have had my differences with him while we served time together and continue to have my differences with him, but I will never disrespect his efforts in struggle. When the opportunity arises I will try to interject objective criticism of his political direction, but respect the fact that he has not deserted the struggle as many ex-prisoner radicals have.

The focus of the anarchist is different than that of the Maoist. The anarchist is concerned with eradicating the established state first, rather than improving the conditions of the people. On the other hand, the Maoist must address the conditions of the people primarily based on the communist philosophy. In the midst of oppression, the Maoist must provide care for the people to win their support before advancing to other stages of struggle. But I do agree with MC49 on this point, that a communist state must be established in the course of revolution to defend against the reoccurrence of capitalist and imperialist domination. A nation without a state invites capitalist and imperialist opportunism. That, in essence, is what conditions were in the Third World nations before they were colonized.

On the point of internationalism. Nationalism in the Americas is premised on the fact that racism as it affects movements against colonialism require a nationalistic perspective because the colony is the political reality. The borders of the colony under racism are defined by the social, economic and political restrictions placed on the people by racism. The borders of racism cannot be eradicated without an internationalist philosophy and political action. Without an international ingredient in the theory of nationalist struggle, the struggle would result in narrow nationalism and acceptance of the boundaries established by racism.

Lastly, I would argue further that anarchism is a means toward an end, while Maoism suggests both the means and the

end.

For a better future for us all!
—Washington state prisoner
December 14, 1994

MC49 responds: The prisoner responds to the following from page 3 of the December 1994 MIM Notes: "The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) is aware that in North America today, there are a growing number of people who simultaneously uphold anarchism and revolutionary national liberation struggles. Two leaders (gasp!) of this trend are Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin (author of "Anarchism and the Black Revolution") and Cooperative Distribution Services.... The influence of these leaders (gasp! gasp!) can be seen in. ..."

The "(gasp!)"s are indeed rude, but the intent was not to be disrespectful of Ervin or the better political work by the better anarchists. Rather, the "(gasp!)"s were intended as criticism of the anti-leadership line held to different extents and in different ways by all anarchists. MIM wishes to emphasize the point that progressive leadership exists even among anarchists, even though many anarchists deny that their movement has leaders, let alone that such leadership can be progressive.

From your statement that "a [socialist] state must be established in the course of revolution to defend against the reoccurrence of capitalist and imperialist domination," we see that you agree with the thrust of MIM's open letter to the better anarchists, and with MIM's basic critique of anarchism.

Also we agree with your perspective on revolutionary nationalism and internationalism, which acknowledges that the two can and should coexist. This is a key difference between Maoists, who agree with your statement⁴, and Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists like the Progressive Labor Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party-USA, who believe that there is a contradiction between internationalism and revolutionary nationalism.

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NY TRANSFER: A MOVEMENT RESOURCE

Maoists Woo Anarchists

MIM found the following on the internet in response to our "Open Letter to Better Anarchists."



As usual, the RCP and MIM are always trying to grab the attention and occupy the efforts of anarchists or would-be anarchists.

The December 1994 issue of "MIM Notes" (No. 95), page 3 has a little article called "An open letter to the better anarchists" (by "MC49").

The article includes some remarks that are downright insulting: "If you can't go beyond one-liners copped from the imperialist media and the Beatles, then you shouldn't speak at all." They say that anarchism was a "failure" in China (I suppose, only in so much that an "Anarchist Revolutionary Vanguard" headed by an omnipresent dictator never seized control of the country) and go on, as usual, to talk about the "great things" Mao accomplished.

The points they make about practicality and, I assume, the necessity of some kind of organization have been much discredited & buried under some seriously fucked-up karma ... but that aside, the article has something very interesting: they suggest that there are a "growing number of people who simultaneously uphold anarchism and revolutionary national liberation struggles." (obviously that would refer to respect for the Zapatistas, which isn't really a struggle for "National Liberation"... as opposed to the Shining Path in Peru, which is pretty universally rejected.)

... they go on to mention some prominent anarchists (?) in this trend: Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin (author of "Anarchism and the Black Revolution") and also "Cooperative Distribution Services" (distributor of works by J. Sakai, E. Tani, K. Sera, Butch Lee, Red Rover and others.)

It might be interesting to check out the writings of these people. If Anarchists start focussing on and including poor blacks, latinos, gang members, the unemployed, and min-wage workers & so on, you can bet that the Maoists will go crazy, trying to co-opt whatever is done ... or at least claim a piece of the pie.

— MIM critic
January 6, 1994

MC49 responds: "If you can't go beyond one-liners copped from the imperialist media and the Beatles, then you shouldn't speak at all" is a specific reference to the anarchist newspaper Fifth Estate's one-liners directed at us in November 1991. After MIM asked Fifth Estate (FE) if they would like to exchange publications with MIM, they replied:

"Mao-oids:
"We don't exchange subscriptions with admirers of dictators and mass murderers. We cast our lot with our comrades from Hong Kong who produced the enclosed poster [of Mao with bloody bullet holes through his head, accompanied by the slogan "no more emperors, down with authoritarianism of all kinds."]
"Remember what the Beatles said..."

If you find MIM's recent reference to this exchange to be "downright insulting," then you should also feel insulted by Fifth Estate's comments (and similar comments MIM has received from anarchists) which make MIM's remarks necessary. Where it is possible, we prefer to give anarchists the benefit of the doubt. Hence the sentence which followed the one you criticized: "But since you've already decided to engage in progressive politics, why not go all the way?"

The reason we say that anarchism was a failure in China does indeed have to do with the failure of anarchists to seize state power, but that is only half of it. (As for the comment about an "omnipresent dictator," we can simply say that this falls into the category of unresearched one-liners copped from the imperialist media discussed above.) Anarchism failed in a number of other key respects, such as selling out to the bourgeoisie and failing to win mass support. The critic carelessly tosses aside Mao's accomplishments, enabled by the seizure of state power, as though saving lives is insignificant compared to the critic's anarchist ideals.(1)

As for the charge that Maoists co-opt anarchists' work, this charge is easily refuted by a comparison of Maoist practice to anarchist practice. Movements in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao have served the people with our successful revolutions, while anarchists have done nothing but criticize from the sidelines.

Notes:

1. On anarchism in China, see "Anarchism in the Chinese Political Culture/Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 4/94, pp. 228-233.

Whither Youth?

Please send me a copy of the pamphlet you have prepared on the situation in Haiti that was mentioned in the December

MIM Notes. I was very excited to read MIM Notes, and would like to get more information on the Party. I do not have much money right now, but I would like to (and intend to) make some sort of contribution in the future. If possible, could you email me more information on MIM's general positions — perhaps something more detailed than the short sketch that appears on p. 2.



There are two MIM positions in which I am particularly interested. First is MIM's belief that "the youth of the white nation more closely approximate proletarian interests than [do] the white working class." (12/94, p.1). This is not a position with which I necessarily disagree. In fact, I myself have struggled with the question of what to do about the profoundly petty bourgeois attitudes that even the most exploited white workers in Amerika so frequently seem to take. As you point out, this stems, no doubt, from the relative positions of privilege which they occupy with respect to "third world" workers (as we have seen with so much of the racist anti-NAFTA rhetoric articulated by so many white laborers), and to those populations who you have referred to as Amerika's internal colonies. What I am most interested in learning about, however, are the forms and channels of organization available to youth today. For example, is there any pre-existing analogue to the union of classical Marxism?

The second aspect of MIM in which I am particularly interested is MIM's "sexual practice policies." (12/94, p.8) I would be very interested in reading your position. In your "Gender War" section, you suggested that in this particular historical moment in the US, all sex is rape. I certainly agree that sexuality is irrevocably caught up in relations of power and exploitation. The notion of "rape," however, carries along with it more than this observation. It implies a relationship in which one subject's agency is not merely constrained by violent social and material pressures, but is entirely denied by them. In any case, I am sure this is not MIM's belief. I am anxious to read your official policy with respect to sex, sexuality, and sexual relations.

If sending so much information is a problem (for whatever reason), please at least write back to me, and let me know how to proceed in acquainting myself with your Party and your work.

In Solidarity,

—Internet reader
February 1995

MIM responds: Your questions are good. Since they are good examples of relatively common questions, we will take a few paragraphs to give substantial answers, from which others may benefit as well.

LABOR ARISTOCRACY

You mention the "relative positions of privilege" occupied by the white working class in Amerika. MIM's argument, however, is that this privilege is *absolute* rather than relative. In MIM Theory 1 we offered our economic calculations to

support this. Theoretically, that means that the labor aristocracy is paid more than the value of their labor, which itself is more than the value of their labor power.

To explain: In Marx's theory of early capitalism, the total value of a workers' production was the value of their *labor*. From this value, the workers were paid the value of their *labor power*. This latter value was less, and it was by definition a survival wage: the amount necessary to reproduce the labor, that is, support the workers — at least enough to get them to show up to work. The difference between the two values was the level of exploitation. To make this system possible, Marx stipulated that the workers had to have no choice but to work for these wages if they were to survive. Under imperialism, this has changed.

With the influx of superprofits from colonies and neo-colonies, the labor aristocracy was able to win greater wages. First, these wages grew beyond the value of the labor power — that is, they were paid more than they needed to survive. This was possible without hurting the capitalists because at the same time superexploited workers were paid *less* than the value of their labor power. Instead of getting a living wage at work, superexploited workers had to augment their wages with greater home production, children's wages — and of course many didn't survive. They could only be persuaded to come to work by force and coercion (such as the wrecking of their local economies).

Eventually, as the system blossomed, the labor aristocracy workers were paid more than the value of their labor — not just more than their labor power. That meant their wages were absolutely greater than the value of what they produced!

This was arranged between the labor aristocracy — which struggled for higher living standards — and the international bourgeoisie — which needed the labor aristocracy as mass consumers (as well as political allies). This extra bonus is hard to measure because it is concealed in the artificially low price of commodities produced by superexploited labor (think of how much coffee, sugar and oil *should* cost, for example). So that in a short nutshell is why MIM says the labor aristocracy has *absolute* rather than relative privilege.(1)

YOUTH

With regard to Amerikan youth, you ask if there might be "pre-existing analogue to the union of classical Marxism" for those who are disaffected with their parasitic existence under imperialism. The short answer is, no. The reason is, again, white Amerikan youth as a group are not economically

'Sexuality is irrevocably caught up in relations of power and exploitation. But "rape" implies a relationship in which one subject's agency is not merely constrained by violent social and material pressures, but is entirely denied by them.'

exploited but are instead privileged. Other aspects of their lives suck, however. (Many labor aristocrats have miserable lives as well, but their alienation more often leads them to white supremacy or fascism.) Many white youth are disgusted by the hypocrisy of their parasitic class and gender position. And many are abused as children and treated as property by their parents. Many rebel against the repression of their culture, or the brainwashing education they receive. The majority do not, however.

We're talking about a minority who at times are willing to give up their nation, class and gender privilege in order to fight for a moral purpose or subjective liberation. This is a valuable force, but it is not decisive in a revolutionary way. So MIM, working as we do primarily within Amerika, does its best to tap into that alienation and potential revolutionary energy. In Amerika, these are useful allies of the international proletariat. But we do not pretend that the majority of white Amerikan youth will come over to the side of humanity under present conditions. The best we can do is inspire such people to work for the liberation of humanity, at their own presumed economic expense.

SEX

You say that "sexuality is irrevocably caught up in relations of power and exploitation." We agree. But "rape," you say, "implies a relationship in which one subject's agency is not merely constrained by violent social and material pressures, but is entirely denied by them." MIM argues that this distinction is quantitative. That is, in different situations of sex under patriarchy, there are different levels of agency, constraint, coercion or consent and force. Only children rape-victims and victims of brute-force rapes have no agency at all in their rapes. But "rape" in the popular definition means much more than that — sex which is both "non-consensual" and "forced." MIM's critique of the pseudo-feminist distinction between this and regular (implicitly consensual) sex is that despite the variation in individual choice, there is no sex that is separate or free from patriarchal relations. As MacKinnon once remarked, when asked if there is ever such a thing as "good sex," "Sure, and workers sometimes have good days at the factory. That doesn't mean that wage laborers are not exploited." (MacKinnon's incorrect line on the imperialist country labor aristocracy notwithstanding, this is a good analogy.)

You are right that MIM does not believe that people's agency is always "entirely denied" in sex under patriarchy. In fact, based on Catharine MacKinnon's analysis, MIM argues

that people "choose" to be raped - that sexual domination is eroticized, that sexual exploitation constitutes "love," and so on. We call this rape, however, because people do not have choices that do not exist; they *cannot consent* to egalitarian sexual relationships under patriarchy, because these don't exist under the patriarchal system.

MIM does not play the game of identifying "good" and "bad" sex under patriarchy. One problem with that pursuit is the elevation of subjective impressions — at the expense of those with less gender power, i.e., members of the oppressed nations. For example, one man's come-on line is harassment and another's is not. The difference is whether or not the woman in question is interested in sex with that man. What determines that? A combination of her taste and — if it comes to court — the impression of the pig prosecutor, judge and jury. In other words, the deck is stacked. The differentiation of some sex as "rape" and other sex as OK is a means of social control and oppression.

So, you ask: "I am anxious to read your official policy with respect to sex, sexuality, and sexual relations." In its early years, MIM struggled ferociously over this question, in public and private. There is a long history of sexual "politics" destroying leftist movements in decadent Amerika.

Once we reached the conclusions above, how could we justify any communists ever having sex? Or, how could we fail to condemn any sex among the masses? Instead of forbidding sex, we settled on a policy of forever-monogamy. In a "pure" sense, we might have said ban sex. But we knew that would never be feasible; that we could not have a rule within the party that the masses would never follow; and, if this were to be a rule, would

we not admit people who insisted on sex? The policy of forever monogamy was the result. It aims to permit sex while minimizing the damage sex causes, to individuals, to the revolutionary movement. It means treating people as fairly as possible in the current sinkhole of a system.(2)

Thanks again for writing. Stay in touch: criticize, submit letters, reviews or articles, etc. Good to hear from you.

Notes:

1. MIM Theory 1, "A White Proletariat?" is available for \$4 from MIM Distributors, PO Box 3576, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576.
2. The debates leading up to this are spelled out in MIM Theory 2/3, "Gender and Revolutionary Feminism," which runs 200+ pages for \$4.95.

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"good" and "bad" sex
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John Birch Lives!

Dear MIM Notes,

Is it true that Jacob Schiff and Max Warburg gave \$20 million to Lenin to finance the Russian Revolution? I read this in a pamphlet.



—a Texas prisoner
July 17, 1993

MC49 responds: This comrade doesn't rule out the possibility, but does doubt it very much. The one source MIM found which supports the theory is a suspect one: *None Dare Call it Conspiracy*.(1) Although their name doesn't appear on it, this book was put out by the far-right, anti-communist John Birch Society. Their main source "on the financing of the Bolshevik Revolution is Czarism and the Revolution, by an important White [i.e., counterrevolutionary] Russian General named Arsene de Goulevitch..."(2) De Goulevitch calls the Russian revolutionaries "armed bandits."(3)

These anti-communist sources are suspect because it serves their interests to pretend that the masses are either too stupid or too content to make revolution on their own, without the aid of a conspiracy — in this theory's case, a conspiracy of profiteering Jewish bankers. Certainly the anti-Semitic Jewish-conspiracy angle must have been popular in De Goulevitch's circles, and is still popular in white supremacist circles today. The Birchers play down the Jewish angle and opt for a populist appeal against "certain international bankers."(4)

But don't think the Birchers are anti-capitalist! "It would be ... disastrous," say the Birchers, "to lump all businessmen and bankers into the conspiracy. One must draw the distinction between competitive free enterprise, the most moral and productive system ever devised, and cartel capitalism dominated by industrial monopolists and international bankers. The difference is the private enterpriser operates by offering products and services in a competitive free market while the cartel capitalist uses the government to force the public to do business with him. These corporate socialists are the deadly enemies of competitive enterprise."(4)

On the question of the Russian Revolution, the bottom line for the Birchers is to cite any source, no matter how disreputable, which will back up their ridiculous contention that: "The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia ... is an event over which misinformation abounds. The myth-makers and re-writers of history have done their landscape painting jobs well. The establishment of Communism in Russia is a classic example of the second 'big lie' of Communism, i.e., that it is the movement of the downtrodden masses rising up against exploiting bosses. This cunning deception has been fostered since before the first French Revolution in 1789 ... In the Soviet Union, as in every Communist country (or as they call themselves — the Socialist countries), the power has not come to the

Communists' hands because the downtrodden masses willed it so. The power has come from the top down in every instance."

In sum, the Birchers believe that capitalism is just, that the masses are happy with it and that the cause of revolution lies somewhere else. MIM says: Hogwash! From Russia to Peru to Amerika's prisons, oppression breeds resistance. It takes some pretty skillful lying to conceal this simple truth.(5)

Notes:

1. Gary Allen, *None Dare Call it Conspiracy*. Concord Press: Seal Beach, 1971, esp. pp. 66-70.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

MIM's Secrecy Is Oppressive

Dear MIM,

In your response to my letter which you entitled, "Liberal Revolution?" (MIM Notes 92, September 1994), MC18 states:

"If you'd like to speak more directly about specific historical issues of 'purity' or effectiveness of Maoism, we ask you to introduce examples into the debate so we can speak to them directly." If I am correctly interpreting this statement as an invitation to further correspondence, I thank you all for the opportunity to be heard. However, in voicing my opinion, I believe it is essential that both you and your readers understand that I have no education where political ideologies are concerned. My soul foundation of "debate" is that which has been learned through living a tribulating life and from practical experience. I am not, most assuredly, a political science major. But I am a realist. So if pain is truly the best teacher, I have acquired my PhD in Life.

As a "specific issue," I'd like to expound upon MIM's unyielding policy of not publishing the names of your correspondents. Your justification for doing so is to "avoid state surveillance and repression wherever possible." Like most bureaucracies, you fail to see the forest for the trees. Your policy is reflective of any form of government I've encountered: all seem to make a decision on what is best for me and by doing so "oppress" my freedom of choice.

Let's examine this from a logical standpoint. I am an inmate serving 200 months in a Federal Penitentiary. When I received my first MIM Notes, I went on a list maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. You can believe that I am now classified as not only a sophisticated criminal, but a potential communist and dissident. This is because mail within

the Federal Bureau of Prisons is carefully monitored. In fact, there is probably a copy of my initial correspondence to you now contained within my Central Inmate file.

While your policy is commendable and probably beneficial for your correspondents not incarcerated, there should still be "choice" (or as you put it "self-determination"). You specifically asked me "Would you prefer to have power held by the few or the majority?" Where is my "power" to determine whether or not my name is printed? My answer to you, and to my own question, is that there is no form of government in existence today in which this principle applies. In all cases of government, the leaders live in a state of grace above the masses.

Without attacking MIM directly, I feel that there are several points that need to be considered. Asia is the home of the Maoist philosophy, yet they too oppress their people. China, for example, executes between two thousand to three thousand prisoners annually! Not only do they execute vast numbers of their people, but they remove organs from the bodies of the executed without choice of self-determination, and often deliberately botch the execution so that the condemned person remains alive while the organs are removed. (Time Magazine, September 5, 1994) If this is not "oppression," what the hell do you call it?

You tell me that the majority wants "food, clothing, shelter, land, basic education and health, and freedom from oppression by the armies of imperialism" and I'm with you 100%. But I'm here to tell you that you can not claim any example in history of any governing nation that met these needs and included "self-determination." All forms of government oppress the individuality of the governed. Government, any form, is like religion: a means to "control" the masses. You can color your rhetoric any way you like, flower it with neat little propaganda phrases, and you can perfume it with quaint ideologies that look really terrific on paper, but you can't stop the corruption inherent in man [*sic*] when he [*sic*] is placed in a position of total control over others. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Continuing with the specifics, I'd like to ask one more question. Why would any form of government seek to overthrow that of another? I mean, it would appear to me that there are plenty of places in the world where you could live under that political regime. Why should anybody have the right to change a form of government? It doesn't make sense. Not unless your true intent is to acquire the land, its natural resources, and the people who populate it to further your own ends. If you want to live under the philosophy of Marxism, there are countries you can go to. If your desire is Socialism, there's Australia and other countries. If it's Maoism, there are countries that practice that political philosophy. It would seem to me that the theory of modern day revolution is to change the inadequacies of the existing form of government and make it better — not change the governing principle. Because if you don't like the political ideology behind this country, there's

absolutely nothing stopping you from expatriating to another country that is more to your political tastes.

Where else in the world can you go where the governing body allows its dissidents to actively encourage revolution, such as MIM does, in open publication? What would happen to a MIM-like staff in a Maoist regime who openly published a newspaper seeking the overthrow of the government? I dare say that if you continued to live, the least that would happen to you is you'd probably find yourselves in a re-indoctrination program conducted by the imperialist state.

You tell me, "About revolution: you either join one or start your own." Believe me, if I possessed the financial means, a base of power, and a means to educate the masses, I would start my own revolution. But it would be concerned with debugging the present system and making it work better — not changing the principle upon which it is based.

You point the finger stating that the "Constitution already serves those it was intended to serve. It was never an issue of your rights. It was always an issue of protecting power." What you fail to realize is that it is not the system of government that needs to protect its power, but the human in his/her position within the government that is intent on protecting his/her power base within the government. An ideology can not be good or evil; it is only reflective of those people who implement it. Which is why I stated in my last letter that "the theory behind [communism] is pure, but, as we have seen, its practice and practical application differ." This is only because the doctrine is reliant on its implementation by fallible humans who are susceptible to their own corruption.

I can't help but wonder who would be using my kidneys and seeing through my eyes if I were in China?

That old drunk, Ben Franklin, pretty much hit the nail on the head when he said, "...if this Country doesn't experience a revolution every twenty years, then the Country isn't working as planned." And while you are absolutely correct that the framers of our Constitution defined "man" as someone who owned property, owned a business, or had money, you're still missing the point. A little over two hundred years ago, our founding fathers conceived a political system that the framers guarantee its own *evolution*, because it guaranteed the *free* exchange of ideas, one that always *demand*ed dissent from its constituents. Sure not everyone in early America had the right to vote or was eligible for the protections the Constitution accorded, but it *was* that guarantee of a *free exchange of ideas*, the one-in-the-same concept that *demand*ed *dissent* from its constituents, that gave the benefits of the Constitution to the common people; that freed the slaves; that gave women the right to vote; that gave the African American the vote; that made abortion a right of choice; that encompassed the concept of desegregation; that provided for sexual harassment; and, that guarantees a system of government which will continue to *grow and evolve* under the principle of government for the people and by the people. It's not perfect, *but* with our checks and balances change is not inconceivable! Because the system

of government is the way it is, when the "Amerikan" public says it has finally had enough, they will rise up in arms and indignation and squash the governing body like an annoying bug! My only hope is that they have enough presence of mind not to destroy a system that has worked for over two hundred years and opt for another political ideology, but will take the time to debug the present system, fix what's broke and make it better.

De Oppresso Liber,
—Joseph J. Schepis, Jr.
November 1994

MIM responds: Here's your name in print for all to see, just as you requested. But ponder for a moment: if the only freedom you have is the freedom to incriminate yourself, then Amerikan freedom seems to be giving you the short end of the stick.

After receipt of your first letter, we sent a copy of MT4 your way. Hopefully, you have had the time to read it over and realize that we do not uphold capitalist China as a model. The horror stories you relate are condemnable enough, and MIM has published a short article about the abuse of organ transplants in MIM Notes.

There are no Maoist governments in power today, so MIM's members could not just take a trip as you advise. There is a successful Maoist revolution being waged in Peru today, but MIM's members do not head there either. Here's why: the best thing that we can do to aid the Peruvians in establishing a just order is by waging revolution here in Amerika. There is something preventing us from going to a country with socialist leadership: Amerikan militarism battling self-determination for oppressed peoples.

Countries do not exist in a vacuum. The United States, whose record on democracy you so admire, is currently upholding a brutal dictatorship in Peru. We could go on with horror stories similar to the ones you relate about China, but there is even more rampant violence in Peru than in China today. This is because starvation and poverty are some of the widest spread forms of reactionary violence, and the people of Peru do not have the remnants of socialist progress that holds starvation down in China. Peru is officially "democratic," but what does this do for the people there? They have studied the very real gains that the Chinese made under socialism and see that it is the best alternative for Third World peoples suffering under imperialism.

Lenin, Stalin and Mao all knew that the advance to communism could not be made in an environment of capitalist encirclement. The reason to build socialism in one country is to create a base area for world revolution. "Live and let live" simply does not apply when bourgeois democracy relies on parasitism. Why should Amerika be "free" to maintain world hegemony propped up by militarism all over the globe?

Amerika does have the luxury of maintaining more freedom for "its own." But at what price? Should we cheerlead

the fact that all citizens can choose between tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum on a ballot when those trying to go to the polls in Third World countries are gunned down by the CIA?

Your contention that governments are no more than the sum of their individual leaders is a form of idealist reductionism. There are no individuals in existence separate from a social structure, and so there can be no cross-cultural analysis of "human nature" (as you suggest with your statement that "absolute power corrupts absolutely"). Leaders act the way that they do out of a combination of their wills as they exist in a social context. There cannot be a determination of the way that leaders (or other individuals) will behave in societies not yet created. Humans have the capacity to challenge the concept of leadership and the personality cult, as the Chinese did during the Cultural Revolution.

The comparison between Amerika and China is grossly unfair. To analyze Amerika fairly, it is necessary to consider not only its domestic oppression, but its international oppression. The Mexican workers making Amerikan auto parts for a dollar a day are not Amerikans so their superexploitation apparently does not concern you. However, the only way that they can stop working for dirt wages and start being self-sufficient is by winning a war of self-determination against Amerika. In your idealistic arguments, you fail to take responsibility for the oppression all over the globe with the same argument that justified the slave-owning pigs who wrote the Constitution: "those people don't count."

Right now, we are in a period of light repression, but revolutionaries do not count on maintaining bourgeois privileges for long. The Black Panther Party published a newspaper, but how real was their "freedom of speech?" They were infiltrated by the FBI, terrorized, and murdered in cold blood.

All of the points you mention in praise of Amerikan bourgeois democracy were gained through struggle. Why is it better to "provide for sexual harassment" than to abolish the patriarchal society that causes it? When you say that the "benefits of the Constitution" have been given to "the common people," MIM wonders who you are talking about. The Third World has the majority of the world's people, and they certainly are not so protected. Internal colonies, as well, do not have full citizenship. For example, Blacks are usually tried by Amerikans, not by their peers as the Constitution ostensibly guarantees.

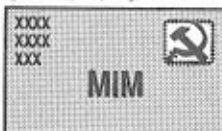
What do you think that the Amerikan public will declare it has "had enough" of? Enough of parasitism, maintaining a standard of living many times that of most of the world maintained through superexploitation? MIM does not expect them to "have had enough" any time soon, which is why it supports the struggles of oppressed nations (and individual Amerikans willing to commit class and nation suicide) against Amerika.

You are right that the system "works" for Amerikans for the most part. And you are right that MIM has "its own ends" in mind when working to change their way of life. Those ends are the liberation of the world's people from oppression by Amerika.

Correspondence with the Political Review Japan Committee (PRJC)

Dear Political Review Japan Committee,

Thank you for sending us copies of the Political Review (No. 38, 40, 42).



We were quite impressed to see a publication in English from Japan. We also seek to publish in more languages than our native language. I'm afraid none of us can write in Japanese. Our apologies.

The principles of anti-imperialism and anti-militarism were the top two principles in our organization's establishment. We are impressed with your coverage and work in connection to the Gulf War. We shall use it in our struggle. Currently, we are writing articles exposing social-democracy and democratic socialism. We are thankful that you pointed out the role of social-democracy and democratic socialism in Japan.

Our biggest disagreement is that we do not consider DPRK, Cuba and Vietnam "socialist" countries. Do you have any more literature on ideological and theoretical questions? How do you evaluate Mao Zedong? We do not think it is possible to understand the collapse of "socialism" without understanding that Gorbachev, Yeltsin, Alia, etc. were the bourgeois in the party.

You argue against the dictatorship of the party in place of the class in "The Present Stage of the International Communist Movement." (No. 42, p. 8) Rosa Luxemburg said something very similar, but do you have any evidence that dictatorship of the whole working class (as opposed to the party) works? It would seem to us that all of the "popular" socialist governments have failed in bringing about progress toward proletarian goals. Where in history do we see the success of uniting the class as apart from one united party? We agree with Mao that "ideological and political line is decisive." We uphold a science of revolution...

Have you written anything about the quantity of surplus-value extracted from the Third World? We believe that imperialist-nation workers are not exploited, but we have no evidence in the case of Japan.

Sincerely,
Maoist Internationalist Movement
(1993)

MIM wrote the following letter October 9, 1994 in response to Political Review 45, Spring/Summer 1994.

Clearly we have some disagreements regarding Maoism and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. From a quick glance, your political line appears to be a reiteration of Kautskyite revisionism. If, despite our differences, someone in your office would like to help MIM, we would appreciate any English-to-Japanese translation work you could provide....

In struggle,
MIM

PRJC Responds: We, the PRJC, received letters from MIM last year and this year. We expressed our standpoints to MIM in the article of this issue. [Reprinted below. —MIM]

We responded to their letter with two main points.

First: the difference between the dictatorship of the party and the dictatorship of the class.

We think that the dictatorship of the class is different from the dictatorship of the party.

1. In other words, to grasp state power by the class is different from to grasp state power by the party. We admit in certain conditions it is necessary for the party to grasp state power directly. But in principle, the people led by the working class should grasp state power, to say more precisely to destroy the bourgeoisie's state power and to establish

their own soviet power. People are the master of the revolution. The party is not.

2. We think the working class's dictatorship means the working class should be the leading class of the revolution. That it means proletarian democracy should be completed among the people in one hand, on another hand, the majority of peoples should control the minority bourgeoisies to erase privileges. As the political system, the party's line should be realized through proletarian democracy and the class's dictatorship, not by the party's dictatorship.

3. In the history, for example in Chinese liberation war against Japanese militarism, Mao Zedong and the party leadership instructed the party to take only one third of all the leading posts of administrative bodies in the soviet areas. Mao wanted the people in the liberated areas to take parts in the revolution more actively. In the Russian Revolution, Lenin

'In principle, the people led by the working class should grasp state power. People are the master of the revolution. The party is not.'

instructed the party inside Russia to strengthen the soviet power and he said not to force the soviet to take the party line in his letter to the comrade. Of course, we know these examples are not always right. It depends on the concrete conditions. However, we can say it is most important that the people's soviet should grasp state power as the class dictatorship through the party's support, not through the party's dictatorship.

4. The reason why we wrote "the dictatorship of the proletariat is not the same thing as the dictatorship of the party," is as the first lesson of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the party had grasped state power and the party had led all. The party's leadership and state's administrative leadership were the same. There was no room for the soviets, that is, people's power, to work actively. Of course we admit it was necessary for the party to take a big role in the administration under the state of war and containment of the imperialists. But the direction of the party is to strengthen the people's power in the soviet always. Because the people are the master of the revolution. When the party thinks the dictatorship of the proletariat always as the dictatorship of the party, the party will meet a dangerous situation to change to a big bureaucratic organ for the people. The Chinese Cultural Revolution is one of the total war against a big bureaucratic party. But that method of the revolution was not constructive.

5. We have a confidence when the party has the power of self-revolution among the people, the party can lead the people revolution. We think that by the self-revolution of the party, the party support to unite the people's struggles and the people's power to the victory, this is the role of the party....

Second: On Kautskyite revisionism

1. We can't get the concrete idea of MIM's criticism on this matter. We write some points here. Please tell us your concrete ideas.

2. We do not think Kautsky's super-imperialism theory is correct. Because the conflicts and contradictions among imperialists last and become bigger and bigger.

3. But, we must consider about the specialities of present imperialisms. One is capital can move freely in an instant all over the world. The second is imperialists use world organizations, for example U.N., IMF, World Bank, and GATT-WTO, etc., to dominate all over the world, especially after the collapse of USSR this tendency appears more clear. And United States is the head of this domination as the sole superpower.

COMMENT: A LETTER TO THE MIM

This letter was printed by PRJC in Political Review 46, p.

8. Point 1 of this letter was a reprint of MIM's "What is MIM?" box. See page 2 of this journal or any issue of MIM Notes.

2. Our viewpoints

First, we fully support the MIM's direction to create anti-imperialist united front with revolutionary forces over the world, fighting with American imperialists who are dominating the world and maintaining world hegemony. We support the MIM are fighting inside United States to end the oppression of all groups over groups. The United States and other imperialists are utilizing international organizations like the IMF, the World Bank and the U.N. to control over the world. The imperialist states restrict the national sovereignty of other countries in the name of "new world order." In this world situation, we have one misgiving that each country's revolutionaries and people are forced to be isolated and to keep the priority on the own nationalist profits than other. It is the time to strengthen international unity and fight against imperialist

domination. Of course every revolutionary forces have as their first task to unite the people in their homeland, depending on the people to overthrow their own dominating classes' state power. At the same time, each national revolutionary forces have another internationalist task to fight against imperialist forces together with other anti-imperialist forces. We oppose ... minimiz [ing] our task only to national struggles.

It is very important for all revolutionary forces to learn each other on their summaries of their struggles and to share same idea of the revolution and to create a new International.

Second, we support fully the MIM to accomplish the revolution through armed struggles. The imperialists are eager to crash and dissolve revolutionary armed organizations. Imperialists are seeking to control over the people and strengthen imperialist alliance, concentrating to attack on the armed forces who have ability to undermine the state power. Imperialists put the border line between armed struggles and political struggles. They accuse all armed struggles as "terrorism" and they are trying to gain over the forces who want to negotiate with them.

We hope to accomplish people's revolution peacefully without armed struggles. But history has taught us reality. The bourgeoisie never abandons their state power by themselves. We must be ready in any case to defend the people and to overthrow the state power by force. It is significant important to keep armed struggle line to realize the people's revolution, in the time when imperialists are trying to disarm all revolutionary forces.

Third, we agree with MIM on its idea that the potential exists for capitalist restoration after the socialist revolution.

**'The Chinese
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We think the revolution needs not only to seize political power to change the social structure, but also to change human relationships and cultures. Therefore, we are requested to continue all-out revolution from the beginning to the end. Even before seizing political power, people need to carry out social cultural revolution to change their lives and ideas in the human-relation to complete people's democracy. In other words, it is the revolution for the people to be the master of the society. This object shall be realized only through continuous revolution to complete people's democracy. Without continuous revolution, there are dangerous possibilities that privileged classes will dominate over the people. Therefore we also think the idea of continuous revolution after the seizing power is very important.

3. Our questions and proposals to the MIM.

We have three questions to the MIM. First, on the historical estimation of the collapse of socialist states, we have a question with the idea that after the deaths of Stalin and Mao, socialist USSR and China had deteriorated to non-socialist states. Second, we have another question on the idea that "the North American white working class is primarily a non-revolutionary worker elite at this time." Third, we have a last question on the estimation of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

We have a great deal of unity with MIM, even if we have different opinions on some matters. We have a confidence that we and MIM can fight together against imperialist forces to strengthen anti-imperialist fronts, aiming to create a new International. We hope to strengthen the unity of international anti-imperialist fronts, exchanging each lessons of struggles.

FIGHT TOGETHER!

From the Publisher [of Political Review]

To our readers:

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

As we promised you, in this issue we introduce readers' letters and our response. We are eager to receive your opinions and criticisms, which are very useful for our self-revolution. We hope also our lessons would be beneficial for you.

PRJC's stand-points are as follows:

1. We stand on cooperation with all anti-imperialist forces. We fight against U.S. and Japanese imperialist forces first. And we do support international people's solidarity fully against imperialist domination.

2. We stand on self-reliance of the revolution. We rely on our people firmly and take all responsibility of the revolution through our self-revolution.

3. We stand on equal relation with others, regardless of its

size or history.

4. We stand on exchanging with and learning from others' experiences to strengthen international anti-imperialist forces.

We, the PRJC, will continue publishing "Political Review" on these standpoints.

MIM responds: Thank you for responding to our letters. Thank you also for printing our basic statement of principles in Political Review (PR) 46. We would appreciate it if you would print our address in the next issue of Political Review so that your readers can correspond with us directly, particularly in regard to our basic statement of principles.

We apologize for being so brief in our second letter. Since you have now expressed an interest in discussing theoretical questions with MIM, we will gladly go into greater detail.

SOCIALISM AND REVISIONISM

In our first letter to you, in response to PR 38, 40 and 42, we said, "Our biggest disagreement is that we do not consider DPRK, Cuba and Vietnam 'socialist' countries." In response to PR 45 and 46, we should add that it is also incorrect to refer to the USSR and East European states as having recently been "socialist." (PR 45, p. 1, cols. 1, 5) We believe that the USSR was socialist from 1917 until Stalin's death in 1953. We hold the Maoist position, which is that a new bourgeoisie arose within the ruling Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This new bourgeoisie seized power after Stalin's death. The Soviet Union under Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev was state-capitalist and social-imperialist, meaning socialist in words but imperialist in deeds. MIM distributes

For ten years
the Cultural
Revolution
succeeded in
defending socialist
development
from capitalist
restoration.

many books which explain this point in greater detail.

In PR 45, p. 1, col. 5 and p. 4, col. 1, you say that the USSR deviated from anti-imperialism "under the Gorbachev line, the call of 'peaceful co-existence all over the world.'" MIM points out that the line of "peaceful coexistence" with U.S. imperialism was first raised by Khrushchev.

In PR 45, p. 1, col. 4, you directly criticize the Maoist line on the post-Stalin USSR: "But the Chinese party and China themselves, through the internal fighting of the Chinese leadership, had decided to regard the USSR as a strategic enemy by the theory of the 'Socialist-imperialism,' and started to face the new stage of foreign policy by trying to rebuild the relationship between China and USA." Again, we distribute a lot of literature demonstrating that the USSR after Stalin was imperialist. For the sake of brevity here, we will simply point to Eritrea and Afghanistan as examples of Soviet imperialist warfare and to Cuba as an example of a Soviet neocolony, whose dependence on its mother country has proven to be its down-

fall.

Once one recognizes that the USSR was imperialist, one need only understand that the USSR was threatening China's borders to understand why China would seek an alliance with the imperialist U.S. Materialists understand the need for proletarians to make alliances with non-proletarian forces. Idealists influenced consciously or unconsciously by Trotskyism do not share this understanding. This brings us to the question of the United Front.

STALIN AND THE UNITED FRONT

MIM says that the Soviet Union under Stalin was socialist. We uphold Mao Zedong's assessment that Stalin was 70% correct. One of Stalin's correct moves was to build a United Front against fascism. For more on this point, see MIM Theory 6, "The Stalin Issue," available from MIM for \$5 U.S. Trotskyists criticize the United Front as an unnecessary collaboration with imperialists. Trotskyists have never held state power, let alone used it to defeat a fascist army. Their criticisms are idealist, not materialist. That is, they compare ideas to practices, while Marxists use the materialist method of comparing practices to practices. Trotskyist idealism would be laughable if it were not deadly. Trotskyism objectively supports fascism by opposing the impure alliances necessary to fight fascism. Similarly, Trotskyism objectively supports imperialism by opposing the impure alliances necessary to overthrow imperialism.

During World War II, the USSR was the world's only socialist country. Furthermore, the prospects for revolution in the imperialist countries were not good. So Comrade Stalin was correct to see the defense of the USSR as the key task for socialists worldwide between 1941 and 1943. His strategy was a success which helped pave the way for successful revolutions in China and numerous other colonies.

So we disagree with PR 45, p. 1, col. 2-3, which says:

"1.... After the victory of the Russian revolution, the USSR had become the fatherland of revolution, and all the party worked under the call of "To defend the USSR and to realise the revolution in each mother country," as the international duty. These unities of the liberation-fighters under the common circumstances grew up many members of the "Anti-Fascism United Front" who had fought for the freedom, independence, and peace, with the idea of self-sacrifice.

"2. Contrary to these struggles organized will with the idea and thought of self-sacrifice, the USSR leadership as the head of world party had badly led the internationalism to the one-sided policy for defending the USSR as the fatherland of revolution, and then couldn't lead the development of the international communist movement.

"As the historical reality of "the USSR first over all," as well known result of the agreement about the map-division of Post-World War II, designated by the name of "Yalta-Potsdam Agreement" for the interest of USSR first, the guideline of then leader Mr. Stalin had been resulted to

force the other nations to be largely sacrificed, for example, on the settlement of the Palestinian issue and Chinese issue, (This settlement of Chinese issue designated by Stalinism has caused to the USSR-China conflict later).... The deterioration of then USSR party, leading the sacrifice of other nations for their own nation, had changed the character of internationalism contrary to its nature."

First, "to defend the USSR and to realise the revolution in each mother country," was a good slogan for, say, the 1920s. And we still should fight for the day when the world tide of revolution will reach the imperialist mother countries. But it should be understood that the failure of the Russian revolution to spread to Germany or other imperialist countries was not due to a betrayal of internationalism by Lenin or Stalin. In 1995, we can see that the center of world revolution has been the Third World colonies, and we can see why. The First World working classes, especially since World War I and World War II, are not objectively revolutionary. This is because the imperialists bribe imperialist-country workers with a share of the superprofits they extract from the Third World. For more on this question, see MIM Theory 1, *A White Proletariat?*, available from MIM for \$4 U.S.

Second, as stated above, MIM thinks that Stalin and the Comintern were correct to recognize that the defense of the Soviet Union was the principal task for socialists between the invasion in 1941 and 1943. We disagree with PR's statement that this policy was "one-sided." And while PR says that with this United Front policy, the USSR "then couldn't lead the development of the international communist movement," we believe that history shows the opposite. The international communist movement was in fine shape at the end of World War II, thanks to Stalin's leadership.

In practice, during World War II, only for two years was the principal contradiction between the socialist camp and the imperialists, thanks to the correct policy of the Comintern. The problem of countries that did not make revolution in that period had to do with the material conditions and lack of vanguard leadership in those countries. It had very little to do with Comintern errors.

Third, MIM believes that the Yalta-Potsdam Agreement, like the Hitler-Stalin pact, was a necessary agreement with the imperialists by the socialist USSR. The Hitler-Stalin pact bought time for the USSR to build up its fighting capacity for the ultimate Soviet-led defeat of the Nazis. Such agreements were necessary in the past and likely will be necessary in the future.

After the war, Stalin said that the war was against German fascism from the beginning. This meant that the Allies during World War II were allies all along. What Stalin said was aimed at making peace with the British and American imperialists by making the most of their old alliance and the bonds between the Soviet people and the peoples of the United States and England. Stalin realized that again time was on the Soviet side and it would be difficult for the imperialists to mobilize their

peoples for war against the Soviet Union, which had just been their ally. He made the most of this, but many communists now have the mistaken impression that World War II was always fought on a democratic, anti-fascist and anti-German basis.

Fourth, Comrade Stalin did not "sacrifice" Palestine. Presumably you are referring to the fact that Stalin recognized Israel. Stalin did not create the Israeli settler state. He merely recognized its existence when its existence became indisputable.

Fifth, Comrade Stalin certainly did not "sacrifice" China. His correct moves in World War II paved the way for the most radical revolution this world has seen.

Your criticisms of Stalin echo Trotsky's condemnation of Stalin's correct policy of building and defending "socialism in one country" as a betrayal of internationalism. Ironically, movements in the tradition of Stalin and Mao have made revolution in many countries—including increasingly-successful Maoist-led revolutions in Peru and the Philippines today, while the Trotskyists can at best take credit for helping make revolution in one country before turning against it.

THE THEORY OF THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES

PR 45, p. 5, col. 4, from the Japanese Red Army (JRA):

"In the other case, there is another lesson as the mistake of the Chinese Revolution. It was concentrating to develop the economy only by the ideological revolution of people's consciousness, though, in the USSR and Eastern Europe, it was tried to develop the production ability by mobilizing the workers' will by the economic impulse rather than by the ideological change of people's consciousness. In that Chinese case, it was tried to seek the economic development through the policy to set up the People's Enterprise as the politico-economic and social commune of the society for mobilizing the peoples' creativeness.

"But, as the problem in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, it was caused into the social confusion through making the fierce contradiction against the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party as the capitalist influence by power based on the youth and students, and invited the violent struggle all over the society. This leftist radicalism had been enlarged into the destruction of the intelligentsia class and the fruit of social tradition. And, on the contrary to its theoretical consciousness, it became to the suppressive power against the people. As a result, Mr. Deng Xiaoping would come to power again, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was liquidated but without overcoming the problem. In all, this Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution resulted only in internal fighting in the Chinese Communist Party, and couldn't mobilize the innovation of people....

"These problems [the Cultural Revolution and the Cambodian Pol Pot regime, which MIM discusses elsewhere] give us the great lessons that communism and socialism will never be realized without the steps of social development, and the problem is caused by the lack of abili-

ty for looking back the difference between the reality and the subjective idea. These problems are based on the idea that the party is universal and can never make mistakes.

"Under the objective conditions in that time, we can say, these peoples' struggles should be combined together with the revolutions in the imperialist countries, for getting the great step for the development.

"In China, under the party leadership, it was thought to be possible to develop from the undeveloped stage to socialism by a step. But, it was clarified that if the party can't have its vector to revolutionize itself, it will be controlled by the spontaneous occurrence in each step of development....

"As our lessons, through the study from precept of the USSR case as the problem of stiffness by the centralized planned economy, though they tried to create the new development by the self-control system or mobilizing the people's subjective power for their ideal, they couldn't overcome the case of USSR economy by the limit of undeveloped society."

MIM distributes a number of works supporting the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). Two good ones to start with are MIM Theory 4, "A Spiral Trajectory: The Failure and Success of Communist Development" and William Hinton's *Turning Point in China*. Each is sold by MIM for US\$6.

To build socialism, it is necessary to know the difference between socialism and capitalism and the difference between Marxism and revisionism. This important question is at the heart of MIM's disagreement with the JRA and PRJC about the GPCR. Mao Zedong learned from the experience of the USSR that a new bourgeoisie can arise within a ruling communist party. In the case of the USSR, this new bourgeoisie seized state power under the leadership of Khrushchev. In China, the new bourgeoisie was led by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Mao launched the GPCR in order to unleash the revolutionary energies of the masses against Liu and Deng's plan to restore capitalism. For ten years (1966-1976), the GPCR succeeded in defending socialist development from capitalist restoration. While we disagree with your assertion that the GPCR was ultraleftist ("leftist radicalism," in your words), there was an ultraleft current in the GPCR which Mao criticized. Ultraleftism served rightism by diverting the masses' struggle away from the handful of "Party people in authority taking the capitalist road," focussing it instead on the masses themselves. This diversion ultimately paved the way for the seizure of state power by the new bourgeoisie, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping.

The charge that the GPCR "had been enlarged into the destruction of the intelligentsia class" is a charge MIM deals with in "What is MIM?", available from MIM for \$2 U.S.

The statement that, "In all, this Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution resulted only in internal fighting in the Chinese Communist Party, and couldn't mobilize the innovation of people" is incorrect. While the GPCR was a fight internal to

the Chinese Communist Party, it was a fight between socialists and capitalists, between Marxists and revisionists. Furthermore, the GPCR did mobilize the innovation of the people. More precisely, the GPCR defended socialist rule, while socialist rule mobilized the innovation of the people. Such innovation revolutionized Chinese agriculture, industry, education and health care. The result was that life-spans doubled from 1949 to 1976.

The JRA/PRJC's idea that "communism and socialism will never be realized without the steps of social development" is what prompted us to say that PRJC's "political line, appears to be "a reiteration of Kautskyite revisionism." What we were referring to was this "productivity first theory," also known as the "theory of the productive forces." This theory has been shared by all the major revisionists, including Kautsky and Bernstein of the Second International, Trotsky, Bukharin, Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao.

According to the "productivity first theory,":

"Capitalist countries with underdeveloped industries, colonies and satellite countries must first 'develop' their productive forces. Without highly developed productive forces, the proletariat could not wage revolution. This was an early version of the 'productivity first theory' in the international communist movement. This fallacy treated social transformation purely as an issue of the development of the productive forces. It completely ignored the effect of the productive forces and the effect of the superstructure on the economic basis...."

"In the proletarian revolution of Russia, people like Trotsky and Bukharin again picked up on this worn 'productivity first theory' in a vain attempt to oppose the Russian proletariat's triumphant advance against the capitalist system. They insisted that economically backward Russia was not qualified to establish socialism. This type of nonsense was soundly criticized by Lenin [who] asked: 'Why can't we first use revolutionary means to attain the preconditions for achieving this certain level and catch up with the people of other countries on the basis of worker-peasant political power and the Soviet system?'"

"In the course of China's democratic and socialist revolutions, successive leaders of the revisionist line, from Ch'en Tu-hsiu to Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao, all borrowed the reactionary 'productivity first theory' from the Second International revisionists and Trotskyites. They said that China's economy was backward and that the proletariat could seize political power only after capitalism was highly developed. This in effect would eliminate China's revolution and keep China in her semicolonial and semifeudal status. Chairman Mao has countered this position with this observation: 'Without political reform, all productive forces are doomed to be destroyed. It is true for agriculture and also true for industry.'..."

"Chairman Mao said: 'True enough, productive forces, practice, and economic substructure generally appear to play the determining role. Whoever denies this fact is not qualified to be a materialist. But under conditions, produc-

tion relations, theory, and superstructure also revolve and show their important and determining role. This must also be accepted.' The history of the international communist movement has demonstrated that the line of demarcation between Marxism and revisionism in the proletarian struggle for political power lies in whether one persistently follows the dialectical materialist theory of the unity of the production relations and the productive forces and the unity of the superstructure and the economic substructure or whether one pushes the reactionary 'productivity first theory.'" (Fundamentals of Political Economy, Shanghai People's Press, 1974, pp. 229-230. Available from MIM for \$16 U.S.)

When we compared your version of the theory of the productive forces to Kautsky, our intent was to show that these "new ideas" are in fact old and tired. The more appropriate comparison, however, is to Trotsky. Trotsky would agree with the following from the JRA/PRJC: "Under the objective conditions in that time, we can say, these peoples' struggles should be combined together with the revolutions in the imperialist countries, for getting the great step for the development."

The problem is that wishing for imperialist-country revolution won't make it happen. The fact that the center of revolution has been in the Third World colonies is a result of material conditions, not of revolutionaries' subjective will. The fact of the matter is that the working classes of the imperialist countries have been bribed by the imperialists, and thus are not a revolutionary vehicle at this time. On this point, see MIM Theory 1, A White Proletariat?, available from MIM for \$4 U.S. It is in fact worse to uphold Trotsky's great-nation-chauvinist theories today than it was in Trotsky's time. Five decades later, it is clear that the center of world revolution is in the colonies and neocolonies.

On the question of the USSR, it is simply not true that "they couldn't overcome the case of USSR economy by the limit of undeveloped society." Furthermore, it is precisely the centralized planned economy which you criticize as being too "stiff" which allowed the USSR to advance, under Stalin's leadership, from being an underdeveloped, economically backward country, to being one of the world's two superpowers and the leading force in the military campaign against fascism.

THE PARTY AND THE CLASS

MIM does not believe that the question of working-class dictatorship should be seen as different from the dictatorship of the party of the working-class. We do recognize that the potential exists for a new bourgeoisie to arise within a ruling communist party. When this new bourgeoisie seizes state power, communists are duty-bound to form a new proletarian party. But as long as the party remains proletarian, the party is the instrument for working-class rule. Even the example you cite regarding Maoist China confirms this point, by showing that party leadership can be used to incorporate the toiling masses in their revolution. You acknowledge that "in certain

condition there is necessary to grasp state power directly by the party." We ask, where in history have the workers and peasants made socialism without party leadership? Your formulation here has an idealistic anarchist flavor. On this point, we refer you to Lenin's "What is to Be Done?"

FOCOISM

We wish to clarify that while MIM knows that the end of the oppression of groups over groups can only be achieved by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle, we are not currently engaged in armed struggle, nor do we recommend armed struggle now in the imperialist countries. We do not know PRJC's stance on this strategic question, but raise this issue because the PRJC gives a lot of space to the Japanese Red Army (JRA), which MIM understands to be an armed-struggle-now group.

A NEW INTERNATIONAL

The PRJC puts forward the idea of creating a new international on the basis of anti-imperialism. This is not pressing on MIM's agenda. The reason for this is that while the principle of anti-imperialism is a basis of unity we have with many organizations, including the PRJC, we seek to build a higher level of international unity than we currently have with many organizations, including the PRJC. We believe that the most pressing questions of the day are the questions of the capitalist nature of the post-Stalin USSR and post-Mao China, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and the non-revolutionary nature of the imperialist-country working-classes. An international with democratic centralism needs to have unity on these questions before MIM would be correct to join it.

POINTS OF UNITY

Despite our differences, MIM has unity with the PRJC on certain points. These include anti-imperialism, internationalism, communism, the exchange of ideas, and a correct criticism of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The correct criticism of the PLO is found in PR 45, p. 3, col. 3. The criticism is written by the Japanese Red Army (JRA). It reads in part:

"In '92, for getting the own status for the liberation struggle and foundation of own state, under the new situation after the Gulf War, the Palestinian, as an Arab state, also chose its new policy to exchange the occupied land for peace, within the framework of Arab-Israeli comprehensive peace settlement of so-called 'land for peace.' It doesn't mean the immediate foundation of a Palestinian state, but an autonomy of a smaller part of their homeland than was divided by the UN resolution in the past. It means that this 'peace' is a door opening to the neo-colonialist plot for the 21st century, controlling the Palestinian by the use of the Palestinian."

Another correct stance taken against imperialism, principally U.S. and Japanese imperialism. We do not think, however, that the PRJC will be fully equipped to fight imperialism

until it learns to recognize that the post-Stalin USSR was an imperialist power, despite its socialist rhetoric.

The PRJC has demonstrated its internationalism by printing an English-language publication and by exchanging ideas with MIM. We are working to increase our non-English language and international work as well. We are glad to exchange ideas with communists and others everywhere, because the process of political struggle makes us all sharper. To this end, we would appreciate it if PRJC would send us the public mailing addresses of other Japanese organizations which are to the left of the Social Democrats. We will gladly reciprocate by sending our list of U.S. groups to the left of the Democratic Party.

Finally, we consider the PRJC to be communists, because they "support [the] end [of] the oppression of groups over groups." (PR 46, p. 8, col. 2.) Despite imperialist propaganda to the contrary, anyone who opposes all oppression of groups over groups is a communist. Our disagreements with PRJC and other communists are disagreements about how to attain our shared goal of ending all oppression.

—January 15, 1995

The PRJC can be reached at: The Political Review Japan Committee, c/o Unita., 1-52 Jinbo Cho, Kanda, Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo, JAPAN

The PRJC asks for one U.S. dollar for their newspaper. We recommend that our non-Japanese readers who can afford to do so send two U.S. dollars to help the PRJC cover the international postage.

We do not at all differ with the anarchists on the question of the abolition of the state as the *aim*. We maintain that, to achieve this aim, we must temporarily make use of the instruments, resources and methods of state power *against* the exploiters, just as the temporary dictatorship of the oppressed class is necessary for the abolition of classes.

—V.I. Lenin

The State and Revolution, 1917

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Attempts at the Ideal

The Civil War: How Spain Was Lost

by MC44

MIM often challenges anarchists to produce evidence that anarchism ever liberated anyone from oppression, or offered a concrete alternative to the gains of communist revolution. Spain in the late 1930s, before the Republic fell to fascism, is the closest thing to an historical "moment" of anarchist leadership or practice (though significantly, not state power). Here MIM evaluates the "anarchist alternative" in Spain through a review of anarchist Emma Goldman's contemporaneous writings on the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). As Goldman reveals, even the best anarchists would rather see the revolution fail — and the masses continue to suffer — than see strategic decisions such as the united front violate the purity of the struggle, *even if those decisions are the best way to ensure its victory*. The Spanish experience clearly shows anarchism to be an ideological utopia, and not a viable alternative to communism.

The Spanish anarchist movement dates to the mid-nineteenth century, but this article is concerned with those few years leading up to the civil war, and the three years of the war. At stake was the fascist threat of Germany, Italy and Japan on the one hand, and socialist construction in the Soviet Union and the impending victory of the Chinese Communist Party against Japanese imperialism on the other hand. As MIM wrote about extensively in "The Stalin Issue" (MIM Theory 6), Stalin and the Soviet Union called for an international united front against fascism. How the united front played out in Spain reveals the fundamental differences between anarchism and communism, and particularly the fundamental incorrectness of anarchism.

Soon after a coalition of anarchists, socialists, communists and bourgeois republicans came to power in Spain in 1936, General Francisco Franco, aided domestically by the Catholic Church and internationally by fascist Germany and Italy, led a right-wing military coup against the Republic. The Soviet Union alone aided the besieged Spanish government, and part of the united front strategy had included soliciting the support of the bourgeois democracies against fascism as early as 1934. But when the 1936 insurrection began, anarchists within the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo - Federación Anarquista Ibérica (CNT-FAI) wanted to simultaneously wage struggle against



Emma Goldman's account of the greatest anarchist movement in history offers clear lessons on the futility of idealist strategies.

the fascists and launch all out social revolution in Spain. This meant expropriating the entire bourgeoisie, including those sectors that opposed fascism. Spanish Communists, adhering to Stalin's correct line on the united front, opposed expropriating the land of those forces who could be united to defeat fascism. The Communists thus opposed the premature anarchist-run agricultural collectives and the ultraleft military struggle against the Republican government itself.

The Communists correctly understood that the principal contradiction necessitated joining forces with those petit-bourgeois segments of Spain, including landowners, who could be temporarily united in spite of conflicting political interests in order to defeat fascism. The Communists therefore did not want to see landowners deprived of their

land by the anarchists collectives since it was crucial to the united front to placate those forces that were ultimately the lesser enemy. The dogmatic purism of the anarchists blinded them to the big picture that the leftist forces had to put aside their political differences in order to create a stronger and more effective struggle against fascism. Anarchists were content to see local collectives and local political action, rather than organized national and international alliances.

Emma Goldman, who met with CNT representatives at the Red Trade Union International congresses of July 1920 and 1921, visited Spain in 1928-9 as a tourist (1); and then again from 1936-38.(2) She represented the anarchist position on social revolution well in 1936 when she wrote:

"... I realize that armed defense is imperative against the armed attack of the [Fascists]. But I am much more interested in the constructive work our comrades in Catalonia are doing, the socializing of the land, the organization of the industries. They may not be permitted to do so for long. But if they should be defeated they will yet have shown the first example in history *how Revolutions should be made.*"(3)

In other words, more important than the fate of the Spanish masses, or the rest of the world facing the fascist threat, is the demonstration of how a Revolution should be made, even if that revolution is unsustainable. From as early as 1934, Goldman was willing to trade on the welfare of the Spanish masses if it meant conceding anything to communism:

"It would be nothing short of a calamity if our comrades in Spain were to affiliate themselves with the Socialists and the Communists. I am willing to concede the Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalists may not prove strong enough to withstand the tide of Fascism. But past experience has proven that Anarchists have fared no better from Socialists, and

certainly much worse from Bolsheviks, than they are likely to get if the Monarchy should be returned to Spain. ... [I]t is more important that the Anarchists should stand their grounds and remain true to their ideals than they should pave the way for Socialist or Communist dictatorship."(4)

Goldman maintained this ideological purism — continuing to equate Fascism and Communism, levelling charges against the Soviet and Spanish Communists of effectively aiding Franco — right through 1936 and throughout the war, when the threat of fascist insurrection was present and palpable in Spain. In 1937, she wrote that anarchists:

"were against [WWI] and some of us went to prison for our opposition to it. Yet, we immediately rallied to the support of the anti-Fascist war. We did so because we consider Fascism the greatest menace in the world, the poisonous contagion which disintegrates all political and social life. The Fascist countries as well as the Russian Dictatorship certainly prove this."(5)

Here Goldman seems to have unity with the Communists, and with the thrust of the united front. But her equation of German, Italian and Japanese fascism with the socialist Soviet Union shows that her definition of fascism is nothing more than the absence of an idealized, and hence bourgeois, "freedom." Her political idealism in the face of fascism amounted to support for fascism (at the same time she accused the Communists of doing the same thing), because she refused to acknowledge and support the one genuine alternative to fascism.

Conversely, in 1937, Mao Zedong grasped the crucial importance of the united front to the struggle of the world's most populous country against imperialism and fascism, and he wrote to the Spanish government:

"We, the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese Red Army, and the Chinese Soviets, regard the war fought by the Spanish Republican Government as the most sacred war in the world. This war is being waged not only for the life of the Spanish people, but also for the oppressed peoples of the world, because the Spanish Government is resisting German and Italian fascism, which, with their Spanish accomplices, are destroying the culture, civilization, and justice of the world. The Spanish Government and the Spanish people are fighting the German and Italian fascists, who are in league with and giving support to the Japanese fascist invaders of China in the Far East."(6)



THE COLLECTIVES

Maintaining worker collectives established by the CNT-FAI versus maintaining the united front was a central conflict between anarchism and communism. Goldman reveals the hedonistic side of anarchism when she derides the achievements of Stalin and lauds a collectively run champagne vineyard and bottling plant. In 1936, she wrote to her niece of this collective:

"The [CNT-affiliated] manager ... was quite surprised when I asked him whether the workers will have a chance to drink the champagne. 'Of course,' he said. 'What is the Revolution for if not to give the workers what they never enjoyed?' Well, let's hope this will really be so. ... One thing is certain, the workers in Russia will not get a drop of the champagne. Here they can already get it."(7)

Typical of anarchist inability to balance forces and think long-term, the yardstick for measuring the success of revolution becomes the opportunity to drink champagne — now! This cry for worker consumption of champagne reveals the inherently localized and limited vision of anarchism. Goldman was concerned with lifestyle benefits for those workers who happened to work at that vineyard. It is this short-sighted and self-interested vision that makes anarchism ultimately a failing policy for the liberation of oppressed peoples.

Of course, Goldman did praise collectivization efforts in other industries as well. Frank Mintz estimates that there were 1,865 collectives in industry, agriculture, exchange and services, involving 1.2-1.6 million workers.(8) According to French anarchist and observer Gaston Leval, during the years of 1936-1939:

"Very quickly more than 60% of the land was collectively cultivated by the peasants themselves, without landlords, without bosses, and without instituting capitalist competition to spur production. In almost all the industries, factories, mills, workshops, transportation services, public services, and utilities, the rank and file workers, their revolutionary committees, and their syndicates reorganized and administered production, distribution, and public services without capitalists, high salaried managers, or the authority of the state."(9)

Of course, were it not for the relative freedoms enjoyed under the republic, relative to the monarchy and the reactionary Gil Robles regime (1934-36) — under which 30,000 CNT members were imprisoned (10) — such admirable organizing would not have been possible. So while the state may not have administered this social revolution, it was the class character of the state that afforded this opportunity. Moreover, one of the central demands of the popular front government — amnesty for all political prisoners — undoubtedly helped the organization of the worker and peasant to page 29 ...

People of Spain, Comrades in arms:

We, the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese Red Army, and the Chinese Soviets, regard the war fought by the Spanish Republican Government as the most sacred war in the world. This war is being waged not only for the life of the Spanish people, but also for the oppressed peoples of the world, because the Spanish Government is resisting German and Italian fascism, which, with their Spanish accomplices, are destroying the culture, civilization, and justice of the world. The Spanish Government and the Spanish people are fighting the German and Italian fascists, who are in league with and giving support to the Japanese fascist invaders of China in the Far East. ... Were it not for the support received from German and Italian fascism, Japanese fascism could not, as it is now doing, attack us like a mad dog ...

We do not believe that the struggle of the Chinese people can be separated from your struggle in Spain. The Communist Party of China is supporting and encouraging you, the Spanish people, by struggling against Japanese fascism. The Communist Party of China, the Chinese Soviets, the Chinese Red Army, and the Chinese people are greatly moved by your defence of Madrid and by your victories on the northern and southern fronts. Each day our press here in the Soviet regions publishes reports and articles about your heroic struggle. ... We firmly believe that the unity of your various parties in the People's Front is the basis for your final victory...

We know that your victory will directly aid us in our fight against Japanese fascism. Your cause is our cause. We read with emotion of the International Volunteers organized by people from every land, and we are glad that there are Chinese and Japanese in their ranks. Many comrades of the Chinese Red Army also wish to go to Spain to join you. ... Were it not that we are face to face with the Japanese enemy, we would join you and take our place in your front ranks.

As many of you know, the Chinese Red Army has carried on a ceaseless and hard struggle for ten years. We fought without resources, through hunger and cold, with insufficient arms, ammunitions, and medical supplies, until at last we won our victories. We know that you and your army are also passing through great hardships such as we also have passed through, and we are certain that you will be victorious. Our ten years' struggle has proved that if a revolutionary people and their revolutionary army are not afraid of suffering, but continue to fight heroically and unyieldingly against the enemy, they will be victorious ...

— Mao Zedong
From a letter to the Spanish people
May 15, 1937

Stuart R. Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse Tung*. Praeger Publishers, New York: 1972. p. 423-24.

United Front

The International Brigades

The Spanish Civil War was the high point of First World communist parties' internationalism, as they followed the policy of the United Front to support the Spanish Republic against Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. With no support of capitalist governments, about 40,000 volunteers from France (10,000), Germany and Austria (5,000), Poland and Ukraine (5,000), Italy (3,350), and the United States (2,800) volunteered to fight against fascism in Spain, and many of them died in the losing effort.(1) Fifty-two countries were represented in all. One-third of the U.S. contingent died in the fighting.(2) The U.S. volunteers included more than 80 Black fighters (including one woman), as well as some other African volunteers.(3)

The 1937 Communist Party-USA adopted the slogan, "Ethiopia's fate is at stake on the battlefields of Spain," to help recruit Black radicals to the Spanish struggle and the United Front. Although many Black nationalists opposed the slogan, Black Communist Party members and their sympathizers supported it, they were infuriated by the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, and this was the closest they could get to fighting Mussolini. Black newspapers wrote articles in support, Black

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doctors, churches, and professional organizations raised money for the republic, buying a fully-equipped ambulance to send to Spain. Harlem musicians held benefit shows.

Of the Black volunteers who went to Spain — in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade — historian Robin D.G. Kelley writes: "Their unique background and experiences suggest that their decision to go to Spain was motivated largely by a political outlook that combined black nationalism and Pan-Africanism with a commitment to the Communists' vision of internationalism." Kelley describes one Black nurse who tried to volunteer with the Red Cross, but they didn't allow Blacks, so she went with the International Brigades. He adds:

"Although the Civil War gave African American brigade members a chance to get back at the fascists for the invasion of Ethiopia, black Lincolns also knew that Spain was a very different place. It was a nation experimenting in a radical democracy, where peasants, workers, and women had the right to vote, where Socialists and Communists held positions of power in government. More importantly, Spain

was one of the few examples of the Popular Front in practice."

Many more communists and supporters wanted to go fight, but U.S. law forbade citizens from joining foreign armies. Beginning in March 1937, all U.S. passports were stamped "NOT VALID FOR TRAVEL IN SPAIN." So the so-called policy of "nonintervention" by the United States in the Civil War actually meant preventing help to the Republic — and helping the fascists. Volunteers had to travel to France and sneak over the mountains into Spain (which Kelley compares to the Black journeys out of the slave South before the U.S. Civil War). Volunteers also had to pay their own way, which prevented many from going. And the Communist Party blocked some people from going because they were needed in the United States.

The Communist Party-USA in the 1930s correctly supported self-determination for the Black nation and upheld the Comintern policy of uniting all who could be united to defeat fascism.

After their defeat by Franco, with the tacit support of the Western capitalist governments, some Lincolns volunteered in the U.S. military to fight in WWII proper, even suffering demotion and segregation because of their "race." President Roosevelt rebuffed their effort to join the U.S. military as a brigade. While the American government allowed fascism to win in Spain, and appeased Hitler as Germany began conquering Europe, these heroes dedicated their lives to the defeat of fascism — internationally and in the United States.

—MC12



Salaria Kee tried to go to Spain with the Red Cross, but they didn't accept "Negroes." She joined the Lincoln Brigade.

Notes:

1. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*. Pantheon: New York, 1994, p. 160.
2. Peter N. Carroll, *The Odyssey Of The Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War*. Stanford University Press: 1994.
3. Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. Free Press: New York, 1994, chapter 6. The rest of this account is from this chapter.

from page 27 ...

ant collectives. (MIM does not deny the widespread support of the Spanish masses for the CNT-FAI. In 1936, the CNT-FAI did not tell people to abstain from the elections as they had in 1934, and this appears to have been decisive in the creation of a center-left republic.)

The CNT-FAI and their historian sympathizers accuse the government and its "Communist allies" of sabotaging the workers' collectives once the fascist counterrevolution had begun. Among the accusations are that the government:

"gave no financial aid to the industrial and agricultural collectives, leaving them to wither away for lack of capital. ... They tried to return the goods and land to their former owners, to sabotage by all means the transformation of the economy. At the same time they systematically refused to arm the CNT columns, while by intensive propaganda they turned public opinion against "the irresponsible, uncontrollable groups of the CNT-FAI."(11)

MIM upholds the necessity of criticism of incorrect lines; and we uphold the struggle among contending lines and strategies as the single best means of finding which ideology and practice will do the most to liberate the oppressed. When we study history, we must look for line struggles not only on paper but in practice. If the anarchists in Spain had a correct criticism of the Communists and the Republic, then their defenders would be telling the story of how the CNT-FAI struggled to make their own line victorious in practice. Instead the story is fundamentally one of obstructions by their "enemies."

Spanish landowners would not have supported the united front while their land was being expropriated. Sam Dolgoff attributes the government's land policies to psychological motives such as vengeance, and power for power's sake. This is to be expected from a proponent of an ideology which believes that, in the words of anarchist theoretician Isaac Puente: "Society is divided into two classes: those who rule and those who must obey."(12) In fact, however, the government had to unite all who could be united in the face of a very real fascist threat.

ANARCHISM AND LEADERSHIP

Evaluating the failure of the collectives in retrospect, Mintz cites as their drawbacks: short-sightedness; use of resources without planning, leading to "neo-capitalism," which led to having many bosses instead of one per collective; and a shortage of bookkeepers and no collation of statistics for "vertical and horizontal co-operation. [i.e. lack of planning — ed]"(13)

Ironically, when Goldman writes about international anarchist critics of the CNT-FAI (for participating in the united front, e.g.), she says that while she supports opposition to any kind of leadership, she wishes they would have held their public criticisms until that leadership was on more stable ground.(14) As Porter explains, however, Goldman was herself one of these critics, who upheld the CNT-FAI while in Spain but criticized them harshly while in England and elsewhere. Inability to reconcile these kinds of contradictions inevitably leaves anarchists politically paralyzed. Marxist-Leninist-Maoists support a party that practices democratic centralism; which balances the freedom to criticize internally with the strength in unity externally. In the conflict between centralism and freedom, anarchists will choose freedom, even if that means losing. Maoists know that only through discipline, centralism and leadership will we ever approach the kind of freedom anarchists dream about. Goldman merely dismisses the vanguard party as authoritarian. "Lenin and his party aspired to dictatorship while the CNT-FAI have from the beginning of their inception repudiated dictatorship and have held high the banner of Libertarian Communism," Goldman wrote in 1937.(15)

Under capitalism, there is a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. In the transition to communism, the proletariat, led by the proletarian party, exercises dictatorship over the enemy classes of the old order. Maoists understand that this latter dictatorship is necessary and transitional, and under it much cultural reeducation work is done to prepare society for communism. Anarchists do not make a distinction between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and the dictatorship of the newly enfranchised peasantry and proletariat. Goldman is wrong that Lenin aspired to dictatorship. Rather, he aspired to communism — a society without the oppression of people over people — and understood dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary step toward that aspiration. All the anarchist aspirations in the world do not amount to anything without a viable strategy.

Past and present supporters of the Spanish anarchist collectives point out that contrary to the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, which insist on "transitions" between capitalism and communism, the collectives were able to avoid this transition and leap directly to communist social relations. But in the last analysis, the collectives proved to be nothing more than an ultraleftist transition to fascism, because they failed to maintain their limited gains, and weakened the anti-fascist forces.

MILITARY MATTERS

In Catalonia, the strongest center of anarchist organizing in Spain, anarchists accused the government of asking for its

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participation in the united front but refusing to provide arms to the workers.(16) Considering the anarchists' open intention to fight both the fascists and the republicans, why would the government arm the anarchist-affiliated workers? Anarchist historian Murray Bookchin proudly writes, in the introductory essay to Dolgoff's *The Anarchist Collectives*, that previous histories of the war covered up the anarchists' "real" role in the struggle:

"We would scarcely have learned from the press that these workers and peasants viewed the republic almost with as much animosity as they did the Francistas. Indeed, acting largely on their own initiative against 'republican' ministers who were trying to betray them to the generals, they had raided arsenals and sporting-goods stores for weapons and with incredible valor had quashed the military conspiracies in most of the cities and towns of Spain."(17)

Enrique Lister

Enrique Lister, a Republican military leader who "participated in almost all the major battles against the nationalist forces of Francisco Franco," died in December 1994.

Born in Spain but trained in the USSR, Lister commanded the Fifth Regiment, "which he had organized as a militia, in the defense of Madrid in 1936, then commanded the 11th Division at Guadalajara in one of the few Loyalist victories over the better armed insurgents. But it was the losing struggle in 1937 over Gandesa, in north-eastern Spain, that immortalized his fight in a civil war song, 'The Battle of Gandesa.' It tells of eight days of hand-to-hand combat on a barren razor-backed ridge called Hill 666, where General Lister's troops and the American volunteer unit called the Abraham Lincoln Brigade faced overwhelming odds."

Later, he became a Soviet citizen, and commanded a Red Army division in the 1942 Battle of Stalingrad, which routed the Nazis.

He seems to have degenerated into revisionism later in life. The New York Times reports that he "remained loyal to Stalin as 'a great revolutionary,' although he later deplored Stalin's 'crimes.'" He served briefly with the Cuban military as an advisor during the 1962 missile crisis. Eventually, he praised the revisionist Mikhail Gorbachev as "realist." He returned to the Spanish Communist Party in 1977.

Without a review of his political career, MIM honors Lister as a war hero in the cause against fascism in Spain and the USSR

—MC12

Notes: New York Times 12/10/94, p. 52.

So these supporters criticize the government for not arming the workers, while celebrating the workers' armed resistance to the government.

Goldman and current bourgeois historians alike agree that Soviet aid to the republic was what prevented Franco's forces from seizing power earlier than they finally did in 1939. So Goldman denounces Soviet aid and the united front on one hand, and complains about the conditional aspect of the aid (and that it wasn't enough) on the other. Stalin did not do enough to save the republic, yet he interfered too much. The anarchists cannot make up their minds. The one thing they do not do is take responsibility for the damage they did to the anti-fascist forces by attempting to win the war against both the fascists and the republicans.

Anarchists want to dream of their cake and eat it, too. Perfect idealists can always blame someone else for the imposition of reality.

MAOISTS ARE THE REAL ANARCHISTS

The anarchist critique of communist movements, repeated throughout the literature on Spain, is that communists' belief in the dictatorship of the proletariat amounts to the "ends justifying the means." According to the anarchists, this is bad not only because the means are bad, but because "evils temporarily tolerated become permanently encrusted and institutionalized into the totalitarian state apparatus, administered by a self-perpetuating ruling class which can be dislodged only by another revolution."(18)

Or Goldman:

"From its very inception, Anarchism and its greatest teachers have maintained that it is not the abuse of power which corrupts everybody, the best more often than the worst men, but that it is the thing itself, namely power, which is evil and which takes the very spirit and revolutionary fighting strength out of everybody who wields power."(19)

Maoists recognize the potential of a new bourgeoisie under socialism. But rather than allowing that knowledge to prevent us from waging socialist revolution, we look toward the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution — a full-blown attack on established political power and the state in a socialist country — as further evidence that the vanguard party can in fact lead a society to communism. And Maoists understand that the best way to combat the power of the new bourgeoisie within the party is to build power among the masses, rather than wringing our hands while cursing "power" in general.

Even anti-communist anarchist David Porter, who edited the Goldman autobiography, when conceding that the GPCR provided that open political climate that anarchists uphold, reaches for a post-Mao example in his attempt to discredit communism:

"On the part of a Communist regime, the greatest openness to criticism yet permitted was during the Chinese Cultural

Revolution of the late 1960s. Even in this case, however, the 'wisdom of Mao' (the highest level of the Party) was untouchable, a sacred realm thus providing leverage for later purges of the sort seen after his death in the 'Gang of Four' campaigns. "(20)

Porter was referring to the period of capitalist restoration in China after Mao's death that continues today.

CONCLUSION

Although the Spanish Civil War was a focus of internationalist politics, Goldman is unable to understand Stalin's role and the internationalist actions of the Spanish Communists in terms other than psychological or mystical. Stalin's goal, according to Goldman's tautology, was to crush the Spanish revolution. Why? Because communists and vanguards are counterrevolutionary. Despite, for example, the political support of the Chinese Communist Party — which praised the Spanish struggle against fascism as another front in their own war against Japan — Goldman does not allow that Stalin could see that the fate of Spain was intimately bound to the fate of socialism in the Soviet Union, emergent socialism in China, and indeed the rest of the world.

Spain during the Civil War hosted the greatest anarchist movement in history. The failure of that movement offers clear lessons in the futility of an idealist ideology that remains more concerned with the form of the struggle (abolish power now)

than with its outcome — truly abolishing power in the long run.

Two additional comrades contributed research and writing to this article.

Notes:

1. David Porter, ed. *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*. Common-ground Press: New York, 1983. p. 11
2. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 55-6, emphasis in original.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 87-8, emphasis added.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Stuart R. Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse Tung*. Praeger Publishers: New York, 1969. p. 423. See Sidebar for the rest of this letter
7. Porter, op cit. p. 60
8. Frank Mintz, "The Spanish Labor Movement," in Albert Meltzer, ed. *A New World in*

our Hearts: The Faces of Spanish Anarchism. Cienfuegos Press: UK, 1978, p. 8.

9. Sam Dolgoff, ed. *The Anarchist Collectives: Workers' Self-management in the Spanish Revolution 1936-1939*. Free Life Editions: New York, 1974. p. 6
10. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 40
12. *Ibid.*, p. 33
13. Meltzer, op cit. p. 9.
14. Porter, op cit. p. 33.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
16. Dolgoff, op cit. p. 41.
17. *Ibid.*, p. xii.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
19. Porter, op cit. p. 89-90.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 133n.

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In the late 1960s, students from imperialist countries around the world demonstrated their internationalism principally through their protest of the imperialist genocide in Vietnam. MIM has written about the American story of these movements, in articles about Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and Weatherman, an underground splinter group from SDS. Here we examine the student movement in France, which was, like so many other First World political movements, heavily influenced and led by anarchism.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit was a student leader and anarchist theorist in the 1968 French student-worker uprising, involving tens of thousands of students and the "largest general strike in French history" (1). *Obsolete Communism: The Left Wing Alternative* is Cohn-Bendit's treatise on the French student movement. By reviewing this book, written weeks after the events of May, MIM forms a criticism of his anarchist analysis and the movement it helped guide. We also discuss age as the principal contradiction within imperialist countries and the role of students in advanced capitalist societies.

BACKGROUND OF THE STRUGGLE

The nearly two weeks of street fighting in May between university and high school students and workers on one hand and the French riot police on the other was, as most accounts of the story claim, spontaneous and without centralized leadership. But radicalism among students had been building for months before the struggle reached beyond the university walls or to the point of armed confrontation.

Cohn-Bendit puts the student revolt in France in an international context, pointing to similar struggles in Berkeley and Berlin. Particularly, he draws on the experience of the German student union SDS (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentbund), praising it for rallying for university reform. According to Cohn-Bendit, the French students were disillusioned with their own reformist union, the National Union of French Students (UNEF), and also by the left alternatives who were "devoting all [their] energies to making a scientific, Marxist analyses of the situation, which, despite their learned character, did little to mobilize the students for their own struggle." (2)

The first student actions of that year were in February, and they revolved around repealing university restrictions on dormitory access. Militants at the Nanterre campus of the national university saw it as their responsibility to "liberate the prisoners." "This culminated in male students forcibly entering the women's hostels." (3) So while anarchists, including Cohn-Bendit, claim that their movements have no leaders, this story reveals that the French student movement was actually led by men. Throughout *Obsolete Communism*, Cohn-Bendit does not address the role of women in the student struggle, or gender at all.

At Cohn-Bendit's own campus, Nanterre, huge student strikes (of some 10-12,000 students) were aimed at "improving working conditions," (i.e. reducing overcrowding). In January 1968, Cohn-Bendit had first basked in the spotlight, calling the Minister for Youth a "Hitler youth." When the authorities

The Pitfalls of French Anarchism

May 1968

by MCB52

started extradition proceedings against Cohn-Bendit (a German citizen) and the university started expulsion procedures, students demonstrated in protest. (4)

The Dean called in the riot police, whom the students forced off campus. With this small victory, "the students had felt the iron fist under the glove of the liberal university." (5)

The students' protest grew with the escalation of the war in Vietnam, which angered students "not only because it represents an attempt by Americans to dictate to the rest of the world, but also because 'socialist' bureaucracies are prepared to stand by and let it happen." (6) French students, according to Cohn-Bendit, took "direct action against the representatives of U.S. imperialism in France." (7) Not wanting to alienate the essentially patriotic French labor aristocracy, he neglects to mention that France had started Western involvement in the war and that its own capitalist enterprises would have been as appropriate bomb targets as American Express offices. (8)

THE ROLE OF STUDENTS

According to Cohn-Bendit, while the vast majority of French students came from bourgeois families, the need for



*... no way of building
of consolidating
the people's power.*

more trained workers had allowed some working-class and petit-bourgeois students into the university system and created a heterogeneity that called into question the "objectivity" of bourgeois sociology. True objectivity, he argued, would reveal the purpose of training a class for 'disinterested' research of a society they control. For example, according to Cohn-Bendit, sociology students were allowed to study either poverty or racism but not the two together.

Despite their heterogeneity, then, student's common social role provided the basis for their demonstration in support of the Algerian revolutionary war of independence from France in the late 1950s, and also for the demonstrations in 1968.

The French working class was conspicuously absent in the Algerian demonstrations. Like other revisionists who cannot see the role of imperialism in creating labor aristocracies, Cohn-Bendit blames the Communists for that absence: "The absence of organized protest outside the universities can be laid squarely at the door of the Communist Party — it was both unwilling and unable to organize effective opposition to the war and support the Algerian revolutionaries." (9)



Cohn-Bendit blames the Communist Party for all political shortcomings of the French workers, as though the party had power to forcibly prevent the workers from having their own demonstrations. That said, MIM does not uphold the French Communist Party

(PCF). The group claiming a Maoist line in France, the Union of Communist Youth-Marxist Leninist (UJC-ml), called the PCF the "PCF(R)," with the "R" standing for revisionist. (10) Heeding the economism of the workers, the PCF was indeed grossly non-committal about opposing imperialism in Algeria. But a revisionist party representing imperialist country workers is neither the source nor the obstacle of anti-imperialist action. French workers had a material interest in maintaining French imperialism, and the PCF supported this material interest.

But in 1968, young workers, "most of whom were not members of the trade unions, proved the most militant and tenacious." With this in mind, Cohn-Bendit came close to saying that the principal contradiction within French society at the time was age. "Modern youth is not so much envious of, as disgusted with, the dead empty lives of their parents. This feeling began among bourgeois children and has now spread through all levels of society." (11)

Cohn-Bendit attributes the radicalism among the younger workers to their "a bellyful of low wages" (12) and their "direct economic oppression and misery." (13) But the young workers shared with the young students the potential of embracing the imperialist state fully and fully rewarding from it. Thus, both groups were betraying their own material interests when they protested the state, and it was their youth that united them.

Students, of course, have more personal freedom to participate in political action than do their worker counterparts. In Cohn-Bendit's sexist language: "He rarely has a wife and children to feed. He can, if he chooses, take extreme political positions without any personal danger." (14) And so it is logical that student revolt would begin first and labor-aristocracy workers (with more to lose in the short-term) would join the movement only later, after some of its demonstrated successes.

SPARKS OF THE MOVEMENT

The March 22 Movement was the real beginning of the events of May. Following the arrest of six National Vietnam Committee militants, about 150 students at Nanterre who had gathered spontaneously decided to take over the administration building. The students decry the "black lists" of radical students that university and police authorities kept and said that

the time for peaceful protest was over. They announced that "anti-imperialist debates" would be held on March 29.

The March 22 Movement set aside May 2-3 for teach-ins on imperialism, but instead the radicals built up defenses against the rumored raid by the right wing student group, Occident, on the campus. The dean ordered that Nanterre be closed and that seven of the movement's members, along with one prominent Trotskyist, appear before a university disciplinary board at the Sorbonne campus in Paris.(15)

University authorities thought that this action would fatally cripple the movement, because at this time the radicals were still a minority. But supporters of the March 22 Movement converged on the Sorbonne in solidarity with the leaders, joined by hundreds more. The rector called in the police, who, with orders to clear the courtyard, filed hundreds of students into police vans.

Cohn-Bendit praises the spontaneous crowd that hurled insults and rocks at the vans with cries of "free our comrades!" He points to the barricades that they set up as proof that the masses do not need a vanguard but are perfectly able to engage in the fighting themselves. The well-publicized brutality of the police did indeed win public sympathy for the students, especially in Paris. This support held up for the next couple of weeks, marked by street-fighting and barricades. The rioting students had three main demands: the release of incarcerated demonstrators, police withdrawal from the university, and the re-opening of the university.

Cohn-Bendit appropriates some revolutionary rhetoric in his glorification of the student struggle. Like Mao, Cohn-Bendit explains that people learn the theory of revolution by waging revolution. Unlike Mao, and any other successful revolutionary, Cohn-Bendit disregards the importance of a party in leading both practice and theory. As for the faltering of radicalism among the students, Cohn-Bendit retreats into anarchist idealism:

"There were some 35,000 demonstrators present in the Champs Elyses alone and — *mirabile dictu* [a religious phrase meaning 'it is marvelous to relate'] — they managed without any leaders at all.(16) Unfortunately, the bureaucratic officials of the UNEF, that moribund Student Union, who had been frustrated in their earlier attempts to take over the movement, now called in the help of trade union bureaucrats who, at the Halles aux vins and in the demonstrations that followed, were able to divert the movement from its original aim: the recapture of the Sorbonne ... [A]ll hierarchical and bureaucratic organizations must necessarily pervert all activities in which they participate to their own ends."(17)

The trade unions and the mainstream student union

opposed radicalism, not because they were bureaucratic, but rather because they supported the interests of their constituencies. Anarchists speak of "bureaucracy" as if it was an ideology or political line unto itself, but in fact bureaucracy is merely the form, not the substance of any movement. When anarchism fails, that failure cannot be blamed on "form," but is the result of anarchism itself.

When the head of the Sorbonne announced it would be reopened under police protection, the students organized a "teach-out." Behind barricades, they experimented with putting direct democracy into practice. Some professors joined the students and decried police repression as the teachers' union fused with the student strike committee. In their closest approximation of independent power, the students organized a "summer university" which would have the task of developing new teaching methods, running political seminars, and organizing art exhibitions.

THE WORKERS JOIN THE REVOLT

On May 13, the trade unions called a 24-hour general strike. For Cohn-Bendit, this action represented the attempt of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the Communist-led trade union, to seize control of the student movement. This "leader" was worried that his "leaderless" movement would fall prey to a more established one.

Professionals joined the strike, as well as cinematographers and others. Cohn-Bendit essentially ignores them because he misidentifies the heart of the contradiction, which was not about wages but about ideology. It was not about the contradiction between the capitalists and the workers but about the contradiction between the youth and their more established elders.

Cohn-Bendit notes that the struggle is not just about redistributing wealth, but he does not have the materialist tools to explain this. He says "liberals, Stalinist bureaucrats, and reformists alike, all reduce the evils of capitalism to economic injustice. And when they extend their criticism of capitalism to other fields, they simply imply that everything would be solved by a fairer distribution of wealth."(18)

Besides this incorrect assessment of Stalinism, there are no references anywhere in *Obsolete Communism* to the Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that was underway at the time of this unrest. The Cultural Revolution was waged precisely because the simple redistribution of wealth is not the end of the struggle.

THE STUDENTS MARCH ON

On May 22, in a desperate but unsuccessful attempt to quiet things down, the government granted amnesty to arrested students. The CGT, for its part, was more than ready to slow the movement and get some big concessions while it could. It organized two marches in different sections of Paris that were

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and theory.**

meant to be as peaceful as possible so as not to provoke the police. The March 22 Movement wanted to pour out of the Latin Quarter (the students home turf) and fly the banner of revolution all over Paris. Maoists wanted to head for the working-class suburbs and get the masses there involved. Instead the different groups appealed for a mass assembly at the Gare de Lyons. The slogans included, "No to negotiations which only prop up capitalism!" "Enough referendums, no more circus!" (19)

Two hundred thousand workers participated in the CGT demonstrations. The March 22 Movement and the action committees started with far fewer but grew through the day. Tens of thousands marched on the Stock Exchange, captured it, and set it on fire. Cohn-Bendit wrote: "Paris was in the hands of the demonstrators, the Revolution had started in earnest! Everyone felt it and wanted to go on. But then the political boys stepped in ..." (20)

Cohn-Bendit blames the Trotskyists for turning the students back toward the Latin Quarter, even though it was the one place that was most heavily occupied by the police. And "it was the UNEF and PSU who stopped us from taking the [less well-guarded] Ministry of Finance..." (21) And so on. Cohn-Bendit takes no responsibility for the chaos of a student movement with no unified line.

THE DECLINE OF THE MOVEMENT

Cohn-Bendit holds that if, on May 25, the people of Paris had woken up to occupied Ministries, then the government would have toppled. "It has been said, and rightly so, that for the first time in history a revolution could have been made without recourse to arms." (22) This is pure idealism. If one Trotskyist student had been able to misguide tens of thousands of students and destroy their revolution in one move, how would the new society after Gaullism prevent others who wanted to misguide the revolution?

That night alone turned Cohn-Bendit away from revolution. "When 24 May drew to a close, revolution was still in the cards — nothing seemed settled either way. But by the 25th, our failure to take the Ministries enabled the state and the trade union bureaucrats to rally from the blows they had been dealt the night before." (23)

The CGT negotiated what became known as the "Grenelle agreement," a package of remarkable reformist gains: increase of the minimum wage by one-third, general wage increases of 7% immediately and an additional 3% in October, reduction of the work week, increased family allowances, payment for half the time lost in the strike. These were the most impressive gains made by union negotiating in 30 years. (24) And of course the Third World proletariat would continue to pay the price.

The PCF went back to doing what it had been trying to do for years: join the various social-democrats as a "respectable" party and form a social-democrat coalition to compete with Gaullism on bourgeois democratic terms. It called for ending the strikes, accepting the Grenelle agreements, and the election of a "popular government." Francois Mitterand was the chosen candidate for the new "Left" coalition.

STUDENTS "HELP" THE WORKERS FIGHT ON

The events of May did not die overnight. Some strikers held out and the March 22 Movement organized "Support and Solidarity" committees that brought supplies to the striking workers and helped communication among the islands of strikes. But the March 22 Movement was understaffed. Its last big move was to reinforce the occupying strikers at the Renault plant in Flins, which had been taken over by the police. This particular factory had only a small union membership and a foreign majority, so the CGT did not hold much sway there.

Twelve hundred students began stopping cars of workers on their way to work to tell them that returning was a betrayal. (Cohn-Bendit does not explain why workers needed students to tell them!)

Three days of battle ensued between the students and workers and the CRS, (the National Security Guards, famous all over Europe for their brutality), against the advice of the anti-provocation CGT, which cautioned:

"Rigorously oppose every attempt to mislead the workers' movement. While negotiations are proceeding in the metal industry, and while consultations prior to a return of work continue in various other branches, dangerous attempts at provocation are being made. These take the form of questioning our undoubted achievements and misleading the workers into adventurist escapades." (25)

**If one student could
derail the movement,
how would the new
society have survived
real attacks?**

Cohn-Bendit never accepts that reformism was in the interests of the workers, and so he reads the CGT statements as being opposed to the workers' interests. In fact, the CGT in repeatedly calling the workers to reason, was trying to gain for them what the Labour Party had gained for the labor aristocracy in England: solid union partnership with the bourgeoisie.

During the fighting, one student who was a Maoist and a member of the UJC-ml, died after being chased by the police. Cohn-Bendit claims his death as his movement's own, not mentioning that the student was a Maoist. (26) Maoists, endeavoring always to "serve the people," made great efforts to serve the group they misidentified as the proletariat. While MIM disagrees fundamentally with the UJC-ml's pandering to the labor aristocracy, it also calls the anarchists to task for not recognizing the contributions of Maoists.

THE MEANING OF REVOLUTION

When Cohn-Bendit speaks of "[t]he real meaning of revolution [being] not a change in management, but a change in man," (27) he fails to recognize that the change in management must precede as well as reflect the change in man. Had he examined the process in China, he would have seen that process as dialectical, that the proletarian party cannot change the social relations of the society without state power. An anarchist and an idealist, Cohn-Bendit wants no part of state power

until social relations have already been transformed. This has never happened.

"This change must take place in our lifetime and not for our children's sake, for the revolution

**An anarchist and an idealist,
Cohn-Bendit wants no part of
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have already been transformed.
This has never happened.**

must be born out of joy and not of sacrifice." (28) But revolution is about both joy and sacrifice, as those who have waged it would tell Cohn-Bendit.

In the end, the problem of the French left was not, as Cohn-Bendit argues, that the vanguardism and scientific thinking are incorrect. Its problem was its failure to recognize the material conditions that imperialism brought to the working class that the leftists were trying to serve.

The Maoist UJC-ml, in its newspaper "Servir le Peuple," correctly upheld Stalin, Mao, and supported the National Liberation Front in Algeria and other struggles. But its misunderstanding of First World workers led it to struggle in vain to bring French workers to Maoism. Many young revolutionaries quit their studies to work in factories, serving the wrong

people. Worse, in the events of May, by urging workers to revolt for material gain, they wound up playing the rear guard to the anarchists. (29)

Conversely, young workers and students liked the anarchist agenda of the March 22 Movement, because it addressed real concerns that they had. Its message to, "destroy this society because it is alienating and unjust," rang true with the youth of France. Youth from objectively oppressor groups will sometimes forgo the material incentives to engage in oppression and instead work for justice for subjective rewards. And this is likely only among a small minority. Without adopting the perspective of the truly oppressed (the international proletariat) this revolutionary energy has no anchor and thus no sustenance.

COHN-BENDIT ON THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The last sections of *Obsolete Communism* claim that the Russian Revolution was not led by the Bolsheviks, but was rather a spontaneous uprising hindered and eventually sold out by the Party. Any anarchist after 1917 has a responsibility to justify their failed path compared to the success of communism. He quotes no historian other than Trotsky, and asserts that Trotsky was a brilliant anarchist who only upheld the vanguard party because he had a religious allegiance to Lenin. (30)

Perhaps it is simple racism that accounts for Cohn-Bendit leaving the Chinese practice of socialism completely out of his analysis. But this omission is symptomatic of another trend: failing to recognize historical advances of socialism and instead looking backwards, to a time when socialism was more "pure" (that is, of course, when it had no victories or setbacks under its belt). The March 22 Movement wanted to reverse history, and do it right this time. But material conditions had changed as imperialism bourgeoisified the French working class, as the police state was mastered, as capitalism developed responses to socialist challenges. (31)

COULD THE REVOLT HAVE BECOME A REVOLUTION?

The 1968 movement was an extraordinary showing of the strength of the youth who are willing to make material sacrifices for subjective gains. The French bourgeois democracy came closer to being toppled than in any other imperialist country, and there may indeed have been a moment in which the government could have been forced to fall.

But in the absence of a vanguard, there would have been a vacuum. The few anarchist Action Committees, which enjoyed only small support and had no coordination of efforts, were not capable of confronting this vacuum, and they were ambivalent about confronting it at all.

Anarchism has no way of building or consolidating the people's power to combat the reactionaries' power. Cohn-Bendit whines about the CGT trying to mislead the workers during the crisis, but surely greater threats to their power would have occurred after the fall of the government. There is no rhetorical substitute for the correct political line and coordinated military effort.

...the anti-authoritarians demand that the political state be abolished at one stroke, even before the social relations that gave birth to it have been destroyed. They demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of authority.

Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon, all of which are highly authoritarian means.

—F. Engels, "On Authority," 1872

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UNDER 21 HERE IS YOUR BALLOT

Notes:

1. Ronald Fraser, ed. 1968: *A Student Generation in Revolt*. Pantheon Books: New York, 1988. p. 203
2. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, trans. from German Arnold Pomerans, *Obsolete Communism: The Left Wing Alternative*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968 p. 24.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
4. Insults about Cohn-Bendit's German citizenship were common, the PCF's newspaper deriding him as a "German anarchist." This led to the chant among students of "We are all German Jews." Richard Johnson, *The French Communist Party versus the Students: Revolutionary Politics in May-June 1968*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, preface.
5. Cohn-Bendit, op. cit., p. 35.
6. A key rallying point for the students was the distinction between the slogan of the French Communist Party (PCF): "Peace in Vietnam," and their own: "The FNL will win." Daniel Singer, *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1970, p. 56.
7. Cohn-Bendit, op.cit., p. 32.
8. The reason for this error is hard to pinpoint. Cohn-Bendit criticizes the PCF for pointing to "a handful" of bosses rather than class interests as they existed, but does not show how his own finger-pointing at foreigners is dissimilar.

9. Cohn-Bendit, p. 44.
10. Patrick Seale and Maureen McConville, *Red Flag/Black Flag: French Revolution 1968*, New York: Putnam, 1968, p. 49.
11. Cohn-Bendit, op. cit., p. 91.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
15. The UJC-ml was for the most part not participating in the university events as of this point, focusing on their work in factories and skeptical of the strategy of provocation that posed great risks to revolutionaries. Alain Touraine, *Le communisme utopique: le mouvement de mai 1968*, Paris: Conditions du Seuil, 1968, p. 122.
16. The Latin phrase he uses is from French Catholic lingo of the day which reflects on his mystical adoration of leaderlessness.
17. Cohn-Bendit, op. cit., p. 61.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
24. Bernard E. Brown, *Protest in Paris: Anatomy of a Revolt*, Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1974, pp. 20-21.
26. Touraine, op. cit., p. 186.
25. Cohn-Bendit, op. cit., p. 76.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 112. Amerikan Yippie Jerry

- Rubin said the same thing: "We are not going to organize the people around our ability to suffer. We are going to organize the people around our ability to have fun and to survive." *We Are Everywhere*, Harper & Row, N.Y.: 1971. p. 232.
29. Brown, op. cit., pp. 78-80.
 30. The Makhno movement and the Kronstadt rebellion, major issues that many anarchist theorists bring up regularly, are discussed elsewhere in this theory journal. Cohn-Bendit's arguments are by no means original, so turn to the next articles for MIM's response.
 31. The bourgeois apologist famous for recognizing the anarchism of the students as being a step backward in historical development, Raymond Aron, is wrong on many scores but has stumbled across this correct analysis. He uses the point in a fundamentally different way, however, to suggest that the anarchists would either become bourgeois with age or become "Stalinist totalitarians" like their elders in the PCF. MIM would challenge anarchists to instead take note of historical developments after revisionism took power in the Soviet Union, which is to say, work for Maoism. Raymond Aron, trans. from French Gordon Clough, *The Elusive Revolution: Anatomy of a Student Revolt*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969.

Review: The Kronstadt Uprising

Ida Mett

Introduction by Murray Bookchin
Black Rose Books: Montreal, 1971

by MC5

The Kronstadt revolt of sailors against the Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union in 1921 is an important event in the anarchist reading of history. According to the anarchists, about 3,000 sailors attempted to restore the gains of the 1917 Revolution by seizing power for the Soviets (self-governing organizations of workers and soldiers) from the Communist Party.

Kronstadt is a city on an island in the Gulf of Finland, 20 km from Leningrad (then Petrograd). The sailors there had played a key role in the 1917 Revolution and still operated a strategic naval base close to Finland.

The Bolsheviks saw the Kronstadt rebellion as counter-revolutionary in its effects and crushed it with military force. The resulting deaths may have reached the thousands, since 527 on the Bolshevik side died with 4,127 injured not counting people lost on the ice surrounding Kronstadt forts or people executed for treason. (p. 59)

Much the way Trotskyists cite smaller points of history as if they were somehow damning of Stalin's overall leadership of the Soviet Union, so the anarchists would dispense with all the benefits of the Russian Revolution because of its repression of the Kronstadt rebellion.

In the concluding pages, Ida Mett admits that the anarchists did not have answers to more important questions than what happened to the sailors who instigated a revolt on very large questions: "We do not know if it would have been possible to save the conquests of October by democratic methods. We do not know if the economic situation of the country and its markedly peasant character were really suitable for the first attempt at building socialism." (p. 86)

Five years after the revolt, a Kronstadt rebel leader defended the rebellion in terms confirming anarchist myopia:

"According to the Kronstadters anything that happened or was done here was dictated by the circumstances of the moment. The rebels didn't place their faith in anyone.... The Committee's [elected leading body —MC5] only concern was strictly to implement the wishes of the people. Was that a good thing or a bad thing? I cannot pass judgment." (p. 74)

The Kronstadters don't even know if their method was good for themselves; yet, they presumed to make a third revolution to spread it to the whole country.

In these statements the anarchists reveal both their lack of serious political analysis and their unintentional conservatism. The implicit reasoning, later employed by Trotskyists more frequently is: "well if the revolution could not succeed carrying out the ideals we so devoutly worship then it's better to let

the imperialists have it their way for now and wait for an opportunity for a more pure revolution." Of course, no Trotskyist or anarchist would admit this, but this is the necessary reasoning of a Trotskyist or anarchist who believes revolution is necessary for social change. There have been no successful anarchist or Trotskyist revolutions, but there have been a lot of anarchist and Trotskyist criticisms of Lenin and Stalin's leadership of the Bolshevik Revolution. The criticisms come from ideals isolated from practice.

LENIN AND TROTSKY'S MISTAKE

As communists who know that a change of social systems is of thorough importance to the well-being of millions of people, MIM is tempted just to say that Lenin made a mistake in letting Trotsky lead the suppression of the Kronstadt sailors. After all, the Bolsheviks faced the Kronstadt rebellion a mere three months after the end of the civil war against the imperialist-backed, landlord-led White Armies in the European part of the Soviet Union. (p. 34)

To the anarchists' credit, Lenin had not developed the theory of Cultural Revolution the way Mao did after decades of experience.

It would be easy to mistake the Kronstadt people as more Whites. If the Bolsheviks had made this mistake, they still had getting Russia out of World War I, solving the famine problems at the time and later, the uprooting of the landlord class and the imposition of capitalism in the place of feudalism to their credit. These were life-and-death questions for millions, not just a few thousand people in Kronstadt.

Another reason to give the anarchists some credit is

that Lenin had not developed the theories of the Cultural Revolution the way Mao had after decades of the international communist movement's experience. Mao lighted the road forward by showing that the masses had to be mobilized after the revolution to conduct class struggle against the new bourgeoisie in the communist party itself. The masses need organizations not unlike the Soviets to pursue self-governance and self-reliance generally.

Mao Zedong led concrete struggles involving millions of people on this question all across China and the world. These struggles included having the masses increase their participation in all levels of politics and government administration. At the time in the Soviet Union, most of the members of the Communist Party in Kronstadt joined the Kronstadt uprising. Among other things they said was: "During the last three

years, many greedy careerists flocked to our Party. This has given rise to bureaucracy and has gravely hampered the struggle for economic reconstruction." (p. 50)

This position of the Kronstadt rebels was not as well-worked out as Mao's position, which concerned some similar problems. Ultimately, the contradictions in the anarchist position are evident still in books published in 1971. While it would be nice to credit the anarchists for once, the Black Rose book makes an overly excellent case against itself.

Kronstadt's combination of high-minded Bolshevik ideals, contradictory theory and no realistic revolutionary practice provided a great outlet for opportunism.

Anarchists have denied actively organizing the Kronstadt rebellion. They have claimed the Kronstadt program as their own however, and rightly so. The Mensheviks and the Left-Social Revolutionaries did also, with somewhat less justification. The Right Social Revolutionaries went further than ideological support and offered material solidarity, which Ida Mett and Black Rose do not deny as possibly accepted by the Kronstadt rebels.

All these parties and political tendencies claimed to see Kronstadt as vindication of their positions opposing the Bolsheviks. (pp. 62-70) What better proof could exist for the necessity of having an organization, a vanguard party to lead a movement of the oppressed? When the masses organize a movement, someone is going to claim credit. It might as well be the people who actually do the work. The Kronstadt rebels, in rejecting all parties, let all parties speak for them.

WORKERS' SUPPORT?

Where did the Kronstadt rebels think their support was coming from? The anarchists blame the Bolsheviks for buying and repressing the workers' support in Petrograd to oppose the rebels. "The Government had made hasty purchases abroad.... It understood the corrupting influence of white bread on a starving population." (p. 53) Yet, it was the anarchists, including Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, who pointed out that the food shortage was a source of discontent. (p. 64) Two of the Kronstadt demands concerned food — rations and peasant incentives. (pp. 40-1, 43) Here it was the anarchists and rebels telling the Bolsheviks that food was a problem, and at the same time the anarchists were criticizing them when they did something about it.

By the way, the rebel demand that food rations be equalized (p. 41) had no basis in fairness. In 1921, the Soviet Union was just beginning the heavy work of reconstruction after world war and civil war. Some workers definitely did more urgent and heavy manual labor and hence burned more calories than other workers. To feed railroad-repair workers and school teachers the same rations would not have been fair.

Other points that the Bolsheviks gave in on during the rebel movement also undercut the support of the rebels. They allowed more freedom of movement around Petrograd and a mere month later established free trade in the countryside in

the New Economic Policy.

Oddly enough, the anarchists complain that the Bolsheviks called the rebels counterrevolutionaries while adopting one of their demands a month later. (p. 43) Then the anarchists complain that the Bolsheviks didn't really accept the major demands of the rebels, just one of them. (p. 83) In the anarchists' own view then, they should have realized that in accepting one demand, Lenin was not contradicting himself to consider the rebels counterrevolutionary overall!

Lenin did not say every demand made in Kronstadt was "counterrevolutionary," as implied by the anarchists, who focus on one demand that they claim Lenin later satisfied, the one concerning economic freedom for peasants. (p. 43) In one quote from Lenin in Mett's book, Lenin makes it very clear that ideology is hardly the issue since the rebels had only "nebulous slogans" and to their backers "It makes no difference, to the Right or to the Left, to the Mensheviks or to the anarchists, as long as power shifts away from the Bolsheviks." (pp. 71-2)

With various changes implemented and in the process of implementation, the rebels seem to have taken to arms too soon. They had not given their arguments enough time after the civil war. As peace became more secure, more and more Bolsheviks would have listened to calls for mass participation, maybe in the Soviets as the rebels wanted. Instead, the rebels upset the peace by starting armed struggle right away. Another armed struggle broke out in the Ukraine as well.

PARTY SUPPORT?

Ironically, it was the Bolshevik or former-Bolshevik organization in Kronstadt which was the most visible political organization behind the uprising. Although the Kronstadt Bolsheviks defected in order to work with the rebels, they still carried with them their organizational skills and links from the past. Other organizations cheered loudly from abroad, but within Kronstadt there appeared to have been no other political organizations at work. (p. 74)

The failure of the rebels to take up a struggle within the Communist Party is all the more ironic considering how much they boasted for winning over the Kronstadt Communist Party members. If they could win over so many party members and yet they knew that they stood no chance of military victory, why didn't they focus on winning over party members outside of Kronstadt? One cannot say the party was a sickly bureaucracy and a hopeless Leninist dictatorship and at the same time boast of publishing a single document and recruiting 780 party members on one island. (p. 49)

While it would be nice to credit the anarchists for once, the Black Rose book makes an excellent case against itself.

WESTERN SUPPORT

As far as bases of support other than the exiles, underground political parties, Petrograd workers and the Communist Party, the Bolsheviks accused the rebels of seeking support from the West over the sea and through Finland. Their charges rang true as 8,000 people fled Kronstadt to Finland when the Bolsheviks suppressed the uprising. (p. 60)

Most astonishing of all, and not denied, is that the French imperialists supported the rebellion two weeks before it happened by publishing articles announcing it and supporting it! This is what rightly set Lenin off, three months after the Soviet Union had finishing repulsing

by the European imperialist countries, especially Britain and France, the White armies. Lenin pointed out that even the leaders of the Right Social Revolutionaries were small-fry "petty-bourgeois" leaders compared with the French newspapers and banks lining up behind the Kronstadt rebellion. Even if spies from Western imperialist countries were not involved in Kronstadt itself, and even if the French papers

were engaged in wishful thinking as the anarchists charged, the West clearly stood ready to back up the Kronstadt rebellion.

The West was the only possible source of material support for the Kronstadt rebellion's ambitious program because other sources of support no longer existed. The rebels had attracted the communists in their area, but then proceeded to start hostilities by arresting high-ranking communist party members from the central government. What was the only reason for the arrests according to Ida Mett? "Their speeches were so aggressive and provocative." (p. 45)

Lest anyone think the Bolsheviks shot at unarmed sailors, it was actually the rebels who started armed hostilities, taking over Kronstadt by force. March 2, two weeks after the Bolsheviks were alerted by the French imperialists. (p. 81) The Bolsheviks had tried persuasion, including leaflet bombardments and radio broadcasts. The final and successful military assault on Kronstadt did not come until March 16 and 17. (pp. 58-9)

The rebels proclaimed a "third revolution" with their actions of the month-long conflict. No doubt they could no longer expect support from within the Communist Party with these methods of using force and announcing a revolution.

Instead, they set in motion organizing support from the exiled Right Social Revolutionaries, who in turn had connections to the imperialists. Meanwhile, the anarchists complain the Petrograd workers were "bought off." There was no widespread anarchist rebellion in the Soviet Union. The rebels did

some leafletting in Petrograd but otherwise, according to one of the leaders himself, "We were cut off from the entire world. We didn't know what was going on outside Kronstadt, either in Russia or abroad." (p. 74) Even Ida Mett concludes the rebels were just "dreamers." (p. 90)

Running out of food, the rebels accepted aid from the Finland Red Cross, led by a retired naval officer. As the situation became worse, the only possibility for material support was the West. Lenin was correct to nip this situation in the bud before it led to yet another imperialist invasion.

In this book the anarchists glorify Kronstadt rebels for rejecting all political parties and wanting to do away with all state power immediately. Reading the book makes one acutely aware that the rebels had no practical national plans or base of support yet they willfully plunged the country into more armed struggle.

This is the danger of moralistic thinking. Without even answering whether or not socialism was possible, these people chose the course of blood-letting amongst the proletariat. The more extreme and detached the ideal from reality, the more blood is shed in futile efforts to establish moral purity. Lenin was right to say that only the imperialists could benefit from these impotent petty-bourgeois vacillations in Kronstadt.

CONCLUSION

Black Rose is the best of the anarchist publishing houses. It takes it upon itself to call "subjective," comrade anarchists Emma Goldman's and Alexander Berkman's accounts of Kronstadt.

When the case against the anarchist view of Kronstadt can be constructed from Black Rose books, it is apparent that the anarchist position was never that good. It's particularly apparent in this book because it appears aimed at a Trotskyist and Leninist audience. Trotsky's role in Kronstadt is emphasized again and again and the anarchists quote Marx against Lenin while giving Lenin the overall blame.

If one were just to read the introduction by Murray Bookchin, one would be tempted to say Lenin had made a mistake in Kronstadt. As one reads the details, however, it becomes clear that there are fundamental political differences between Kronstadtism and communism. The anarchist position becomes hopelessly mired in its own vacillations and contradictions.

Having said all this, MIM should still distribute the book as information on the Kronstadt uprising along with this review of it. The book is interesting for its quotes of many different views and for representing the anarchist view both then and in contemporary times. Perhaps MIM will find better material to work with in the future, but for now this is the best.

MIM needs money to do this work. Prisoners earn pennies a day and contribute stamps. What can you contribute?

Fifth Estate on the Bolsheviks

"Bolshevik Mystification and Counter-Revolution:
Myth of the Party"
Fifth Estate May 1976

August 1991

by MC12

This review is done in spite of the dated article as a refutation of the best the anarchists have to offer.

This is an interesting article by some tough anarchists. It correctly identifies the threat of capitalist restoration from within the Party from the beginning of socialist construction. However, its underlying problem is the continual problem of anarchists: idealism and utopian day-dreaming.

Marxism and the dialectical materialist study of history recognizes that revolutionary transformation is always built upon the bone structure of the existing order. Thus, socialism is growing within the "womb" of capitalism and imperialism, as on the one hand workers are united by social production, and on the other nations are constructed in order to be oppressed by an interdependent empire, leading to anti-imperialist revolutionary nationalist struggles.

The anarchists always want a clean break from the past. To throw it all away. To build a non-hierarchical society within existing society, and then simply replace one with the other. All revolutionary struggles which fail to replace Babylon with Utopia are thus totalitarian takeovers. This is the contradiction between anarchist utopianism and scientific socialism.

But more specifically, Fifth Estate is correct to point out that under Soviet socialism conditions continued for the existence of a coercive state apparatus, bureaucracy and centralization. But they wrongly accuse the Bolsheviks of creating these conditions.

Marxists during the Lenin era were very confused by the failure of the State to "wither away" during socialist construction. Because while the coercive state has been a feature of class society throughout history, under Soviet socialism the extent of State coercion increased from 1917 through the 30s and 40s. The mystery behind this development was revealed only with the advent of the Maoist era and the recognition of continuing class struggle under socialism.

Whereas Stalin had the tendency to explain the need for State coercion as stemming from outside aggression (which the Trotskyists tacitly accept when they use it as an example of why "socialism in one country" doesn't work), only in China was the existence of the bourgeoisie under socialism thorough-

ly recognized. In other words, if it's a dictatorship of the proletariat, who is it a dictatorship over? The answer is that the bourgeoisie still exists (albeit in a new form) and has the capacity to grow, within the Communist party in power. Therefore the notion of the State withering away was recognized to mean a much more complex, contradictory process, initiated in China with the Cultural Revolution.

Fifth Estate also correctly points out the danger of sudden bourgeois restoration: "The bourgeoisie has only to grab [the Party's] leadership to virtually destroy the entire movement." The coups in the USSR and China reflect this very real danger. They are right to identify mass consciousness and action as the driving force to prevent capitalist restoration, but fail to see the potential for the Communist party to serve as the guiding force in this struggle. They fail to assimilate the lessons of the Cultural Revolution.

When comparison is between actual practice and utopian ideal, the practice always looks bad. But this is a fake comparison. Marxism has the capacity to learn from its mistakes in practice and produce new theoretical approaches. (The mass line and popular struggle against capitalism within the Party are examples here.) Utopianism always stands still, and every historical effort is seen from its eyes as a failure.

Fifth Estate is also correct to point out that Lenin was ahead of the Bolshevik majority in his realization that the Party weakened as it grappled with controlling the State, becoming more "isolated from the working class." Lenin argued this point regularly after 1917, and even passed quotas for workers on various governing bodies to combat this tendency, though they were rarely enforced.

But Fifth Estate draws an artificial distinction between the "centralized" Party and the "spontaneous" masses. Calling the 1917 revolution spontaneous, as well as the organization of urban workers into Soviets — even though these often represented local initiatives — is to willfully ignore the impact of socialist organizing among urban populations prior to 1917.

The anarchists will always take credit for communist organizing after the fact, but leave the blame to someone else!

There was a see-saw relationship between the "masses" and the Party, as the masses were in fact often ahead of the Party — but that itself was often the result of Party organizing. Hence the mass line, and the interdependence of theory and practice, (something anarchists are wise to ignore).

Fifth Estate discounts the existence of raging debate and struggles within the Bolshevik Party over the question of "workers control." Lenin himself was often in the minority

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within the Party leadership. There were two connected, dependent factors to the debate. The first was protecting the country and feeding the people, the second was maintaining and developing the worker-peasant alliance.

The peasants had supported the Bolsheviks because the Party represented the workers standing up for peasants' democratic rights. Meanwhile economic planning enabled the workers to eat food produced by the peasants, even as the workers produced the machines and weapons needed to consolidate the peasants' gains. It was a terribly delicate balance — one which the Bolsheviks had little or no experience, and one which needed to be maintained under conditions of scarcity and war.

While Lenin saw the danger in the growing gap between the Party and the masses, he also saw that the demands for "workers' control" would lead to a breakdown of planning and destruction for the country.

The anarchists have no suggestion for how Russia was to resist outside aggression, feed workers and satisfy peasants. They only sing the praises of spontaneity and local initiative.

What is the alternative presented? "Had the movement from below restored the initial achievements of the revolution of 1917, a multi-faceted social structure *might* have developed,

based on worker's control of industry, on a freely developing peasant economy in agriculture, and on a living interplay of ideas, programs, and political movements..." (emphasis added) That's a pretty big *might*.

Instead, according to the anarchists, fascism descended over the world, and history stood still, waiting for the spontaneous leap to utopia.

The Fifth Estate anarchists show a healthy suspicion of bourgeois elements within the Party. But there is no evidence given (nor can there be) for the assertion that the "centralized party" is a "completely bourgeois institution," except guilt by association: structure = oppression = bourgeoisie!

Under a feudal regime, the same charge could have been levied at anti-feudal struggle: structure = oppression = feudalism!

And under socialism: structure = oppression = socialism!

Until at last scientific socialism leads human society to communism. At which point the anarchists are welcome to take all the credit for it they want. If there are any of them left by then.

Maoist Sojourner

*A monthly publication by and for
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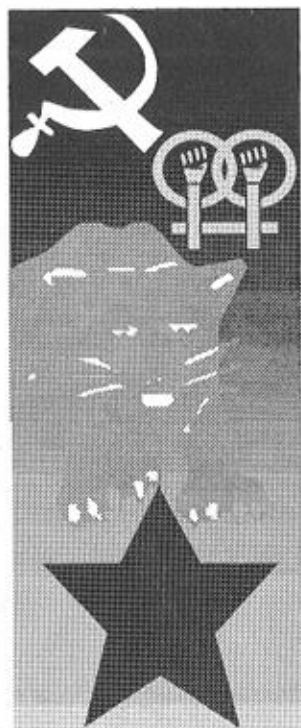
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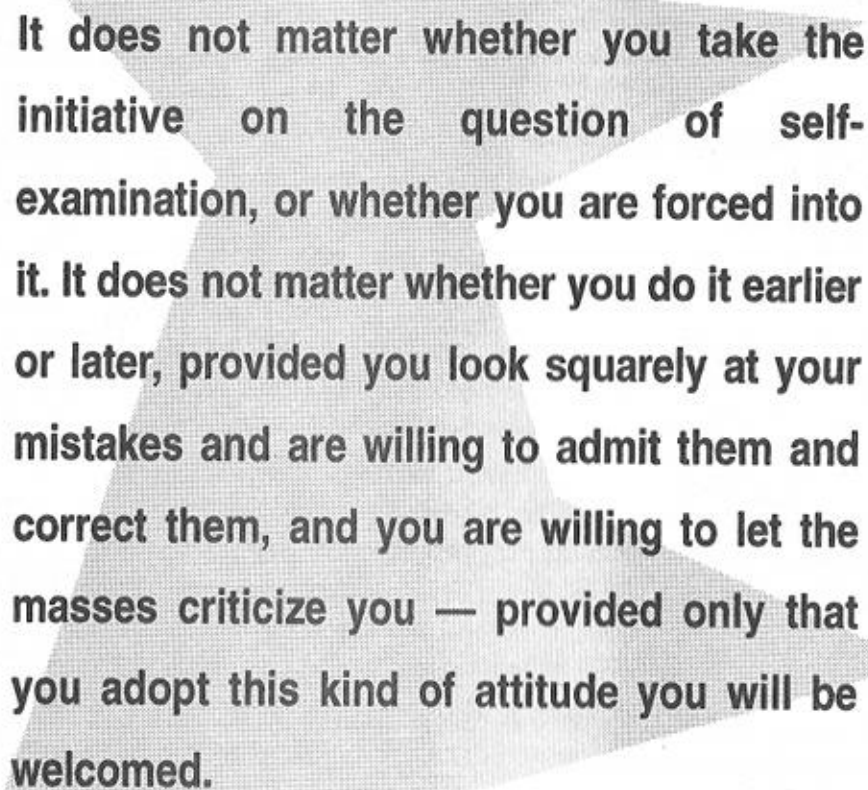
T A K E RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS. WE MAOISTS DO.

We take responsibility for J.V. Stalin's excessive executions in the Soviet Union. We also take responsibility for the creation of the world's first socialist society and the defeat of Hitler's Germany. We take responsibility for Mao Zedong's mistakes in the Great Leap Forward in China. We take responsibility for the unjust sufferings of thousands during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). We also take responsibility for the Liberation of China; the doubling of life expectancy from 35 to 69 years, and the furthest communist advance in history. What MIM can't stand is people who take no responsibility for anything in the world—anarchists, Trotskyists, pacifists—all people using pretty words to criticize real world action. We prefer to take responsibility for the bad side of revolution than to live with responsibility for the injustices of the established order.

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It does not matter whether you take the initiative on the question of self-examination, or whether you are forced into it. It does not matter whether you do it earlier or later, provided you look squarely at your mistakes and are willing to admit them and correct them, and you are willing to let the masses criticize you — provided only that you adopt this kind of attitude you will be welcomed.

— Mao Zedong

Chairman Mao Talks to the People, Talks and Letters: 1956-1971. Pantheon Press: New York, 1974. p. 163.

MIM's Anarchist Wind

Resisting the Wind Within

Since Maoism and real anarchism have the same long-run goals, it is not surprising that the two get confused sometimes. Some anarchists take up ideas from Mao, consciously and unconsciously, and some Maoists take up anarchist ideas unconsciously. In 1994 at its Party Congress, MIM had its first serious two-line struggle involving two camps of comrades. Anarchism was at the center of this conflict.

When anarchists start to move in a Maoist direction, the first step is inevitably confusion. MIM has written of an anarchist organization in the Midwest that tried to take a communist anarchist line, but found itself in contradiction on questions of leadership and organization.⁽²³⁾ Leadership and organization takes up considerable time in anarchist politics. The inevitable joke is that anarchists can never have a meeting, because whoever started the meeting would not have the authority to do so. This literally caused the break-up of our Midwest comrades' organization.

Most anarchists would claim they are not opposed to organization per se, just leadership, hierarchy and coercion. At this time in history, MIM believes that revolutionary organization without leadership and hierarchy is not possible, any more than water can be stopped from boiling at 212 F°. MIM believes that anarchists who push for politics similar to Maoism but without the "coercion" are in fact bowing to the unconscious tyranny of structure that exists within the status quo. Thus, contrary to what one would expect of a movement dedicated to classlessness, genderlessness and a world without borders, rich white men play a disproportionate role in the world anarchist movement.

The most consistent "communist anarchists" abandon questions of organization and take up lifestyle politics or lifestyle anti-politics. Such anarchists believe in spreading change on an individual level without coercion. This kind of anarchist, necessarily a pacifist, tends to be environmentally-minded and oriented toward collective living right here and now. In the 1960s, Black Panther Minister of Defense Huey P. Newton referred to the entire white "left" as anarchist on account of its late to non-existent

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appreciation of the teachings of Lenin and Mao on party organization. Even those self-proclaimed Maoists in the leadership of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) didn't form new vanguard parties until the mid-1970s.

In an ideal world, MIM would prefer the pacifist, anarchist approach. Right now anarchism is wrong, because classes, nations and genders concretely exist and have refused to give up their privileges without being forced to do so by (organized) armed struggle.

Back in the first edition of "What Is MIM?" we wrote:

"MIM believes that in a group whose goal is to seize power from the bourgeoisie, discipline and unity are essential if it is to have any chance of success. The government and capitalism's ruling classes are working from an extremely well-fortified and entrenched structure. The only effective way to fight it is to create another more powerful structure that works to dissolve power on the same level. This is the function of a vanguard party."⁽¹⁾

Even though anarchism has brought no significant progress for the human race in its last two centuries of existence, some people continue to cling to it, almost exclusively in the imperialist countries.

In the United States in particular, economic conditions going back to Europeans settling individual farms on the "frontier," individualism has been a central fact of American culture and politics. Even to this day, some anarchists seek to live on agricultural communes as if that is the best way to promote social change. They forget the coercion which created the communes' plot of land, and are in practice uncritical of the structure of capitalism.

ANARCHISM AS LIBERALISM

The lifestyle anarchists who actually seek communist goals — and there are few — have a consistent position that merges with Liberalism. Indeed the final goal of communists, anarchists and Liberals can be the same in a world without class, nation and gender hierarchy. In fact, such shibboleths as "free trade" can only really occur under communist anarchism.

Until that time, powerful groups coerce each other in their economic and gender relations.

Under Liberalism, the rules tend to be fair if everyone has equal power. For instance, the rules of Liberalism are fair for the bourgeoisie or for the male landowners who founded the United States. As long as the less powerful, (and the powerless) are ignored — slaves, women and the poor — then Liberalism makes perfect sense and seems to be a fair way of organizing conduct among equals. To some extent, Liberalism exists within the white nation as a whole. "Free speech" for Euro-Americans exists to some extent, but only at the expense of the "free speech" of the Third World, where the U.S. government backs fascist government repression.

In the ideal Liberal scheme, groups are not organized or acknowledged to oppress other groups. However, at this time, Liberalism is in fact a gross camouflage for oppression of groups by other groups.

Although imperialists are few in number, they are powerful enough to win any one-on-one fight with oppressed people, who are deprived of economic and political power. The way the imperialists retain their privileges is by organizing for Liberalism — a rule by which fights are one-on-one. Hence, the most powerful people support individualism.

ANARCHISM AND ANTI-IMPERIALISM

When some less powerful, or powerless, people suggest that they organize to deliver one simultaneous blow against the oppressors, anarchists protest. They don't like the demands of working together in a group and coordinating actions.

In order to land one effective blow at the same time against oppressors, there has to be coordination. Someone has to give the signal. Otherwise it just doesn't happen and people fight their own ways at their own times — and in history thus far get whipped by oppressors who merely divide and conquer.

Anarchism is impractical. Anarchists want consensus decision-making among oppressed people, arguing that any idea coming from the oppressed is a good one and no one idea should be imposed over the idea of another oppressed person. To these anarchists, the leadership of one communist is as bad as the oppression of any capitalist or imperialist. The anarchists ignore that the communist leader can always be recalled by the masses, because communist leaders have no real power under capitalist or imperialist rule that does not derive from the masses.

Furthermore, anarchists share the glorification of the individual (against the group) with the imperialists. When they see oppressed people gaining any power at all as individuals, they see it as people "making it on their own." This problem is especially great in the United States, where the middle class is so large and the pull of middle class economics on anarchists is very great. These anarchists do not account for the subsidy paid by the Third World proletariat for the middle class of the imperialist countries. These anarchists also don't have any practical plan for paying reparations to the Third World.

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Organizing the ships, railroads and planes to make reparations will by itself require coordination and it is not practical to do as individuals. The volunteer fire department model way of getting things done is not going to work for doing our internationalist duties.

ANARCHISTS IN MIM

In 1994, MIM had an internal struggle that started out over gender — as do so many struggles that end with the political degeneration of comrades in the First World. If someone leaves the party without stating cardinal differences, or stating cardinal differences and then not putting equal time and money into another party or organization with a different line, then we know the issue is just political degeneration. Some comrades lie to themselves about their reasons for degeneration and come up with grandiose political reasons for their break with MIM when they

either never had much political commitment or they wish to cut back their commitments.

This experience again shows us that the vanguard party needs to be the most committed to the scientific leadership of the proletariat, and hierarchy in the party should be based at least partly on that commitment.

The career ball-and-chain turns many comrades' heads from revolution. Some find the acquisition of real estate and other wealth to be the ball-and-chain. Finally, there is the ball-and-chain of romance culture, which is probably the single largest diversion of both male and female young comrades. Since the vanguard party is supposed to be the collection of the best leaders of the proletariat, MIM members are supposed to put their politics ahead of careers, the acquisition of wealth or typical middle-class lifestyle and the pursuit of romance. Since capitalists do not pay us to be revolutionaries, revolutionary politics is something that happens in the "leisure-time" of a society. Even full-time revolutionaries are in part funded from a surplus in society that would otherwise make leisure possible.

MIM'S STRUGGLE

Though it started on what everyone thought was a minor issue, the struggle at MIM's Party Congress took a substantial detour into democratic-centralism and organizational questions and became a two-line struggle connected to gender in its own

right.

Some comrades wanted to drop MIM's revolutionary feminist symbol from the MIM Notes and Notas Rojas mastheads. They drew support from some long-smoldering anarchist elements who themselves took the opportunity to light a verbal brushfire for anarchism in the party. However, by this point MIM was already making progress in the resolution of the conflict and the majority of comrades became alarmed with the gust of anarchist wind.

Anarchists implied that oppression by communists in the party was worse than oppression by imperialism. Making the matter even easier for the party, they also adopted some Orwellian anti-communist rhetoric as well as some Trotskyist poses.

The opening salvo of the anarchist wind at the 1994 Party Congress attacked the elected leadership of the party, who served in a party structure that included definite hierarchy, as is the universal practice in Maoist parties. The structure had been nearly unanimously accepted, previously.

HIERARCHY

The anarchists in MIM began by attacking hierarchy outright. Referring to MIM's formal leadership and "informal 'Power Circle,'" they attacked internal party hierarchy that had been accepted without previous complaint at a prior Congress.

"What the [leadership] learned is that it had not yet awarded itself sufficient 'top-down' power to effect its unstated hegemonic goals. Notice that the ... Power Circle now openly declares itself to be the 'top.'"(2)

Actually, as the same document acknowledges later, the "Power Circle" had already been voted the "top" in a previous Congress. The same person started referring to a bourgeoisie in the party, though s/he later retracted that language.

"Like all bourgeois aspirants to power, the ... Power Circle learned from its own errors and came up with a new, improved version of a system to perpetuate itself and fool the masses. MCs X and Y and their supporters now actually propose to put the ... Power Circle in a position to tell a comrade how long a shit they can have."(3)

The now ex-comrades fail to distinguish between the "power" of Maoist comrades and bourgeois totalitarian states: "Like all bourgeois, the ... Power Circle doesn't impolitely mention 'who' will hold what 'office' — because it is seizing power not for itself just as individuals, but as a class!"(4) At the same time, the anarchist critic did not put him/herself up for a vote as party leader, as the party structure allowed, until the very last two days of the Congress.

Further, the rule of the party hierarchy was so oppressive to these anarchists that they referred to it as "star chamber proceedings."(5) The Star Chamber was the monarch's court in England, before bourgeois democracy, and the phrase is synonymous with kangaroo court.

Another charge the anarchists slung at the rest of the party: "the way to get ahead in MIM (if we vote in the corporate structure) will be by not even THINKING anything that disagrees with what you guess the power elite is thinking."(6)

The fact that no one in MIM's political hierarchy had access to the means of production, a state or even an army did not at all stop our anarchists from their irresponsible divisiveness. As MIM pointed out before, anarchists attack everyone organizing to overthrow bourgeois rule with an organized party, as if the revolutionaries were the same as bourgeois oppressors. Thus, these ex-comrades in MIM suddenly came to oppose MIM's line distinguishing communists from the power structure to be overthrown.

Listening to these ex-comrades, one would have thought the party leadership had an army, a court system, a prison and other instruments of coercion. Unfortunately, we must inform the world that MIM does not have any of these instruments of state power or access to the means of production. MIM does not have so much as incipient Soviets of the type the Chinese Communist Party had in the base areas where they led guerrilla warfare in the 1930s and 1940s.

But the anarchists made repeated references to their "persecution and hounding" by the elected party leadership. The anarchists went so far as to say that MIM leaders, had they been in state power, would be executing comrades for nothing. Asked if they thought the Communist Party of China in state power would have repressed them for saying what they did, they had no answer.

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After the first ex-comrade finished attacking the "mutating bourgeois political machine" in MIM, other comrades (now ex-comrades) took even more forthright and less contradictory positions to support the anarchist wind. These ex-comrades simply attacked hierarchy in movement organizations outright:

"Well, in the first place, why should the party have a [Theory Minister] in the first place?"(7) (The Theory Minister is the person with the highest authority in the party, who sees to the day-to-day representation of MIM's theoretical line.) Another chimed in, "what makes the TM right all the time? Such blind allegiance smacks of paranoia and a personality cult."(8)

The only paranoia was by the anarchists who could not stomach any leadership, not even

leadership without a state or capital. On the one hand, they claimed someone was asking for blind obedience; on the other hand, they later complained they were tired of so much arguing and struggle. With their own confused line, no wonder the anarchists only decided to run for the top party offices at the very last minute of the Congress; they weren't sure there should be any party leaders.

Finally, on the subject of hierarchy, another ex-comrade wrote:

"The structure proposal is hierarchical and pushes responsibility inward, not outward. The outline leaves a few key MCs in positions of supposed power, which in reality they cannot have in a Maoist party. The rank-and-file cadres and the branch formations actually carry out MIM's practice and are responsible for recruiting and creating public opinion. It is a mistake to support a structure that is modeled after your basic bourgeois corporation. And unlike a corporation MIM's MCs are not in contact with such a hierarchy enough for such a plan to be even functional. But this is not the main problem. The main problem is that this proposal does nothing to support the growth that comrades must go through to become functioning Maoists."(9)

This ex-comrade thought that hierarchy was not part of Maoism. When shown Mao works to the contrary, this ex-comrade had nothing to say. Maoists do not choose hierarchy

It is impossible to have democratic centralism for a party without hierarchy — a mechanism for deciding questions of differing interpretations of the 'general line.'

because they like it; we choose hierarchy because it works to make revolutions under the horrible conditions of imperialism. Idealistic visions of the non-hierarchical future now only get in the way.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

MIM anarchists argued that "upholding the general line (which ought not to be subject to daily interpretations by either [of MIM's top leaders]) and not betraying people and fomenting revolutionary thoughts and PRACTICE among the people is democratic centralism."(10) Under this definition, many people outside the Party would be upholding democratic centralism. While this anarchist definition describes an honorable way to live one's life, it says nothing about the importance and organization of a vanguard party. The bottom line is, it is impossible to have democratic centralism for a party without hierarchy — a mechanism for deciding questions of differing interpretations of the "general line."

Through this struggle, comrades realized again what it means to have a cardinal principle. Cardinal principles require unanimity and there are only four for MIM — the Cultural

Revolution, the ex-Soviet Union, the Euro-American working class — and democratic-centralism on all other questions. To advocate abolishing democratic-centralism, openly or in essence, and in the face of repeated counter-argument, is to abandon Maoism. There is no point to being in a Maoist party with such views. No one is stopping these anarchists from being anarchists. They should just stop claiming Mao and instead run their own progressive organizations.

For example, the instigator of the anarchist wind began the struggle by saying, "I will, of course, submit to the majority will of this Party." As the struggle went on, however, MIM learned that these anarchists saw discipline among small groups of comrades as primary and party-wide discipline as secondary. The anarchist leader at one pointed opted out of party-wide struggle claiming that s/he was "bowing" to the authority of a small group of comrades with whom the anarchist was working directly.(11) This small group was not elected by the party majority to have authority to override the elected leadership. Finally, when the party majority demanded self-criticism and a period of study before returning to party membership, this comrade quit all party discipline.

There must be unity between local and continent-wide work, because without merging the two together, provincialism and dogmatism will result. Promoting local politics over party-wide discipline is a common mark of anarchism. Like the mistaken slogan, "think globally, act locally," the anarchist

line in MIM inherently distrusted organization beyond a very narrow local sphere. The MIM anarchists correctly saw that continent-wide organization required hierarchy, but they concluded therefore that continent-wide organization (the party) is a mistake. For all practical purposes, they replaced Mao's "practice is principal" with "my local practice is principal" — an inevitably subjectivist and provincialist view.

MAO ON PURGES

Several comrades raised general doubts about self-criticism and purges. (See accompanying article.) They raised doubt, pondering the consequences of purging the wrong comrade at the wrong time. This is liberalism, and it can be destructive to the growth of the Party. To this logic, MIM responds "as long as everyone is on the Maoist path, it won't matter in the end." Mao wrote:

"Why should a person only go up and never go down? Why should one only work in one place and never be transferred to another? I think that demotion and transfer, whether it is justified or not, does good to people. They

thereby strengthen their revolutionary will, are able to investigate and study a variety of new conditions and increase their useful knowledge. I myself have had experience in this respect and gained a great deal of benefit. . . .

"What I am saying is that in every stage of mankind's history there have always been such cases of mishandling. In class societies such cases are numerous. Even in a socialist society such things cannot be entirely avoided either, whether it be in a period of leadership by a correct or an incorrect line."(24)

SECURITY

The MIM anarchists asked,

"Why should we hide our problems from the masses? Let's tell the masses how MIM handles its internal contradictions. Don't let security hold you back. Who cares if the masses know what MIM's 'structure' is on paper? The CPP and PCP [Communist Party of the Philippines and Communist Party of Peru] broadcast their basic operating structures to the world. Any pig can figure MIM out in a hot second. The ONLY security is reliance on the masses. Let the masses approve MIM's administrative 'structure.' We serve the masses, remember, shouldn't the masses have a say in THEIR PARTY?"(19)

The MIM anarchists also suggested that MIM put its internal discipline "in front of the masses."(20)

Going to a logical conclusion, the leader of the anarchist wind advocated that MIM elect its leaders in public through majority vote of the masses and thus do away with wrangling over internal party structure! While raising this, our anarchist leader denied s/he was attempting to water down our cardinal question on the masses in the imperialist countries. Nonetheless, s/he refused to say how we would decide who should vote and thus left it open that the majority of Euro-American in the public would have the majority of votes in forming a supposedly internationalist proletarian party.

It was an apparent contradiction that if we could not decide "top-down" on the basis of crystallized rational knowledge, then we would have to let anybody vote. Perhaps because they realized this, our anarchists advocated this position and didn't seek to develop it very far, having been exposed for both Liberalism and chauvinism on the Euro-American working class question.

To these far-fetched suggestions from the anarchists, the majority replied sarcastically:

"No need for a party with [democratic centralism] at all. Let's just campaign our way to the top! There's no security problem, because there is no repressive state here?! No, not here, only inside the MIM party is there a repressive state with Thought Police. In North America, shit, we can put up our party leaders for public election, no problem, because there is no [state] repression of communists, just 'persecution' of communists inside communist parties." (22)

In the highly organized era of imperialism, a revolution cannot be waged without organization, hierarchy and democratic centralism in the proletarian party. Maoists do not exalt this reality, but neither do we turn away from it or attempt to wish it away. We intend to remain organized and to emerge victorious.

Notes:

1. "What Is MIM?" 1991. p. 13.
2. Anarchist Wind Internal Document of MIM, "MIM/Senses," July 19, 1994.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Anarchist Wind Internal Document, "Chat," July 23, 1994.
7. Anarchist Wind Internal Document of MIM, August 3, 1994.
8. Anarchist Wind Internal Document of MIM, July 21, 1994.
9. Anarchist Wind Internal Document of MIM, July 20, 1994.
10. Anarchist Wind Internal Document of MIM, "Where I Stand," July 31, 1994.
11. Anarchist Wind Internal Document of MIM, July 21, 1994.
12. "MIM/Senses," op cit.
13. "MIM/Senses," op cit.
14. Anarchist Wind Internal Document of MIM, July 23, 1994.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. "MIM/Senses," op cit.
18. Anarchist Wind Internal Document of MIM, July 21, 1994.
19. Anarchist Wind Internal Document of MIM, July 23, 1994.
20. Ibid.
21. Majority reply, August 13, 1994.
22. Majority reply, July 23, 1994.
23. MIM Notes Bound Volume, available from MIM for \$10.00. Send check made out to MIM Distributors to PO Box 3576, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576.
24. *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters, 1956-1971.* Pantheon Books: New York, 1974. p. 162.

Why is MIM underground?

Read *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*, by Ward Churchill & Jim Vander Wall. This history of the birth of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a detailed account of the FBI's work infiltrating and splitting and wrecking revolutionary organizations, including murders and frame-ups, helps answer the question. The book demonstrates the extent of the threat to anti-imperialist movements, and the long-term futility of the FBI's work.

Send \$17 to: "MIM Distributors,"
PO Box 3576
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576.

Post-1924 Trotskyism Anarchism for Party Members

MIM comrades who fell into anarchism (see previous article) also fell back onto the old arguments put forward by Trotsky within the Bolshevik party in the USSR. Under attack for essentially abolishing the party principle, the leader of MIM's internal anarchist wing had recourse to Trotsky. Echoing Trotsky on Stalin's supposed "degenerate bureaucracy," our anarchist leader referred to MIM's leadership as a "degenerate MIMocracy."

This is not surprising because Liberal "Marxism" (Menshevism), anarchism and Trotskyism all share some underlying assumptions. They vary only slightly in their forms.

MIM's anarchist leader sounded like Bakunin, Trotsky and George Orwell all wrapped in one:

"[The party leadership] proposes to kill dissent; to kill democracy; to impose upon the Party a bureaucracy of trigger-happy ... police with the power to kick comrades suspected of dissenting with the 'thoughts' of the Power Circle out of the Party; and to relegate the contact with the masses of the [small groups within the party] to a 'subordinate' position to the bookish 'leaders': MIM's government."(1)

No conceding that there was no government power in MIM, the anarchist leader said, "Because we do not hold state power (nor are we a 'proto-government,' last I looked) we can be at least as tolerant of 'dissent' as Mao was during the Cultural Revolution."(2)

Those who criticize repression by MIM are actually worse than Trotsky. When Lenin died, and Stalin had state power, there was potentially something to complain about. Opposing hierarchy while the communists are in state power is questionable to begin with, but it is out-Trotskying Trotsky to make these complaints when the party has no state, no army and no access to the means of production. Maoists should have no tolerance for that kind of nonsense. The bourgeoisie in the party arises when the party gains access to the means of production through state power.

INDIVIDUAL VERSUS CLASS IDENTITY

According to anti-communists and Trotskyists, the existence of a vanguard party with centralized discipline and

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purges of its degenerated elements means that communists are made into robots who can't think for themselves. This echoes the bourgeoisie, which is trying desperately to get the oppressed "to think for themselves" as individuals instead of groups. Individuals so identified will never be able to unite to overthrow the ruling class, only groups will.

According to MIM's anarchist leader, "You start purging every supposed impurity in the people's vanguard on the basis not of mass criticism but of mud-slinging and lethally divisive 'suspicions' — you'll end up with a bunch of robots and no mass line and no MIM."(3)

Viewing communists as mindless idiots, in the fashion of the bourgeoisie, our anarchist leader also said: "Neither is it to the credit of those outside the ... Power Circle that you have allowed us to rule you for so long."(4) In other words, if not everyone was participating in all party decisions at all times, then it showed that the party masses were stupidly allowing degenerate bureaucrats to take over.

Trotsky said something very much the same once he lost his two-line struggle with Stalin: "Out of the party with passive obedience, with mechanical levelling by the authorities, with suppression of personality, with servility, with careerism!"(5) In fact, it is the bourgeoisie that has an interest in glorifying personality so the individual is glorified and class struggle is de-emphasized.

SMALL GROUP AUTONOMY

In the party's subdivisions, branches and bureaus, the anarchists raised a major ruckus. Having been exposed in struggle on party-wide questions, our anarchists took up the Trotskyist strategy of undertaking factional struggle, not as part of a disciplined platform on party-wide issues but as part of destroying party unity, small group by small group. Of course, true anarchists do not belong to parties, so they advocate "autonomous" political action in localities. Trotskyists after 1924 do the same, but within parties.

MIM's anarchist had this to say on small group autonomy: "Long Live the [small groups]!"(8)

Meanwhile, Trotsky had said: "Every unit of the party must return to collective initiative, to the right of free and comradesly criticism — exercised fearlessly and unflinchingly — the

right of organizational self-determination.”(9)

PURGES

One of the things that the bourgeoisie always throws at the communists is the communist practice of purging rot from the party through majority rule. In actuality, bourgeois parties also carry out the practice of purging, but they only complain when communists do it. For example, local and national meetings of the Democratic and Republican parties are technically subject to “credentials” checks. From time to time, such credentials become important in convention votes and people without the right credentials may be kept from participating. By attacking the discipline of the proletarian party, the bourgeoisie tries to make it harder for the proletariat to land one united blow. Ultimately, purges are more necessary for the proletariat than for the bourgeoisie, which is guaranteed victory as long as everyone thinks of him or herself as an individual and not a group member.

MIM has no problem providing space to its critics in our publications, where we gladly rebut them; however, we see no point in retaining anti-proletarian critics within our own ranks. Anarchists should be in anarchist groups (or non-groups) and Trotskyists should be working with Trotskyists.

Like Trotsky, MIM's leading anarchist exaggerated the use of purges in the party, saying that MIM had “moved to purge those daring to voice even a minor disagreement with the opinions of the self-proclaimed ‘leaders.’”(10)

Despite the fact that Stalin had for years objected to Trotsky being purged, Trotsky spoke of “the already ossified bureaucratic degeneration of party morals and relations,” and added that “the answer to the first word of any criticism is: ‘Let’s have your membership card!’”(11) MIM's leading anarchist had been in the party for a long time, and had a history of attacking MIM leadership as totalitarian (without being purged). But the worst came at the 1994 Congress.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTY'S CENTRAL LEADERSHIP

MIM's leading anarchist:

“Initial attempts by the ... Power Circle to enforce a standard of acceptable ‘thoughts’ upon itself gradually gave way to putting over on the Party a series of increasingly restrictive, idealist and commandist ‘structures.’ ... [An article submitted by the party leadership] proposes to kill dissent; to kill democracy; to impose upon the Party a bureaucracy of trigger-happy ... police with the power to kick comrades suspected of dissenting with the ‘thoughts’ of the ... Power Circle out of the Party...”(12)

Likewise Trotsky concentrated his fire on the party's central leadership during his struggle with Stalin:

“Before the publication of the decision of the Central Committee on the ‘new course,’ the mere pointing out of the need of modifying the internal party regime was regarded by bureaucratized functionaries as heresy, as factional-

ism, as an infraction of discipline. And now the bureaucrats are ready formally to ‘take note’ of the ‘new course,’ that is, to nullify it bureaucratically. The renovation of the party apparatus — naturally within the clear-cut framework of the statutes — must aim at replacing the mummified bureaucrats with fresh elements closely linked with the life of the collectivity, or capable of assuring such a link. And before anything else, the leading posts must be cleared out of those who, at the first word of criticism, of objection, or of protest, brandish the thunderbolts of penalties before the critic. The ‘new course’ must begin by making everyone feel that from now on nobody will dare terrorize the party.”(13)

Listening to this paragraph of Trotsky, echoed by MIM's leading anarchist throughout his/her debate at the Congress, one would never know that the party leaders were elected by the party.

When Trotsky complained about bureaucrats and a regime oppressing people, at least there actually was one — real state power! Furthermore, Trotsky said this 70 years ago. MIM's anarchist still hadn't learned by 1994!

Trotskyists and anarchists alike pretend that the communist leadership is personally responsible for the existence of bureaucracy — essentially for the existence of power. In reality, with Trotsky or Stalin in power, either way there was going to be bureaucracy. For the case of anarchists, being “in power” is a contradiction in terms, so unless they can succeed in eliminating power through their one-on-one strategy of individual persuasion, they have no business blaming Stalin or communist leaders for the existence of power. One might as well blame someone for the sun's setting at night or the onset of winter.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CENTRALIZATION

MIM anarchist:

“The friend pointed out that a Party always needs a ‘center.’ Some call it a ‘center of gravity,’ because in a truly repressive society, it must shift locations and focuses from time to time when attacked. In times of peace, the center of gravity, even under socialism [MIM would say especially under socialism, when the party has state power — MCS] often has a tendency to accumulate bourgeois-type power unto itself.”(14)

According to Trotsky, after Lenin passed from the scene:

“The center of gravity was wrongly placed in the apparatus. The initiative of the party was reduced to the minimum. Thence, the habits and the procedures of leadership, fundamentally contradicting the spirit of revolutionary proletarian organization. The excessive centralization of the apparatus at the expense of initiative engendered a feeling of *uneasiness*, an uneasiness which, at the extremities of the party, assumed an exceedingly morbid form and was translated, among other things, in the appearance of illegal groupings

directed by elements indubitably hostile to Communism. The idea, or at the very least the feeling, that bureaucracy threatened to get the party into a blind alley, had become pretty general." (15)

Likewise, MIM's leading anarchist took the opportunist course of blaming the inevitable (bureaucracy) for the weakness of the communist movement — in Trotsky's words, its "blind alley." The first step was to make people anxious about things as regular as the sunset and then to blame other problems on that sunset. MIM's leading anarchist:

"What possible successes did the prototype structures have in the real-world that any comrade can point to as a basis for continuing in the same direction? One failure after another indicates that we are facing the wrong way. A mousetrap has turned into a ludicrous Rube Goldberg machine." (16)

This same anarchist had approved MIM's 10th Anniversary statement of accomplishments just a few months before. Suddenly it seemed to our anarchists that MIM had no accomplishments. Just as Trotsky had done when Lenin died, they spread defeatism. In Trotsky's case, the root cause was that, like the Mensheviks, he did not believe the Soviet Union was ready for socialism under the existing conditions, since it did not yet have a large enough proletariat, especially compared with its peasant class.

But MIM's anarchists took up a more right-opportunist

approach, calling on comrades to give up all security, to give up structure and succumb to whatever the North American masses voted for "with their feet."

Numerous political descendants of Trotsky, such as the Socialist Workers Party-USA, took up a similar line on operating above-ground, fixating on numbers and taking up electoral politics as the logical conclusion of their premises. We at MIM believe plenty such organizations exist already and so we saw to weeding the anarchist vegetation out of the Party's garden.

Notes:

1. Anarchist Wind Internal MIM Document, "MIM/Senses," July 19, 1994.
2. Anarchist Wind Internal MIM Document, "Hey!" July 21, 1994.
3. Anarchist Wind Internal MIM Document, "Chat" July 23, 1994.
4. "MIM/Senses," op cit.
5. *The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology*, 1964, p. 141.
6. Trotsky in 1936, *Ibid.*, p. 153.
7. "MIM/Senses," op cit.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Trotsky, op. cit., p. 140, emphasis added.
10. "MIM/Senses," op cit.
11. Trotsky, op. cit., p. 140.

12. "MIM/Senses," op cit.
13. Trotsky, op. cit., p. 140.
14. "Chat" op cit.
15. Trotsky, op. cit., p. 138.
16. "Chat" op cit.

What Do You Know About The Philippines?

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is leading a revolution in the Philippines today, in alliance with anti-imperialist and nationalist forces throughout the country.

Find out more about the Philippine revolution. MIM distributes these materials by the CPP and allied organizations:

- *Liberation International*. A publication of the International Office of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF). Bi-monthly news and analysis of the revolution, including international news. \$3 per issue.
- *The Philippine Revolution: The Leader's View*, by Jose Maria Sison. CPP founder's account of the revolution. \$15 post-paid.
- *Rebolusyon*. Theoretical journal of the CPP. \$4 per issue.

Send cash, check or m.o. made out to: "MIM Distributors"
PO Box 3576, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576.

Internal Anarchism in the International Communist Movement

In defense of hierarchy, leadership, organization and theory from Lenin to MIM
by MC5

In the middle of MIM's internal struggle over anarchism during the 1994 Party Congress (see accompanying article), the majority drew more and more upon the writings of Chairperson Mao Zedong for guidance on questions of party organization against the anarchists challenge. At one point in the struggle, the anarchists replied:

"One can find a Mao quote to justify anything. One thing you won't find in Mao's writings, tho', is much in the way of references to Marx, Lenin, Engels, Stalin, etc." (Anarchist Wind Internal Document of MIM, July 21, 1994.)

Because of his personal popularity, Mao's words have indeed been used to justify a lot of revisionism in China. However, the Party majority countered that if Mao quotations could justify anything, then the anarchists should be able to find Mao equating the leaders of pre-revolution parties with state power, but they were able to find no such quotations.

More important than the substance of this issue, however, is the method with which the anarchists looked at the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, writings we communists refer to as "classics."

Once in power, the Chinese Communist Party saw to it that China publish hundreds of millions of copies of the "classics" in several different languages and set up a publishing house for translating these works into various languages. These books cost pennies in China, and a few more cents in foreign countries. The low cost of "Quotations from Chairman Mao" enabled the Black Panther Party to make a profit on the book and buy their first guns.

Taking Mao out of context and revising his use of this term, the anarchists in MIM derided referring to the classics as "book worship." Here MIM explains why the classics remain critical to the organization of a vanguard party in the 1990s, and why hierarchy, leadership, organization and theory remain critical to the successful revolutionary struggle.

I. LENIN

In the 1890s, before Lenin wrote "What Is To Be Done?", the Bolshevik Party was in a more backward situation than MIM is today. Lenin was working with various circles of activists and study groups that kept getting smashed by the state. They didn't have a party structure and they didn't produce regular literature. Nonetheless, he encountered people very much like the anarchists in MIM, who confused the authority of party leaders with the authority of the state. Lenin recalls hearing the first attacks on the "dictatorship" of leaders within the Party in 1895.(1) He wrote:

"We hope that the reader will understand why the Russian Bolshevik, who has known this mechanism for twenty-five years and has seen it develop out of small, illegal and underground circles, cannot help regarding all this talk about 'from above' or 'from below,' about the dictatorship of leaders or the dictatorship of the masses, etc., as ridiculous and childish nonsense, something like discussing whether a man's left leg or right arm is of greater use to him."(2)

In 1905, Russian conditions were more open than they were under the czar, because the regime granted some bourgeois liberties. In the aftermath of a huge revolutionary upsurge, Lenin advocated that the Party quickly take in new revolutionaries. However, he anticipated that some might complain about giving a vote to new comrades, and he argued that the Party was strong enough to take in people as well as train them quickly in large numbers.

"Is Social-Democracy ["socialism" in the language of Lenin's day] endangered by the realisation of the plan we propose?" he asked.

"Danger may be said to lie in a sudden influx of large number of non-Social-Democrats into the Party. If that occurred, the Party would be dissolved among the masses, it would cease to be the conscious vanguard of its class, its role would be reduced to that of a tail. That would mean a very deplorable period indeed. And this danger could undoubtedly become a very serious one if we showed any inclination towards demagoguery, if we lacked party principles (programme, tactical rules, organisational experience) entirely, or if those principles were feeble and shaky. But the fact is that no such "ifs" exist. We Bolsheviks have never shown any inclination toward demagoguery. On the contrary, we have always fought resolutely, openly and straightforwardly against the slightest attempts at demagoguery; we have demanded class-consciousness from those joining the Party, we have insisted on the tremendous importance of continuity in the Party's development, we have preached discipline and demanded that every Party member be trained in one or other of the Party organisations."(3)

Although Lenin won the votes at the Second Congress, the newspaper *Iskra* — one of the bases of Lenin's faction of Social-Democracy — was taken over by the Mensheviks after the Congress, thanks to Plekhanov. In periods of weakness, vacillators can do a lot of damage. And Plekhanov had distinguished revolutionary credentials with which to act as a self-

out. This experience reveals that revisionism must be combated no matter how hard its proponents work. Line is decisive in a vanguard party.

LENIN AFTER THE SPLIT WITH THE MENSHEVIKS

In the period following the failed Revolution of 1905, Lenin advocated more openness in recruiting. While MIM's anarchists found some support for their line in this period of Lenin's (1905-1909), there are some crucial differences between his party and MIM. When arguing that workers are "instinctively, spontaneously Social-Democratic" and thus openness with regard to recruiting workers was appropriate, he admonished:

"Don't invent bugaboos, comrades! Don't forget that in every live and growing party there will always be elements of instability, vacillation, wavering. But these elements can be influenced, and they will submit to the influence of the steadfast and solid core of Social-Democrats."(3)

The Bolshevik Party did open up, emphasizing less theory. At this moment for the Party, he argued for a party composition of 90% workers and 10% intellectuals:

"We have 'theorised' for so long (sometimes — why not admit it? — to no use) ... that it will really not be amiss if we now 'bend the bow' slightly, a little, just a little, 'the other way' and put practice a little more in the forefront." He also said: "Let this question be the exception (it is an exception that proves the opposite rule!) in which we shall have one-tenth theory and nine-tenths practice. Such a wish is surely legitimate, historically necessary, and psychologically necessary."(4)

This call for a more open Party, relying on worker spontaneity, was a failure. Clearly, MIM today cannot just open our Party to anyone calling themselves workers and expect that the correct line will spontaneously flourish.

Attacking hierarchy and theory in the Party, as the anarchists in MIM did, means attacking the forces that weld the Party together and make crucial organization possible. The result of Lenin's call for openness and less theory, at the Fourth Congress, was that the Bolsheviks lost their majority. The Congress elected a Central Committee of three Bolsheviks and seven Mensheviks. The editorial board of the central organ was Menshevik. As a result of this and years' more experience, Lenin learned that having an effective Party was a matter of emphasizing theoretical clarity and not tolerating intellectual vacillation.

By World War I, he saw that the larger European parties took up national chauvinism and led the workers into imperialist war. Zinoviev argued that it was better to have a steadfast Party one-fifth the size of a larger one that vacillated. Confusion hurts the leadership and recruiting process needed for proletarian revolutionary victory. As late as 1917, the Bolsheviks, with Lenin's guidance, knew when to stay small

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and not try to become too popular at the expense of their line. They maintained an unpopular opposition to World War I because they knew it was just a matter of time before the reality of the Russian working class asserted itself.

LENIN AND CENTRALISM

Just as the anarchists in MIM attacked MIM leadership as formalistic, bureaucratic and "Stalinist," so did the Mensheviks attack the Bolshevik Party leadership, using the same language:

"As a matter of fact, Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov[']s] ... entire [opportunistic] position ... in organisational questions already began to be revealed in ... their advocacy of a diffuse, not strongly welded, Party organization; their hostility to the idea (the 'bureaucratic' idea) of building the Party from the top downwards, starting from the Party Congress and the bodies set up by it; their tendency to proceed from the bottom upwards, allowing every professor, every high-school student

and 'every striker' to declare himself a member of the Party; their hostility to the 'formalism' which demands that a Party member should belong to one of the organisations recognised by the Party; their leaning towards the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, who is only prepared to 'accept organisational relations platonically'; their penchant for opportunist profundity and for anarchist phrases; their tendency towards autonomism as against centralism..."(5)

Upholding the "very precise (formalistic and bureaucratic, those would say who are now using these words to cover up their political spinelessness)"(6) policies passed by the Organizing Committee of the Bolsheviks, Lenin continued: "Opportunism and anarchism, or bureaucracy and formalism? — that is the way the question stands now, when the little difference has become a big one."(7)

BRANCH CENTRALISM

MIM is not the first party to have the problem of comrades who favor loyalty to small groups in the party before the central party organization. Lenin argued against Comrade Akimov's call for small group autonomy within the party:

"[I]nasmuch as the Party is one whole, it must be ensured control over the local committees. Comrade Lieber said, borrowing my expression, that the Rules were 'organised distrust.' That is true. But I used this expression in references to the Rules proposed by the Bund spokesmen, which represented organised distrust on the part of a section of the Party towards the whole Party. Our Rules, on the other hand ... represent the organised distrust of the Party towards all its sections, that is control over all local, district, national, and other organisations."(8)

He continued:

"He inveighs against my 'monstrous' centralism and claims that it would lead to the 'destruction' of the lower organisations, that it is 'permeated through and through with the desire to give the centre unrestricted powers and the unrestricted right to interfere in everything,' that it allows the organisations 'only one right — to submit without a murmur to orders from above,' etc. 'The centre proposed by the draft would find itself in a vacuum, it would have no peripheral organisations around it, but only an amorphous mass in which its executive agents would move.' Why, this is exactly the kind of *false phrase-mongering* to which the Martovs and Axelrods proceeded to treat us after their defeat at the Congress."(9)

In the end, Lenin's Party led a successful revolution, while the anti-centralism, anti-bureaucratic Mensheviks wasted away.

PURGES

Lenin argued against counting "all who help" in the struggle as Party members, labelling it "anarchistic."(10) But Lenin's critics portrayed him as an elitist purge-monger, who wanted to "throw overboard" valuable "Party members" who were not directly members of any Party organization. Lenin countered that better centralism within the Party would mean more fruitful and expansive relations with the non-Party masses.(11) Recently, MIM created the MIM Supporters Group (MSG) and the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League (RAIL), which are associated with MIM but not directly a part of it. This followed our recognition that while MIM is best off with only Maoists as members, valuable revolutionary work can be done by people who have a lot of unity with Maoism but are not in a position to be in a Party. Anyone outside the Party can help in the revolutionary struggle. But to be inside the Party you are supposed to do more than just help, Lenin said, and we agree.

After initially defeating the Mensheviks and then losing ground to the them, Lenin had a brief resurgence in 1907, only to get his faction smashed again after yet another major round of degenerations. By 1909, he was no longer talking about openness.

"A year of disintegration, a year of ideological and political disunity, a year of Party driftage lies behind us. The mem-

bership of all our Party organisations has dropped... The main cause of the Party crisis is indicated in the preamble of the resolution on organisation. This main cause is the wavering intellectual and petty-bourgeois elements, of which the workers' party had to rid itself."(12)

II. STALIN

The universal experience of party discipline

As MIM has pointed out before, Stalin probably disagreed with us about the early stages of party-building. In "Foundations of Leninism" and elsewhere, Stalin argued that great personalities necessarily play a disproportionate role in the early stages of party-building. From what we understand, we believe he would advocate joining large organizations of the oppressed masses in order to weld them into something like a party at this stage of the struggle. In contrast, MIM has emphasized the scientific element of party-building at this stage. Taking a strong anti-imperialist stand requires small numbers at this stage in the revolution, because of strong material pressures to ally with imperialism or to push for a new neocolonialism.

So While MIM looks toward the classics for guidance on questions of political line and party organization, we also recognize the different material conditions in an imperialist country. In Russia and China it made sense at the initial stages of party building for communists to join large organizations such as the Guomindang and trade unions. Perhaps in the United States the starting point would be the Black church, the Rainbow Coalition. But MIM instead believes it is important to publish independent party literature and to divert those in the Black church and the Black electoral struggles onto a better road.

For the mature party, and for the party that holds state power, Stalin's writings are more universal. In 1923, when the Bolsheviks held state power in the Soviet Union, someone named Rafail rose within the Party. When Rafail compared Party discipline to the army, as did the anarchists in MIM (and we don't even hold state power!), Stalin countered:

"The Party is the advanced detachment of the proletariat, built from below on the voluntary principle. The Party also has its General Staff, but it is not appointed from above, it is elected from below by the whole Party. The General Staff does not form the Party; on the contrary, the Party forms its General Staff. The Party forms itself on the voluntary principle... Hence the specific character of Party discipline, which, in the main, is based on the method of persuasion, as distinct from army discipline, which, in the main, is based on the method of compulsion. Hence the fundamental difference between the supreme penalty in the Party (expulsion) and the supreme penalty in the army (death by shooting)."(13)

In MIM's Congress, the anarchists complained that they were effectively executed with words. They too likened purges

with militarization. And like the MIM anarchists, Rafail was part of an opposition to party leadership which argued for the freedom to form factional groups within the Party.(14)

Stalin also contended with forces in the Party, including Trotsky, who made the non-Marxist, non-materialist error of separating the "Party" from the "Party apparatus," or leadership, and criticizing the latter. Stalin argued that this distinction was impossible to make: what would the Party consist of separate from its apparatus?(15)

(At this time, early in the split with Trotsky, Stalin did distinguish Trotsky from more revisionist Mensheviks, and gave him credit for having a better line than the more inexperienced Party elements whom he influenced. MIM also can uphold Trotsky from 1917 to 1923 while upholding Lenin over Trotsky in that same period when the two disagreed.)

In MIM's case, not only is the distinction between the Party and its leadership a false one, but the expansive powers of MIM's leadership were purely imagined by its anarchist critics.

III. BROWDER

In 1944, Earl Browder, then General Secretary of the Communist Party-USA, along with 38 of 40 members of the CPUSA's Politburo, thought the best way to protect socialism in the Soviet Union was to dissolve the independent role of the CPUSA, and win over the American people without intimidating them with a communist party. Browder would have sacrificed anything for international peace with the Soviet Union. (Today, this tendency among imperialist-country communists manifests itself in groups such as the non-Maoist party in Quebec, which is making support of PCP its main task. They have since moved on to trying to form parties which apparently is involving a process of splintering, which is probably necessary. They don't take to heart the idea that their task should be to overthrow North American imperialism, not sacrificing everything for the PCP.)

In the case of the CPUSA, this problem was the result of revisionism, and it was discovered way too late to be corrected. Browder's critics, including William Foster, incorrectly believed that the white working class was exploited and fundamentally anti-imperialist, so their correct criticisms of Browder's dissolution must be taken with a grain of salt.

First, the critics argued that Browder had too much authority in the party. To counter this authority, they argued (significantly, unlike the MIM anarchists) that comrades needed to show more theoretical mastery and take on more party leadership. They wanted to reconstitute the independent party and stress the study of theory.

Browder's critics wrote a new Constitution, saying:

"Some people think that we can fulfill our vanguard role today by merely reflecting and putting into more precise and correct form what the democratic masses are thinking. Obviously, this is not correct. This does not mean giving leadership to the mass movement, for it can only result in

tailoring behind the mass movement. While we must constantly feel the pulse of the people, and remain an integral part of the mass movement, we can never forget that the Party, as one of the Marxist classics emphasizes, 'cannot be a real party if it limits itself to registering what the masses of the working people think or experience...' In fulfilling the vanguard role of the Party, we must be able to project ideas often not yet fully accepted or understood by the masses, and do so in such a convincing and effective manner that we can influence labor and the people to accept them as their own."(16)

MIM's internal struggle similarly included anarchists who wanted the party to merely reflect the proletariat but not lead it. Communists who believe the best road to revolution is a vanguard party must struggle resolutely against this trend, which results in dissolution. Just as the anarchists in MIM wanted, Browder's first steps toward dissolving the party outright included downplaying the party leadership and increasing the autonomy of the lower organizations. Finally, like the anarchists in MIM, Browder downplayed theoretical study in favor of mass work — underestimating the importance of the former and the nature of the latter.

Browder's critics countered:

"This distortion of and contempt for Marxian theory is dangerous and has nothing in common with Marxism... It is our deep conviction and determined purpose to insure that now, as never before, for us Communists, theory must serve as a guide to action."(17)

Rather than take the course advocated by today's party anarchists, the CPUSA's correct pole in the 1940s sought to put the role of the party "clubs" back on par with mass organizing. The party clubs were the basic cells of the party, with 45,000-90,000 members. They restored the requirement for internal party struggle. In contrast, anarchists in MIM said less theoretical struggle would combat personality cults (such as Browder's, and, the MIM anarchists claimed, personality cults within MIM) and other leadership problems. This line holds that when theory is elevated, the role of individual leaders is increased and distorted.

Even at the height of the CPUSA's membership, Browderite revisionism went basically unchallenged. Resistance to Browderism was not strong enough to create new parties or prevent the party from shrinking. Large numbers of members does not prove the line correct. Tens of thousands of people had the chance to think for themselves, and without international pressure they basically failed.

PRAGMATISM AND EMPIRICISM

Those on the correct pole of the CPUSA — opposing Browder's right-opportunist liquidation in the name of merging with the masses (garden-variety rightism) — saw the danger of anti-theory pragmatism: "We often confused the woods for the trees, and tended to evaluate or raise short-term tactics

and transitory phenomena to the level of strategy or a 'new theory.'"(18)

In self-criticism, the anti-Browderites quoted Lenin from "Marxism and Revisionism":

"To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day to the windings of political trivialities, to forget the basic interests of the proletariat and the main features of the entire capitalist system as well as the whole capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these basic interests for the sake of real or would-be advantages of the moment — such is the policy of revisionism. And it obviously follows from the very essence of such a policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms and will give rise to one or other variety of revisionism, each time when there is some 'new' question, or when there is more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though this turn changed the basic line of development to but an insignificant degree and for but the shortest period of time."(19)

Quoting from the *History of the CPSU*, the CPUSA of 1945-6 found something used by Mao in "Combat Liberalism" and other places:

"A party is invincible if it does not fear criticism and self-criticism, if it does not gloss over mistakes and defects in its work, if it teaches and educates its cadres by drawing the lessons from the mistakes in Party work, and if it knows how to correct its mistakes in time. A party perishes if it conceals its mistakes, if it glosses over sore problems, if it covers up its shortcomings by pretending that all is well, if it is intolerant of criticism and self-criticism, if it gives way to self-concealment and vain glory and if it rests on its laurels."(20)

Through its struggle with anarchism in 1994, MIM progressed to its deepest understanding of Maoism yet. Some people degenerated and a little Menshevik rot in the Party was swept away. We must rid ourselves of anarchism, tame our ultraleftism, and expose the right opportunism that opposes inner-party struggle just as it opposes righteous struggle with

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—Mao

the masses. If we can do these things and keep the "book-learning" and inner-party struggle moving forward on an even keel, then we can avoid some massive disruptions and battles with revisionism, and we can reach outward for a meaningful and effective mass line.

IV. MAO ZEDONG

THE UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE OF PARTY DISCIPLINE

At the MIM Congress, the initial anarchist outburst came from a desire to protect some people from criticism and use that to advance an anti-democratic-centralism agenda. By the end of the struggle, MIM's anarchists were openly saying that we were making ourselves too "small" by "persecuting" (criticizing) people. The majority reminded the anarchists that our Third World comrades have truly suffered at the hands of the imperialist state and know that persecution is very different from mere criticism.

According to Mao:

"Criticism must be sharp... If you do not do things well, I won't be satisfied with it, and if I offend you, I offend you, and that's that. To be afraid of offending people is nothing more than being afraid of losing votes and being afraid of having difficult relations in one's work with one's co-workers. Will I starve if you don't vote for me? Nothing of the sort. Actually, relations will be smoother if you speak out and put the problem clearly on the table... A bull has two horns because it has to fight. One purpose is for defense and another purpose is for offence. I have often asked comrades, 'Have you grown any "horns" on your head?' You comrades can feel your heads and see... I think that it's better to grow two 'horns,' because that conforms to Marxism."

PARTY AND SOCIAL BASE

Contrary to the sizeist ideas of "growth" promoted by MIM anarchists, who were trying to call right opportunists to their aid, Mao saw criticism of petit-bourgeois individualist ideas as part of their own "growth."

"The source of such incorrect ideas in this Party organisation lies, of course, in the fact that its basic units are composed largely of peasants and other elements of petit-bourgeois origin; yet the inadequacy of the Party's leading bodies in waging concerted and determined struggle against these incorrect ideas and in educating the members in the Party's correct line is also an important cause of their existence and growth."(21)

In North America, where most of the petit bourgeoisie does not belong to oppressed nations, there are even more mistaken ideas to correct. Here we should be all the more willing to engage in criticism and self-criticism.

MAO ON ULTRA-DEMOCRACY

MIM can take guidance from the following quotation from Mao, even though he speaks of a military situation. But

at our current stage of party building and public opinion, we have different kinds of battles, and hence the following is of some use:

"Since the Fourth Army of the Red Army accepted the directives of the Central Committee, there has been a great decrease in the manifestations of ultra-democracy. For example, Party decisions are now carried out fairly well; and no longer does anyone bring up such erroneous demands as that the Red Army should apply 'democratic centralism from the bottom to the top' or should 'let the lower levels discuss all problems first, and then let the higher levels decide'. Actually, however, this decrease is only temporary and superficial and does not mean that ultra-democratic ideas have already been eliminated. In other words, ultra-democracy is still deep-rooted in the minds of many comrades. Witness the various expressions of reluctance to carry out Party decisions.

"The methods of correction are as follows: (1) In the sphere of theory, destroy the roots of ultra-democracy. First, it should be pointed out that the danger of ultra-democracy lies in the fact that it damages or even completely wrecks the Party organization and weakens or even completely undermines the Party's fighting capacity, rendering the Party incapable of fulfilling its fighting tasks and thereby causing the defeat of the revolution. Next, it should be pointed out that the source of ultra-democracy consists in the petit-bourgeoisie's individualistic aversion to discipline. When this characteristic is brought in the Party, it develops into ultra-democratic ideas politically and organisationally."(22)

MAO ON HIERARCHY

The anarchists in MIM openly struggled against having a Party hierarchy, arguing that powerful leadership would thwart the Party's growth, and most importantly, quell the initiative of the local party organizations. They claimed Mao Zedong would not have supported hierarchy in the Party. The majority in MIM claimed, and maintains, otherwise:

"All decisions of any importance made by the Party's higher bodies must be promptly transmitted to the lower bodies and the Party rank and file...

"The lower bodies of the Party and the Party rank and file must discuss the higher bodies' directive in detail in order to understand their meaning thoroughly and decide on the methods of carrying them out."(23)

"The Chairman said: 'The slogan of 'Doubt everything and overthrow everything' is reactionary. The Shanghai People's Committee demanded that the Premier of the State Council should do away with all heads. This is extreme anarchism, it is most reactionary. If instead of calling someone the 'head' of something we call him 'orderly' or 'assistant', this would really be only a formal change. In reality there will still always be 'heads.' It is the content which matters. There is a slogan in Honan, 'The present-day proletarian dictatorship must be completely changed.' This is a reactionary slogan.'"(24)

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For people lower in the hierarchy to criticize the leadership is not only fine, it is a matter of duty. Struggles within the party can and will arise and become bitter, but when people emerge from these struggles calling for the abolition of hierarchy and democratic-centralism, when comrades cannot make the distinction between a revolutionary party without state power and the bourgeoisie, those people have emerged as anarchists and do not belong in a Leninist party.

MAO ON MASS LINE

Anarchists in MIM further asserted that strong leadership in a Party undermined the mass line. The most famous quotation from Mao on the mass line follows. MIM's anarchists only presented the first part of it:

"In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily 'from the masses, to the masses'. This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge."(25)

But crucially, in the same article, Mao emphasizes the role of Party leadership:

"In relating to subordinate units any task (whether it concerns the revolutionary war, production or education; the rectification movement, check-up on work or the examination of cadres' histories; propaganda work, organizational work or anti-espionage, or other work), a higher organization and its departments should in all cases go through the leader of the lower organization concerned so that he may assume responsibility; in this way both division of labour and unified centralized leadership are achieved... Both the person in over-all charge and the person with specific

responsibility should be informed and given responsibility. This centralized method, combining division of labour with unified leadership, makes it possible, through the person with over-all responsibility, to mobilize a large number of cadres — on occasion even an organization's entire personnel — to carry out a particular task, and thus to overcome shortages of cadres in individual departments and turn a good number of people into active cadres for the work in hand. This, too, is a way of combining the leadership with the masses.”(26)

Stalin and Mao both struggled against the tendency of the party leadership to be “divorced” from the masses, but neither opposed leadership and the party apparatus wholesale. There was a time when there were no “bureaucrats” in MIM. The very first one was named with permission from the rest of the party and a sardonic and self-critical air. But the record will show that before there were bureaucrats (office-holders) there was not a monthly newspaper, a theory journal or other regular party projects. Bureaucracy, departments, hierarchy, centralism — these are the only ways to organize the masses, who do not want to follow anarchists into failure.

Mao continues his defence of hierarchy within the Party:

“In view of Chang Kuo-tao's serious violations of discipline, we must affirm anew the discipline of the Party, namely:

“(1) The individual is subordinate to the organization; (2) the minority is subordinate to the majority; (3) the lower level is subordinate to the higher level; and (4) the entire membership is subordinate to the Central Committee.

“Whoever violates these articles of discipline disrupts Party unity. Experience proves that some people violate Party discipline through not knowing what it is, [emphasis added] while others, like Chang Kuo-tao violate it knowingly and take advantage of many Party members' ignorance to achieve their treacherous purposes.”(27)

Communist anarchists, such as J. Sakai, can be valuable friends of the people and the party. They share with communists the central ambition to achieve a society without oppression or hierarchy. But

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when anarchists claim Mao Zedong for their anarchist ideas, inside a party, they become harmful to the Party and need to change their ways or be purged.

Mao had several criticisms of communist leaders with regard to their implementation of the mass line. First, he thought some comrades underestimated the masses and the material situation, actually opposing the upsurge of the masses in cases where sturdy leadership would have brought the revolution faster.(28) Second, when the comrades are divorced from the masses and know nothing of the specific conditions of the masses; and third, when the comrades just don't exert leadership — how liberalism basically rots the mass line and causes it to break down.

“For over twenty years our Party has carried on mass work every day, and for the past dozen years it has talked about the mass line every day. We have always maintained that the revolution must rely on the masses of the people, on everybody's taking a hand, and have opposed relying merely on a few persons issuing orders. The mass line, however, is still not being thoroughly carried out in the work of some comrades; they still rely solely on a handful of people working coolly and quietly by themselves. One reason is that, whatever they do, they are always reluctant to explain it to the people they lead and that they do not understand why or how to give play to the initiative and creative energy of those they lead... To solve this problem the basic thing is, of course, to carry out ideological education on the mass line, but at the same time we must teach these comrades many concrete methods of work. One such method is to make full use of newspapers.”(29)

So according to Mao, abdicating leadership is destructive to the mass line. Anarchists will try to present the opposite, arguing that leadership itself is opposed to the mass line. Abdicating leadership is an excuse for passivity — a common problem among the petit bourgeois.

MAO AND SMALL GROUP AUTONOMY

The struggle between the MIM majority and the anarchist wind was largely the struggle between centralized party discipline and the small group discipline that the anarchists promoted. This problem occurred in the Chinese Communist Party as well. Mao wrote:

“What are the remnants of inner-Party sectarianism? They are mainly as follows:

“First, the assertion of ‘independence.’ Some comrades see only the interests of the part and not the whole; they always put undue stress on that part of the work for which they themselves are responsible and always wish to subordinate the interests of the whole to the interests of their own part. They do not understand the Party's system of democratic centralism; they do not realize that the Communist Party not only needs democracy but needs centralization even more. They forget the system of democratic centralism in which the minority is subordinate to the majority, the

lower level to the higher level, the part to the whole and the entire leadership to the Central Committee. Chang Kuo-tao asserted his 'independence' of the Central Committee of the Party and as a result 'asserted' himself into betraying the Party and became a Kuomintang agent. Although the sectarianism we are now discussing is not of this extremely serious kind, it must still be guarded against and we must do away completely with all manifestations of disunity. We should encourage comrades to take the interests of the whole into account. Every Party member, every branch of work, every statement and every action must proceed from the interests of the whole Party; it is absolutely impermissible to violate this principle.

"Those who assert this kind of 'independence' are usually wedded to the doctrine of 'me first' and are generally wrong on the question of the relationship between the individual and the Party. Although in words they profess respect for the Party, in practice they put themselves first and the Party second. What are these people after? They are after fame and position and want to be in the limelight. Whenever they are put in charge of a branch of work, they assert their 'independence'..."

"Cadres from the outside and those from the locality must unite and combat sectarian tendencies. Very careful attention must be given to the relations between outside and local cadres."(30)

CONCLUSIONS

Revisionists claim to uphold Maoism while gutting its contents. When MIM's anarchist wind claimed Mao for its line, it went from ultraleft deviation to a revisionist line. They never attempted to back up their line and instead counselled on the one hand that it was not important to read the classics, but on the other hand that if one does read them, one will find their anarchist conclusions in them.

MIM's relative youth and specific conditions guaranteed that Liberalism, empiricism, provincialism and nationalism would go together in two-line struggle. MIM's anarchist wind sought to deny that there was anything universally valid in the classics for MIM's two-line struggle. In contrast, the Party majority believed that what Lenin said about 1895, what the anti-Browderites said in the 1940s, what Stalin said about Rafail and what Mao said about hierarchy, bureaucracy, sectarianism and the mass line are all applicable in our situation as well (with careful attention to the differing conditions). There is nothing new about Liberal opposition to party hierarchy and discipline. To believe otherwise is to succumb to provincialism, the belief that conditions we face are so completely unique as to defy the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Notes:

1. "'Left-Wing' Communism: An Infantile Disorder," in V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works: Vol. 1*, International Publishers: New York, 1967. p. 358.
2. "Ultraleftism and Infantile Disorder," in *Ibid.*, p. 361.
3. "The Reorganisation of the Party," in *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 575.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 260-1.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 301.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
12. "On the Road," in *Ibid.*, pp. 584-5.
13. "The Discussion, Rafail...", in J. V. Stalin, *On the Opposition*, Foreign Languages Press: Peking, 1974. p. 33.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
15. "Thirteenth Congress of the RCP(B)," in *Ibid.*, p. 59.
16. "On the Struggle Against Revisionism" CPUSA, 1946, p. 71.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
20. *History of the CPSU*, p. 80.
21. Mao "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party," 1929. *Selected Works, Vol. I*. Foreign Languages Press: 1967, p. 105.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. Stuart Schram, ed. *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, Pantheon Books: New York, 1974. p. 277-78.
25. Mao Zedong, "Concerning Methods of Leadership," *Selected Works, Vol. III*, 1975, p. 119.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-1.
27. Mao, "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," *Selected Works, Vol. II*, pp. 203-204.
28. *Selected Works, Vol. I*, pp. 23-4.
29. *Selected Works, Vol. IV*, pp. 241-2.
30. Mao Zedong, "Rectify the Party's Style of Work," *Selected Works Vol. III*, 1975, pp. 43-5.

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The continuing relevance of *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*

by MCS

Stuart Schram has been accused of gathering up the most liberal materials from Mao he could find to publish *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*. These materials (some unofficial) come from the Cultural Revolution, and the book contains attacks on the Party and polemics never approved by democratic centralism for public distribution.

From reading *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, it is possible to get the impression that Mao considered that communism in China was sufficiently advanced to do without state repression of political enemies. In MIM's 1994 Party Congress, the anarchists (see accompanying articles) used this period of Mao to argue against any criticism at all by the leadership of the Party membership.

BOOK WORSHIP

At the 1994 Party Congress, the anarchists in MIM accused the leadership of book-worship, ostensibly citing Mao for this concept. Here MIM examines this ludicrous claim.

There are at least three different cases where Mao spoke of book worship. Two don't apply to us and the third disproves the anti-theorist anarchist line on so-called book worship.

The one that doesn't apply to MIM is Mao's criticism of the Chinese comrades in the 1920s and 1930s who got their revolutionary educations in Moscow. These comrades returned to China and tried to follow books and formulas from their education without doing investigation of Chinese conditions. No MIM cadres have received our revolutionary educations abroad under the auspices of a revolutionary government. These references to book worship do not apply to us. The second reference is in Mao's discussion of education. This does not apply to us either because we don't run the schools. From a position of state power, Mao argued to an audience of educators who were themselves raised in Confucian education:

"We shouldn't read too many books. We should read Marxist books, but not too many of them either. It will be enough to read a few dozen. If we read too many we can become bookworms, dogmatists and revisionists." (p. 19)

The third and most relevant context of Mao's criticism of book worship is his admonishment to party leaders. This applies to the party leaders in MIM, called upon to rebuild the Maoist movement here almost from scratch.

"I hope you will read more books from now on. It just won't do if high-ranking cadres don't even know what is materialism and what is idealism. What do we do if we find the

books of Marx and Lenin difficult? We can ask a teacher to help us. You are all secretaries, but you ought to be students too. I myself become a student every day. I read two volumes of Reference Material daily, and that's why I know a little about international affairs." (p. 298)

Even Stalin's worst detractors, such as bourgeois academic Robert Tucker, admit that Stalin read 500 pages a day. The bottom line on book worship is that in both Stalin and Mao's parties, cadres read far more than are MIM comrades able at this intense stage of party building without state power. In this light, criticizing book worship in MIM, as the anarchists in MIM did at its Party Congress, amounts to deriding reading at all, especially the Marxist classics.

CREDIT/EGO/ME-FIRSTISM

When asked to make thorough self-criticism for their line on hierarchy and leadership MIM's leading anarchist refused, citing the superior importance of their "local practice." Mao faced similar problems of people claiming credit for their local work as a strategy for avoiding criticism:

"Don't be impulsive and forget what's what. Since the time of Marx we have never talked about credit. You are communists, you are that part of the masses which is more conscious, you are part of the proletariat which is more conscious. So I agree with this slogan, 'First do not fear hardship, second do not fear death'; but not the slogan, 'Even if we get no credit, we are rewarded by hard work; if we get no credit for hard work, we have the reward of being exhausted' (laughter). This slogan is the direct opposite of 'First do not fear hardship, second do not fear death.'" (p. 288)

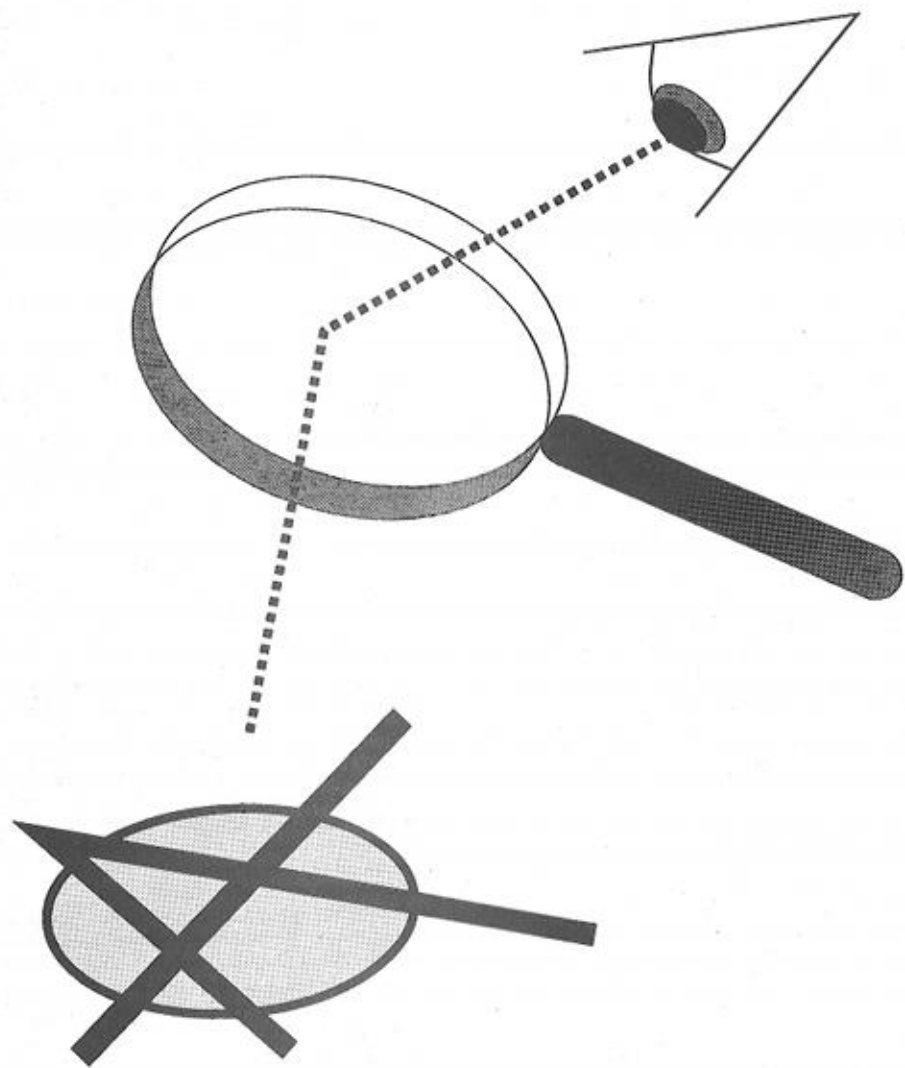
CRITICISM/SELF-CRITICISM

Self-criticism, as conceived of by Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, is supposed to be intense and swift, and it is necessary regardless of whether the Party notices that a mistake was made. In other words, if a comrade errs, that comrade makes self-criticism immediately, and does not wait for the Party to notice and suffer from the full effects of that error. And Mao never said that it was wrong or premature to ask for self-criticism from erring comrades. The anarchists in MIM argued that since they did not see their actions as mistakes, than self-criticism was premature. The majority, with Mao's support, countered that since the majority and the leadership saw the error, the time for self-criticism to begin was *now*.

Speaking of a campaign in the late 1950s and 1960s, Mao said of criticism and self-criticism:

"It does not matter whether you take the initiative on the question of self-examination, or whether you are forced into it. It does not matter whether you do it earlier or later, provided you look squarely at your mistakes and are willing to admit them and correct them, and you are willing to let the masses criticize you — provided only that you adopt this kind of attitude you will be welcomed." (p. 163)

Notes: *Chairman Mao Talks to the People, Talks and Letters: 1956-1971*. Pantheon Press: New York, 1974.



The Ideal in Review

MIM has been staying on anarchism's case for years, reviewing anarchist publications, events, history, music, art, and so on. When we could, we engaged anarchists directly and published the results of our debates. Over time we raised most of the arguments that would later fill out this issue. Our purpose is to bring out anarchism's best side and expose its worst—to struggle with anarchists and potential anarchists. Here we present a sample of past debates. Some of these are here to show where MIM stands historically, and some are still burning questions.

Anarchy & The Alternative Bookstore

The following is MIM's response to a letter titled "censorship disturbing" by Michael William, which appeared in the Spring 1993 (No. 36) *Anarchy* magazine. William's letter is a response to another letter — from the Alternative Bookstore collective, written by Karl Levesque — which appears in the same issue of *Anarchy*.

The Alternative Bookstore's letter berates *Anarchy* for printing an article from an independent fascist without accompanying disclaimer or criticism. The letter argues that anarchists in particular and anti-fascists in general should never provide free publication to fascists without seizing the opportunity to discredit them.

Several readers responded to the collective's letter by explaining that Levesque was not really an anarchist. William goes so far as to call him a fascist. "Proof" of Levesque's fascism, according to William, is that Levesque at one time ordered copies of MIM Notes for the Alternative Bookstore's free lit section.(3)

In the course of his letter, William levels a number of false charges at MIM — most of which amount to unsubstantiated gossip. All of them have been refuted by MIM already, either in practice or in correspondence to the Bookstore. Readers should check out *Anarchy* No. 36 to get the full debate. The purpose of this letter is only to address the slander against MIM. After our article, we reprint our exchange with the bookstore, and then William's letter.

CONSISTENCY AND RESPONSIBILITY

MIM recognizes the importance of holding people and political organizations to standards they espouse. It's important to look out for groups who "wave the red flag to oppose the red flag." William claims that his letter is part of an attempt to distinguish genuine from phony anti-fascists: "it is always necessary to peel away the masks to reveal what [anti-fascism] is for as opposed to taking at face value what it claims to be against."(1)

William uses this standard to run through the list of political stances Levesque supports to prove Levesque's "obvious" affiliation with fascism. These include Maoist, Stalinist, Leninist, leftist, nationalist. William never says anything about how any of these ideologies has in practice proven itself akin to fascism. To turn the question around: we know that

William is opposed to the listed ideologies, but he never says anything about how anarchism in practice has been a truer friend to the oppressed than any of these ideologies.

HIDING UNDER THE BANNER OF "AUTHORITARIANISM"

As MIM pointed out to the Alternative bookstore when it criticized us for authoritarianism, among other things, "we give pages and pages of space in our newspaper to discuss anarchist newspapers and our critics. We wonder what your contribution is to the distribution of Maoist work."

William says that "the shit really hit the fan when Levesque ordered in a pile of MIM Notes, a Maoist/Stalinist journal, to give out in the free section [of the Alternative Bookstore]. The issue in question contained a letter from an ex-Maoist and an editorial response saying that Stalin was 70% correct!"(1)

MIM takes the 70% figure from Mao's assessment of Stalin. Among other proud achievements of Stalin, we point to the Soviet defeat of Hitler despite the treacherous behavior of the so-called democratic countries, and the technological advances in the Soviet Union through 1953. We also recognize Stalin's mistake in declaring the class struggle over under socialism. But unlike William we point to Maoism as an advance over Stalinism. While it lasted, the Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was tremendous successful in mobilizing the Chinese masses to demolish class society.

Even as we recognize Stalin's mistakes, where were the anarchists? Where is their superior historical alternative to Stalinism or Maoism for that matter? MIM does not know of any classless collective operating in Montreal at the time Stalin was defeating fascism in Europe. It seems reasonable to assume that the anarchists were doing then what they do today — criticizing concrete work for classless, stateless society from the sidelines, without offering any better alternative. Truc, theory without practice never makes practical mistakes. But then again theoretical perfection without practice never won any battles against fascism.

"In practice, the only people doing anything this century to reach anarchism are people in Marxist-Leninist parties — in China, Albania, the Soviet Union, etc. Anarchism as practiced has become another tool of the status quo, usually for anti-communist propaganda."(2)

As the Alternative Bookstore never responded to the

above criticism from us, we now extend the offer to William as well. [William did respond to MIM's article in the Winter 1994 issue of *Anarchy* (Issue 39, Vol. 14 no. 1). We will continue this debate in the next issue of MIM Theory.]

NATIONALISM OR FASCISM, WHERE DO THE ANARCHISTS FALL?

William goes on:

"In practice, people focusing on anti-fascism tend to be leftists, often Leninists or Leninist sympathizers. In line with their vision of a preponderant role for the state, they predictably concentrate on petitioning the cops to be more vigilant and the state to ban neo-nazi activities."⁽¹⁾

MIM recognizes this tendency among the pseudo-left as well; we call these people pseudo-left or revisionist or liberal because despite what they may claim, they are not progressive or revolutionary in practice. But then again we have our standards. Our criterion for being "progressive" or "revolutionary" in practice is that groups not reinforce the power of the state through their actions.

We see no such demarcation from William, who again criticizes from the sidelines, without proposing a better practice. Here William falls into our definition of pseudo-anti-fascist: he shits all over apparent practice, but by not offering a progressive alternative, he supports the status quo.

William points out correctly that the pseudo-left's reliance on cops is hypocritical in light of the fact that these same cops "touched off the Oka crisis by firing indiscriminately at Mohawk men, women and children." He goes on to say that "as a result of the influence of Stalinism, Maoism, Castroism, etc., militant 'anti-fascism' has a long history of homophobia and racism. The virulently homophobic Maoist Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), a group supported by MIM Notes, is massacring native people who object to their hegemony."⁽¹⁾

It demonstrates a lack of investigation to lump MIM and the PCP in here with the so-called anti-fascists. See MIM Notes issue 43 — a special 20 page issue including on-scene reporting from Kahnesatake in July of 1990 plus interviews with Mohawk warriors, and subsequent coverage of the repercussions of the stand-off and the warriors' trials. Pick up any other issue of MIM Notes for coverage of anti-imperialist struggles internationally.

But now we're confused. William recognizes the Securite de Quebec slaughter of Mohawk people as reactionary, yet he decries nationalist struggle. Part of the case against Levesque is his "supporting Leninists and various national liberation movements."⁽¹⁾ So which is it going to be? The Mohawks have described the struggle that began at Oka and continues to date as nothing but revolutionary nationalism. So does William here recognize revolutionary nationalism for what it is — a blow against the imperialist state — or was that reference to the cops at Oka simply a demonstration of where anarchist purism will get you? (supporting neither side of a struggle, calling one side fascist and the other totalitarian?)

William offers no citation for the PCP brutality he claims. And no wonder; he isn't talking about them. His evidence is that "the rival Peruvian guerrilla organization MRTA [Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement] 'executed' seven gay men in one of the streets."⁽¹⁾ William does not say why this charge against the MRTA should also serve as evidence against the PCP when the two groups are unrelated.⁽⁴⁾

Again from our letter to the Alternative Bookstore:

"MIM Notes has repeatedly criticized the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), USA for its position against gay and lesbian sexual orientations. That position of ours came out in the first issue of MIM Theory and then was repeated and developed. We have also sent an open letter to the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), which the Peru Maoists are apparently members of. You will notice that we are not signatories of the RIM for this and other reasons. In any case, our practice has demonstrated that we are willing to do a lot to demarcate on the gay/lesbian issue."⁽²⁾

William goes on to rattle off a list of a few more anti-gay and racist incidents in Ireland and France in the same stream of "proof" regarding his assertions about communists. This is opportunism at its worst. William holds up the ideological mirror to prove that Levesque is not a real anarchist. But he uses assorted acts by anyone calling themselves a communist as evidence against communism as an ideology.

Finally towards the end of his letter William says that "[anti-authoritarians and anarchists] need to develop our own analysis of fascism (and anti-fascism)."^(1, p. 81) As far as "developing" an analysis of fascism, time's running out. You trash Stalin with no argument, spitting in the face of the most successful military defeat of fascism to date and start to talk about "developing" an analysis? This explains in a nutshell why the majority of the world's people — in China, Vietnam, Korea, Peru, Eritrea, Albania, etc. — have voted against anarchism as an "anti-fascist" ideology.

As Lenin said, the masses vote with their feet, and they voted for Stalin (and Lenin and Mao) — and the reason was that four or six or ten revolutions later Marxists are engaged in concrete struggle, not splitting over stale ideology without respect for successful practice.

Notes:

1. *Anarchy*, issue 36, p. 80.
2. "Anarchist bookstore shelves MIM Notes," MIM Notes No. 55, p. 2.
3. The bookstore has long since stopped distributing our paper. See MIM Notes 55.

4. The MRTA is a reactionary formation that has submitted to truces with the Peruvian military while the same military was slaughtering revolutionary political prisoners. See MIM Notes 64.

Anarchist Bookstore Shelves MIM

reprinted from *MIM Notes* 55
August 1991

Dear MIM,

I am writing you on behalf of Anarchist Bookstore, a bilingual anti-authoritarian/anarchist bookstore in Montreal. We at Alternatives have been receiving and distributing MIM Notes for at least a half a year now. At a recent meeting, however, it was decided to stop distributing MIM Notes.

The decision, made after months of debate and with some reservations, was a part of a more general decision to stop stocking any official organs of party, pre-party, or secret party formations.

I should point out, though, that MIM Notes was often used as an example as to why such publications should be banned. It was felt that your support for Sendero Luminoso, despite reports of anti-gay executions and homophobic statements by Guzmán, was counterrevolutionary. It was also felt that your retort to an anti-Stalinist critic was unfair and biased. Inside and outside the bookstore collective, though, it was certainly your line on sexuality, feminism, and your "discussion" of anarcho-feminism which caused the most amusement and derision. Suffice it to say that it was not felt that your views were particularly intelligent, or that your method of dealing with criticisms, (the responses to a list of hacked up and facile "questions") was fair.

Of course, the above is merely an outline of why people in the collective did not want to stock your publication. There is also of course the underlining difference in philosophy and chosen strategy and tactics between Maoists and anarchists, but it would be wrong to ascribe our decision to anarchist sectarianism. Our shelves are full of Marxist-Leninist books, some even by Maoists. We carry many magazines firmly rooted in the Marxist-Leninist tradition. MIM Notes was just beyond defending for some of us.

At the same time, you should realize that some members of the bookstore collective would have rather kept on distributing MIM Notes, but were not willing to paralyze the group process by insisting on such an unpopular point. Amongst the points that MIM Notes was appreciated for by some collective members, and by Leftists and anarchists outside the collective, was its prison coverage and its non-sectarian review of other Left publications.

—Alternative Bookstore
June 1991

MCS responds: We were excited to receive your letter on political issues concerning MIM Notes. We regret that it did not go further into detail and that apparently MIM has been excluded from an interesting dialogue about us. We suspect that some of you would consider your own act authoritarian in other contexts. Furthermore, if criticizing another group behind its back for the purpose of breaking an alliance with it is not sectarian, we don't know what is.

More important still are your questions of stance. MIM Notes has repeatedly criticized the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) for its position against gay and lesbian sexual orientations. That position of ours came out in the first issue of MIM Theory and then was repeated and developed in MIM Notes/MIM Theory 12, 13, MIM Notes 35 and several times in the letters pages. We have also sent an open letter on the issue to the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), which the Peruvian Maoists are apparently members of. You will notice that we are not signatories of RIM for this and other reasons.

We have received no response from RIM, which at least one anarchist near its foundations believes to be a mere RCP publicity operation. The upshot is, we would very much like your source of information on anti-gay executions and what the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP) said about them. We read a mention of anti-gay/lesbian rules in *Time Magazine*, but *Time* also said the PCP were drug traffickers. Without having had a chance to ask the Peruvian Maoists about it, we are not about to repeat such a criticism, although previous issue of MIM Notes publicly asked what information was out there about drug trafficking. In any case, our practice has already demonstrated that we are willing to do a lot to demarcate on the gay/lesbian issue. We are not willing to believe just anything the bourgeois media says about Comrade Gonzalo however, so if you have evidence, we'd like to see it or get sources.

As for your discussion of "fairness" in treatment of our political opponents, we find your criticism hypocritical. We try to contact our opponents and give them a chance to say something as demonstrated by our dealings with the RCP and the PCP, not to mention our frequent reviews and citations. We struggled with the RCP on the issue of sexual orientation for quite some time to make sure we knew their position and then we criticized them publicly and more importantly we criticized them through action.

Your collective criticizes us through actions without so much as giving us a chance to address your concerns. Furthermore, we give pages and pages of space in our newspaper to discuss anarchist newspapers and our critics, including two recent anarchist feminists and an anti-Stalinist. We wonder what your contribution is to the distribution of Maoist work.

Now for a general point about so-called anti-authoritarianism and anarchism. The issue between Marxism and anarchism was interesting when Engels wrote about it. Since that time — and this is true for "back to M-L" trends as well — the ideolo-

gy of anarchism has become a sad joke perpetuated by intellectuals and other idealists.

In practice, the only people doing anything this century to reach anarchism are people in Marxist-Leninist parties — in China, Albania, the Soviet Union, etc. Where have the partisans of “anti-authoritarianism and anarchism” brought the world? Even if you can manage to blame Stalin for Spain, that still leaves the rest of the world — where anarchism and anti-authoritarianism have failed utterly compared with Marxism-Leninism and then Maoism. Anarchism as practiced has become another tool of the status quo, usually for anti-communist propaganda.

The real anarchists this century have been the Third World revolutionaries, mostly inspired by Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. All the criticisms of Mao and Stalin in the world cannot cover up the bourgeois nature of pseudo-anarchism in practice. That is why MIM is composed partly of former Trotskyists and anarchists. A simple reading of history leaves few alternatives for starting places to come up with a strategy of reaching classless society.

This is not to address those anarchists who should really just be called civil libertarians because they defend private property in theory, not just practice, the way “communist” anarchists do. People who know they want anarchism, the highest stage of communism — no state, no classes, no nations, no socially constructed genders and no other oppressions — there people are found in MIM.

Also, while your store is closed to us, our pages remain open to you. We are quite confident in our views and take our work very seriously. We'd like the chance to deal with something more substantial from you.

William's Letter

Dear Anarchy:

I worked at Alternative Bookshop from 1982-84 and during 1986-87. I find it very disturbing that some members would have censored Anarchy and that, in the bookshop's single-minded zeal, the question of censorship is not even discussed in their letter, nor did it assume much importance in conversations I had with members. This sign of the authoritarian bent the bookshop has taken concerns me personally, since I had two articles in the issue in question, one of which, my “Femme aux Bananes” piece, dealt with a local situation not dissimilar to the present one. Since the bookshop had not made it a priority to pay Anarchy, and no copies of the “Abandoning Civilization” issue were available, when the following issue came out I took five extra copies I had of the “Abandoning” issue down for the bookshop to distribute.

Also, the reference to infiltrators by the letter's author, Karl Levesque, is too provocative not to respond to: this guy has probably done more of a wrecking job in the anarchist milieu than all the North American fascist infiltrators put together. Levesque arrived in town in his mid-teens in the mid-eighties. He first worked at Cafe Commune, and only joined the bookshop later, when I was working at La Sociale, another anti-authoritarian bookshop. Initially calling himself an anarchist, Levesque soon embraced the state, broke with an anarchist outlook and began supporting Leninists and various national liberation movements. I (and others) had some of the most convoluted conversations of our lives, as Levesque continued to call himself an anti-authoritarian despite his support for Leninists and the state. Not only were his brains on a vacation, Levesque was permanently out to lunch, and I attempted to ignore him if he ranted at me when I dropped by the bookshop.

Ultimately, Levesque's outbursts began to take on a more specifically anti-anarchist bent. When a person interviewing a prospective bookshop member said that no real anarchist milieu had coalesced in Montreal, Levesque interjected “tant mieux” (“all the better”), as he went out the door. When I brought up a piece he did in his now-defunct Youth Lib Zine about an Anarchist Youth Federation gathering in Ottawa, he was quite frank in calling his piece an “anti-anarchist rant.” These sound bites remained etched in my memory because I was shocked and dismayed by how hostile his outlook had become. At this point, or earlier, Levesque should have realized that he was in the wrong project and left. In a more normal situation, he would have simply been ejected. But friendship factors and a leftist bookshop faction which was becoming encrusted in the project made this a far from ordinary situation.

The shit really hit the fan when Levesque ordered a pile of MIM Notes, a Maoist/Stalinist journal, to give out in the free section. The issue in question contained a letter from an ex-

Get MIM Theory 6
The Stalin Issue
Reviewing the post-Gorbachev
biographies — and summing up
the good, the bad, and
the ugly-but-necessary.

Send \$4.95, cash, stamps or check to:
“MIM Distributors,” PO Box 3576
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576

Maoist and an editorial response saying Stalin was 70% correct! When bookshop members virulently objected to the arrival of the Stalinist paper and those of other organizations wishing to take power, Levesque threw a tantrum, went "on strike," and threatened to leave the project ("on strike for Stalin," someone quipped). Around the this time a member who had been in Paris for close to a year returned. A couple of other people were interested in joining, and the thought that Levesque might leave and that the project might start to get back on track made me interested in re-joining. Although I had worked there for four years, and people who had worked with me in the bookshop and La Sociale wanted me to come in, the leftists used a bureaucratic formalism to keep me out, saying that because I had formally resigned, (as opposed to being on leave, or whatever, like the person in Paris), I would have to wait to get back in. The other people were kept out as well, and one recently returned to Ottawa after being unable to get into the project for three years. Exasperated with dealing with leftists and national liberationists and feeling that the project was dead in the water, most of the hard core people began to leave. Today, the main criterion for working in the bookshop is the ability to tolerate Leninist sympathizers and leftists. [...]

Now that he's too old to run a youth-lib operation, Levesque says that the major focus of his activities is anti-fascism. However, with so called anti-fascism it is always necessary to peel away the masks to reveal what it is for as opposed to taking at face value what it claims to be against. In practice, people focusing on anti-fascism tend to be leftists, often Leninists or Leninist sympathizers. In line with their vision of a preponderant role for the state, they predictable concentrate on petitioning the cops to be more vigilant and the state to ban neo-nazi activities. At one local anti-fascist event, a couple of dozen neo-nazi activists showed up outside and started to raise a ruckus. The anti-fascists cowed inside and called the cops. Then came bitter complaints to the media about the cops not getting to the scene fast enough—the same racist cops who are beating and shooting people of color on a daily basis, and who touched off the Oka crisis by firing indiscriminately on Mohawk men, women and children. As a result of the influence of Stalinism, Maoism, Castroism etc., militant "anti-fascism" has a long history of homophobia and racism. The virulently homophobic Maoist Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), a group supported by MIM Notes, is massacring native people who object to their hegemony. In the jungle town of Pallpa, the rival Peruvian guerilla organization MRTA "executed" seven gay men in one of their 'cleansing of undesirables' actions" (Angles, December '92). "The Irish People's Liberation Organization (IPL), an offshoot of the Irish National Liberation Army, firebombed a gay bar in Belfast on September 19, 1992. As three men hurled the device and a fuel canister into the Waterfront Pub, one shouted, 'We have a bomb for this queer pub'" (Xtra, November 13, 1992).

In France, the once-powerful French Communist Party has

always fancied itself the soul of anti-fascism. In the nineties, the Banlieu Rouge (the "Red Suburbs" - a belt of working-class neighborhoods surrounding Paris) are becoming riddled with brownshirts, as Communist Party members desert the party en masses in order to join the extreme right National Front. From a left totalitarian state to a right-wing equivalent, for folks like this, is a short jump. The same people who once counted on the state to solve the "fascist problem" are now calling on the state to solve the "Arab problem" with mass expulsions.

As anti-authoritarians and anarchists, we're anti-fascists too. But we need to develop our own analysis of fascism (and anti-fascism). Anti-fascist leftists sometimes have access to useful information. At times, we may fight alongside anti-fascists against fascists in the streets. At times, we will have to fight against 'anti-fascists' to prevent them from manipulating us, putting us in prison, or up against a wall.

I agree with the bookshop that publishing Gill's missive is problematic. I am uncomfortable with the thought of Anarchy becoming a bulletin board for neo-fascists. But if fascists are trying to infiltrate the milieu, I want to be aware of what they are saying. I have no intention of relying on the interpretations of professional 'anti-fascists'; like Levesque. It is also important to put this affair in context. Levesque was unable to name a single neo-fascist other than Gill who is attempting to infiltrate the anarchist milieu. And in a letter to the feminist porn journal Eidos Gill whines that "it is the anarchist-oriented writers and presses that have been the most hostile" — so she doesn't seem to be getting anywhere fast.

As well, Anarchy's open forum letters policy is extremely precious and any attempt to tamper with it I find very dangerous. When two of the three core bookshop members were working at Cafe Commune, another once-anti-authoritarian project I worked at which also degenerated into a leftist stomping ground — an anti-nationalist poster of mine was censored there, so this is not the first time I've had to deal with these people: I certainly do not intend to trust them concerning such matter!

Instead of taking orders from confucianist reactionary jerks like Levesque, why not find out whether we're really being infiltrated by neo-fascists? Since Anarchy is widely distributed, perhaps anyone aware of such incidents could write in to inform the milieu.

—Michael William

Review: Organize!

Organise! for class struggle anarchism
June-August 1991, Issue 23
Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF)
c/o 84b Whitechapel High St.
London E1 7QX ENGLAND

November 1991

by MCS

Organise! is as consistent as revolutionary anarchist communism gets. For the most part, MIM has much to agree with in Organise! but in the end the ACF shares the common flaws of First World anarchism — First World chauvinism and idealism.

On the good side, Organise! attempts some analysis of the British poll tax and distinguishes between poor working class people who needed to oppose the tax to survive and the lower middle class. This is a step in the right direction. The ACF persuasively argues that the defeat of the poll tax was a victory for those seeking to survive in Great Britain. It also points out that the upper middle classes paid the tax while the poorer people generally did not.

Having called the struggle a victory, the ACF points out how impossible it is to fight taxes with the bourgeoisie in state power:

"If income tax is raised on the rich, they have their tax havens and creative accountants. If companies are taxed, they just raise the prices we have to pay. If landlords are taxed, they raise rents. And if taxes aren't increased they cut services that working class people rely on."(1)

This is good hard-headed analysis concerning a movement apt to get a lot of cheerleading.

"The Long Arm of the State" is also a good article exposing all the lies and brutality of the state, especially its framing up of people considered deviants.

Another good article recounts the Mohawk struggle, in anarchist terms. Indeed, it seems that the ACF points to the indigenous peoples of North America as a kind of model of living: "The principles behind traditional Native American living can only spur on that fight — principles that were known before corrupt and ugly class systems took hold."(2)

MIM agrees with the ACF on this point, which is especially important to refute ahistorical bourgeois arguments that say that human nature dictates the need for class oppression. Certainly people who have known the first thing about the economies and cultures of indigenous peoples do not say that human nature dictates the existence of capitalism. MIM would

only disagree with the ACF if it then implied that societies already immersed in capitalism can proceed to anarchism. There is no historical experience that vindicates anarchist strategy on this point. By anarchist strategy, MIM means strategy like the ACF's that argues against the organization of the oppressed led by a vanguard party. All anarchist groups share a dogma of strategy opposed to all ideological descendants of Lenin. This dogma is pure idealism because nowhere in the real world has it worked.

The ACF's other main error — white nation chauvinism — the hallmark of both First World Trotskyism and anarchism — is raised to a principle by the ACF, even in the context of talking about South Africa. "We have no starry-eyed illusions in thinking that any nationalist or national liberation organisation can bring a juster society."(3)

To the ACF, it does not matter if colonialists rule a country or if indigenous capitalists rule a country. For that reason, the ACF is happy to criticize all bourgeois rule in South Africa equally — whether it be apartheid rule or the ANC's possible future rule. MIM disagrees and holds that decolonization is an important historical step of progress in its own right and an important experience for the international proletariat. MIM supports this decolonization at the same time that it criticizes ANC revisionism — its socialist sounding rhetoric covering up its capitalist nature.

On a consistent basis, the ACF also criticized the Kurdish struggle in Iraq, as usual without pointing to a superior struggle in existence, thereby equating Saddam Hussein, imperialism and the Kurdish national struggle.(4) The closest the ACF comes to avoiding idealism is its discussion of Irish workers' struggles. ACF incorrectly attacks James Connolly, a revolutionary socialist way ahead of his time, but at least ACF points to a wave of Irish strikes from 1916-22 that it does support instead of Connolly's approach:

"This period of immense struggle saw the seizure of land, general strikes in many localities, soviets formed in Limerick and Cork, workers taking control of their workplaces and raising the red flag of socialism across the south."(5)

The ACF's line on national liberation is an excuse for the First World bourgeoisie to exploit foreign countries and bring back the superprofits to share with workers organized by the likes of ACF. By confusing the proletariat, the ACF contributes to the alliance between the labor aristocracy in the imperialist countries with the imperialists. The ACF is simply the loudest left-wing noise possible from the superprofit-bribed labor aristocracy of the First World.

Notes:

1. Organise!, p. 3.
2. Ibid, p. 6.
3. Ibid, p. 9.
4. Ibid, pp. 10-11.
5. Ibid, p. 13.

Review: Asylum

Asylum: A magazine for democratic psychiatry
Vol. 5, no. 1, Winter 1990-1991
c/o Prof. FA Jenner
O Floor
Royal Hallamshire Hospital
Sheffield S10 2JF ENGLAND
£3.20/4 issues

November 1991

Asylum is disappointing because of its anarchist pretensions. It lacks any consistent ideological edge.

This issue of Asylum focuses on looking at mental illness in terms of entire communities. It shows a concern for matters such as economic sensibility in integrating the mentally ill into society. Despite this "social ecology" or "community mental health" approach, the magazine never makes any firm links between transforming social structure and eradicating mental illness.

Quite the contrary, there is quite a bit of talk about "users" and "consumers." Fighting mental illness the anarchist way in this magazine amounts to choose-a-lifestyle politics, an extension of the buy-your-way-to-freedom school of thought of the middle class.

Asylum really has a social democratic agenda supportive of mental health professionals. Article after article calls for government funding of community mental health after the shutdown of mental hospitals. Some of the articles threaten the failure of integration of the mentally ill into communities, if the government does not turn over the money once spent on mental hospitals.

The journal would be more clearly positive if it did not spread more illusions than it conquered. The articles about the substance of mental illness itself, rather than on de-institutionalization and social ecology, are the most frustrating.

The section starts with a quotation from Sylvia Plath's journal from 1957. She speaks of a self-critical demon and the need to have a positive self-image. MIM believes that this kind of psychological pabulum is often foisted on women and the oppressed to make them happy when they should not be happy with their oppression. The excerpt from Plath ends "They can't ask more of me than my best," which is a fine statement, but for the most part, psychiatrists see Plath and others as needing to balance negative voices ("The demon would humiliate me.") with positive voices like "I can live being middling good."

MIM believes life for the oppressed is humiliating, and should not be distorted with psychiatric adjustment ideology. As for the non-oppressed First World, self-criticism is a humil-

iating process. Those "demon" voices should be there for First World people and they should be obeyed. MIM seeks to have all people get on to the progressive road, something which requires constant self-criticism and re-evaluation, especially in a world corrupted by nation, class and gender privileges. MIM opposes the idea that everyone should just seek out an equal amount of self-criticism and praise so as to protect one's individual identity or ego. There is no "natural" amount of self-criticism or social praise. If necessary the ego should be completely sacrificed in order to work with the international proletariat.

Looking at what the editor of Asylum has to say, it is clear that revolutionaries fit into every category of mental illness — an indication of the lack of clarity that psychological categories of analysis have. "The depressed can so mistakenly blame themselves for the ills of the world and present themselves as outrageously wicked, and so deserving of punishment, even execution."⁽¹⁾

If the oppressed people drop a nuclear bomb on the United States, that is the violence of the oppressed against the oppressor. Americans will deserve their collective death in such a situation. Also, disciplined revolutionaries in Lenin's party took responsibility for their errors and often offered themselves up for execution. Later, in the 1960s, the leaders of Progressive Labor came up with a Leninist formulation that lack of progress in the revolution was always the fault of vanguard leadership. (This is often true in the short run, but not if material circumstances change for the worse for revolution.)

Dr. Jenner offers the typical meld of reactionary views and Freudianism to explain why this above type of "depressed" person is wrong: "We are always the result of some degree of tension between our biological only too human egotistical urges, and our equally human social ideals."⁽¹⁾ Hence to see clear right and wrong in society is mental illness according to Dr. Jenner, which is one reason why MIM says that Freudian psychiatry is a reflection of imperialist decadence.

Later, Dr. Jenner talks about another problem, also relevant to revolutionaries, "a more intellectual tendency to describe reality independently of the socially acceptable way of so doing. The individual is often one who feels manipulated and controlled by outside forces, and is aware of the limitations of his individuality and room for manoeuvre....He gives himself importance, and does not care what others think, or at least feels that to care about that won't help him to live. He tends to see himself as good and others as wicked."⁽¹⁾ Is this not the fearless materialist proletarian revolutionary criticizing the bourgeoisie? According to Dr. Jenner, the above person is a schizophrenic.

A much more positive approach — the "therapy" for the "community" of transforming the world to overcome mental illness — for most First World people is described in the existentialist approach. "Interpretations and values are not imposed, rather the person conducts his own investigation into himself and the world. The counsellor assumes the client's

inherent capacity to do this, and to make sense out of a seemingly absurd (Camus) universe. Where the client acts in bad faith (Sartre), refusing to acknowledge his radical freedom, the counsellor will point this out and underscore his belief in the person's capacity to make informed choices regarding the direction he wishes his life to take."(2)

Of course, differing from existentialists, MIM tries to sell a certain point of view; however, otherwise, MIM agrees with the existentialist approach outlined above. For people to work with MIM on transforming the world, they must have certain values and interpretations in place already or MIM would be wasting its time. Beyond that, people must not adopt the fatalistic ideas the bourgeoisie would want the oppressed to have. Instead, they must take responsibility for their actions and utilize science in order that their actions have the impacts most desired.

The job of psychiatrist must be abolished, if only because it is corrupting to the truth to have a profession of people making money by constructing various vague illnesses that people have. Instead, all oppressed people and progressive-minded people must take up the science of controlling their own destinies.

Notes:

1. Asylum, p. 29.

2. Ibid, p. 34.

Review: Workers Solidarity

WSM

PO Box 1528

Dublin 8

Ireland

Review of post on alt.politics.radical-left

April 13, 1993

by MC12

This Irish anarchist magazine, produced by Workers Solidarity has provided a few general statements of anarchist politics to Internet readers by posting them on alt.politics.radical-left and storing them at the gopher archive gopher://etext.umich.edu. The following is a review of their document "Revolution."

Workers Solidarity correctly asserts that "capitalism can not be reformed away ... it must be overthrown through a revolution." But in Russia, Nicaragua, Iran and Cuba, they say, revolution has "just replace[d] one set of rulers with another." And yet they argue for revolution.

Revolution, WSM writes, "occurs when the mass of the people desire change that their rulers are unwilling or unable to grant. It can not be the result of the action of a small group of

plotters." No small group of plotters can make revolution alone, MIM agrees—but successful revolutions also don't happen without a small group of plotters to help lead them.

WSM's criticism of Iran, Nicaragua and Cuba—which are named, with no evidence or discussion in the article—is that "none of these were anarchist revolutions. They all resulted in the substitution of one ruling class for another. They failed to bring about classless societies." MIM will only stick up for these revolutions insofar as they represented outbreaks against imperialism—China is not mentioned in the article—but we still have to point out that even these revolutions have come closer to bringing out classless societies than anarchist revolutions, which have done nothing because they have never succeeded at all. Communists recognize that there is a difference between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Going from bourgeois rule to proletarian rule (as in the USSR and China) is a step toward classless society, not a futile exercise in preserving the class status quo, as WSM implies.

The WSM is criticizing these revolutions because they were national liberation struggles, which "harnessed" "working class militancy" before they "crushed the working class at home while seeking terms with imperialism abroad." Cuba and Nicaragua were revisionist-led governments, and they did seek terms with Soviet social-imperialism. But they did not "crush" their working classes as much as they prevented the further advance of revolution. Iran is another story. There the revolution overthrew an imperialist-lackey comprador government which ruled through terror, and replaced it with a right-wing theocracy. While MIM may share the same analysis as WSM on the character of the new Iranian regime, our materialism prevents us from conflating that experience with the Sandinistas or Castro. The Ayatollah never claimed to be socialist.

The absence of China from the article makes the argument meaningless as a critique of national liberation. In China, national liberation struggle was the first stage of a socialist revolution that led to vast improvements in the lives of hundreds of millions of people. Anarchism has no track record to compare.

The "crushing" of the working class (peasants are never mentioned) is only possible in these countries, WSM says, "because the vast majority of the workers accepted the necessity of state rule. This is why anarchists emphasise the importance of smashing the state rather than using its apparatus to introduce socialism." And, since the transition from imperialist or capitalist states to no state requires an intermediate stage, this is also why anarchist revolutions never get anywhere.

WSM claims that "There is no more utopian idea than the idea of a minority introducing socialism through the state apparatus," but the historical record shows that anarchism has a solid leg up on socialism when it comes to dreaming.

According to WSM, the trick to making anarchist revolution work is "a huge subjective factor. This subjective factor is a large proportion of the working class holding anarchist poli-

tics. This does not mean the WSM must be the largest faction or even that anarchist groups must be the largest faction. It does mean that workers must see the introduction of socialism as something that is their task, and that the state has only a counter-revolutionary role to play." If workers hold these views, WSM says, socialism with no state will be possible. What WSM cannot answer is: Where is the material basis for these ideas? Transforming the ideas of classes requires social struggle and transformation.

Indeed, WSM says "This will not just happen spontaneously. Some anarchists make the mistake of thinking politics will become irrelevant once workers seize the factories. They think that the various Leninist and reformist left theories will become instantly irrelevant. In actual fact this is the period when politics will become relevant as never before. It is a period where millions of workers will be looking for a political direction."

The anarchists inevitably fall back on leaders, however, as we can see from that quotation and the next one. Who seizes the factories, before the masses have anarchist consciousness? Leaders. Probably a small group of them. And the anarchist explanation for the failure of anarchists is that they did not have enough leadership. That's idealism, not materialism.

They say: "In the past revolutions have been led to disaster because the ideas that led the working class were reformist or authoritarian. Once in power such parties brutally crushed working class activity. This is as true of the reformists in the German revolution of 1919 as it is of the Bolsheviks in 1917-21. Anarchist organisation must be capable of debating and defeating such ideas as they arise." But without a material basis for the ideas, they are destined to lose. Socialists in Russia, and reformists in Germany, were able to win because their ideas were in line with the material conditions of the masses of those countries, and hence they proved victorious.

As long as anarchists are trying to impose a utopian consciousness over cold material reality, they will fail. Communists, on the other hand, propose a transitional state—a source of real power over the oppressors. The masses accept (and create) that leadership because it can work.

A central aspect to the theory of historical materialism is that revolutions produce societies from that which exists before them. The core of the new society is present within the contradictions of the departing order. Anarchism seeks to short-circuit this process and impose a totally new consciousness, with no basis in the reality of the present society. That is one reason why, although good anarchists and communists share the same goals, the anarchists are unable to produce a strategy that works. Communists have yet to produce a classless society, but we've done more, and come closer, than anyone else.

Shadow Knows...

reprinted from MIM Notes 82
November 1993

Issue 28 (Dec 92/May 93) of *The Shadow*, a left-leaning anarchist newspaper, ran the following review of MIM Notes. The footnotes refer to MIM's responses, which follow.

MIM Notes — "The official Newsletter of the Maoist Internationalist Movement."

Well, it looks like the good old Revolutionary Communist Party has got some competition as America's foremost fanatical (1) Maoist sect (2). Not nearly as slick (3) but even more fanatical than the RCP, the MIM is so obsessed (4) with ultra-militant pretensions (3) that their contributors write under pseudonyms like "MC12" and "MC86," (5) conveying the impression of a hardened cadre (6) (shades of Pol Pot's "Brother Number One") (7). White boy revolutionary wannabees (8) with a neurotic (4) need to be guilt-tripped (9) by shrill rhetoric with all the subtlety of a sledgehammer (3) should really get off on this one. Strictly for masochists (9). Subs \$12/year, from PO BOX 3576, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576(10)

MC49 replies: 1. "Fanatical" is in the eye of the beholder. The lack of substance in the critic's review of MIM Notes makes it tough to tell what the critic means by this remark. Presumably s/he sees MIM as fanatical because MIM forthrightly states that the only way to end all oppression is by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle. MIM's critic at *The Shadow* should ask him/herself why s/he is choosing to disparage MIM and the RCP as "fanatical" when there are so many other worthy targets, such as the millions of Americans who supported the war against Iraq. His/her use of the term reflects psychology of the sort that the bourgeoisie uses to forcibly institutionalize revolutionaries.

2. MIM observes that the critic's review of MIM Notes is a public attack on MIM by someone who didn't bother to argue with MIM first. What could be more sectarian than that?

3. Ah, but is MIM's political line correct? MIM's critic has much to say about MIM Notes' form, but little to say about its content.

4. Bourgeois psychology, again.

5. MIM notes that *The Shadow's* staff box contains many pseudonyms, too. MIM believes that numbers are the best way to make MIM Comrades (MCs) and MIM associates (MAs) accountable to the masses without aiding the state surveillance and repression that has historically been directed at communist parties and anti-imperialist movements working for revolution.

6. MIM cadres' political line is "harder" than the mushy politics of our various critics. Right in the "What is MIM?" on page two of every issue, MIM Notes says where MIM cadres stand on the most important issues of today. Where does

MIM's mushy critic stand on these questions?

7. MIM's critic reveals his/her class standpoint with this statement. Clearly s/he assumes that all readers will be horrified by the mere mention of Pol Pot's name. See MIM Notes 41 for MIM's refutation of the myths about Pol Pot that MIM's critic assumes are universally believed facts. (Available from MIM for \$2.)

8. Shadow readers? (Seriously, anarchism, like Trotskyism, has a disproportionate influence in First World nations where bourgeois ideology has the most influence.)

9. Perhaps MIM Notes' consistent exposure of the relationship between U.S. imperialism and the privilege enjoyed by the North American white nation has left MIM's critic feeling guilty? If so, s/he should work with MIM against imperialism, instead of either wallowing in his/her own guilt or walking away from it.

10. Where's the beef?

The Shadow is available for \$1/copy bulk rate or \$2/copy first class from Shadow Press, P.O. Box 20298, New York, NY 10009. They prefer cash, but also accept checks made out to "Shadow Press."

5th Estate Hates MIM

*reprinted from MIM Notes 60
January 1992*

MIM received the following letter in response to a request to exchange publications

Mao-oids:

We don't exchange subscriptions with admirers of dictators and mass murderers. We cast our lot with our comrades from Hong Kong who produced the enclosed poster.

Remember what the Beatles said ...

—The Fifth Estate
November 1991

MC17 responds: The enclosed poster was one of Mao with bloody bullet holes through his head. The slogan on the poster was "no more emperors, down with authoritarianism of all kinds."

MIM sees this letter as a classic example of the anarchists' incorrect practice which makes it impossible for them to achieve anything. MIM exchanges publications with a range of political groups hoping to expand our sources of information and further improve our line as we work to build the most pro-

gressive organization possible. These particular anarchists can not even see past their own blinders of unsubstantiated propaganda to exchange potentially useful information or enter into intelligent dialogue with a group like MIM whose ultimate goal is quite similar to their stated purpose.

The difference between Maoists and anarchists is one of practice. Maoists are the real anarchists, the ones who will ultimately bring about communism: a society without power of any people over people. This difference is seen historically: Maoists have a practice and a history of success; never has there been a successful anarchist revolution.

Anarchists have never posed a threat to capitalism and so are themselves complicit with the system they profess to hate.

MIM offers any believers in anarchism essays and books to back up our politics. Write to us for a list of literature on anarchism including a review of the publication of the Fifth Estate. People interested in MIM's work defending Mao against the charge of being a butcher should send \$2 to MIM Distributors for back issues.

f@#% off!

*reprinted from MIM Notes 61
February 1992*

*MIM received these two letters in
response to queries about
exchanging newspapers:*

Send your disgusting Maoist-Stalinist-Leninist trash to China! Eat the rich and bury the Leninists!

—Anarchy Magazine
December 1991

Dear Friends,
Here's the latest SHADOW. Sure, let's exchange subs — our politics may be different, but it's good to exchange stories, info and viewpoints. Keep in touch!
peace on earth,

—The SHADOW
December 1991

MC17 responds:

Some anarchists are better than others.

Review: IWW's Industrial Worker

reprinted from *MIM Notes* 42
June 18, 1990

Industrial Worker
April 1990
\$10 per year/12 issues
3435 N. Sheffield Ave.
Chicago, IL 60657

by MCØ

Count the IWW among those left groups still hankering for "one big union" in the American white working class. The most theoretical piece in this issue, "Expanding the Struggle," exposes the general shallowness and primitive Marxist analysis of the IWW.

After a general rundown of the problems in organizing — existing union leadership is bought off, sexism, workplace hierarchy — ways to "expand the struggle" are proposed. The IWW would like international networks of workers, direct links between strikes, and a city wide rent strike. Seizing power from the state by force didn't seem to make the list.

The author concludes: "It means challenging the system by breaking down the chains that exist in our minds as well as the economic and legal ones."⁽¹⁾ This adds up to liberal individualist guilt, especially because the IWW proposes no mechanisms to break the economic and legal chains. Certainly MIM believes in attitudinal and cultural revolution but these are products of concrete actions. To the IWW's credit, they are putting out a newspaper.

The IWW makes several fundamental mistakes in its analysis of the American working class. First, it fails to recognize that this class has something in common with its employer: in a revolution, workers who are paid more than the value of their labor will lose a hell of a lot more than their chains. It is ironic that the IWW doesn't see the writing on the wall in the union leadership-membership distinction decried by so many left groups. In the majority of these unions the membership is not to the left of the leadership (which is nowhere near communist). Greyhound drivers and Pittston workers want more money and better jobs, not revolution.

Second, the character of the working class in America is no longer industrial. Although the IWW recognizes this to the extent that they make overtures to service workers, for example, they do not realize that Americans are remunerated for non-productive (in the Marxist sense) and non-exploitative jobs. Sure organize all organizable classes, but no longer will "All Power to the Soviets" and workers holding the means of production hostage bring down the economy. OK, Mr. Bourgeoisie, I've got your typewriter and office files...

MIM's main beef here is people wasting their time when this effort could move on in the more revolutionary groups first, namely students, non-white workers, prisoners, etc.

A front page article naively pushes the IWW constitution-

al plank to "build a new society within the shell of the old." Attempting an alternative government and economy is a common strategy among anarchists. The IWW has selected out a community-oriented "bread bank" where members withdraw flour and bake bread for sale. This ideology does not realize the inherent weakness of such alternative systems which exist on a whole different scale from the imperialist system which drives the American economy. The system forces peoples participation in the national economy via taxes and the need for wages. Moreover, even if alternative economic programs grew tremendously in size they would still only work toward escapism. They do not confront the international parasitism of the United States, nor do they build for a revolution.

Some of the better articles in the paper focus on El Salvador and the Philippines. But even these fall into crass, workers-in-the-fore dogma. The piece on the Philippines covers a KMU union leader who says all the Aquino promises fell through. True enough, but the article does not bother to point out that the KMU opposed the NPA boycott of the Aquino election and constitutional ratification.⁽²⁾ The IWW managed to find a reformist force and talk about imperialism solely in terms of worker's struggles.

Notes:

1. *Industrial Workers*, p. 3.
2. See Gregg R. Jones, *Red Revolution Inside the Philippine Guerilla Movement*, 1989.

Review: Fifth Estate

reprinted from *MIM Notes* 36
March 1989

Fifth Estate
Spring 1988
\$5/year, \$7 foreign
PO Box 02548
Detroit, MI 48202

Fifth Estate is a long-standing anarchist effort. It contains news of actual anarchist organizing, something that is often hard to put a finger on. For example, there was the anarchist "unconvention" and a direct action by some radicals that ripped up the train tracks where Brian Wilson was run over.

In this issue there is a nice review of some Palestinian history to put the uprising in some context, lengthy discussions of Earth First!, ecofeminism and the ecology movement and a piece on Spanish anarchist history.

The line of Fifth Estate is summed up as follows in contrast with another anarchist trend: "Our critique of technology and technological civilization; our reappraisal of primitive society and its relevance, both as a model for anarchy and as an alternative, visionary epistemology for people today; our critique of scientism, positivism and rationalism; and our affirmation of a sacred or spiritual dimension in nature." (p. 5)

By the way, Fifth Estate is anti-communist as in anti-totalitarian. The organizing news is peppered with comments about the RCP, RSL and others.

The Fifth Estate line is more deeply thought out and researched than most of what passes for anarchism. Comrades should come to grips with Fifth Estate or more similar lines of thought.

Review: Black Flag

reprinted from MIM Notes 35
January 23, 1989

Black Flag: For Anarchist Resistance
No. 181, 4/25/88
BM Hurricane
London WC1N 3XX
6 issues
£5 Free to Prisoners, non-earners pay postage

This monthly newspaper is hard-core anarchist. It calls for one big union of industrial workers and opposes any form of the state.

The statement of principle is "for a social system based on mutual aid and voluntary co-operation — against State control and all repression. To establish a share in the general prosperity for all — the breaking down of racial, religious, national and sex barriers — and to fight for the life of one world." One also gathers that it opposes all Marxism.

With the exception of an article about genocide against Aborigines in Australia, Black Flag, like most anarchist and Trotskyist newspapers has almost nothing on the Third World. It has plenty to say about white workers and the liberties of people in white countries, however.

On the whole, though, quite interesting.

Review: Duel in Peru

reprinted from MIM Notes 76
May 1993

S. Colman, 1993

by MC45

MIM applauds S. Colman's efforts in this play. While the Peruvian revolution has most anarchists these days falling to agnosticism or pacifism, Colman — a self-described anarchist — is working to popularize the fact of the revolution. "Duel in Peru" demonstrates a commitment to developing the level of debate between anarchists and communists, on the tactics and strategy of revolutions.

MIM's criticism of this play includes a critique of anarchism as an ideology and a center of organization, as well as Colman's thin treatment of Marxism. This review is written as part of what we hope will be a continuing debate between anarchists and Maoists on the questions of world revolution, and towards the most effective means of organizing in the interests of the people of Peru and the world.

MARXISM AND ANARCHISM

Colman is attempting to develop and strengthen the connections between Marxism and anarchism. Colman takes on the title of "a hyphenated anarchist — like anarcho-Marxism (along with anarcho-pacifism, anarcho-feminism, etc.)." (1) MIM calls people like Colman, who recognize the need for dialectical analysis and for the elimination of oppression, communists in ideology. Materialists, such as Colman, recognize that anarchism is an ideal at this stage, not a means of eliminating oppression.

"Anarchism's strength is in its ability to provide an idealistic utopian vision. Without a vision, change cannot happen. But a vision is not enough. The communist method of materialism can get us from here to the stateless, classless society. Idealism alone will get us nowhere. Keep fighting the power — one winnable battle at a time," said one ex-anarchist turned Maoist.(3)

Colman spends a lot of time playing with the tension between individualist ideology and revolutionary analysis. Individualist theory is used as a prop for capitalism and is difficult for revolutionaries to get rid of entirely. This tension becomes the principal contradiction in the play—superseding the political debate and focusing on the personal. This approach discounts the importance of revolution and political struggle. But MIM's cultural tastes dictate that people starting political projects should finish them—to do otherwise is to demean the political struggle you intend to help.

THE DUEL

The plot centers on the debate between Marxism — in the

form of Vera, a former student at the University of Ayacucho, and a member of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) — and anarchism, represented by Jamil, a wealthy Jordanian anarchist slumming it in a Lima shantytown. Jamil persistently tries to pick Vera up.

Vera spends much of the play arguing why political commitment is essential. Jamil, on the other hand, is happy to criticize all political movements from the standpoint of pacifist, animal-loving individualism. Representing a privileged and adventurist ideology, Jamil is the son of a formerly feudal and increasingly bourgeois family.

"Duel in Peru" culminates in a saber duel between Jamil and the chief of the local anti-terrorism police precinct. The duel boils down to a combination of machismo and the remaining decadence of "honor" in the old feudal society. The chief of police (from a land-owning background himself) sees a social equal in Jamil, and calls on Jamil to help him re-live the good old days of land-owning glory. Jamil, the righteous anarchist, obliges.

SYNTHESIS

The romantic backdrop muddles the debate between anarchism and Maoism. The political content suffers somewhat from the format as well — political struggle makes for less than graceful dialogue.

In Act I, Vera hears out some of Jamil's idealist criticisms of the PCP, and pushes him to offer them to the party as constructive criticism. He proves to be a nihilist, unwilling to struggle or engage in principled debate. (He's been there, done that, doesn't have the energy.) Vera continues to meet with him and talk politics, while Jamil continues to use these meetings to try to get her into bed. This sexual dynamic cripples the attempt at political synthesis.

The play does not hold any struggle sharp enough to demarcate between anarchism and communism. Nor does it arrive at the most correct answer on any of the strategic questions it raises (animal rights, pacifism, state capitalism, fascism, free love, individualism).

Discussion of these issues amounts to bandying back and forth the stereotypes each actor has of the others' ideology. It's one thing to take this as an artistic approach to a random anarchist character—making him a composite of assorted ideologies associated with anarchism. But it's irresponsible to take the same approach to representing the PCP, a long-standing organization with a published line on many of the questions raised here.(2)

Both Vera and Jamil take a disproportionate number of instances from American history as illustrations for their arguments. The examples that are not out of American history and culture were popularized enough in the U.S. to have a high recognition factor for most Americans. It doesn't do much for realism, but this is a nice touch in a polemic. It gives the play's most likely audience an easy frame of reference to work with so that they can concentrate on struggling with the politics at

hand.

"Duel in Peru" gets credit for being closer to a synthesis of Maoist and anarchist theory than many anarchists are willing to think about. It loses out in portraying both theses as less developed than they really are, lowering the level of unity it can hope to inspire. Colman has the anarchist side raising criticisms of Marxism that have been answered historically since before the Russian revolution. So while the play recognizes the need for a synthesis of theory, it has missed the boat on honestly defining the parts it is trying to synthesize.

"Duel in Peru" and a catalog of other writings by the same author are available from Dawn Press, P.O. Box 02936, Detroit, MI 48202.

Notes:

1. "Marxist Communism" ("Synthesis of Anarchism and Marxism"), Freedom, Vol. 52, No. 17. Reprinted in "Duel in Peru."
2. Write to MIM for "Fundamental Documents" of the Communist Party of Peru, \$5, and for a listing of other literature on the PCP and the political situation in Peru. 3. MIM Notes 62, 3/92, p. 2.

Author's Reply

Friends,

Re: your review of my play, "DUEL IN PERU," in your last issue, about my sole comment on this review — or critique — would be your saying Jamil obliged the cop to help re-live the good old days of landowning glory because he (Jamil) is an Anarchist.

And so Jamil is. But if he were a *consistent* Anarchist or progressive, he'd not thus be obliging that cop. He'd then *right off* see the stupidity of a saber-duel, this archaic "honor" or "face saving." But Jamil, alas, while Anarchist most of the time, seems unable to *altogether* jump out of his aristocratic, feudalistic skin, *least* not when called (as by that cop) a *coward*.

Such seems Jamil's ongoing little problem, a problem, as I've over-the-years noticed, of not-a-few persons, those who enthusiastically embrace social revolution, to the point of actual membership in a left organization, only to later — like suddenly (as suddenly as Jamil's giving in to that duel) — join the Establishment — now a yuppie, liberal Democrat or whatever the sellout — the subconscious conservatism, which so many of us are raised on as of early childhood, suddenly springing to the fore!

So you might, I believe, show a bit more *tolerance* toward this complex character Jamil — who, by the way, seeks *not only* to — as you seem to assume — get Vera in bed — that tool — but likewise to bring her back to the Middle East in — recall? — marriage or mating, whichever she prefers. Back to his complexity, he travels around the world more in search of *himself*, like seeking to resolve that split of his (which, as I

say, most of us harbor — even Vera, who for a time is split between sticking with Jamil and remaining with the Sendero), that split of his between his progressive aspiration on the one hand — Marx, Gandhi, Thoreau, Rousseau, Wilhelm Reich (even Mao “70%”) — and the aristocratic/feudal regression on the other, albeit such regression of his *mighty rare* — to his, as I’d point out, credit.

All told, I thought your review a *good one. Good? Great!* And my deep appreciation thereof! I especially liked your *not* dismissing Anarchism out of hand. What is Anarchism actually (or anarcho-pacifism) but the *Marxist final dialectic stage* (however vague with Marx & Engels, what with their focus, analysis, not actually on any far future but on the *current* situation, problem — the *capitalism* — and how to get out of *that*)! And conversely, what is Marxism (along with Maoism) but the — in the overall, dialectical picture — *pre-anarchist stage* (or stages)!

“DUEL IN PERU” is not a Marxist play, not an Anarchist play. It’s a *Marxist-Anarchist* play (Vera as basically the former, Jamil as basically the latter). And again much thanks for your reviewing it.

—Sam Colman
May 16, 1993

MIM responds: MIM agrees with you on the principal contradiction in your play: the tension between individualist ideology and revolutionary analysis. After we identify this as the principal question there are two options: either accept that one of the political schools of thought represents individualism, and one revolutionary analysis, or accept that the choices of the individual are weighted more heavily than the project of political change generally. I.e., if the choice is between individualism and organization rather than anarchism and marxism, then clearly you argue that the individual *per se* is more important historically than the effect of his/her actions. We disagree.

You say that perhaps we should have more tolerance for a character such as Jamil, this is the crux of our ideological difference, and the difference between communism and anarchism. On the one hand you say that he travels around the world in search of himself, but then you say that his regression to aristocratic values is rare. In terms of political commitment, for Jamil to be both constantly in search of himself and usually committed to progressive politics is a contradiction in terms.

When we refer to someone’s political commitment, we are talking about their practice. Their ideology, while it may sound pretty independent of practice, is immaterial to easing the pain and suffering all progressives combat. So to say that Jamil’s slips into feudal thinking are few is close to the opposite of our assessment. We would say that Jamil’s commitment to progressive politics is quite weak, since he never does anything — although as you point out, his progressive aspirations are there.

In this context, there is no difference between trying to get Vera into bed and trying to take her back to Jordan for whatever

purpose. Either way, he is trying to place sex ahead of revolutionary political work in her life and is certainly doing it on his own; this is irresponsible.

As you say, anarchism is the final dialectical stage (the one we see in the distant future anyway) of communism. We refer to anarchism as an ideal for this reason. “Anarchism” is meaningless without the context of communism. For this reason, we have come down on anarchism before. “The issue between Marxism and anarchism was interesting when Engels wrote about it. Since that time — and this is true of Trotskyism and ‘back to ML’ trends as well — the ideology of anarchism has become a sad joke perpetuated by intellectuals and other idealists.” (MIM Notes 55, p. 2) The “ideology” of anarchism refers to setting anarchist practice up as a viable method for ending class/state society.

Like some anarchists, MIM believes in an end to oppression of groups of people by other groups — nations, genders, classes. Our ideology leads us to historical materialist analysis of these oppressions. And our understanding of history tells us that with planned production, self-sufficiency programs, community-based health care and education, communists have done more to end group oppression than any other social movement.

—MIM
June 10, 1993

Friends,

Re your letter of last June 10, you pose, point out, the difference between *social* revolution and *personal* revolution (though you didn’t use the term *personal*). You project the former (if I read you right) as basic (or not thinking first of the individual self).

And basic the social may be. Yet so long as *personal* revolution (Thoreau, Tolstoy, Gandhi, Brian Wilson and the like) does not block social revolution, or no (sic) cover for the status quo (as it, yes, *sometimes* is, like the “saint-like” Maria Moyano in Peru — and I say “sometimes,” or “not usually,” since I can’t see true-blue Thoreauvianism as any such cover), and so long as it’s no such cover, then neither can I see it, the personal, as in any way detrimental to the social. The personal, in fact — I’d put it — *enhances* the social (as the social enhances the personal), what with the personal revolutionary *lifestyle*, like steering clear as much as possible of capitalist activity, capitalist greed, the bourgeoisdom, or steering clear of *killing* (if *all* revolution “comes out of the barrel of a gun,” *how come Gandhi kicked the British out of India!*), including killing or eating of other species, or calling cops *pigs*, which *insults the pigs*, or steering clear as much as possible of that which emerges 6000 years back with private property, patriarchy, class and the civilizational sex-taboo, to wit, coerced *monogamy* — as contrast to the precivilizational *free love* (which monogamy MIM Notes stands, alas, foursquare *in favor of*. True, monogamy for you, this 6000-year artificiality,

is but — as I understand your position on it — until the revolution. After which, maybe no more monogamy, no more coercion thereof. Yet this position of yours *splits*, does it not, *means and ends*, which split people like Emma Goldman had cautioned against, she in particular and *personal* revolution in general.)

Your letter, taken as a whole, was a thoughtful analysis. But a little something in it that in particular bothered me — your saying Jamil “never does anything.” *Never? Like his donating, at the play's close, 70 grand toward the fund to free Chairman Gonzalo?*

What you, I believe, had meant was that Jamil is no activist. Well, he's no joiner of an organization. (He'd grin, along with Woody Allen, about “not joining any organization that would have me as a member!”) All the same, when Jamil is up against it (in spots around the globe that he visits), in some bind, predicament, his reaction is generally, if suddenly, *progressive*, in marked contrast to the position one of his effendi class would likely take.

And hey, wouldn't *most* folks react like Jamil when the chips are down? When they “have nothing to lose but their chains?” While some opt for fascism to find a way out of their economic problems (the skinheads in Germany, etc.), most — at a crisis moment — will, or at any rate with the aid, intersection, of a vanguard party, will “graduate” from a *potential* working class consciousness to an *actual* one.

So why wring your hands over Jamil as not real left activist, no vanguard guy! No, he's not. Yeah, he *is* as much in search of himself as a new kind of society. But when push comes to shove, he's *there!* Assisting a left group or left cause (in this case, the Sendero), albeit but financial. And you gonna sit there and say the financial isn't important? Or Jamil's no more than 70% for Mao doesn't count? Hey, maybe you should re-read Eduardo's little speech at the play's close! Re sectarianism, puritanism!

And are you, O MIM, *also* there when the chips are down? I'm now referring to the Gonzalo capture. “Although MIM's in plenty *literary* sympathy with Gonzalo, with the freeing of the guy” — as an RCP friend of mine recently put it — “MIM's not *doing* anything” (like, as I take it she meant, setting up a *fund* for his freedom, like that IEC in London).

Did somebody just say “MIM's not *doing* anything?” Reminds me of Jamil “never does anything!”

In any contest between MIM and Jamil as to who is doing more toward the freeing of Gonzalo, who do you suppose would win! Lucky for you Jamil is fictitious! But anyway, I'm profoundly appreciative of your not only reviewing “Duel in Peru” but engaging in this bit of dialogue with it's author.

—Cordially,
Sam Colman
June 14, 1993

MIM responds: You ask what is wrong with the personal revolution — why criticize it as a pursuit if it does not get in

the way of the social revolution? We would say first that there is no such thing as a personal revolution. Lifestyle choices that go against the grain of capitalist thinking do not affect capitalist structures. The places where personal lifestyle decisions are relevant are those in which they either help or hinder revolutionary organizational structures. For example our line on monogamy as you point out.

It would be a gross misrepresentation to point up our line on monogamy *per se* as a means of combating patriarchy. Regarding monogamy and leisure time relationships generally we say that people should be honest with each other and waste as little time as possible on ambiguities and lies. Non-monogamy in First World political circles has been an important factor in breaking up political alliances, and diverting attention from politics.

This analysis of the dangers leisure time activities pose to political commitment could only have come out of a perspective which sees revolutionary politics as the first life priority and understands that personal “revolution” (which we would just call lifestyle choices) must be made in the context of political work. You seem to see monogamy through the lens of personal choice. You ask: would people be free to be polygamous after the revolution?

This question is secondary. We know that vanguard Maoist parties have shown the best progress throughout history in eliminating patriarchy. So we look for the best policies to build and sustain a vanguard Maoist party. We know that sexual games have broken up revolutionary political alliances in the past. So we know that taking steps to prevent these games among MIM cadre will help to preserve the party. Contrasting this analysis with the perspective of personal revolution demonstrates how you can't have it both ways. You are suggesting that people should be able to have sexual freedom as long as their political commitment is strong. We say that sexual “freedom” is a part of patriarchal decadence, and that it takes its toll on political commitment and clarity.

In your example of Thoreauvianism, the act of isolating oneself rather than organizing other people and working to build unity among all of like political consciousness directly affects revolutionary politics. Obviously, we would not hold Thoreau responsible for not upholding Maoism. But people who try to live like him today are choosing an old and proven ineffective strategy of making social change. There is no contest between Thoreauvianism and Maoism today. Maoism today represents continuous political development while Thoreauvianism represents theoretical laziness.

In all of your examples the claim of “not blocking social revolution” rests on being able to sit comfortably in the middle. You say how come Gandhi could kick the British out of India if revolution comes out of the barrel of a gun? First we would ask you if that means you think Gandhi did more to advance the cause of world revolution and anti-imperialism than Mao? Did he help to fund other anti-imperialist struggles, or send Indians to help other victims of British imperialism

after he established socialism in India? Do you think pursuing Gandhi's theory at this time would be a better move for the PCP, or for parties in the rest of the Third World or in America? Other than that we should point out that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" is a quote always taken and used out of context just as you did in your letter. It was an observation Mao made on the state of political power. Not a statement of ideology. The ideology that grows out of that observation is that people deserve not to be oppressed by the barrel of a gun. The ideology suggested by the quote when it is taken out of context is that whoever has more guns has more power. Quite an anti-Maoist statement as Maoists have always said that true power rests in the masses. So again, who did more to eliminate oppression under the gun: Gandhi or Mao?

On separating means and ends, it would be suicidal not to. Imperialism hates socialism because socialism threatens imperialism's privilege to oppress. How many organizations and people have been killed or imprisoned because they wanted to pretend that they could create islands of groovy socialist relations within imperialist power centers? There is no danger of separating means and ends. There is a vicious danger of not recognizing that being a socialist or Anarchist or whatever does not mean instant entitlement to socialist or Anarchist living conditions.

On to your remarks about Jamil. The whole basis of our critique is the question between Anarchism and Maoism. As long as that is still a practical question for some activists we will push people who address it to do so in a way that sheds the most light on the differences and comparative strengths of the two ideologies. When we said that Jamil "never does anything" it was in the context of critiquing him and Vera as representatives of Anarchism and Maoism respectively. We said that we push people to struggle through the need for political activism. That political action—specifically party-building—is the only responsible path for people who genuinely want to see an end to oppression. Jamil as a character, role model, someone to relate to does not push people in this direction. He spends so much time on the personal that he is not a role model for dealing with the political question between Anarchism and Maoism. And as a political figure in a political piece of culture this is our critique of him. We said in the last letter that you have placed the personal contradiction above the political in your play. We seem to agree on this assessment.

So on the one hand you say that the personal contradiction is okay to concentrate on as long as it does not detract from the political. We disagree on that but that's O.K. But then you go on to say that Jamil gives money and Jamil supports Mao 70% so really he's on top of the most correct political practice in addition to dealing with his personal contradictions. But you never compare his practice of giving money to the practice of working with a party. Really the two practices are not comparable because both are necessary aspects. But it seems that you are saying that giving money to political work could be a supe-

rior practice to doing political work ("lucky for MIM that Jamil is fictional"). Is this an accurate interpretation? Because we take a different approach. Mao said that if the party has the correct line (if it's line is with the interests of the people) it can have anything it needs. If it does not have cadres, it can have cadres; if it does not have weapons, it can have weapons; if it does not have money, it can have money.

Cash is not such a precious commodity that we would stress it over political commitment. Besides which you cannot struggle with people to make them rich. You can struggle with people to develop their political commitment. Rich people with political commitment will give work *and* money to a party. You show Jamil refusing to do political work *and* then giving money "instead" and then say that that is a better practice. You are right that it is not "nothing." But then if all Anarchism's representatives can offer is monetary contributions, it's no surprise the number of masses who have voted for Maoism historically.

As to the specific issue of setting up a fund to free Gonzalo, your position on this would depend on what you think is the appropriate role of a vanguard party in any given country. I.e., is it more effective to collect your resources and send them to another party in another country, or to utilize your resources to work on your own country? What would you suggest as the balance between building public opinion in the U.S. in support of the PCP and Gonzalo and sending cash donations to Gonzalo? You've already made your own answer—or part of it—in practice. Why do you choose to publish plays rather than send the money you spend on plays to the PCP if you are using your plays to advocate sending money to the PCP? Which gets the overall job done quicker?

The answer to your question about what most people do when faced with a choice between progressive or reactionary politics depends on the person's material interest as you yourself acknowledge. You say on the one hand that Jamil stands "in marked contrast to the position one of his effendi class would likely take." But then you say "wouldn't most folks react like Jamil when the chips are down?" We ask you when does the bourgeoisie find itself with nothing to lose but its chains?

If Jamil is in contradiction to most of his class then we would say it is correct to challenge members of that class to approach the question of revolutionary politics from a practical point of view. It is most correct to challenge them to act outside their class interests. To understand what those interests are and act against them. You cannot seem to decide what you want to tell them. On the one hand it's cool to give just financial support but on the other hand you recognize most of them would not do that. So first there is no need to challenge people because they will do the right thing eventually but then they should be praised because they are extraordinary. This is exactly the kind of fuzzy message we try not to give people. People can handle the truth in political struggle, but only if you approach them with it.

Review: ani defranco

reprinted from *MIM Notes 92*
September 1994

ani defranco
out of range
Righteous Babe Records

by a comrade

Defranco creates no illusion that changing the attitudes of men is a solution to violence against women under patriarchy. In "If he tries anything," Defranco debunks the reactionary socialization that women are powerless to protect themselves: "I'm invincible/ so are you/ we do all the things/ they say we can't do/ we walk around in the middle of the night/ and if it's too far to walk/ we just hitch a ride."

While the song recognizes violence as a product of this system, as opposed to a tease selected for a few women, this song's solution to domination over women ends up just reversing the domination into power games. "We got rings of dirt around our necks/ we smell like shit/ still when we walk down the street/ all the boys line up/ to throw themselves at our feet."

This ultimately leads to confusion because women who defend themselves from one type of domination will only encounter more unless patriarchy is abolished. "The commodification of sex" presents the idea that as long as she has power in walking down the street or power in individual sexual games then she has control. "i say i think he likes you/ you say i think he do to/ i say go and get him girl/ before he gets you/ i'll be watching you from the wings/ i will come to your rescue/ if he tries anything."

The contradictions in this type of thinking result in an inconsistent reaction to similar products of patriarchy. The pseudo-feminist can choose to defend herself against those types of rape that are most offensive and welcome the temporary taste of pseudo-power, but following this recipe continues the idea that in the end women will lose — they accept the normal domination of gender relations in the sex they don't consider to be rape, instead of realizing women have the real power to destroy those relations too, through revolution.

"We are wise wise women/ we are giggling girls/ we both carry a smile/ to show when we're pleased/ we both carry a switchblade/ in our sleeves/ tell you one thing/ i'm going to make noise when i go down/ for ten square blocks/ they're gonna know i died/ all the goddesses will come up/ to the ripped screen door/ and say what do you want dear/ and i'll say i want inside".

In a vengeful "How have you been," Defranco shows that coercion exists in all sexual relationships. Not surprisingly, she

buys into the petty-bourgeois-scarred-for-life-psycho-babble that says she must be hurt and have a boil-your-bunny-mentality to get even. "Me and you and your girlfriend makes three/ in the interest of numbers I will make myself scarce/ i'll make myself scarcely me/ but i'll be outside your window at night/ pull up your shades/ leave on your light/ 'cause I don't want to come in between/ I just want to know/ how have you been..."

Because it is not in the interests of men to stay in relationships, they use lies as coercion and the revenge for power that Ani seeks in return is also power through sex. The problem here is that the reason it is not in the interest of men to stay in relationship rests in their existing strength under patriarchy, so the revenge sought through sex once again is a way for women to allow themselves not to have the hope and seize power through revolutionary struggle. When women are in relationships in which they know they are being fucked over, it is a way to permit themselves to not reach for more. "And i'd do almost anything once/ something about you / i think i'd do you more/ if i had my way i'd stay here."

In "Out of Range," Ani Defranco cannot decipher the violence against women and the reason that it exists, so of course she runs away. "Just the thought of our bed/ makes me crumble like the plaster/ where you punched the wall/ beside my head/ and i try to draw the line/ but it ends up running/ down the middle of me/ most of the time."

MIM knows that First World women have the choice to leave their partners when abuse is involved, but since Defranco sees no possibility for real victory the line is skewed.

Despite her attempts to reject socialization, Defranco misplaces the oppression by the state, to lock up its opposition, and confuses the position of First World women. "Boys get locked up/ in some prison/ girls get locked up/ in some house/ and it doesn't matter/ if it's a warden or a spouse/ you just can't talk to 'em you just can't reason/ you just can't leave/ and you just can't please 'em."

MIM knows that women can leave their spouses but it is not in their short term material interests to do so, but the 3.1% of Black males in the country that are locked up by the state cannot leave; this much is true.

The result of Defranco's weak analysis and perpetuation of reactionary stereotypes leaves her only an escapist alternative.

"I was locked/ into being my mother's daughter/ i was just eating bread and water/ thinking nothing ever changes/ then i was shocked/ to see the mistakes of each generation/ will just fade like a radio station/ if you drive out of range/ if you're not angry then you're just stupid/ or you don't care/ something's so unfair/ when the men of the hour/ can kill half the world in war/ or make them slaves to a superpower/ and then let them die poor."

Then when she begins to recognize the relationship between the system and the individual manifestations of patriarchy, she turns the song into a sad victim of love song. "Baby i love you that's why i'm leaving/ there's just no talking to

you/ and there's just no pleasing you/ and i care enough/ that i'm mad/ that half the world don't even know what they could'a had".

In "Letter to a John," Defranco again advocates the anarchist revenge that many pseudo-feminists opt for. Her hard-ass attitude is her way of saying that she is in control of the situation and her life as she rationalizes that prostitution is the way to take back the control she lost as a result of being sexually abused as a child.

"I'm just gonna sit on your lap/ for five dollars a song/ I want you to pay me for my beauty/ I think it's only right/ 'cause I have been paying for it all of my life/ I'm gonna take the money i make/ and I'm gonna go away/ I was eleven years old/ he was as old as my dad/ and he took something from me/ I didn't even know that I had/ So don't tell me about decency/ Don't tell me about pride/ Just give me something for my trouble/ 'cause this time it's not a free ride."

The solution that Defranco proposes is reactionary because she seeks the power that will benefit herself only. MIM knows that the best revenge for violence against women is to build a revolutionary struggle. With her younger, more anarchist take, Defranco ends up advocating the same that rich yuppie women advocate — "Now I just want to take/ I'm just gonna take/ I'm gonna take / and I'm gonna go away" — she just doesn't have it yet.

When First World women are enraged at the relative inequality within the white nation and seek revenge against the violence against women, they must also take a step further. Unless First World women are willing to fight against patriarchy and capitalism, they are accepting that they benefit from the status quo.

The most disgusting display of women being socialized to enjoy their submission on this album is where Defranco sings: "we are made to fight/ and fuck and talk and fight again/ and sit around and laugh until we choke." When women are fascinated with violence and eroticize their loss of control, it only makes sense to find solace in the fact that you do not have to stand up and fight because you know you will not win.

Women have less economic and political power. In order to justify their passivity toward this, pseudo-feminists and anarchist feminists must play the game that they have some sense of power. Both groups are also actively on the side of the patriarchy when they do not organize and fight against the system itself.

Individual acts of power are temporary and revenge against all men is reactionary. It must come also with the understanding that the enemy is the system and the ally to the struggle of women are revolutionary feminists. MIM warns the revengeful anarchist feminists out there that you are not solving the origin of the problem if you are taking power back for the momentary image of control it gives. Feeding into this is feeding into the fact that anarchist feminists are merely taking advantage of their relative privilege under patriarchy.

Review: rage against the machine

reprinted from MIM Notes 74
March 1993

rage against the machine is relentlessly political, and their points of reference are rooted in internationalism. The CD cover pictures a Buddhist monk burning to death in protest of south Vietnamese war policies and the liner notes are printed on a background photo of the Vietnamese masses. The band gives thanks for inspiration to, among others, the Mohawk Nation and Huey Newton. In their lyrics the Black nation, Azania, Indigenous people in North America are all "my people." They also put on a damned good show.

"Bombtrack," the first cut on the CD, lays out the band's agenda attacking "Landlords and power whores/ On my people they took turns," and calling out so-called radicals who aren't dealing the whole truth to their audiences. "Killing in the Name" corrects that error, hammering home the fact that cops and the Klan are the same folk. Which is why they do the same job.

"Take the Power Back," "Bullet in the Head," and "Know Your Enemy" stress education as the key to revolution. They point to the fundamental contradiction of imperialist teachings. On the one hand, capitalism feeds its youth on the American dream: "compromise, conformity, assimilation, submission/ Ignorance, hypocrisy, brutality, the elite" so we can grow up to be good soldiers and tax-payers. But the reality of the system based on this ideology breeds enemies within its ranks.

In "Wake Up," the band goes after "The networks at work, keepin' people calm," who cover up the history of Black nationalism to try and justify FBI murders of Black revolutionaries. The song is a brief lesson on how none of this is any accident, and how imperialism is expedient about eliminating individuals and organizations that threaten to make revolution. rage against the machine closes this song with their own threat: "how long? Not long/ Cause what you reap is what you sow."

"Settle for Nothing" slams reformists for leaving capitalism intact: "If we don't take action now/ We settle for nothing later/ We'll settle for nothing now/ And we'll settle for nothing later."

But in the final analysis, rage against the machine leaves listeners with no action to take, and no viable way to destroy the machine.

The closest rage against the machine gets to offering a practice is in "Take the Power Back." They call on their audience to "get it together then/ Like the mother fuckin' weather-

men," but they make no accounting for the ultimate demise of the Weather Underground or even their failure to make any significant dents in imperialism when they were around. MIM wonders if rage against the machine consciously shares the weather brand of internationalism: solidarity with the international proletariat in words but a practice that leaves American imperialism intact. From the final cut on the CD, "Freedom:" "What does the billboard say/ Come and play, come and play/ Forget about/ the movement/ Anger is a gift."

The flip side of revolutionary internationalist consciousness is the strategic confidence to plan to take on the imperialists eventually. MIM invites all people who are turned on to rage against the machine's music and lyrics to struggle through the anger and pain of imperialism to a revolutionary practice.

Punk Protest Bangs a Gong For Privilege

*reprinted from MIM Notes 68
September 1992*

by MC12

At two consecutive weekends of punk political and cultural activity in Washington, D.C. at the end of July and beginning of August, the white punk movement demonstrated real revolutionary potential, but also showed how deeply it is currently mired in both reformism and anarchism. The reformism is a more advanced stage of political decadence, but it apparently represents what happens to the youthful anarchism if it is never organized for revolution. The "advanced," older leaders do a lot to retard potentially revolutionary development in this movement.

At its best, the movement trashes the whole system, at least making it possible for real revolutionaries to have some influence on people within the movement who want to go beyond just destroying the system. Many of these people enthusiastically buy MIM literature. At its worst, it is a preachy call to white self-interest, and is therefore both harmful and useless to truly oppressed people.

A flyer from Positive Force, the organizers of the Punk Percussion Protest and concert which drew about 1,000 mostly young white people near the capitol on July 25, screams, "Revolution begins with you." But then it takes off after a bunch of recent Supreme Court decisions which will make life more inconvenient for privileged white people, as if the Court itself had not been a tool for genocide and exploitation since

its creation.

The flyer even says, "The Court, once a strong protector of free speech, has increasingly swung towards tolerating stricter limits on expression." This kind of statement represents the ugly, privileged side of the white youth movement. Contact with, study and understanding of the lives of oppressed people—principally oppressed Black, Latino and indigenous nations—shows the emptiness of this kind of longing for better days gone by.

The organizers eventually descended into complete Democratic Party politics, when they emphasized "unless we act now, our society will be dominated for most of the rest of our lives by a Supreme Court that resembles a Moral Majority rogues' gallery." In other words (although the writers would likely object to this characterization), "You better vote for Clinton, gang, or white people are in trouble!"

The pamphlet did also mention rolling back affirmative action and the prison system as areas where the Supreme Court has recently caused harm. A spokesperson for the League of Indigenous Sovereign Nations also addressed the crowd, demanding a seat at the United Nations for indigenous peoples. (MIM says: one seat?! We can do better than that.)

The pamphlet listed a handful of reformist, mostly Democratic Party groups such as the National Organization for Women, Amnesty International, the American Civil Liberties Union; as well as a few more progressive groups such as the Washington Peace Center and the D.C. Student Coalition Against Apartheid & Racism. Then it said: "If you don't like any of these, then start your own!"

This appears to be the work of a jaded leadership simply mimicking the angry alienation of its youthful counterparts; the list of organizations would then represent the decrepit state of the writers themselves, while the call to "start your own!" is a hollow echo of rebellious sentiment.

One young person interviewed by MIM at the rally explained of the Supreme Court, "I just think they're wrong. Maybe this'll do something to change their views on the world."

When pressed, however, he agreed that was unlikely. What about overthrowing the whole government and building a better society altogether?

"That could work, maybe..." although "greedy people are going to keep wanting the power."

So what do we do?

Eventually he conceded, "We have to organize and start a new culture."

At the concert, members of Riot Grrrl, an organization of angry young punk women, took the stage to explain its views on feminism and women's revolution. Women are oppressed the world over, one woman explained, and "that is why we must band together for a revolution that is our own."

"The revolution has started," she said, "and it is like no other ... it is a Grrrl revolution ... it is Grrrl power."

Prior to reviewing Riot Grrrl literature or conducting an

interview, MIM won't yet assess Riot Grrrl as a whole. But MIM urges the militant women in this group to read and critique MIM literature and struggle over the revolutionary course for feminism, which means adopting the perspective of the world's truly oppressed.

The Riot Grrrl is also currently tailed by paternalist "pro-feminist" men, who tell men, for example, to cross the street when walking near women at night. Men who have this condescending view of women will never be able to take women seriously as warriors, political leaders, or comrades. This is a kinder, gentler chivalry for which revolutionary women have no use.

At the Riot Grrrl convention the next weekend, a pamphlet called "Patriarchy Kills" lists "a few tips" on how men can stop rape, including: Don't laugh at sexist jokes, don't support sexist culture, support women who say they've been raped, don't blame women for rape, educate yourself and support self-defense for women, avoid being near women alone on the street at night (for fear that you might frighten them), demand that the State bust rapists harder ("Many authorities pay lip-service to such concerns—it's our job to see that they do more.") don't rape anyone, join them or groups like them.

The only good thing about this article was its statement that in order to not rape, men must "learn to communicate openly and honestly about your desires, and insist on that from your partner(s) ... Sex must be explicitly and mutually agreed upon, free from undue pressure, or it is rape." MIM agrees almost completely with this statement. But MIM knows that no sex under imperialist patriarchy is "free from undue pressure," and therefore it is all rape! MIM does not support the paternalistic efforts of chivalrous men to create a more acceptable form of rape, by, for example, "avoiding sex with anyone who is drunk or chemically impaired or too young or who otherwise may be vulnerable to you." It is not that simple.

The reformist side of this movement poses left and anarchist, but in reality is neither. It acts like it doesn't want to tell people what to do, but in fact it moves people toward empty reform struggles. The anarchist side is perhaps epitomized by a statement from one of the members of the band Bikini Kill, which played at the concert.

"Everybody knows what to do," she said. "I don't need to tell you."

But if "everyone knows what to do," then why is there so much groping and confusion on the "left" about how to respond to the war on women? And why have no strategies advanced by the American "women's movement" succeeded in curtailing patriarchal domination?

MIM will continue to struggle on the fringes of this and similar movements, support what can be supported and try to salvage as many white American nationals as possible. Those young people who will hold themselves to the revolutionary standard of oppressed people in America's internal colonies and in the Third World should consider themselves desperately needed for the revolution, and kiss the motherland good-bye.

Rollins Stays Punk and Disorderly

reprinted from MIM Notes 65
June 1992

The Rollins Band
Imago Recording Company
1992

by MCØ

In emetic bursts of yelling — backed by that hallmark of Black Flag: throbbing headache guitars — Henry Rollins sings, or rather screams, about how he's kept his self-esteem, an all important concept to the music of alienated white youth. The songs on this self-titled album follow a distinctly male self-esteem through failed relationships with women, the ugly judgements of society and a bout with suicide. It's not pretty, and not meant to be.

The very existence of The Rollins Band shows a certain toughness or self-esteem to which revolutionaries can relate. Of the multitude of anarcho-nihilist punk bands to come up in the 1980s, only a handful remain. While Black Flag — Rollins' first well-known band and one of the punk greats — is extinct, he is now screaming into the microphone with "the bars," Black Flag's icon, tattooed on his inflated bicep. Rollins still has his rage against assimilating into society, selling out, growing up, being normal and is, in a word, still "a punk."

The first two tracks, "Low Self Opinion" and "Grip," examine the mind of someone on the edge, someone out of sync with society. In "Low Self Opinion" Rollins sings, "You withdraw deeper inside/You alienate yourself/And everybody else." Yet at the end of the song Rollins essentially tells this angry, self-hating individual that he needs to look at his actions from the outside and get some self-esteem.

In "Grip," when the walls close in all around a similar pro-

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tagonist, Rollins is yelling that "You've got to jump back/Keep your self-respect intact."

Both these songs really capture the dialectical nature of the concept of self-esteem. On the one hand, it is a reactionary prescription for social problems, as in the cliché said of people on welfare that they ought to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." On the other hand, no revolutionary movement has ever succeeded without instilling in party members and the masses enough confidence and "self-esteem" to believe that they can smash the system.

Where does The Rollins Band fall on this continuum? Like most punk music, somewhere in the middle. It can't conceive of a political movement, but it won't tolerate life under the present system.

"Tearing," "You Didn't Need," and "Almost Real" make up a triumvirate of songs where women, and fickle actions in relationships, send men to emotional hell. In "Tearing," two lovers rip on each other until its time to tear away. Unfortunately the song is very agnostic about the causes of such break ups: "Sometimes things don't work out/It tears you apart, it tears me apart/Sometimes happens all the time/And I'm feeling torn apart."

MIM can sympathize that relationships in a patriarchal context suck, but know that people are no more likely to find suitable partners through break ups than struggling to maintain existing relationships. Ironically, "You Didn't Need," a tune about how the singer feels after a woman leaves him for no reason, suggests one of the other alternatives: "Some people are better left alone." MIM often says if people can't hack the struggle of sexual relationships that they should opt for celibacy.

"Almost Real" is a bit of a sexist inversion. It is the story of a woman who goes man to man, and how the protagonist, who has already been with her, sees her future prospects "lined up like broken heroes." While there are many women in this position, it is certainly a better summary of male interest under capitalism and patriarchy.

The coup de grace for The Rollins Band is "What Do You Do," a song for those who "see yourself and want to kill." The endless crescendoes of harsh chords bring this whole ugly tour of darkness to a head.

Feel the pressure
Feel it squeeze
The eyes in your head
The heart in your chest
Where's the answer
Where's the release
What do you do

Don't commit suicide from listening to The Rollins Band. Join MIM, write the occasional record review, and get out on the street and struggle with the people.

Self-help Abortion Won't Liberate Women

reprinted from MIM Notes 67
August 1992

by a comrade

In June [1992], the Supreme Court upheld all but one of Pennsylvania's restrictions on abortion, and privileged women are somewhat justifiably scared that their "right" to legal abortion will be impeded. Those hardest hit by this ruling are young teenage women who will increasingly need the written consent of their parents or permission from a judge.

Poor women of Amerika's oppressed nationalities do not have access to adequate health care of any kind, and the ruling makes that situation worse. For poor women, the discussion of health care includes far more than the "right" to terminate a pregnancy; without a larger discussion of how to abolish imperialism and patriarchy, abortion is not the principal contradiction. Important as access to abortion is, only women for whom gender is the only contradiction can devote their entire political practices to a demand for one procedure.

Examining the practices of feminists and pseudo-feminists will help revolutionaries separate friends from enemies. It can also provide a basis to struggle with feminists who have an analysis of patriarchy but who don't have the necessary revolutionary practice. The self-help movement is an example of feminism minus real revolutionary theory.

Self-help refers to both a "medical" procedure and a philosophy — women take their own health care into their hands and perform at-home abortions, also called menstrual extractions (ME), on one another. Broadly, the term self-help means women learning about and being responsible for their own health care, including pelvic exams, treatment of vaginal infections, and menstrual extractions. The groups are intimate collectives of friends and acquaintances who grow to trust each other with their bodies and their confidences.

SELF-HELP PRE-DATES ROE

The ME self-help movement began in 1971, pre-Roe v. Wade, in response to white women's anger and frustration at back-alley abortions and often-resulting deaths. In the decades before Roe, more than a thousand American women died each year as a result of illegal abortions.(1) In the early 1970s, women began teaching themselves how to perform menstrual extractions, the process of extracting the contents of the uterus to eliminate a pregnancy. ME lost much support of "feminists" after Roe v. Wade, but in 1989, after the restrictive Webster decision, women thought that their "right" to abortion would be taken away.(2) For the past several years women trained in

the technique of self-help have travelled across the country and given presentations on menstrual extraction and other health care issues. Self-helpers say that thousands of menstrual extractions have been performed since its inception as a procedure.(3)

The self-help movement is still an underground movement, and its presence in cities around the country is not publicly advertised. There is no evidence that this movement has reached rural women, or inner-city poor women. There are groups in Cleveland, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Honolulu, New York, Boston, and Salt Lake City, as well as other cities. Self-help is promoted primarily by the L.A.-based Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers; however, there is no obvious way for women to find information on self-help groups in their area. Since 1989, the Federation has received hundreds of phone calls from women requesting information on menstrual extraction.

Self-helpers emphasize that women do not actually give themselves abortions; you must have this group support and it is physically impossible to perform one on yourself using this procedure.

The materials used to make a kit for the procedure, patented as the Del-Em, can be obtained from various sources, including pet supply stores and hardware stores.(4)

Fifteen white women, roughly between the ages of 21-35, attended a local meeting in Washington D.C. on July 8, 1992. MIM spoke with one woman, a self-helper since 1975, who indicated that this movement primarily serves women who already have the best access to health care in the world. The self-help underground network fails to reach Black, Latino, and Indigenous women. Organizers express remorse at this fact, but are not willing to risk exposure and the state repression that a public campaign may engender.

TOUGH CHOICES FOR FEMINISM

MIM knows that the self-help approach still leaves the patriarchy right in place and keeps women in theirs. While ME can be an important, revolutionary step for women and their allies to be taking, it denies the ability and power of women to

be able to seize and control the state apparatus, so that under socialism all women will have good health care.

Self-help is not an attempt to change the system, it is rather an attempt to completely circumvent it. The system, alas, remains as strong as ever and women denied access to health care and political power will not get it through this movement. MIM says that circumventing the system at the point at which women need abortions is way too late.

The capitalist patriarchy denies women full access to true political and social choices. It is only through socialist revolution that all people will gain control over their bodies and their lives. Self-help may provide some women with some more options some of the time, but the patriarchy remains and Third World women continue to be exploited in order to provide American women with what control they do have.

Self-help is not supported by mainstream pro-choice pseudo-feminist groups, such as Planned Parenthood and NARAL. These groups believe that self-help diverts attention from the cause of legal and political battles in the existing capitalist structure—that is, asking the men who control this country to please give women this "right to choose." MIM says that these legal battles are just reformist methods that will never give women true freedom or power.

Self-helpers themselves are not organized into a structure, such as a vanguard party, that will lead the revolution for women everywhere. This movement is an anarchist feminist movement that is satisfied with empowering women to look at one another's bodies and perform menstrual extractions, without ever really challenging and confronting the system that produces an underground movement to address the needs of even the most privileged strata of women.

MIM says take a political risk and fight for true power and control for the people! Continue to learn and teach the science of menstrual extraction, but also learn the science of revolution. Work with MIM to build an internationalist, revolutionary feminism.

Notes: 1. *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves* 1984, p. 295. 2. The Ottawa Citizen 9/8/91. 3. The Houston Chronicle 9/22/91. 4. In Health 11/91, p. 52.

Review: Max. Rock & Roll

reprinted from MIM Notes 42

June 18, 1990

February 1990, No. 81
\$15 for 6 issues
PO Box 288
Berkeley, CA 94701
by MCØ

MRR is a healthy mix of punk nihilism and cynical anarchy. As one of the best sources of scene news and information on underground and alternative music MIM continues to endorse the publication.

This issue has good coverage of the Panama invasion and spends most of the debunking the U.S. rationale for the invasion as bullshit. MRR even takes the MIM line on the lack of outcry: Americans are duped and bought off.

MIM's essential disagreement with MRR and much of punk rock stems around two conflicting assumptions. Either (1) music is capable of bringing about social change through building a new "scene" or (2) social change is impossible and who gives a fuck any-

way. MRR has a good analysis of many social problems and even the role of U.S. intervention in imperialism, but they don't know what to do about it or don't care to.

The bottom line is MRR does not believe in a political party as much as escapism. In the past the magazine also rejected MIM advertising as "too political." Typical Liberal/Anarchist drive!

So take it for what it is: good entertainment and information on cultural alternatives which will soon be forcing MRR to the left.

'Freedom' Forum: Flyer Free-For-All

MIM found the following comments on a flyer advertising our *Free Books for Prisoners* program:

"Freedom will not exist in the ideal Maoist state" and
"Communism = Fascism. Disarm authority, arm your desire!"

This was our response, which we posted beside the flyer:

Dear Critic:

The statement that there is no freedom in a Maoist state is an attempt to split progressives from the ideology that has been most successful in creating freedom for the majority of the world's people to date. That is if you define freedom as eradicating differences between men and women in economic and political power, eliminating class differences, educating all people in society for democratic participation in culture, politics and production, etc.

Of course if you define freedom as the liberation of desire maybe you would prefer hippy free love to Maoism. But then again hippy free love is restricted to people with First World privilege and ignores the bulk of oppression of the world's people which is located principally in the realm of economics and military occupation.

Maoists and Maoist-influenced parties have led revolutions in such diverse countries as China, Albania, Vietnam, Kampuchea and Eritrea. In Albania, women went from being 21% of doctors before revolution to 38% in 1978 (before capitalist restoration), and from being 0% of engineers to 18%. In Amerika in 1978, women were 8.7% of the doctors and 1% of the engineers.(1)

The anarchist critic will likely respond that s/he does not support capitalism, the system which keeps women from responsible, educated jobs in Amerika. But while Maoists make real-life revolutions, the anarchists — after 150 years of high-minded theoretical yammering — *have not led one revolution.*

As for the charge that communism equals fascism, the typical anarchist "proof" of this is that Josef Stalin made a non-aggression pact with Adolf Hitler in 1939. Stalin did this after trying repeatedly to bring the "democratic" United States and Britain into an alliance to defeat the Nazis. The allies refused to enter the war against the Nazis and Stalin was left to fight them alone. In Stalin's shoes, what would the anarchists have done? Stalin bought time with the non-aggression pact and two years later defeated the bulk of the Nazi army while the allies remained non-committal about entering the war.(2)

The Soviet Union (when it was a Socialist state) was responsible for the most successful defeat of fascism to date. Yet the anarchists equate communism and fascism! It would be more correct to equate anarchism and fascism for all the good anarchists did to defeat Hitler. Sure Stalin's decisions

weren't the prettiest you could imagine, but he made them in the realm of real politics, a painful arena which the anarchists have rarely dared to enter.

MIM is open to discussion with all progressive people who want to engage in the nitty gritty of revolutionary work. We don't promise free love tomorrow; we simply work from the most effective proven ideology to eliminate oppression.

Notes:

1. Send \$6 post-paid for MIM Theory 2/3, "Gender and Revolutionary Feminism" to MIM Distributors, P.O. Box 3576 Ann Arbor, MI 48106.
2. Send \$6 post-paid for MIM Theory 6, "The Stalin Issue" for a lengthy discussion of Stalin's critics and the United Front.

A second critic responded to MIM's response:

Excuse me,

Have you ever spent time in China or the Soviet Union? I have, and believe me, especially in China, there's very little personal freedom of thought or expression; women still get the shaft — they still don't get equal status, and even if they're doctors, it's because doctoring is considered women's work!! There's female infanticide, forced abortion and plenty of domestic violence. Students there are afraid to talk to me in public. Get a clue. If you're so into Maoism, go to China and see it in action.

MIM responds: We would not go to China today to see Maoism in action. We agree with this critic that women are not free in China today. What our critic leaves out of her/his litany against the current regime (much of which we share) is that this regime is not Maoist. China has not been Maoist since 1976. Mao opposed Deng Xiaoping's line while he was alive. And Deng came to power as part of a coup d'etat following Mao's death in which Mao's closest supporters, the so-called Gang of Four, were arrested and imprisoned.

A July 28, 1992 article in the New York Times called "With focus on profits, China revives bias against women" describes some of the patriarchal practices that have emerged with capitalist restoration in China. The feudal practice of wife-buying and -selling has returned, and western-style advertising has restored women's image as ornaments. The NYT reporter grants that under Mao women held more positions in government, and had better jobs and housing, but they couldn't be "feminine."

MIM asks, what's so great about femininity? Basically femininity encompasses all the cultural signifiers of women's oppression: wearing clothes that show off your body, putting on make-up to hide your face, spending ridiculous amounts of time *worrying* about physical appearance (not even doing anything about it, just worrying), acting stupid or unopinionated so that men and other women will not find you threatening,

acting helpless, believing you are, being intimidated by problems rather than analyzing and attacking them, etc.

Our critic seems to appreciate the evils of this sort of femininity, so we should focus on the specifics of how the Chinese people fought this sort of reactionary culture until 1976.

While Mao was alive the Chinese people waged constant struggle against female infanticide, forced abortion and domestic violence. To address the problems of relative overpopulation and lack of education for women, young people were encouraged to wait until they had some education to get married. Young married women were encouraged to wait to have children so that they would not be instantly tied to the home. Local women's groups educated women in their communities about contraception. Communities encouraged married men to stay home and take care of their children on week-nights so that their wives could go out and attend study groups. So in Maoist China there were activist measures to bring women more into the public-social, political and economic-spheres than they had been under feudalism, and there was ongoing community support to make sure that these measures were carried out.(1)

One possible remaining disagreement between MIM and our critic is over the question of what freedom is. Many western critics have pointed to the "Mao sui" or to Chinese political education as signs of a lack of freedom. This criticism assumes that people are living at or above a subsistence level and looks to see what kinds of privileges they enjoy on top of this. In pre-revolutionary China many peasants starved in the winter if their crop had not been sufficient to store food for the cold months. They paid outrageous rents to landlords, had little formal education and no political power. The Communist Party attacked all of these problems before and after the revolution. It placed these issues of survival as definitive to the freedom of Chinese people.(2)

This perspective is very important for First World progressives to grasp, to avoid the trap of measuring freedom in Third World countries by western standards. First, many western standards of freedom (like the freedoms western women have listed above) are nothing more than symbols of decadence and social decay. But other western standards are economically inapplicable. It does not make sense to criticize China for failing to provide the freedom to dress as individuals when China is providing the freedom to eat and have an education. This kind of backwards prioritizing only sets progressive politics back.

Notes:

1. Ruth Sidel, *Women and Child Care in China*. Penguin Books, Inc. Baltimore: 1973.
2. William Hinton, *Fanshen*; Vintage Books, New York: 1966.; Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*. Bantam, New York: 1978. Sidel, op cit.

Anarchist Feminist Donates \$.45 to U.S.

reprinted from MIM Notes 52
May 1991

Dear MIM,

I object to some statements in the "feminism" pullout section of MIM Notes 50. The section I specifically disagree with is the article on anarchist feminists. First of all anarchy is just that. How can you be so presumptuous as to try to tell people how all anarchists think? Or how all "feminist" anarchist think? I, in this letter, will not be so foolish as to speak for all "anarchists" as you did in your newsletter. I will only tell you what I think.

I believe in the equality of men and women. I believe in the equality of all races. I also believe in equality of all living things on this earth, (or anywhere else for that matter!) In your article you state that women anarchists believe "that men are the patriarchy and therefore that men cannot be trusted." Again, I refuse to speak for anyone else, but I (yes I am female) do not believe that men are the only source of repression or government. Yes I do trust men as much as I trust women or anyone else. What I'm against is any kind of government (including Maoist, communist, capitalist, or any other) except for self government.

—a west coast non-reader
(except for once)

P.S. I found this very important to address to you. So important I gave my 45 cents to the government to purchase a stamp to send this! What about you and your contributions to the government you allegedly hate?

MC17 responds: The author of this article accuses MIM of misrepresenting anarchists, but then goes on to present a position that closely mirrors that ascribed to them by MIM. Perhaps the author wishes MIM would have noted that there is not uniformity among the views of all anarchist feminists. This does not change our basic criticism of anarchy as an ineffective method to end oppression.

The post script to this letter is a case in point. The author would have all of us stop giving money to the government and then, presumably, somehow the government will just stop functioning. This anarchist view neglects to notice the entrenched structure that the government has established to take money from and brainwash its subjects. This is not a structure that can just be dissolved away if enough people act individually.

Perhaps the author is privileged enough to exercise relative "self government" but the author is doing this at the expense of those who can never have this privilege until capitalism is overthrown.

The entire government and its power structure is propped up by repression. The author of this letter is against repression and supports equality, but fails to offer any viable method to achieve this equality. This amounts to tacit support for the

existing oppression.

The author fails to realize that communism means the absence of a government, but that we can not realize this absence without prolonged struggle against the entrenched capitalist power structure, a struggle that MIM is organizing and waging while anarchists are carefully keeping their money out of the hands of the government —45 cents at a time.

Support MIM's Prison Work

1. Struggle with, work with, finance and join MIM. The best way to help prisoners is to overthrow the system that profits from their oppression.
2. Finance MIM's prison work. Our biggest bill each month is postage. Most prison comrades have no way to pay for their literature. Send what you can afford. Stamps are as good as cash.
3. Distribute *MIM Notes* and *Notas Rojas*. Bring the voices of prisoners and their supporters to a wider audience. Contact MIM for distribution information. Send \$12 for a one-year subscription to *MIM Notes*.
4. Start or join a prison support group. MIM can help with advice and resources.
5. Fight censorship, beatings, torture and other fascist crimes. Work with political allies and let the enemies know you are watching. Sometimes political pressure brings local victories.
6. Stay in touch. Keep us informed of pro-prisoner work you do. Our readers will find it educational and inspirational.



MIM Notes publishes *Under Lock & Key* — news from prisons and prisoners — every month.
Write: MIM Distributors, PO Box 29670, Los Angeles, CA 90029-0670.

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Don't give up on ending oppression to maintain the purity of your ideals! Communist revolution is not perfect. But it's done more than anything else to defeat imperialism and end oppression.

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Struggle with, work with, finance and join the Maoist Internationalist Movement.

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Anarchists!

The Maoist Internationalist Movement works for communist revolution — beginning with national liberation struggles — as the best course for a society free from the scourge of imperialist patriarchy.

What do you suggest?

Don't make up a lot of pretty ideas that don't work — and then hold real-world actions to your idealist standards.

Show us something that works better.

We want nothing more than to get out of this hell-hole. Where will anarchist strategies takes us? So far, they've gone nowhere.

Find our more... Read MIM Theory 8: "The Anarchist Ideal & Communist Revolution."

Struggle with, work with, finance and join the Maoist Internationalist Movement.

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National Questions Revisited

Asian-Descended Nationalism Approaches

by MCS

Yen Le Espiritu, in *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*, writes: "While Native Americans can trace their common descent to their unique relationship to the land, and Latino Americans to their common language, Asian Americans have no readily identifiable symbols of ethnicity." (1) For this reason it will be hard to understand the politics of the Asian-descended population in North America within the paradigm of the Black Panther Party or other national liberation organizations.

To apply a materialist analysis of the Asian and Asian-descended peoples, it is necessary to examine the links to the land and a common economy that do exist. When we do this, we see that the Asian and Asian-descended population is both the youngest and most polarized of the national minorities in North America.

IMMIGRATION

The most important factor in understanding Asian-descended people relative to other nationalities in North America is the mixture of generations and relatively recent nature of Asian immigration. The political concerns of many are still rooted in their homelands. Sometimes the only concern with U.S. conditions comes from a concern with U.S. relations to the home country of origin. The Asian-descended focus on conditions here in North America is still new and relatively scattered, which is not unusual for first and second generation immigrants.

According to the 1988 census, fully 44.8% of the "Asian-American" population over age 15 does not have U.S. citizenship. Among those who do have citizenship, many are naturalized first generation immigrants, of whom we can expect to have at least half their political and cultural heart left in the home country.

The Chinese, Japanese and Filipinos are the largest subgroups of Asian-descended people in North America. The Japanese appear most stabilized here with over 80% of its group having U.S. citizenship. No doubt this group is the most ready for MIM's message concerning the evils of capitalist eco-

nomie competition in poisoning relations among peoples.

The Chinese and Filipinos also surpass 50% with citizenship, but no other ethnic group — Indian, Indonesian, Korean, Laotian, Vietnamese etc. — has more than 50% of their number as citizens. (2) Hence, the Asian and Asian-descended people simply haven't had a chance to develop a new national culture in connection to North American conditions, because they haven't been here long enough.

THE ORIGINAL WAVE OF MODERN ASIAN IMMIGRATION

The bulk of the Asian and Asian-descended population is either first generation or second generation. In *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, J. Sakai talks about Chinese "coolie laborers" and their descendants. That generation, which also saw some Japanese and scattered Korean immigration — especially to Hawaii — is the most assimilated and distinctly "Asian-American" in the sense of having built a distinct culture over a long period of time.

Chinese and Koreans in the United States (or educated in the United States) played important roles in the revolutions back in their home countries. Sun Yatsen for China and Syngman Rhee for Korea are examples of bourgeois revolutionaries with U.S. exposure. There were also communist revolutionaries who lived abroad in the United States and elsewhere, such as Vietnamese communist Ho Chi Minh.

Writings about this wave of immigrants have a strong anti-imperialist and proletarian flavor and cannot be separated



from the history of slavery and land theft in the United States. For this reason it is most comfortably accounted for in historical narratives such as Sucheng Chan's *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*.

THE SECOND WAVE: ANTI-COMMUNIST ASIAN IMMIGRATION

With the victory of communist-led or national liberation struggles in China, Korea and Vietnam, immigration to the United States received another push — this time with a different class background. Whereas "coolie laborers" and Hawaii's plantation workers were poor, those fleeing the communist revolutions came from landlord, high-ranking government official, capitalist and intellectual backgrounds. This was especially true in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s and accounts for some of the reputation of the Asian-descended peoples in North America as "assimilationist," "conservative" and the "model minority."

The anti-communist wave of immigrants started with more wealth and education than the usual immigrant laborers that arrive on U.S. shores. For these immigrants it was not difficult to appear to be the "model" minority.

At the same time as anti-communism opened previously closed immigration doors in the United States, the U.S. government also realized the possibilities of taking advantage of the "brain drain," which is another factor in Asian immigration to the United States, even in countries with no communist government or successful national liberation.

THIRD WAVE: BRAIN DRAIN

Many of the best-educated people of Asia arrived in the United States and never returned to Asia, because of better working conditions in the United States. It did not trouble the U.S. government that the peoples back in the Asian home countries paid for their intellectuals' education. Like the rest of the Third World, Asia contributed heavily to the brain drain phenomenon the United States took advantage of, especially between 1965 and 1977.

For instance, the People's Republic of China currently leads the Third World in sending students to the United States. More than 50,000 Chinese students live in the United States, most of whom are scientists and engineers. Whereas under Mao Zedong there was considerable national pride and no policy encouraging study abroad, since 1979, the Chinese government under Deng Xiaoping has sought to imitate Western capitalism economically and technically and hence it opened the floodgates in order to facilitate copying the West. Yet, after the June 4, 1989 massacre at Tiananmen Square, the U.S. government granted all Chinese students permanent residency — thus finding a new way to legitimize the "brain drain."

It is difficult to separate the brain drain factor from the

anti-communist factor, because the U.S. government realized two things simultaneously: 1) combating communism meant aiding and influencing the upper classes and intellectuals of Asia including allowing their immigration after communists came to power. 2) Such immigrants do not pose as many "difficulties" in assimilation for the United States and in fact add to U.S. wealth rapidly.

In the middle of this century, just as the United States was passing laws domestically to ensure voting rights, end Jim Crow segregation and otherwise polish the U.S. image for international consumption, it also passed a law to change the previous racial bias in immigration. Since the Soviet Union had long scored great propaganda points against the United States on the issue of "race," presidents Kennedy and Johnson finally found a combination of political motives to clean up the U.S. act a little bit. The 1965 Immigration Act was a key turning

point in Asian immigration. It brought U.S. immigration trends more into line with the proportions of the world population just by assigning flat rate quotas per country. This meant the abolition of the old racially based quotas that limited Asian immigration to 2,990 a year compared with 149,667 for Europe per year.(3) Other relevant legislation includes the 1975 Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, the 1980 Refugee Act and the 1987 Amerasian Homecoming Act.

The push from the People's Republic of China notwithstanding, the brain drain phenomenon fell back dramatically during the late 1970s.

Legislation, including the Eilberg Act of 1977, sought to keep high-paying jobs for U.S. citizens. Whereas in 1977 over half of Asian immigrants were professionals — scientists and the like — by 1982 only one-tenth were professionals.(4)

By 1995, there is tentative evidence of a "reverse brain drain" as Asian and Asian-descended professionals return to their home countries or their parents' home countries, sometimes giving up larger salaries in the United States. According to the New York Times, the Pacific Basin is driving the record outflow of migrants leaving the United States. One hundred ninety five thousand people of all nationalities left the United States in 1994, a record since World War I.(5) On the other hand, the boom in East Asia and trade with the United States ensures that the economic strength of the Asian-descended community that remains in North America will only grow and perhaps offset the reverse brain drain.

Asian professionals who spoke to the New York Times believed that they had better chances for advancement in the fast-growing economic environment of East Asia. Compounding this likelihood is the often discussed "glass ceiling" for Asian or Asian-descended professionals. Whether or

**The anti-communist
wave of immigrants,
with more wealth and
education than most
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appeared to be
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minority.**

not the United States can afford even this slight reverse brain-drain remains to be seen. In many colonial countries before the revolution, slight trends in emigration tell the tale of imperial decline and increase the pressure for change. For example, a shortage of skilled white people gave the capitalists of South Africa a reason to end apartheid. They could no longer "man" colonialism sufficiently and hence sought an accommodation with Nelson Mandela. The Azanian experience reminds us that the more reactionary immigration attitudes become in the United States, the faster the empire will decline.

FOURTH WAVE: BOAT PEOPLE

Since U.S. authorities only changed their racist immigration quotas to be less blatantly racist because of international public opinion and secondarily because of domestic pressure from "minority" groups, it is not surprising that the government continues to use immigration to score political points. The most important unity factor in U.S. immigration policy remains anti-communism. While the most recent wave of Asian immigrants is extremely poor, immigrants are generally perceived as anti-communist material.

If taken separately, refugees fleeing Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam — called "boat people" — are the most economically oppressed group in North America. Many arriving from China are not much better off and live as virtual slaves till they pay off their emigration fees charged by black market hustlers.

The contrast with the second wave of immigrants is so great that MIM refers to the Asian-descended peoples as highly polarized. The gap between the "boat" people and the old landlord-capitalist descended peoples is extreme and, combined with its relative youth, contributes to its lack of cohesive national culture and consciousness.

POLITICAL VIEWS

In line with the economic polarization of the Asian and Asian-descended peoples is their political polarization. In MIM Notes 95, we described the ethnic voting connected to the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California. Many Asian-descended people were active in opposing Proposition 187 and could sense keenly the implications for themselves; on the other hand, the majority ended up supporting Proposition 187, at about the same percentage rate as Blacks did, but less than whites did. (See MIM Notes story on Prop. 187, 12/94)

Usually, surveys do not include sufficient numbers of Asians to gauge their views. In fact, surveys and government appropriations are one of the reasons that pan-Asianism exists at all. As individual ethnicities such as "Japanese-American," the Asian-descended people don't have much clout. The U.S. government is used to identifying people by race and becomes confused in setting up government programs and the like with-

out racial identifications; hence the government is perhaps the ultimate source of the pan-Asian identification.

Another reason there is not much data collected by bourgeois scholars and government officials is that Asians don't vote either, because they are often not citizens, as we explained above. In California, which is one place where "Asian-American" politics is most developed outside Hawaii, the rate of voting is only 48%. It rises to 69% among just the citizens.(6) To begin with, the registered voting percentage of Asian-descended peoples is lower than that of all ethnic groups in California, with only 39% registered. Hispanics are next lowest with 42%.(7) Surveys of Californians also show that Asians are also the ethnic group most likely to identify as "independent" and the most otherwise evenly split between Republicans and Democrats. In Hawaii, "Japanese-Americans," on the liberal side of U.S. electoral politics, deliver their votes as a bloc for the Democratic Party.

Some literature written has detailed the revolutionary movements that gained power and influence in the United States earlier in the century. Perhaps less known is that immigration from regimes friendly to the United States inevitably includes some dissidents and revolutionary-minded people seeking to flee U.S.-backed dictators by moving to the United States itself, where the labor-aristocracy has assured somewhat greater freedom for the common person and where old enemies will not know the immigrant. Hence, as always, the immigrants to the United States contain a greater percentage of revolutionary-minded people than the white nation contains.

Yen Le Espiritu has written about the party-building movement in connection to Asian-Americans. There have been some interesting and visible revolutionary organizations during and since the Vietnam War. Yen Le Espiritu describes demonstrations where Laotian, Chinese, Vietnamese and other national communist banners could be seen: it must have been quite a sight.

The 1970s Maoist I Wor Kuen (IWK) is of most interest to MIM. The Asian-descended peoples had IWK and other representatives in the Revolutionary Wing, a short-lived Maoist organization. The sellout of the more radical publications and organizations paralleled what happened in the student and Black movements as well. Furthermore, the Asian revolutionaries had their problems in dealing with feminism, and like their white counterparts IWK went through a "free love" phase that later earned condemnation. According to Yen Le Espiritu, other organizations at the time had a more blatantly male chauvinist line.(8) In all these senses, the Asian-descended people were not distinct from what happened over-

to page 96 ...

**As always,
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nation contains.**

The Liberation of Tibet

Revolutionary Advances and Counter

by MA313 & MCS

Today in the United States there is a movement to "free Tibet." The movement has long-standing ties to the CIA, even though the United States does not recognize Tibet as an independent country. The movement to free Tibet and restore the Dalai Lama is reactionary nationalism and anti-communist imperialism of the worst sort. Since the latter 1980s, the movement has gained a lot of ground thanks in part to the low prestige of Deng Xiaoping revisionism both in Tibet and abroad. In this essay MIM will put forth its position in defense of the liberation of Tibet from feudalism by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and our opposition to the fascist oppression by Deng Xiaoping.

MIM agrees that a "free" Tibet would be a better alternative to the oppression of the people under Deng's state capitalist regime, but we do not support the movement to restore the Dalai Lama to power. MIM supports the self-determination of the Tibetan people, separate from China if that's what the people want. But the Dalai Lama is a slavemaster in search of the restoration of the ownership rights to 4,000 human beings to his own family alone.(1)

FEUDAL OPPRESSION IN TIBET

Prior to liberation in 1950, Tibet had a serf economy. The top power figure was a religious leader called the Dalai Lama, but behind the Dalai Lama were the nobles — the real power holders in Tibet.

The three kinds of serf-owners were nobles, the local government and the monasteries — with the latter two holding the majority of the land. Serf-owners constituted 5% (approximately 300 families) of the population and owned all the land and livestock. Serfs worked on their owners' land for free, and when they had time to work on their own land, they were robbed of 70% of the harvests. Serfs were further burdened by exorbitant taxes, including a birth tax, a death tax, a yearly tax for living (for children) and a poll tax for all adults.(2) There were taxes for cats, donkeys and chickens, for bells worn by animals, or for owning a flower pot.(3) Non-payment of taxes was punishable by beating, flogging, or death. A former serf who ran away to join the PLA says of his life before liberation:

"I think I was not much different from a yak or any other draft animal for I could not read or write a word and knew nothing at all. For generations my family belonged to a big serf-owner who had five hundred families of serfs, working both in farming and in livestock. I wore the same sheepskin winter and summer and it was my only garment. It was so old that there was no wool on it any more nor any warmth, but only plenty of lice. I was always hungry."(4)

The same serf tells of his beating when he was caught running away at age 15:

*'I was not much
different from a yak.'
— a former serf on
life before liberation.*

"Blood came then from my nose and mouth. The overseer said, 'This is only blood from the nose: maybe you take heavier sticks and bring some blood from the brain.' They beat then with heavier sticks and poured alcohol and water on the wounds to make more pain. I passed out for two hours. I am twenty-four now, and it is nine years past, but if I take off my shirt or push back my hair, you can see the scars of that beating still."(5)

RELIGIOUS HIERARCHY

Within the monasteries there also existed a hierarchy of privilege and power. Lower lamas, who did not own slaves, were often treated like animals, being forced to sleep outside or on dirt floors. They were essentially slaves to the upper lamas, who could force them to labor and beat or flog them at will. There was also sexual abuse by the upper lamas within the monasteries and also in the villages by masters and serf-owners, who would rape women indiscriminately when passing through a village. Many of the lamas were forced into the monasteries at a young age, and were anxious to leave when the opportunity arose.

Contrary to what the Dalai Lama or his Western supporters might tell you at a public lecture in the United States, feudal Tibet was not a benevolent, peace loving paradise. In this "benevolent society" serfs were killed for their bones. Sometimes the victims were not yet dead when the bones were harvested from their bodies.(6)

Despite the retardation of technical advancements under feudalism, torture devices were plenty and quite advanced. Handcuffs with special sizes for small children, devices for cutting off noses and ears, instruments for slicing off knee caps and heels and a special stone cap which covered the head, leaving two small holes for the eyes to bulge through, (making it easier to gouge them out), (7) were all found in the monasteries and temples by the PLA after liberation. Children accused of "witchcraft" under the lamas were skinned alive.(8) This is the society that the Dalai Lama wants to restore.

revolutionary Claims

GIMME BACK MY SLAVES!



THE 1950 LIBERATION OF TIBET

Prior to 1949, Tibet had been considered a part of China for 700 years. According to Anna Louise Strong, "No foreign power in seven hundred years has recognized Tibet as a separate nation or sent an ambassador to Lhasa."⁽⁹⁾ Furthermore,

"The claims made by Tibetan rebels in India that Tibet was 'practically independent' after the empire fell, are based on decades of disunion in China, when warlords ruled various provinces, and when Chiang Kai-shek, who rose to power in 1927, only succeeded in unifying part of China, which was almost at once involved in a long war with Japan."⁽¹⁰⁾

The PLA entered the city of Chambdo in 1950. This area, plagued by fighting between Tibetan and Szechwan warlords, was not, according to most maps, part of Tibet. In 1950 however, the population was majority Tibetan. The PLA entry was anticipated by the Dalai Lama, so Tibetan troops were sent to meet and fight the PLA. The PLA quickly defeated the Dalai Lama's army in Chambdo. Many Tibetans, including some of the leadership of the Tibetan army, went over to the PLA side.⁽¹¹⁾ The PLA was able to win support by explaining their intentions and through sharing what was happening in China.

The PLA did not advance into Tibet until 1951, when an agreement between the Dalai Lama and the Central Government for the "Peaceful liberation of Tibet" was signed. This agreement set the terms of the transition for Tibet back into being a functioning part of China.

Claiming the support of the Tibetan people, the Dalai Lama also claimed to support the agreement, in which China was to "leave unchanged the political structure, the powers of the Dalai Lama, the income of the monasteries" and was not to

"use compulsion for reform."⁽¹²⁾ Instead, reform was left in the hands of the local governments and monasteries, who had agreed to begin reforming themselves.

Why would the CCP agree to this slow pace of reform? First, the nationalist sentiments of the Tibetan people had to be taken into account. Tibetans were wary of Chinese motives due to a history of relations with warlords during and prior to the Chiang Kai-shek era. Secondly, religion was deeply intertwined with the feudal economic and political system and to move too fast against the economic and political structures could have alienated the people. It was through time that the masses were won over. On one hand they could see the honest practice of the PLA, and on the other hand they could see the brutality and anti-reform nature of the nobility.

After the 1951 agreement, past serf debts to their owners and the monasteries were abolished. These debts, passed down from generation to generation of Tibetan serfs, were a significant form of exploitation and control. In many other ways, the remnants of the feudal superstructure obstructed reform and the advancement of the people. Land reform and the transfer of lands from the nobility and the monasteries to collective farms was delayed. Farming implements sent from other parts of China to be used by the Tibetan masses were impounded by the nobility.

After a counterrevolutionary rebellion was put down in 1959, the PLA discovered 200,000 farm tools hidden in warehouses.⁽¹³⁾ At each stage, the nobility hoped China's policy would change or a foreign power might invade China and get them off the hook. The PLA in the meantime was working toward gaining support among the people and the Tibetan people's understanding of freedom was growing.

FEUDAL REBELLIONS AGAINST PROGRESS

Directly under the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan government was the official Cabinet of Ministers, called the kasha. The kasha was made up of six wealthy noblemen, or kaloons, and these kaloons had a definite interest in restoring the former system.

In the seven years after 1951, there were several small rebellions of the nobility against the PLA to restore feudalism. In 1959, four of the six kaloons united in rebellion. The Dalai Lama's role in the rebellion is not directly clear. He claims to have been kidnapped by the rebels and forced into exile, but his later actions show that he was at the very least a willing accomplice if not a co-conspirator.

The 1959 rebellion was defeated principally because the rebels did not have the support of the people. Of those Tibetans that did fight for the kaloons, they surrendered quickly to the PLA because they were forced to fight against their will.

The conduct of the rebels and the PLA also helped defeat the rebellion. Rebel forces had traveled through many parts of Tibet looting and raping along the way. They had a reputation as bandits and were feared by many Tibetan people. In order to make it clear to the masses who the aggressors were, the PLA waited 10 days before counterattacking.

The rebellion openly called for a restoration of feudalism, the extermination of Communists and the further empowerment of the monasteries and nobles under the guise of "freedom of religion."⁽¹⁴⁾

When the rebellion was put down, the Dalai Lama fled to India along with a significant number of the nobility. This exodus of reactionaries formed the nucleus of the "Free Tibet" movement. Again, the Dalai Lama claims that he was forced by the rebels to flee, but when he was given a chance by the central Chinese government to return to power, he refused. Instead, the Dalai Lama remained in India and denounced China as well as the 1951 agreement.

According to the PLA, 600 rebels died in the 1959 rebellion.⁽¹⁵⁾ Other sources claim that the rebellion was a large scale massacre by the Chinese army, and count 87,000 Tibetan deaths. The latter source is not attributed and unverifiable.⁽¹⁸⁾

On the world's main computer conference regarding China — internet's soc.culture.china — irresponsible Western activists concoct figures on the genocide of Tibetan peoples, basically out of thin air, since no real census supports the figures they promote. MIM has discussed several times, including in MIM Theory 4, the hypocritical and fictional way that figures for Third World deaths are calculated in First World countries.

For example, the imperialists might take two census figures several years apart, and extrapolate what the second population should be using the last known birth/death rate. If the second census figure is less than expected, the imperialists are quick to yell "Genocide!" before looking to see if there are reasons, like war or natural disasters, why people might have

stopped having children. In a similar Liberal fashion, the imperialists are quick to call a starvation death in a country unfriendly to imperialism a murder, but they call it business in countries with friendlier governments.

The exodus of the nobility in 1959 allowed the reform in Tibet to go much faster for two reasons. First, the major resistance was physically gone, and secondly, the nobility's violation of the 1951 agreement freed the Chinese Communist Party to move much faster. No longer was the CCP bound to maintain the previous political structure of Tibet. Serfdom was offi-

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cially abolished soon after the rebellion, and land reform began in earnest.

Bourgeois historian Jonathan D. Spence reports that even after the 1959 rebellion was put down, the CIA continued to train Tibetan rebels in Colorado and fly them to Tibet.⁽¹⁹⁾

ADVANCES OF SOCIALISM IN TIBET

Under Tibet's feudal system, serfs were illiterate. Under socialism, the Chinese Communist Party made the advancement of national minorities and their territories a priority.

Experimental farms were set up, hospitals and schools were built for the people, seeds and tools were given for farming, and three major highways were built from 1954-57, employing the Tibetan people in the process. The fact that the PLA paid them wages won the support of many serfs, for the concept of wages was previously unheard of for serfs in Tibet. These highways lowered the cost of tea and textile imports greatly because of the efficiency of truck transport in comparison to the former mode of yak transport.⁽¹⁶⁾

In Loka in August 1959 — after the feudal counterrevolution was put down — land reform began and every family in the region received land they could themselves harvest.⁽¹⁷⁾

At each step, committees were set up as organs of political power designed to lead the former serfs to a higher level. The consolidation of power in the hands of the ex-serfs was both a product of, and a condition for, a settling of accounts with their former oppressors. The serfs were also encouraged to speak out about their former oppression in accusation trials, where upper lamas and masters were openly accused of their crimes by the people. The guilty were often given the chance to repent if they admitted their crimes and acted in favor of reform.

Some of these ex-slave masters fled to more remote provinces and others fled to India. Still others were in jail. There is no evidence of large numbers of former serf-owners being killed, either by the CCP or by the masses during public trials.

RETURN OF OPPRESSION UNDER DENG XIAOPING

With the restoration of capitalism in China in 1976, there were big losses for the people throughout China. Since then, the CCP's policy toward Tibet has changed. Prior to capitalist restoration, the promotion of the minority nationalities was a priority. Now Tibet is treated as a colony. Resources are extracted from Tibet, and millions of Han (the main Chinese ethnic group) settlers are being sent to Tibet.

There have also been reports of genocide being committed against Tibetans — which are quite believable, given Deng's practices in other regards. These include the rounding up of pregnant Tibetan women to forcibly impose abortion. What lessens the credibility of some of these recent reports is who is presenting them. Many of pro-Tibet activists have a very shaky practice in regard to reporting what happened under Mao, when it was clearer what was going on, and they openly support restoring the Dalai Lama.

We must be clear that when we criticize Chinese revisionism in Tibet, we must also defend the Maoist theory and practice in eradicating feudalism and advancing towards communism. Much of the "Free Tibet" movement is anti-communist to the core, and cares not about the difference between Maoism and revisionism, as long as it can blame Maoism for everything. Despite the setbacks of capitalist restoration, without the stimulus provided by Mao Zedong's Communist Party, Tibet would not be so well-off economically as it is today. Mao's party helped Tibet modernize in a way impossible to imagine under the rule of the Dalai Lama. Far from committing genocide, being part of China helped the Tibetans prosper. With the development of a working class in Tibet in addition to a free peasantry, it was not unwise for Tibetan people to throw off both the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama completely.

Western people uninformed of the nature of the question make numerous and easy mistakes with regard to Tibet. One attraction to Western hippie types of the Dalai Lama is the spiritual side of Tibetan Buddhism. Westerners get the sense

that the Chinese are destroying a culture in Tibet. Visitors there will see evidence of fighting, relics showing machine gun bullet holes for instance. What the Westerner cannot see, however, is that the fighting has been between the Tibetan classes as well as between Chinese and Tibetans.

To mourn the passing of the Dalai Lama's influence is the same as mourning the passing of the American plantation owner in the South. Moving to restore the Dalai Lama is moving to restore serfdom, slavery, ignorance, superstition, and economic disaster — unless of course the Dalai Lama simply plans to live the life of a comprador and allow Western imperialist exploitation of Tibet. Even this is not really possible because of the weak infrastructure in Tibet.

Even Deng Xiaoping-led capitalism is likely more progressive for Tibet than what the Dalai Lama has in mind. It is a terrible choice — Deng Xiaoping fascists shooting down Tibetan monks in the streets or Dalai Lama theocrats reimposing slavery, but as long as Tibet makes progress within capitalism, as it appears, MIM supports China's retaining Tibet.

MIM has no reason to support the minority of monks who seek to restore Tibet's old way of life. The former slaves and serfs of Tibet are just as much Tibetans as the monks are. Under Mao, the leader of Tibet was none other than a woman who had been a slave for nine years. Other leaders had also been slaves. These people and the new economic forces they represented in Tibet clearly have an interest in opposing the Dalai Lama and Deng Xiaoping and seeing to Tibet's development.

In Tibet today there are surely genuine communists, real Maoists, not revisionists like Deng Xiaoping. It would be best for them to organize a movement for independence from China. Under Maoist leadership, the Tibetan people could advance back to socialism, and even a capitalism free from Deng's fascism would be progressive. MIM would support their fight for national self-determination. Failing that, the Tibetan people are better off under Deng Xiaoping's capitalist rule than under some restoration of former slave-owners.

- Notes:
1. *Great Changes in Tibet*, Foreign Language Press: Peking, 1972, p. 22.
 2. *Peking Review* 7/4/75, p. 27-28.
 3. Anna Louise Strong, *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet*. New World Press: Peking, 1960, p. 227.
 4. Anna Louise Strong, *Tibetan Interviews*. New World Press: Peking, 1959, p. 30.
 5. Strong, *Interviews*, op cit. p. 31.
 6. Strong, *Serfs*, op cit. p. 231.
 7. Strong, *Interviews*, pp. 91-2.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
 9. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
 10. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-3.
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
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 14. Strong, *Interviews*, p. 86.
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 17. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
 18. "Tibet: An Independent State Under Illegal Occupation" (pamphlet) U.S. Tibet Committee, National Headquarters 241 E. 32nd St. NY, NY 10016.
 19. Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, W.W. Norton and Company, New York: 1990, p. 587.

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all in North America in the 1960s. Now that the red flag has fallen in East Asia, we are waiting for new issues to arise and generate new communist movements.

One other notable organization of recent times is the East Wind, but MIM is not much of a fan of this organization. While it had a strong basis in "Asian-Americans," it did not have much by way of political development beyond cultural unity. In fact, it appears to have been mixed up with Deng Xiaopingism.

Today, from what we can see J. Sakai does not lead any distinctly Asian movement. Furthermore, although MIM has attracted Asian-descended peoples from its foundation, it has never undertaken specifically Asian-focused work either. Our comrades from the Philippines and the revolutionary movement there provide us with an excellent opportunity to influence the largest subgroup of Asians here. In 1980, Filipinos were the largest subgroup of Asian peoples within U.S. borders, and they appear poised to regain that ranking from the Chinese as we write this. At the same time, they also have the most to complain about economically. College-educated Filipinos made \$16,000 a year to the Japanese-"Americans" \$23,000 and the Chinese-"Americans" \$21,000 in 1979. (9)

ANARCHY OF CAPITALIST PRODUCTION

The irrational nature of capitalism ensures destructive economic competition. Historically, economic competition has fallen on immigrants the hardest as long-term citizens begrudge jobs to newly arrived immigrants.

Such is the current situation with Asians in North America. A poll done in 1980 in nine cities showed that 47% of citizens thought the Indochinese refugees were taking jobs from people in their area. The same survey found that 77% would disapprove of someone in their family marrying an Indochinese refugee and 65% would not allow one as a guest in their house. A 1989 survey by the Los Angeles Times showed that 25% of the public thought Asian-Americans had gained too much economic power while no other ethnic group received more than 7% of the public's concern.

More importantly, in 1982, a national poll showed that 44% of the public blamed U.S. economic problems "almost completely" or "very much" on the Japanese.(10) For this reason, MIM believes that an inter-imperialist conflict with Japan ending in U.S. fascist nationalization of Japanese assets and a trade war would enjoy widespread settler support. Hence, we must keep our eyes on that scenario and prevent it from developing through internationalist solidarity.

Elsewhere we have reviewed a film on the Vincent Chin murder in Detroit. Few people realize that there were several similar murders afterwards. Most heinous was Patrick Purdy's spraying 105 AK-47 bullets at an elementary school in Stockton, California in 1989. He killed five children, all of whom were Southeast Asians.(11) Police and local officials originally denied the racial motivations, but an Attorney

General report nine months later put forward the evidence that Purdy had previously expressed his hatred of Southeast Asians and saw them as taking jobs.

TOWARD A MAOIST ANALYSIS OF U.S. CONDITIONS

While the great Vietnam era political organizations are gone, Asian academic and political conferences still contain a strong anti-imperialist flavor. MIM would like to see them develop a more clear Maoist direction. To fully understand issues such as the Vincent Chin murder, an analysis of U.S. conditions is necessary and that includes the reason the labor aristocracy is not an ally of oppressed peoples. This task of analysis will fall to second and succeeding generations in the Asian community.

Dialectically-speaking, it should be no surprise that the immigrants of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s are now seeing their children grow up on U.S. soil with different political concerns than their own. No generation can escape the influence of the prior generation, but second-generation "Asian-American" children begin to rethink their own conditions within U.S. borders. The murder of Vincent Chin was unexceptional in U.S. history filled with such murders, but it provoked a social movement by a generation of Asian-descended people who had been here long enough to criticize the U.S. justice system on its own terms. Organizations that arose to support Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign are typical of where second-generation thinking may lead—a concern with taking the United States at its word with regard to civil rights and beginning to notice contradictions. It is the U.S. born (second generation) Asian-descended peoples most likely to ask, "why can't I be treated the same as all the other Americans?"

MIM seeks to hasten such concerns with democracy to lead Asians toward the struggle for self-determination. In the Chinatowns and Koreatowns and certain blocks in Berkeley and San Mateo, the economic community for such struggle already exists.

Some of the upper class will assimilate and join U.S. imperialism. However, imperialism gives us great confidence in its abilities to oppress and create antagonistic conflicts. Time is on our side when it comes to the growth of Asian-descended struggle.

Notes:

1. Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities* Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1992, 16.
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3. Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* Twayne Publishers: Boston, 1991, p. 146.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
5. New York Times 2/21/95, p. 1.
6. Yen Le Espiritu, op. cit., p. 58.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-8.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-7.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 137-9.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 156-7.

The Anti-Maoist Line on Angola: Revisionism vs. Internationalism

December 1994

by MC49

Enemies of Maoism from the "left" often point to the role of Maoist China (1949-1976) in Angola. Anarchists, Trotskyists, and Soviet-type revisionists unite in saying that Maoism proved itself bankrupt by backing organizations which were supported by the United States and South Africa. To debunk these simplistic assertions, we will first examine these anti-Maoist views, then look at the facts.

THE ANTI-MAOIST LINE

The anti-Maoist line on Angola originated in Moscow. This line is well-represented by the pro-Soviet Communist Party of Canada (CPCa):

"Another source of international tension was the policies of the Maoist leadership of the PRC [People's Republic of China]. China established trade and political relations with the fascist junta in Chile and the racist apartheid regime in South Africa. It joined the United States and South Africa in giving military aid to reactionary forces in Angola in 1975, with the aim of setting up a pro-Western regime in that country. ... This scurrilous record demonstrated Maoism's break with Marxism-Leninism, and confronted many people who had been influenced by Maoism with the necessity of rethinking their position."⁽¹⁾

Specifically, "[T]he Soviets ... accuse[d] the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) of being both Maoist and in the pay of the CIA."⁽²⁾ Moscow called the FNLA's leader, Holden Roberto, "a puppet of US imperialism."⁽³⁾

Trotskyists and anarchists simply echo Moscow's line on China's role in Angola. For example, the Trotskyist Spartacist League refers to Angola as an example of why they call Maoism "Marxism-Leninism-Henry Kissinger Thought."⁽⁴⁾

Even the crypto-Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP), which falsely claims to uphold Maoism, cannot restrain itself:

"In relation to Angola, China made a number of significant errors.... China's errors were due both to the fact that revisionists had a great deal of influence in matters involving China's foreign relations and to certain errors on the part of the Chinese revolutionaries themselves, particularly in tending to view the Soviet imperialists as the main danger in the world against whom an international united front should be

**China's principal role
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formed. This latter error has a long history in the international communist movement, dating all the way back to the time of the Third Communist International.... China's continued support for the FNLA and UNITA, even after it was clear that they were being used to advance U.S. interests against the Soviets, was wrong. South Africa's invasion of Angola on behalf of the U.S. and on the side of the FNLA and UNITA had the effect of consider-

ably raising the stakes involved for China in continuing this support and consequently China withdrew this support in mid- to late October of 1975."⁽⁵⁾

REALITY

Maoist China supported all three of the main forces that engaged in armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism. China started supporting the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA, led by Agostino Neto) in 1958, shortly after its formation in December 1956. In February 1961, the MPLA launched its armed struggle. The June 24, 1961 issue of China's *People's Daily* hailed the armed struggle of the Angolan people against the Portuguese colonialists. ⁽⁶⁾ In the early 1960s:

"The Chinese gave funds. Seldom amounting to more than a few thousand pounds at a time, this money could none the less be crucial: The MPLA of Angola, for instance, got donations which sustained them in the vitally important period at the beginning of the sixties when their first blows against Portugal were being prepared. The Chinese gave food and medicines and lorries. Now and again guerrillas fought in Chinese uniform."⁽⁷⁾

In December 1963, China started arming the FNLA, which had been formed in 1962 by a merger of existing groups. In 1964, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi) formed, and China provided support to them as well. In sum, the main thrust of China's Angola policy was not to support any particular faction or factions, but to support the armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism. Even in 1970, when the Sino-Soviet split was deep, the MPLA received aid from both China and USSR, putting the lie to the anti-Maoist claim that China's role was principally pro-U.S. and/or anti-Soviet. ⁽⁸⁾ China's role was principally anti-colonial and pro-Angolan masses.

On the question of the FNLA:

"The CIA reportedly financed [FNLA leader] Holden Roberto during most of the 1960s at a paltry rate of \$10,000-\$20,000 a year until the money was stopped by the Nixon administration in 1970 in a conciliatory gesture toward Portugal. It is on the basis of this evidence that Moscow has accused Roberto of being 'a puppet of U.S. imperialism.' However, such an accusation does not hold much water, for like other Angolan nationalists Roberto had made it clear that he was willing to receive aid from any source. In fact by 1964, the paucity of U.S. aid had led him to the conclusion that 'the Western countries are hypocritical. They help our enemies. While paying lip service to self-determination, the U.S. supplies its North Atlantic Treaty ally, Portugal, with arms that are used to kill us.'"(9)

Through the early 1970s, China continued to support the FNLA, the MPLA and UNITA. By August 1974, however, China was apparently trying to counterbalance the Soviet-backed MPLA with its support for the FNLA.(10) In March 1975, Chinese aid to UNITA was apparently serving a similar counterbalancing goal.(11) As stated above, opposing the Soviet Union was not China's principal role in Angola. It was, however, a reasonable one. For one thing, China, as a socialist state, had an internationalist duty to weaken its principal enemy. The Soviet Union was China's principal enemy at the time; it was actively threatening socialist China's borders. Secondly, history has shown that Soviet imperialism was aim-

ing to make Angola a neocolony. On this point, see Cummings.

Finally, the myth promoted by the pro-Soviet CPCa that "the Maoist leadership of the PRC ... joined the United States and South Africa in giving military aid to reactionary forces in Angola in 1975" needs to be refuted. The crypto-Trotskyist RCP does Maoists no favors by spreading the half-truth that "South Africa's invasion of Angola ... on the side of the FNLA and UNITA had the effect of considerably raising the stakes involved for China in continuing this support and consequently China withdrew this support in mid- to late October of 1975."

While the CPCa refers to "1975" to imply that South Africa and China simultaneously aided the FNLA, and the RCP implies that South Africa's invasion put China in a position of confusion and contemplation, the fact is that it took China only four days to remove its advisors and support. South Africa invaded on Oct. 23, 1975. On Oct. 27, China withdrew its military instructors and its support to FNLA and UNITA.(11)

On Nov. 11, 1975, Portuguese colonialism stepped down. In February 1976, the MPLA took state power, marking the start of Soviet neocolonial rule. The neocolonial nature of MPLA/Soviet rule is an important point to understand, but it is beyond the scope of this article. On that question, see Cummings.

In sum, Maoist China's principal role in Angola was not pro-U.S. or anti-Soviet, but anti-colonial and pro-Angolan masses. Where China used its foreign policy to combat Soviet influence, it was doing its anti-colonial, internationalist duty. Those forces who oppose socialist alliances with impure forces like U.S. imperialism are either the same forces — like the anarchists, Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists — whose purist dogmatism keeps them from making the alliances necessary to seize state power and prove that they can do a better job, or are — like the Soviet-line revisionists — simply opposed to socialist alliances because they are opposed to socialism.

Notes:

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2. Alan Hutchinson, *China's African Revolution*, Westview Press: 1975, p. 237.
3. G.P. Deshpande and H.K. Gupta, *Somaiya Publications*, Bombay, 1986, p. 171.
4. *Workers Vanguard*, No. 524, 4/12/91, p. 6.
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6. Alaba Ogunsanwano, *China's Policy in Africa: 1958-71*, Cambridge University Press: New York, 1974, p. 107.
7. Philip Snow, *The Star Raft: China's Encounter with Africa*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson: London, 1988, p. 77.
8. Deshpande and Gupta, p. 162.
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10. Snow, p. 125.
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Review:

Panther Advances National Liberation

The Black Panther
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Berkeley, California 94701-0519

by MC17 & MC234

Produced by the Black Community News Service, this newspaper is a good source of anti-imperialist and pro-national liberation news. While the Black Panther Newspaper Committee (BPNC) (which began publishing the Black Panther in 1991) is clearly not the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organization that the Black Panther Party of the 1960s was, MIM has a lot of unity with the BPNC. Two important themes throughout the paper on which we unite are the need for national liberation of the Black nation and the call for reparations from Amerika for centuries of abuse.

This issue of The Black Panther focuses on crime, unemployment, homelessness and the state of the Black community. It features statistics about the relative condition of the Black nation compared to whites in Amerika and points out that the call for fighting crime and a crime bill will only lead to increased repression of the oppressed in this country.

The BPNC does a good job of criticizing reformism and integrationism. In an article about the NAACP it points out that this organization was founded by whites to keep Blacks in their place and that it has been used by the imperialists to sell out the people.

An article about the Nation of Islam and Farrakhan correctly asks for an explanation from the NOI for its "current medical and security contracts with the enemy U.S. government" and criticizes them for not committing to the struggle around political prisoners, concluding that "genuine efforts to organize the Black colony for National Liberation and Independence should be embraced and supported by our people. However, we must not allow our emotions to blind us to the history of those who profess to

lead us to that liberation."

The article "Youth, Crime & Punishment: Rx Genocide" comes the closest as any article in the paper to call for the creation of a Leninist vanguard Party that builds public opinion and independent institutions of the oppressed as it prepares for armed struggle. This article, like many others in The Black Panther is a strong call for national consciousness and national liberation, but it stops just a little short: "We must carry on the tradition of the Black Panther Party."

Nowhere in any issues of The Black Panther has MIM seen any sign of rebuilding the Party. A newspaper is a first step, but only a step. MIM was a pre-party with a newspaper for many years, but we were able to create a Party with hierarchy and democratic centralism and to expand even further. The failure of the Black Panther Party to practice democratic centralism, and to fully educate its members and develop new leaders made it easily susceptible to state destruction. The formation of a functioning Leninist Party on explicit Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles would be the first step the BPNC could make to avoid repeating the fatal errors of the BPP. Even better than that — given the state of Maoist forces at this time — the Maoist elements within BPNC should join MIM.

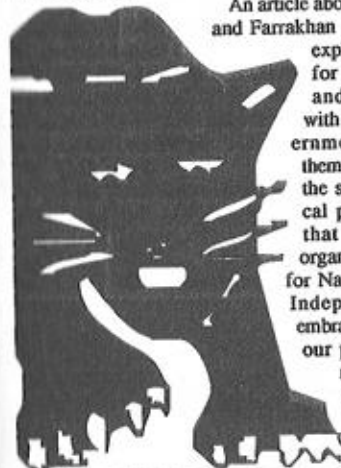
INTERNATIONALISM

The BPNC demonstrates its internationalism with two articles in this issue about the Zapatista's fight for national liberation. MIM is also pleased to report that in two other issues MIM has seen (Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter 1993) the BPNC has printed statements in support of the Maoist People's War in Peru and in defense of Peruvian political prisoners and prisoners of war, including Chairperson Gonzalo. It was also encouraging to see Chiang Ching, one of the "Gang of Four" (the leaders of the Maoist pole in the late Cultural Revolution) celebrated among a list of creative and artistic revolutionaries.

In a review of the first issue of the BPNC's The Black Panther MIM criticized them for their false internationalism in hailing Cuba as a socialist state. BPNC continued this error at least until the Spring/Summer 1993 issue, calling Cuba an example of scientific socialism.

In this Spring/Summer 1994 we see more of the same. An article by Dhoruba bin Wahad about the 7th Pan-African Conference, states "[t]here is no longer a 'socialist camp' to

Given the state of
Maoist forces at
this time, the
Maoist elements
within BPNC
should join MIM.



oppose the blatant aggressions of capitalism." Without specifying exactly what he means, MIM has to assume that bin Wahad is using the more common (but wrong) view that the Soviet Union was socialist from Khrushchev to Gorbachev.

Wahad also makes a sharp criticism of Mandela for staying with New York City's mayor David Dinkins on a recent visit to the U.S. — comparing this to a Black revolutionary staying with Buthelezi in South Africa.

Wahad advocates pan-Africanism and in doing so focuses on the need to fight racism in this country. This is one of the major failings of this issue of the Black Panther: the failure to distinguish between racism and national oppression. While on the one hand, many of the articles call for national liberation of the Black nation, they fail to distinguish between the superstructural nature of racism and the substructural national oppression.

IMPERIALIST NATION LABOR ARISTOCRACY?

Another problem with this issue of The Black Panther is its failure to treat the question of the working-class in this country in scientific terms. One article about unemployment and homelessness by Safiya Bukhari-Alston does a good job of pointing out the discrepancy between Black and white employment rates. But this article criticizes NAFTA and GATT as measures that will hurt Black laborers. MIM does not tail the anti-NAFTA and anti-GATT movements in this country because to do so would objectively reinforce imperialist nation chauvinism. As J. Sakai points out in *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat* the export of industrial jobs overseas has allowed white industrial workers as a group to move up to white collar jobs.(1) MIM has not yet studied the exact effects of capital export on oppressed nation workers although we can make two points at the outset:

- Opposing individual trade agreements without opposing imperialism is like opposing just the Republicans. It ignores the reality that industry will continue to move to the Third World with or without any specific trade agreement.(2)

- Marx wrote: "The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development that the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole."(3)

Instead of organizing the proletariat in the United States against the proletariat in the Third World (or worse, organizing the labor aristocracy against the proletariat), MIM works to organize the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and the proletariat's principal enemy: imperialism.

The BPNC's incorrect analysis of the working class is furthered in the Trotskyist article "Class and Race: A Dialectical View" which discusses how racism had led to the superex-

ploitation of Black workers in this country. The author says "white labor must be made to see that it has a material class interest in the elimination of racial oppression."

MIM refers readers to MIM Theory 1 and J. Sakai's *Settlers* for explanations that the white working class is not exploited (surplus value is not extracted from them) and is in fact bought off with the superprofits of imperialism to support Amerika, including Amerikan national oppression.

"Class and Race" is followed by a confusing editor's note. Rather than clarifying this incorrect stand it further confuses the issue by calling China during the 1980s "a socialist economic perspective" and goes on to say that "[a]t best a mixed economy (one with socialist and capitalist features) removes some of the exploitative features of capitalism." This editor's note does conclude with the correct statement that "Black people want/need self-determination to defend themselves against racist behavior, regardless of the economic system."

Some of the articles seem to be advocating Black capitalism as a means for liberation ("Fight-Back on 1-2-5" on page 2, e.g.). The defense of the national bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie in the oppressed nations is indeed a progressive struggle as these two classes are real, potential allies to the proletariat in national liberation struggles. But revolutionaries should not fool the people into believing that "the economic liberation of Harlem" is possible without communist-led national liberation; nor should revolutionaries equate the liberation of the national bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie with liberation for the exploited classes.

The Black Panther embraces focoism with its printing of a short statement calling to all unemployed warriors: "Every time a policeman kills a Black person, find the motherfuckers that did it and execute them." Even the gun carrying Black Panther Party of the 1960s knew better than this. They knew that focoist actions (armed actions taken by a few people without the support of an educated and organized revolutionary base) would lead to further repression and ultimate failure.

The best article in this issue is entitled "Black Lumpen on the Cutting Edge." The author calls for "Black Maoist Revolution" and discusses the importance of Marxism and particularly Maoism in analyzing the revolutionary potential of the lumpen proletariat. This author is clear to say that Maoism is the most advanced revolutionary ideology today. MIM may agree with his analysis, however, the people he appears to be labeling lumpen, we call proletarian.

Notes:

1. J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*. Morningstar Press, 1983, p. 136. Available from MIM for \$10.
2. See MIM Notes 96, Jan 1995 for an article on GATT. (\$1) For more on NAFTA, see "NAFTA stand clarifies

RCP's differences with MIM" in MIM Theory 7 (\$4.95) or "NAFTA opponents protect Amerikan privilege" in MIM Notes 79, August 1993. (\$1)

3. Marx & Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," New York: Washington Square Press, 1964, p. 80.

Republic of New Afrika: Prisoner Challenges Claim to Land

Revolutionary greetings:

... As I told you, my financial situation is real fucked up so my delay on getting to you is not due to a lack of interest on my part. We are only allowed 1 stamp per month (free) here in SHU. So please do not take my delays in getting back to you as intentional...

I would like to comment on an article in one of your MIM Notes concerning the RNA's demand for land. [MIM Notes 88, May 1994, p. 5.] This is purely counter-revolutionary and selfish. We know and understand that if the U.S. does honor their request for land that all that will happen is a neocolony will be established within the boundaries of Amerikkka.

We know that Amerikkka will by no means allow a communist regime to exist within its borders. So this land that they are demanding will just be another capitalist society run by Blackfaces.

Either these people are ignorant to what Frantz Fanon stated about the national bourgeoisie in *Wretched of the Earth* or they never read it in depth or they simply don't care. I would advise the RNA to thoroughly read the chapter "The pitfalls of national consciousness" in *Wretched*....

... This letter thing is kinda fucked up cause I'm limited to one letter a month consisting of 6 pages. And I some times use that 1 letter a month to write home.

By the way, can you send me *The Black Panthers Speak* and the MIM literature list? Also anything else y'all think is necessary for my political growth and development. Please get back to me ASAP and if I take a while to respond don't think I dissed y'all, cause only 2 things could have happened: the pigs killed me or I used my one stamp a month to write home. But in no way would I just stop writing you.

So until next time comrades, One love!

Your brother in struggle,
—A prisoner in New York

East Coast study group responds: The demand for land is progressive in that it would be a positive step forward for the Black Nation's efforts at self-determination. Even a more advanced neocolonialism, with clearly demarcated borders, would be a step above the current situation. MIM, however, looks higher than this: towards communism.

As Maoists we believe in a two-step revolution. The first is the anti-imperialist or democratic stage. The second is the anti-capitalist stage. When the revolution is led by communists, the entry into the second stage is a definite part of the agenda. When the national bourgeoisie leads, this second stage is not on the agenda at all (and the national bourgeoisie, with its vacillating nature, has difficulty leading the oppressed masses in the first stage.)

The demand for land is progressive in that it can be used to build public opinion for revolution. While petitioning Congress for the land is a waste of time and misleading the masses, organizing for the day we can seize it is not. Amerikkka is surely not going to let an independent Black nation — communist or not — exist within its borders at this time.

We read the chapter in *Wretched* that you refer to. Fanon and Mao have a lot of unity on the balance of forces in revolutions in the colonial countries. It's important to keep several things in mind when reading Fanon. The first is that the approach and purpose is different than of Mao's *Selected Works*. *Wretched* was quickly written in three months by an observer of the Algerian revolution. The *Selected Works* were written over several decades by the leader of the Chinese revolution and contains more empirical knowledge than *Wretched*. Fanon observes, dissects and gives subdued opinions. Mao talks directly about the current balance of forces and what is necessary at each stage to advance the proletarian revolution.

As such, context is easy to lose in *Wretched*. Neither Fanon nor Mao condemn the national bourgeoisie as you do. They both expose the nature of the national bourgeoisie that leads it to conciliation and to seeking comprador status after (or during) the revolution. But this is an argument as to why the proletariat should lead the national bourgeoisie against imperialism, towards new democracy, and even into socialism; and not an argument to lump the national bourgeoisie in with the compradors and other enemies of the people.

One more point: Fanon seems to lump many different classes in with the "working class" or the "proletariat," including the petit-bourgeoisie and other strata and occupations dependent upon imperialism. While this extension of the proletariat into non-proletarian classes is incorrect, Fanon's conclusion as to the revolutionary nature of the peasantry and of the lumpen proletariat is correct. The key is context and the corresponding correct analysis of the principal contradiction.

We will send you Mao's *Selected Works* as soon as they are available; we sent *The Black Panthers Speak*.

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Review

African People's Socialist Party

January 4, 1994

by MCS

The African People's Socialist Party (APSP) headed by Omali Yeshitela holds one of the positions on political economy of the United States that is most like MIM's among the parties in North America that MIM is aware of. Crucially, the APSP sees national oppression as central and holds that the white working class is benefitting from national chauvinism. This latter difference distinguishes it from its opposites like the Progressive Labor Party, which holds that there is no national oppression, just racism, and that the white working class actually suffers from racism economically because the bosses use it to divide the workers, lower their wages and lengthen their hours.

SUMMARY

MIM can summarize its differences with the APSP as follows:

1) According to MIM, the experience of socialist countries is a dividing line question. APSP does not treat the issue with much prominence, and in practice agrees with many former Maoists, as in the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, who believe that domestic questions are principal.

2) APSP believes the road to socialism is "painted Black"; MIM would place a greater emphasis on the Third World.

3) APSP does not mention anywhere that the oppressed nations of North America also have sectors of workers bought-off by imperialism. Instead, according to APSP, Black people are 94% proletarian. According to the APSP, the bought-off Black sectors are numerically insignificant:

"The milk and bread ploy not only bought off sectors of the black community, the capitalist-aspiring black petty bourgeoisie, but it also bought off the avaricious sector of the petty bourgeoisie from virtually every other nationality."(1)

In contrast, MIM wonders aloud like the Black Panthers did whether or not there is a Black proletariat and if so, how large is it?

WHITE WORKING CLASS

It is surprising to what extent MIM and the APSP agree. For example, the APSP makes the fight for reparations a central part of its work and slams the Trotskyists like Mandel for racism and national chauvinism. According to Mandel and most other Euro-chauvinists, Third World workers make less money than workers in the imperialist countries because the imperialist country workers are more productive.(2) Typically these chauvinists say the white workers use more capital and are more productive, but they forget where that capital came from — the superexploitation of the Third World. The chauvinists act as if the property of the United States used in production should be treated as the property of the white nation

workers, not the workers of the world who produced it. APSP on the other hand, says that the white nation owes Black workers \$4.1 trillion in reparations for stolen labor during slavery and for discrimination in later years. The calculations make use of scholarly knowledge already available.

MIM recently learned that APSP also has a favorable impression of J. Sakai's book *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*. According to APSP (and MIM would agree), "white workers know they get a better deal by being in the heart of imperialism, and narrow appeals to self-interest only result in trade unionism and increasing national chauvinism among white workers."(3) APSP goes on to point out that alienation and war are still reasons for the white workers to

MIM sees nothing about white workers' class status per se that bodes well for revolution. It would take a catastrophic change in white workers' conditions for them to change to the revolutionary road.

oppose capitalism.

APSP generally has greater confidence than MIM that white workers as a class can be won over to the revolution: "It was the APSP itself which had the confidence that North American working class people could be won," according to the APSP's leading white writer in "Reparations Now!" named Penny Hess, who leads whites by following APSP directions. In contrast, MIM sees nothing about white workers' class status per se that bodes well for revolution. Even if the current recession continued 25 years, the United States might then be in about the position England is in now, and the English white workers are no revolutionary vehicle yet. It would take a catastrophic change in white workers' conditions for them to change to the revolutionary road.

BLACKS AS THE REVOLUTIONARY VEHICLE

Strategically, APSP believes Blacks are the most important element of the revolution, because of their urban locations near important resources: "The black population because of its historical and structural relationship with U.S. imperialism, is the most significant, objectively grounded anti-imperialist force within U.S. borders."(4) In addition, APSP has a slogan saying, "the road to socialism is painted Black." Furthermore, according to Yeshitela, the proletarianization of the Black population after the Civil War and after the modernization of World War II "is fatal to the survival of capitalism."(5) Overall, the APSP views the Black vs. white conflict as the principal contradiction: "The destruction of colonialism, led by a conscious black revolutionary socialist party, will constitute

the critical blow in the struggle for socialism within U.S. borders."(6) In such a precise pamphlet, MIM was disappointed to see that the APSP had not considered the possibility that Blacks are partly a beneficiary of superexploitation of the Third World. The APSP is quite thorough with its history and calculations, so we had hoped to see a calculation of this problem as well, especially since MIM knows of no precise calculation of this problem anywhere.

Along this line, the last part of APSP's calculation of reparations owed to the Black workers is ideologically incorrect. The APSP performs its calculations just assuming that Black workers should be paid the same as white workers instead of considering that maybe both Black workers and white workers in North America are overpaid and owe something to the Third World.

Ultimately, the APSP's position on this question is integrationist, even in language, and it proves that only proletarian internationalists can lead a thoroughgoing revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle. \$1.474 trillion are owed to the Black people from "discrimination" in the 1947-1979 period,(7) but that is only assuming Blacks should enjoy the same parasitic living standard as whites at the expense of the Third World. The assumption is that Black workers should get an equal piece of the imperialist pie as well.

In MIM Theory 1, MIM also performs a similar calculation, but only to prove how absurd it is to think that white workers are being exploited and creating surplus-value for their employers. Right in that calculation, MIM explains that it would be silly to assume that Third World workers are not a major source of the surplus-value sucked in by the American capitalists. However, the APSP just leaves this issue out entirely.

The earliest issues of MIM Theory from the time that MIM Theory was just a xerox sheet and not a journal asked the question of to what extent Black workers are also labor aristocracy. Even at that time, MIM acknowledged it had no good answer for this question, being short of the facts and calculations necessary, but we still asked it whereas the APSP just leaves it out.

In answering the question of the size of the Black proletariat, one indication is the support that a communist line obtains. Even the Black Panther Party, as successful as it was, never attracted a majority support relative to other bourgeois Black political organizations. It attracted widespread and conscious support from the lumpenproletariat and the petit-bourgeoisie, and still the Black Panthers only had a plurality of support in the Black community relative to other political organizations. The support that the Black Panthers received was nonetheless much greater than ever received by communists in the settler population. The Black Panthers proved that we must take the revolutionary potential of the Black lumpenproletariat, proletariat and petit-bourgeoisie seriously.

MIM also rejects the common white lie of unite-the-working-class analysis based on figures that show Black workers

work in integrated workplaces. While it is true that there are sizable Black contingents of industrial workers working alongside the white workers, that does not mean they share the same class position. The average white worker owns substantial home equity based on generations of settler wealth. In contrast, Black workers still average close to no home equity.

On the other hand, the answer to the question of the size of the Black labor aristocracy is partly why MIM does not believe that the "road to socialism is painted Black." If it were true that Black people were the major vehicle to revolution and socialism, MIM would have to get on-board with the APSP slogan. However, since MIM does not believe Blacks are 94% proletarian and does not believe the role of Blacks will be nearly as central as the weight of Third World peoples generally, MIM does not use the APSP slogan, "the road to socialism is painted Black."

Within U.S. borders, MIM would not assume that Blacks will play a greater role than superexploited Latino workers, who are illegal aliens or natives who struggle for their land. According to the APSP the number of Blacks is also a reason Blacks are the best vehicle of change, (8) but even numerically, the centrality of the Black nationality within U.S. borders is breaking down with the growth of other oppressed nationalities, so this reasoning of the APSP does not stand up either. As a result, MIM will not appeal to narrow Black self-interests at the expense of the Third World or at the expense of the success of revolution against imperialism. What MIM envisions is an internationalist alliance of oppressed nations that constructs a government to run the ex-United States after revolution. Such an alliance will be able to ensure that American imperialism

The APSP assumes that Black workers should be paid the same as white workers instead of considering that maybe both Black workers and white workers in North America owe something to the Third World.

does not have a comeback and it will exercise dictatorship over the white nation with an eye to civilizing it and cleansing it of its parasitic tendencies.

The combination of APSP positions discussed so far brings us to another point. How is it that the white support group for the APSP answers to a single-nationality party, all the while that APSP criticizes other parties for their social compositions? Are the Euro-American people oppressing only Black people? No!

It is true that white supremacy is a white problem as the APSP says. That white supremacy does not regard just Blacks. This form of APSP organizing is incorrect and it smacks of a bid to enter the neocolonial kingdom with white backers. It

reminds us of the exclusive clubs that Clinton and other ruling class people belonged to that did not accept Blacks, except after "progress" and only once the Blacks were sponsored in by whites.

On the one hand, the APSP tells us that 94% of Blacks are proletarian. That alone is a cover for the Black labor aristocracy and middle-classes who virtually don't exist according to APSP. On the other hand, the APSP is telling the world "the road to socialism is painted Black." This line has the same end result of the line of the national bourgeoisie: ignore class struggle within the nation and, more significantly, rely on those mixed class forces to get to socialism. In this context, the white support group for the APSP is the perfect shoehorn to get the Black bourgeoisie into the white empire shoe.

There are only two correct ways to use the white revolutionary people in revolutionary struggle. Either the whites belong to a multi-national party that has an anti-imperialist line dedicated to the international proletariat or the whites form a group that supports a multinational organization of the oppressed nationalities. Anything else will amount to using white people to gain entry into the empire by one particular oppressed nationality.

The class position of the APSP is that of the better sectors of the national bourgeoisie, sectors MIM regards as an ally in the struggle, especially at this stage in the revolution. APSP is not a clear leader of the oppressed Black people and Black proletariat if there is a Black proletariat for the following reasons. First, it omits the issue of Third World superexploitation from its overall discussion of the Black working class. Left to itself, the APSP would paint itself a Black road to capitalism and leave behind the issue of reparations to the Third World.

Secondly, the APSP does not concern itself much with real-world socialist experiences in China, Albania and so on, because the APSP currently is consciously or unconsciously set up to use the international proletariat in struggle to achieve the ends of the Black national bourgeoisie. After the revolution against imperialism, the APSP does not care much about issues like the Cultural Revolution, class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Prior to the revolution, the APSP does not evince much interest in feminism, the advocacy of women's equality, either. The lack of concern for these issues is indicative of the outlook of the national bourgeoisie, not the Black proletariat. Like AIDS victims searching for the most effective vaccine or other treatment, the international proletariat is searching for the most effective antidote to capitalism, and its genuine spokespeople can never take the issue of class struggle under socialism after the revolution lightly.

SOCIALISM

An example of how lightly the APSP takes the question of socialism is as follows:

"What we have is a capitalist world economy. It has never not been a capitalist world economy as long as it has existed, notwithstanding the revolutions in the Soviet Union in 1917 or in China in 1949, etc. What actually happened in 1917 was that some socialists took power in Russia, but there was no socialist revolution in Russia.

"For those who find the palpitating nostalgic need to debate the damn question, the evidence is there. ... If socialism existed in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev could not be doing the shit that he is doing right now. ...

"The basis for the overthrow of capitalism is not a contest between white workers and white bosses, who actually constitute the minority of the people in the world."(9)

Here as elsewhere, the APSP supports a popular view in scholarship that there is a single world-system of capitalism. Elsewhere, Yeshitela can be found supporting the work of underdevelopment theorists and Immanuel Wallerstein in particular.

MIM disagrees with the world systems theorists on the question of socialism, because they think it has never existed and we at MIM are quite certain it did in China, Albania and Russia at one time. Ironically, Wallerstein and hence Yeshitela echo the Trotskyist position that it is impossible to build socialism in one country. Yeshitela does not believe socialism in the world depends on Europe, the way the Trotskyists do, but substituting the Third World for Europe

still leaves Stalin, Mao and Hoxha as leaders of non-socialist societies.

According to this position, we shouldn't care if capitalists or Mao Zedong rule China. In contrast, MIM believes there is a big difference between Mao and the Guomindang. That difference is the difference between socialism and capitalism.

Nor is it necessary to speak of a world-system as the APSP does to blame capitalism for "the poverty of the Sudan" or the "slums of Delhi in India."(10) It is correct that there are many more poor people living in capitalist societies than rich people. Sudan, India and most of the Third World have been capitalist or capitalist with semi-feudal remnants, but that does not mean China under Mao was not socialist!

The problem with world systems theory is that it is good for some long range historical questions. One thousand years from now, we will look back on the 20th century and say it was a capitalist century. In this sense the world system approach is correct, but for some medium-run questions, it is not so helpful. To get to the socialist era, we need to solve some short-run and medium-run problems. We need theories

The class position of the APSP is that of the better sectors of the national bourgeoisie

and analyses to separate Mao from Chiang Kai-shek and Clarence Thomas from George Jackson. It doesn't do any good to say a society run by George Jackson is the same as a society run by Clarence Thomas — part of a world capitalist system. Mao Zedong in particular showed us that who rules makes a big difference.

While the APSP is correct that the Russian Revolution in particular has been a rallying point of white nation chauvinists like the Trotskyists, it is not very serious of the APSP to simply dismiss the Russian Revolution just because of what some opportunist fruitflies hovering over Russian history want to say. By that reasoning we would dismiss the Black Panther Party too, because of what a bunch of "punks" say about it now that Huey Newton is dead. In addition, the APSP totally overlooks the case of Albania, a small country of poor, white people that went quite far into socialism, especially considering what a weak position it was in.

APSP also makes very dismissive comments that do not encourage a very thoroughgoing study of important issues: "We often found ourselves at odds with self-defined revolutionary 'Maoists,' 'Trotskyists,' 'Marxist-Leninists,' etc., whose starting point was inevitably a quote by some dead revolutionary intellectual or another." (11) At another point APSP discourages readers from "cramming" themselves full of information about 1917 or 1949 — the Russian and Chinese revolutions. (12)

This kind of contempt for history (a selective contempt for socialist history we should add because APSP is much better about African history prior to and during colonialism as we would expect from the national bourgeoisie) would never be found in the medical profession. When someone is dying from AIDS or trying a new medicine to fight AIDS, the medical community wants to observe the course of the disease and see which drugs slowed the disease, even if the patient eventually dies. We must take an equally serious approach to studying the fight against capitalism, imperialism and militarism.

It is a characteristic of the national bourgeoisie of any oppressed country that it cannot achieve its goals without mobilizing the working classes to bring it to power. The national bourgeoisie is too weak to bring down imperialism by itself and needs to use some rhetoric attractive to the working classes. On the other hand, the national bourgeoisie wishes to mobilize the working classes just enough to overthrow the imperialists but not the national bourgeoisie and capitalism itself. Hence, the national bourgeoisie must vacillate between mobilizing the working classes and putting forward a capitalist agenda.

The APSP touts a lot of revolutionary and progressive figures in history without ever going all the way with any lessons in the fight for socialism. Hence, it advises the people against

studying socialism too much or other such "nostalgic" things. When it mentions that it follows Marx, Lenin and Mao it says, them "also." It's always a half-hearted reference.

We can't be surprised that the national bourgeoisie has a pretty good analysis of the white working class, which is allied with the imperialists the national bourgeoisie wants to overthrow. At the same time, the issue of the history of Soviet social-imperialism and the restoration of capitalism in China just don't matter too much to the national bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie doesn't want the masses to be learning too many lessons that could be used against the national bourgeoisie later. That's OK. The national bourgeoisie of the Black nation is forced by circumstances to do a lot of good things right now because the imperialists cut them out of the action.

SOCIAL BASE, SCIENCE AND MULTINATIONAL ORGANIZING

"We're trying to build a movement based on science. You have to be tired of these emotional roller coasters that don't inform you. We are building this movement that will allow North Americans or white people to participate on the right side of history for the first time." (The Burning Spear, June/July, 1991, p. 5)

The national bourgeoisie must vacillate between mobilizing the working classes and putting forward a capitalist agenda.

An example of the APSP's contempt for serious issues is the APSP's quick characterization of other organizations. In "Reparations Now!" Penny Hess writes off Sojourner Truth Organization and May 19th with a sentence or two about whites being equal with Blacks as freedom-fighters in these groups. Hess doesn't tell us anything about the programs of these groups or if they see themselves this way. It amounts to saying the

organizations are integrated and hence they are wrong. That is not to say that MIM agrees with these groups either, but political opponents should always be used to sharpen the scientific abilities of our comrades. The repeated attempts to write off groups because of this or that social nature of its membership is a way to put down the scientific abilities of the masses. It's saying they can't figure out politics, but they can understand that May 19th must be wrong because it is a multinational effort (which it might deny; we don't know). With this approach, the APSP demonstrates hypocrisy with regard to its claims to be employing a scientific method.

APSP takes this tack with other organizations as well. Admitting that it doesn't know much about its differences with All-African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP), the APSP says that the A-APRP doesn't do much or publish theory. At the same time, it complains "about the A-APRP's organizing of students exclusively, rather than going into the community." (13)

The ironic effect of this approach to issues — attacking who the organizers are instead of what they are saying — will

be to undercut the serious analysis that the APSP does do. The APSP can publish newspapers and newspapers full of serious theory and analysis, but if it spreads the attitude that the history of socialism is not important or that you can know an organization's politics with a sentence or two, the APSP will also find its own members not reading or understanding the APSP's own literature.

On this and other questions, the original Black Panthers were better than the APSP today. Hence MIM distributes the Black Panther literature and emphasizes that as most advanced on the Black national question to this day, particularly the writings from 1966 to 1970. Here is how far Huey Newton went to debunk the kind of ad hominem attacks that the APSP makes:

"If you are a *dialectical materialist*, however, Marx's racism does not matter. You do not believe in the conclusions of one person but in the validity of a mode of thought; and we in the Party, as dialectical materialists, recognize Karl Marx as one of the great contributors to that mode of thought. Whether or not Marx was a racist is irrelevant and immaterial to whether or not the system of thinking he helped develop delivers truths about processes in the material world."(14)

Here is Newton saying that the truth doesn't depend on if you're a racist or not. Two plus two is four even if David Duke says it. In fact, if you start denying what David Duke says on those rare occasions when he is correct, just because he is white and a fascist white supremacist, pretty soon you won't know and the people you are "educating" won't know that two plus two is four.

Aside from this problem of confusing analysis with emotion, there have been those within Maoism who believe that students must be the first. In other words, which social group will take up revolutionary consciousness first is not an easy question like the APSP makes out and the APSP should not be criticizing people solely on the basis that they work mostly among students. Again what is important is where the truth is accepted. Mao himself said that students are always the first to enter the revolutionary historical stage, whether we like it or not. George Jackson of the Black Panthers said as much about making mechanical assumptions about social base:

"The breakdown of establishment-conditioning usually occurs first at the university level. Students refuse to accept the lie that our exploitation of the world's people is actually beneficial to them. They begin to refuse their share of the spoils. Huey Newton and Bobby Seale left the campus to form the Black Panther Party. The Students for a Democratic Society gave birth to the Weatherman."(15)

If George Jackson believed that students were the first to see through the system, we should not be so dismissive of an organization working with students. It is not a ridiculous idea to try to keep up with students.

George Jackson went further to stick it to people who believe you can tell the politics of an organization (especially small ones) simply by looking at its social character. According to Jackson, the system gained its support from the lower strata that had small demands that the U.S. imperialists could meet through co-optation. These lower strata served as a reserve for imperialism Jackson called a "new pig class." Contrary to what one might expect, "Above this class, in the loosely defined petit-bourgeois level and upper-middle-class professionals and students, we can find some very real revolutionary consciousness!"(16)

**'If you are a
dialectical
materialist,
however, Marx's
racism does
not matter.'**

— Huey Newton

Now we know George Jackson had no sympathy with the upper-middle-class, but he must have noticed something in his long service in revolutionary struggle that made him say that. Hence, we don't think George Jackson would have had much patience for organizations that dismiss other organizations with a few words about "students" or "petit-bourgeois" social base.

Today, now that revolutionary forces are smaller than in Jackson's day, the issue is all the more complicated. We are still in the stage of finding Huey Newtons to set up a pole to undo the intellectual brainwashing of the imperialists on the people.

There is nothing wrong with taking the position that communist organizations should not be integrated, but if the APSP is going to do that it should clarify what it is saying through history, not wishful thinking. If it does, it will find that most of the revolutions that it draws inspiration from were in fact multinational. Russia, China, Eritrea and Vietnam were all multinational efforts. The most successful revolution in Latin American history so far — the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP) — has also been multinational. (See MIM's other essays on this subject.) At the beginning of the Vietnamese struggle, Vietnamese comrades were involved with the French Communist Party. For that matter, people such as Zhou Enlai, Zhu De and many other key leaders in the Chinese Communist Party's history also cut their teeth in France. Some writers have gone so far as to show that the Russian Revolution was initially based out of Finland and other European countries. Hence, to condemn multinational efforts is to condemn most of the social revolutions in modern world history just like the counterrevolutionaries do.

That is not to say that the form internationalist revolution takes in North America should not be nationalist revolutions. It's just that MIM does not condemn the multinational efforts if they are genuinely anti-imperialist (nor does it condemn single nationality movements that are genuinely anti-imperialist)

and MIM sees itself as being in the early stages as in Vietnam, China or Russia. For practical reasons we are multinational now and for practical reasons we aim toward an alliance of separate revolutionary nationalist struggles led by separate national Maoist parties in the long-run. Whatever form the struggle takes, the goal is the same, the destruction of imperialism. History shows that among genuine revolutionary scientists there can be no begrudging mutual aid. Those with correct proletarian internationalist bearings will have no trouble circulating amongst any nations organizing to defeat imperialism.

BLACK PANTHER PARTY

The APSP boasts in its membership some former Black Panthers and not surprisingly the APSP has a relatively good take on the Black Panthers. These days it is very popular to paint the Black Panthers as reformists, maybe independent welfare-workers at best. The masses are being absolutely bombarded by the corporate media and Hollywood with all kinds of crap revising the history of the Black Panthers.

Omalu Yeshitela correctly calls the sell-outs and rewriters of history "punks": "The punk is Bobby Seale. The punk is Rush, who quit."(17) Also included is David Hilliard and let's not forget Eldridge Cleaver, who toured with the Moonies in the early 1980s calling for all foreigners to be expelled from the United States.

The APSP also demonstrates awareness that the Black Panther Party was a Maoist party, while denying it at the same time:

"although the Black Panther Party was very much influenced by the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party as espoused by Chairman Mao Zedong, for most of its very brief existence the Black Panther Party was an ideological mix, containing several different revolutionary ideological currents within it."(18)

This tentativeness of the APSP in acknowledging the BPP's Maoism is part of the vacillation of the national bourgeoisie we mentioned earlier.

It is true that the Black Panthers grew quite quickly and came to encompass many people unconsciously drawn to the Black Panthers' Maoism. Yet, we must read what Huey Newton said when he was politically sane and representing the ascendant revolutionary struggle and we must read what he told us to read or we haven't understood the Panthers. TO THIS DAY.

The crime of Mao Zedong and Huey Newton was that they were not reformist enough. They were successful in fighting imperialism. Today, the bourgeoisie desperately wishes to go beyond smashing the Panthers to smash the very things they stood for — using Hollywood, psychiatry and lecture-circuit fees. We on the other hand have the job of regaining the ground that the original Black Panthers captured, starting with acknowledging the truth — that nothing in the Black nation since has surpassed the original Black Panthers and the strug-

gle of the masses they unleashed.

If we go back, we will find that Huey Newton told people in his speeches they needed only two things — the Red Book (Quotations from Chairman Mao) and the gun and he had his audience repeat these directions back to him just to make sure they got it. Today, some people still don't get it.

If you haven't read Mao Zedong, you don't realize all the ways in which Huey Newton was a Maoist. You probably didn't know that he titled a book after a saying of Mao's and opened the preface with a reworded saying from Mao Zedong. It would also be possible to miss that the rules of the Black Panthers came from the Chinese Communist Party.

Before China's Revolution in 1949, China wasn't even a country. It was a disintegrating monarchy with warlords ruling their individual fiefdoms in China. Japan took over large parts of China and set up colonial governments. The whole time, the people were starving, doing drugs and living to an average age of 35. China was a mess! The Chinese people were messed up by the oppressor landlords and colonialists! Yet, with Mao Zedong Thought, China threw out the Japanese and defeated U.S. backed neocolonial forces and liberated the largest country in the world with inferior weapons, technology and initial resources. No, Mao Zedong was not god; he was better. God never liberated a country. Mao Zedong led actual things that we can all learn from and this is something Huey Newton knew, because he cared profoundly for the oppressed people. He didn't want any phony weapons in struggle. He wanted something powerful and something that works and he reached for Maoism. The result was the most successful Black revolutionary movement in North America this century.

How often does Maoism have to prove itself before people study it? Jonathan Jackson was calling the United States a "paper tiger" like Mao did and with George Jackson's approval. George Jackson acknowledged Peking in China as his beacon, not Atlanta or Freetown.(19) Jackson referred to himself as a "Marxist-Leninist-Maoist-Fanoniist" at a time when Mao himself was still saying just "Marxism-Leninism." George Jackson, a general and Field Marshall of the military of the Black Panther Party said, "I am an extremist, a communist (not communistic, a communist), and I must be destroyed or I will join my comrades in the only communist party in the country, the Black Panther Party."(20) And now that Bobby Seale and other sell-outs have sold out, they try to tell us the Black Panthers weren't communist, never mind Maoist. Let's get a clue from these sell-outs what to avoid!

Mao Zedong

was not god;

he was better.

God never

liberated

a country.

Today the New People's Army in the Philippines is returning to its founding principles. Maoism. The PCP has had the most successful revolution in Latin America. Its principles are Maoist. Life should be more complicated than that, but it isn't for communists.

Ironically, the APSP has picked up something from the anarchist white left that Huey Newton wrote about in "Huey Newton Talks to the Movement about the Black Panther Party, Cultural Nationalism, SNCC, Liberals and White Revolutionaries." In one word, what the APSP picked up was "doubt." The APSP knows of Maoism and other socialist experiences. It doubts them all, takes advantage of ignorance

Having stated these differences with the APSP, there is a lot to learn from the APSP literature on reparations owed to the Black nation, particularly on the calculations regarding slavery.

on the international Maoist movement and sometimes even promotes the Black labor aristocracy's view that Maoism is some kind of white "communist" conspiracy. In the place of Maoism or even Huey Newtonism the APSP offers us "Yeshitelism," as if this "Yeshitelism" has surpassed what the original Black Panthers had to say. MIM says it is not possible to surpass the original Black Panthers without understanding them. What they said about the Black national question remains more relevant to our time than anything said since that time — something that no one can help partly because the tide of the masses' struggle has receded since the time of the original Black Panther Party.

We do learn some lessons from the BPP similar to what the APSP says. First of all, in North America, multinational parties may not be the way to go, since the BPP has proved the success of its method. Secondly, there is no reason to deny that Black people and other oppressed nationalities will liberate themselves.

The difference between the MIM and the APSP on these questions can be summed up very simply as the fact that MIM regards the BPP's original line and analysis as unsurpassed. Where MIM does criticize the BPP, it is mostly in connection with its demise, because we don't buy the way that the sell-outs have summed up that organization and someone has to sum up what happened. At some point, we hope there is a Maoist Internationalist Party (MIP) of the Black nation that surpasses the BPP. We are working toward that, but we must say with all objectivity at this point we all study the international communist movement and we study the BPP, but we must nail down some detailed questions of theory and practice on the Black nation before we can regain lost ground and

move forward from there. Without an honest evaluation of our movement's weaknesses, and the relative superiority of the original BPP, we will be criticizing what is correct and supporting what is incorrect.

LAND

The APSP takes an interesting position on land. It speaks supportively of First Nation land claims and even goes so far as internationalists to say that Black claims for land can put Blacks at odds with the First Nations. "Africa is the national homeland,"(21) says APSP. While many Black activists seek to deny their connection to Africa and emphasize the "American" in "Afro-American," the APSP has said, "My struggle isn't for integration."(22)

In fact, the best part of the APSP line is its position regarding reparations to the African people in Africa. This is something clearly in the interests of the international proletariat and not just the Black national bourgeoisie.

On the land question, the APSP opposes the Black Belt thesis and correctly points out that conditions have changed considerably since the time that the Communist Party called for a Black nation in the South. The Black population has migrated from rural areas in the South into cities and sharecropping is hardly significant economically anymore.

The change in the conditions of Black people has left the Black Belt thesis outdated according to APSP. "Our struggle is not for land in the fashion that Ray O'Light puts it, especially not today when the overwhelming majority of our people have been proletarianized."(23)

Rejecting the Black Belt thesis still upheld by some organizations in the United States allows the APSP to "provide us with the ability to mobilize every African in this country where he or she is located."(24) MIM agrees that the Black Belt nation thesis is just not as relevant as it used to be to Blacks.

"The Republic of New Afrika, with its mythological nation in Mississippi someplace, is all out of place. It don't even have a problem in Los Angeles. It considers the people in Los Angeles and other cities to be 'refugees.' That's what it says. The so-called Republic of New Afrika is down in Mississippi some damn place. In addition, it is a petty-bourgeois organization. It does not define ideologically that the key to revolution is the African working class."(25)

MIM would not be so harsh on the RNA, who according to documents in the Black Panthers Speak, the Black Panthers thought should take a crack at it their way. History shows nations forming on territories sometimes lost decades and centuries ago. The Black Belt thesis is not entirely farfetched. If the First Nations allow it (and so far the most advanced indigenous people we have talked to encourage it), much of the Black Belt will be part of the liberated Black nation along with other territories outside the Black Belt in the North.

In connection to the land question, the APSP also seems to have a comfortable grip on opposing economism, not just on

the white working class issue, but on Black economic issues. "Reparations is not just cash," says their pamphlet, "Black People and the U.S. Economy: Our Case for Reparations." The real issue is community control — not welfare handouts, not real estate and not cash. (26)

If not careful, economist demands for land not situated within a revolutionary strategy could end up pushing things backward as the APSP points out. In South Africa, the whites put Black people on lands known as Bantustans, the 13% of the land that is the lowest quality in South Africa. (27)

CONCLUSION

The APSP's lack of seriousness regarding the experience of socialism in the world and the neglect of the issue of the Black labor aristocracy, is evidence that the APSP is simply paying rhetorical lipservice to the international proletariat to use it for the purposes of the Black national bourgeoisie. People who are serious about socialism want to know what has worked and hasn't worked in socialist movement history.

Having stated these differences with the APSP, it should also be stated that there is a lot to learn from the APSP literature on reparations owed to the Black nation, particularly on the calculations regarding slavery. MIM recommends "Stolen Black Labor: The Political Economy of Domestic Colonialism," because MIM itself does not carry any literature as precise on certain questions regarding the political economy of the Civil War period. From practical organizing experience, MIM has learned that it is valuable to listen to the Black national bourgeoisie for information and analyses that might be squelched by the imperialists. At the same time, the party of the proletariat must take a stance independent of the national bourgeoisie and not fail to criticize it where appropriate.

Research help from MC49.

MIM welcomes submissions or responses from the APSP for publication in subsequent issues of MIM Theory.

Notes:

1. Burning Spear, March, 1991, p. 15.
2. Omali Yeshitela, assisted by Rick Ayers and David Barber, "Stolen Black Labor: The Political Economy of Domestic Colonialism," 1983, p. 11.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-5.
4. Omali Yeshitela, "The Struggle for Bread, Peace and Black Power," 1981.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
6. Burning Spear, March 1991, p. 3.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
8. Omali Yeshitela, "Stolen Black Labor," 1983, p. 103.
9. Burning Spear, March 1991, p. K.
10. See Burning Spear discussion of "failure of socialism," March, 1991, p. J.
11. Burning Spear, July 1990, p. 13.
12. "Black People and the U.S. Economy: Our Case for Reparations," 1982, p. ii.
13. Burning Spear, June/July 1991, p. 3.
14. Huey Newton in *In Search of Common Ground* W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 1973, p. 27.
15. George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye*. Bantam Books: New York, 1972, p. 77.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
17. Burning Spear, June/July, 1991, p. 11.
18. Burning Spear, July, 1990, p. 13.
19. Jackson, *Blood in My Eye*, pp. 4, 10.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 151.
21. Omali Yeshitela, "The Struggle for Bread, Peace and Black Power," 1981, p. 48.
22. Burning Spear, June/July, 1991, p. 5.
23. Omali Yeshitela, "The Struggle for Bread, Peace and Black Power," 1981, p. 47.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
25. Burning Spear, June/July, 1991, p. 11.
26. "Black People and the U.S. Economy: Our Case for Reparations," 1982, pp., 75, 77, 94.
27. Omali Yeshitela, "Stolen Black Labor," p. 95.

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