

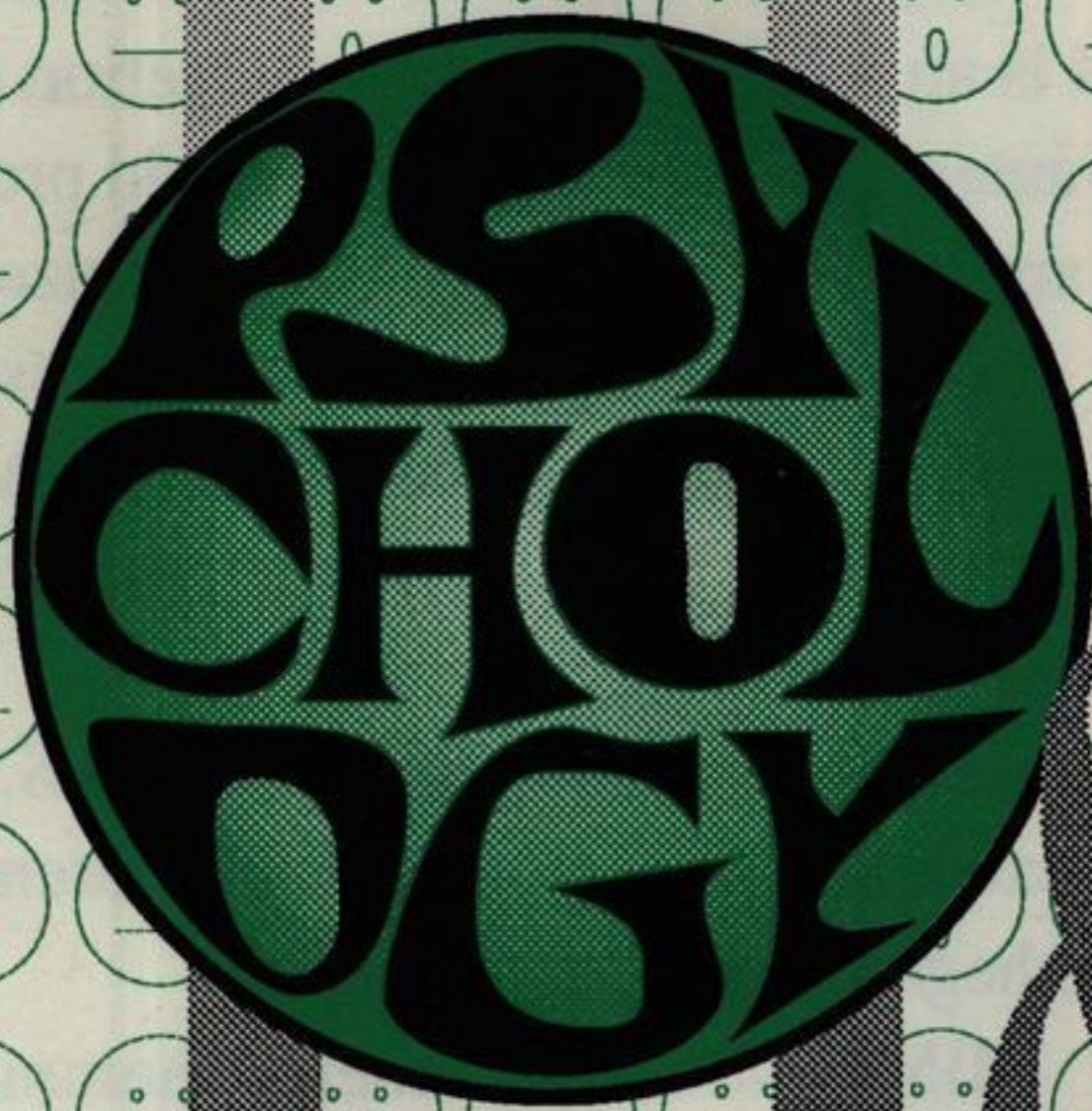
MIM THEORY

Number 9
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THE OFFICIAL THEORETICAL JOURNAL
OF THE MAOIST INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT



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IMPERIALISM



Therapy, Suicide, Child Abuse, I.Q., Drugs, Socialist Methods ...

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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, "RC" means RAIL Comrade, a member of the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League, which is led by MIM.

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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 as the U.S. 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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Psychology & Imperialism

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WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

MIM's PROGRAM, OCTOBER 1995

1. WE WANT COMMUNISM.

We believe that anyone who opposes all oppression—power of groups over groups—is a communist. This includes opposition to national oppression, class oppression and gender oppression.

2. WE WANT SOCIALISM.

We believe that socialism is the path to communism. We believe that the current dictatorship of the bourgeoisie oppresses the world's majority. We believe that socialism—the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry—is a necessary step towards a world without inequality or dictatorship—a communist world. We uphold the USSR under Lenin and Stalin (1917-1953) and China under Mao (1949-1976) as models in this regard.

3. WE WANT REVOLUTIONARY ARMED STRUGGLE.

We believe that the oppressors will not give up their power without a fight. Ending oppression is only possible by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle. We believe, however, that armed struggle in the imperialist countries is a serious strategic mistake until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless. Revolution will become a reality for North America as the U.S. military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony.

"We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun."—Mao Zedong

4. WE WANT ORGANIZATION.

We believe that democratic-centralism, the system of unified application of majority decisions, is necessary to defeat the oppressors. This system includes organization, leadership, discipline and hierarchy. The oppressors use these weapons, and we should, too. By building a disciplined revolutionary communist vanguard party, we follow in the tradition of comrades Lenin, Mao and Huey Newton.

5. WE WANT INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF AND FOR THE OPPRESSED.

We believe that the oppressed need independent media to build public opinion for socialist revolution. We believe that the oppressed need independent institutions to provide land, bread, housing, education, medical care, clothing, justice and peace. We believe that the best independent institution of all is a self-reliant socialist government.

6. WE WANT CONTINUOUS REVOLUTION.

We believe that class struggle continues under socialism. We believe that under socialism, the danger exists for a new bourgeoisie to arise within the communist party itself. We believe that these new oppressors will restore capitalism unless they are stopped. We believe that the bourgeoisie seized power in the USSR 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. We believe that China's Great Proletarian Cultural

Revolution (1966-1976) is the farthest advance towards communism in human history, because it mobilized millions of people against the restoration of capitalism.

7. WE WANT A UNITED FRONT AGAINST IMPERIALISM.

We believe that the imperialists are currently waging a hot war—a World War III—against the world's oppressed nations, including the U.S. empire's internal colonies. We seek to unite all who can be united under proletarian and feminist leadership against imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy.

We believe that the imperialist-country working classes are primarily a pro-imperialist labor aristocracy at this time. Likewise, we believe that the biological-women of the imperialist countries are primarily a gender aristocracy. Thus, while we recruit individuals from these and other reactionary groups to work against their class, national and gender interests, we do not seek strategic unity with them. In fact, we believe that the imperialist-country working-classes and imperialist-country biological-women, like the bourgeoisies and petit-bourgeoisies, owe reparations to the international proletariat and peasantry. As such, one of the first strategic steps MIM will take upon winning state power will be to open the borders.

We believe that socialism in the imperialist countries will require the dictatorship of the *international* proletariat and that the imperialist-country working-classes will need to be on the receiving end of this dictatorship.

8. WE WANT NEW DEMOCRACY FOR THE OPPRESSED NATIONS.

WE WANT POWER FOR THE OPPRESSED NATIONS TO DETERMINE THEIR DESTINIES.

We believe that oppressed people will not be free until they are able to determine their destinies. We look forward to the day when oppressed people will live without imperialist police terror and will learn to speak their mind without fear of the consequences from the oppressor. When this day comes, meaningful plebiscites can be held in which the peoples will decide for themselves if they want their own separate nation-states or some other arrangement.

9. WE WANT WORLD REVOLUTION.

We believe it is our duty to support Marxism-Leninism-Maoism everywhere, though our principal task is to build public opinion and independent institutions in preparation for Maoist revolution in North America. The imperialists think and act globally—we must do the same.

10. WE WANT POLITICS IN COMMAND.

We believe that correct tactics flow from correct strategies, which flow from a correct ideological and political line. We believe that the fight against imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy goes hand-in-hand with the fight against revisionism, chauvinism, and opportunism.

"The correctness or otherwise of the ideological and political line decides everything. When the Party's line is correct, then everything will come its way. If it has no followers, then it can have followers; if it has no guns, then it can have guns; if it has no political power, then it can have political power."—Mao Zedong

Editor's Introduction

In 1992, MIM published "Abolish Psychology," in the second issue of MIM Theory. There we argued against the practice of attributing human behavior to individual mental "traits" instead of to material circumstances and conditions. In the years since, we have developed this thinking in two ways. First, we tried to find ways to deal with problems of individual behavior, motivation, depression, and so on in a practical way as part of the struggle against imperialism and patriarchy. Second, we expanded our historical and theoretical treatment to cover mental health practice in socialist China, a critique of "radical feminist" therapy, and so on. This issue is the result of that dual process of developing theory and practice. In it, we advance and deepen the work we began to report on in 1992.

We never want to take our focus off the goal of overthrowing imperialism and patriarchy. As soon as anyone starts to treat mental health in theory or practice as a way to *adjust* to the oppressive and alienating status quo, then the battle is lost. Prozac or other mind-numbing drugs are a great way of coping with parasitism if you have no aspirations to achieving humanity and ending oppression. But, like the search for better sex, that approach represents the adaptation of the privileged, not a challenge to the system of oppression.

Still, as one testimonial from a formerly-suicidal revolutionary that we publish in this issue illustrates, the systems of oppression take their toll at many levels. If people are so depressed or suicidal that they can't do revolutionary work, it doesn't do much good to put off dealing with it until socialism. In this issue, looking at the Chinese practice, our own developing experience, and learning from various critiques of mainstream psychology, we begin to find the kind of stopgap answers to, on the one hand, get people up and active in the revolutionary struggle, and on the other hand to develop the theory we need to deal with these problems as they extend into a future socialist era.

The issue is complicated, and our answers here are somewhat tentative. It is easy to see that psychology is used to legitimize the oppression of internal colonies with U.S. borders and oppressed nations around the world. Everything — from "IQ" to "crime" and poverty itself — is blamed on the "psychology" of the oppressed. This extends from the macro-psychology of culture through behavior to the micro-psychology of "genetic" or "chemical" causes of individual behavior. But, does the practice of psychology oppress the oppressors, such as rich white women? These people may waste their lives in a chemically-induced stupor at the "suggestion" or coercion of patriarchal medical authorities. Young white revolutionaries may be medicated or committed while their oppressed-nation comrades are incarcerated or executed.

But MIM concludes that the practice of psychology among the oppressors, while rendering lives even more empty than they already are in human terms, nevertheless represents the decadence of a parasitic culture and lifestyle. It is the paradox of oppressor cultures that many of the parasites themselves face empty lives which seem out of their individual control. Though most will not, some of these may choose class, gender and nation suicide and join the forces of revolution. This potential is especially promising among youth, who are often crushed under the weight of both outright patriarchal abuse and psychology at the same time. The youth who survive this double-whammy are potential revolutionaries and valuable assets to the struggle.

Like cocaine, psychology under imperialism means different things at the same time: death to the oppressed, a plaything for some members of oppressor nations, and an alienating force, motivating for some potential defectors from imperialism and patriarchy. In the hands of imperialism and patriarchy, it is a weapon against the oppressed, and a symbol of all that which revolutionaries hope to eliminate in the struggle to lift society into a socialist and communist future.

Note on Terminology: Mental Illness

The first wave of anti-psychology theorists, led in the middle of this century by libertarians such as Thomas Szasz, argued that since mental illnesses lack biological or medical foundations that can be diagnosed by physicians, then mental illnesses should not be referred to as "diseases" or "illness." Unlike physical diseases, they argued, mental diseases are not "real."

This argument is appealing to radicals for obvious reasons. Reactionary research into the supposed genetic connections between intelligence and violence, for example, demonstrates the genocidal consequences of the bourgeoisie defining behaviors as biologically or genetically based. But in correctly disavowing the causality of and biology/genetics in complex human behavior, Szasz and his successors both mystified the concept of disease and medicine and ignored the need for revolutionary change in an alienating society.

Szasz, an important rightist critic of psychology as it was practiced in the 1970s, objected to the term "mental illness" in this way:

"Traditionally, psychiatrists have regarded mental illness as a phenomenon apart from and independent of the social context in which it occurred. The symptomatic manifestations of diseases of the body, for instance diphtheria or syphilis, are indeed independent of the sociopolitical conditions in which they occur. A diphtheritic membrane was the same and looked the same whether it occurred in a patient in Czarist Russia or Victorian England."

Yes, psychiatrists have thought this way, as have medical doctors. Both are wrong. Like mental illnesses, diphtheria does not exist separate from the society in which it occurs. The disease is contagious, after all. And its effects vary. A person who gets diphtheria in a First World country (unlikely) has access to treatment that prevents any permanent harm. The disease has a very different meaning for someone in the slums of a Third World country, who is likely to die. Only certain social contexts yield diphtheria and its manifestations are also determined by the social context. To divorce real social phenomena from their circumstances is to render them meaningless, whether discussing diphtheria or mental illness.

One materialist distinction between diphtheria and mental illness would be that diphtheria can be combated through the use of technology and advanced health care, whereas mental illnesses are combated through social and political change. Acute infectious diseases will not be eradicated from the world under imperialism, but safe enclaves can be created for those who have the benefits of technology. There is no historical precedent for such safe havens free of neuroses without thorough social change.

The Amerikan Psychological Association (APA) no longer uses the term "mental illness," largely in response to the critiques

of Szasz's ilk. They decide these sorts of things by a vote among their members. Now the APA uses the word "disorder," which clears it of the biology criticism, but has its own problems politically. After all, to have a disorder means to not follow the rules as defined by people in power. And these things are politically defined. Homosexuality was once considered a disorder by the APA, now it is not. Radicals do not follow the rules of the bourgeoisie, and the labeling of mental illness and disorder has certainly been used against revolutionaries.

MIM criticizes the institution of psychology — using a variety of terms — but does not deny that many people do in fact have problems getting through the day in an alienating society; suicide is the example we explore here in greatest depth. But rather than insisting that such people are not "really sick" (and thereby mystifying physical illness), we fight for revolutionary change and the creation of a society in which groups of people do not oppress other groups.

Having made these criticisms of commonly used terms, MIM does not have great alternatives. Kitzinger and Perkins use "social disability," and their arguments are interesting enough (see the review of *Changing Our Minds* in this issue). But for the purposes of this volume, MIM will use the word "disease" at times, as the Chinese did, or even "disorder." Specific disorders described use the bourgeois definition for the word, while recognizing causes and solutions as social where the APA would not necessarily agree.

Some critics of naming problems "psychological" problems as "diseases" are concerned about losing the ability to moralize their victims. Again, this criticism is an incorrect line on medicine in general as well as when applied to psychology. It is true that Amerikan mass culture loves to blame everything on biology and genetics. Both right and "left" use this argument. Men and women act differently because their brains work differently in accordance with caveman gender roles, says *Newsweek*. Gay men are genetically pre-determined to be gay, so sexuality is set in DNA stone, say liberals. "Biological" causes are mystified in the culture as being more "real" than social causes — and their solutions more "real" as well.

Maoists are not interested in blaming those who suffer from any problem — physical or mental — and giving a sermon instead of help. Maoists hold people accountable for improving their condition, whether they suffer from self-induced problems such as lack of exercise, which hinders political work, or from ambiguously caused problems like alcoholism, or from socially caused problems like suicidal depression. (Imperialism has perpetrators, too, but the oppressed are accountable for their own liberation.) This means having compassion for people and challenging them to improve while providing avenues to help make that possible.

Letters to MIM Theory

Anorexia As Body Control

Dear MIM,

It was with great interest that I read the book review of *Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a*



Modern Disease [Joan Jacobs Brumberg, 1988] in MIM Theory 2/3. Its author correctly discredits biomedical and psychological explanations for anorexia, but does not fully develop the socio-

economic explanation to realize its revolutionary ramifications.

Women's longing for power is key to understanding anorexia. As the review noted, in the 19th century United States, "starvation was one socially acceptable way for middle class young women to rebel against parental control." (1) Women who feel disempowered seek out whatever control they can. Today's situation is not as different as the author suggests. Anorexia is a way that many young women oppressed by a patriarchal society exercise control over one small aspect of their lives they feel they can control: their bodies. (Their oppression is relative, of course, given their white-nation First World status.) The beginning phases of anorexia, when young women see the changes they have induced in their bodies' form, can feel very empowering. They are making a concrete change out of sheer will. That they choose this particular concrete change is indicative of their culture. They have been trained by the bourgeois media that their bodies are malleable.

The review condemns "writers [who] have made glib comparisons between religious fasting by women and anorexia today." True, suggesting such parallels indicate a biological basis for the behavior which is blatantly unfounded (and also false). However, the analogy is not empty.

Take, for example, the situation of women in India. Economically, they are not given the opportunity to develop self-reliance. They are conditioned to ignore politics, are harshly condemned if they so much as contribute a nod to their husbands' comments in that realm.

Religion is the one milieu into which women are welcomed. In addition to lengthy daily rituals before idols, pilgrimages, and meditation, they do fast. One festival calls on followers of Jainism (a strict, revised Hinduism with tens of millions of followers in Gujarat and Bombay) to neither eat

nor drink anything except freshly boiled water for nine days. Most of the participants are women, of course, because they have the time and energy to "spare" for such endeavors. Women are made effectively non-political because they are trained the one thing that they *can* do is strive for the purification of the soul. This is an impossible ideal, of course, so it can take up their whole existence and excludes them from any other activities.

The beauty ideal in Amerika is not so all-powerful that it becomes the only goal most women strive for. It is, however, one goal presented that many women believe they can and should reach. Like Indian women who channel all their creative energies into the service of Lord Krishna, many Amerikan women channel theirs into service to the beauty ideal.

The revolutionary potential of this phenomenon is not hard to grasp. Young women feel disempowered, and are eager to sacrifice for a goal. I do not mean to exaggerate their revolutionary potential, for surely they do have a material interest in maintaining hetero-patriarchal imperialism as it exists now. Many Amerikan women have indeed joined "the system": to reap its benefits (and have conformed with the beauty ideal to at least some degree in order to accomplish that). However, anorexic women, who go far beyond the thinness that makes them "suitable" for the male-dominated working world, tend to think these goals are empty. They feel society fails to give them something worthwhile to strive for, or else they feel unable to reach success by hetero-patriarchy's rules.

The role of the revolutionary party is clear. Doing away with images of anorexic women is not enough, or even the first step. Women are not stupid (even the middle-class white ones MIM so often condemns): when presented with a valuable goal, they may recognize it and join in the struggle for it. Like they have been trained in the malleability of their bodies, women can be trained in the potential for societal change. Like they have been trained to strive for the (impossible) beauty ideal, they can be trained to strive for an ideal society. Abolishing anorexia is not an end in itself, but will be accomplished by a revolution that allows the full empowerment of women.

—A formerly anorexic MIM supporter

MIM responds: Thank you for your letter. It seems you agree with MIM that anorexic women should be encouraged to become politically active and oppose the cultural pressures which contribute to anorexia. Yet you also seem to be suggesting that we revise our approach to women and not challenge them so much.

Certainly the analogy between anorexic women in the

First World and religiously fasting women in the Third World is not empty. Women in both locales are discouraged from involvement in politics and encouraged to spend more time in the realm of the spiritual, the abstract and the superficial. The relevant point in our review of *Fasting Girls* was similar to yours: researchers may often find objective similarities among women in Amerika and women in India for example — both fast from time to time.

But these objective similarities do not necessarily illuminate the subjective motivations these same researchers are trying to explain. Your analysis of the similarities is much more compelling than anything we've seen out of the pseudo-feminists to date. But your analysis still ignores the distinction between fasting for spiritual purity and starving oneself to look better. Presumably the Jainist women do not also bring themselves near the point of death in their fasts. And at the very least, if they do so, we would guess that they are thinking about something more meaningful than looking like supermodels when they do it.

You point to both groups of women being excluded from political realms, but again ignore the key differences between the two groups of women. Amerikan women, for example, may be culturally discouraged from taking part in politics, but their retreat from politics into the realm of concern over body image is a symptom of mass decadence. They have the alternative of seizing political power, yet they choose to spend time and endanger themselves with concern over the way their bodies look. It seems incongruous to compare Amerikan women's retreat from power they *do* have to Indian women seeking alternative to power they don't have. If we are wrong here please enlighten us: we would speculate that Indian women on the whole — whether they fast or not — have more respect for the importance of food to survival than the typical Amerikan anorexic.

On the differences between 19th century manifestations of anorexia nervosa and the disease today, you seem to have skipped over our and Brumberg's main point: that anorexia nervosa in the 20th century is defined by the predominance of successful women among those who have the disease. You are correct that in both the 19th and 20th centuries anorexia has been an attempt by women to control a portion of their own lives. What you missed in the review is that women who are anorexic in the 20th century are principally those women who have benefitted from increased control in all spheres of their own lives *other* than the shape of their bodies. It continues to be poor and Black women — those who control their lives to a significantly smaller degree than white women — who are not anorexic.

So when you refer to anorexic women *feeling* that they can only control their bodies you may be right. But in reality they control much more. These women are faced with a situation in which they control increasingly more than previous generations and lower classes of women have done. MIM argues that anorexia comes not so much from an attempt by

women to control *the only thing that they can*, but from women attempting to re-confine their own concerns to the sphere of the body, the beauty myth, etc. This is why we challenge them to recognize the false promise of these concerns.

MIM recognizes everything you say about First World women presuming themselves to be powerless. Taken by itself, this emphasis on how powerless Amerikan women *feel* is only excusing them from political responsibility because they feel bad. The comparison you draw between First and Third World women's fasting, passing over their different reasons for doing so, is similar to many other attempts to draw similarities between "female" experiences that gloss over national differences in North America.

For that matter, there are gender differences, too, between the First and Third World women's behavior you describe. It is the basic female condition under patriarchy to be excluded from politics, as poor Indian women are. It is basic *glorification* of female subordination to place one's own sexuality ahead of political participation, which is what women in the First World do daily.

MIM challenges privileged women who think they are not powerful to recognize how powerful they really are. We want to do much more than present women with a possible alternative that they might take. We hope to convey to them that they can either work for genuine feminism — proletarian feminism — or be honest about their allegiances to the First World bourgeoisie and its grotesque standards of beauty.

On to your point about middle class white women not being stupid. First, you seem to be suggesting that we say they are stupid. If anything, we repeat until we are blue in the face that they are not stupid, that activists should stop treating them as if they are, and that they should stop putting up with being treated like idiots and begin working with MIM to seize real power.

Second, you refer to our line as "condemning" these women. If you have read MIM Theory 2/3, it is not necessary to reiterate that rather than condemn individuals, or even groups of people, we criticize political lines which attempt to shield people from responsibility for their actions. Principally, we attack political lines that rely on notions of "false consciousness" as an explanation for reactionary behavior. We call on individuals and groups to realize the most progressive forces in society and the most correct path forward, and work with us to build public opinion in favor of Maoism and in the interests of the Third World proletariat.

By suggesting that our line on gender is a "condemnation" of white middle class women, you seem to be proposing that we soften up somehow, maybe change our approach to these women. We can only try to challenge women *enough* to accept the importance of them exposing and trashing patriarchal inventions like anorexia.

Notes: 1. MIM Theory 2/3, p. 191.

Lumpens of Patriarchy?

This was an exchange on the Internet involving a discussion of MIM's line on the labor aristocracy, the lumpenproletariat and gender. MIM's response is at the end.

Comment: Not answering for MIM, I believe it's quite unlikely that an American socialist movement could be successful. It is far too much of a threat to the existing power structure, which is well aware of the potential of socialism. The populace is too convinced of the supremacy of capitalism, too, for socialist ideas to catch on.

Writer: Might it be that the reason "the populace is too convinced of the supremacy of capitalism" is because the white working class in the U.S. has an extremely high standard of living compared with the so-called "Third World"? That this high standard of living is based upon the super-exploitation of Third World peoples? I agree with MIM on this point. However, I think one must also look at the increasing transfer of manufacturing to the Third World, coupled with the increasing use of automation (as predicted by Marx in Notebook VI of the Grundrisse) as leading to a new class structure in the United States.

The lumpenproletariat will grow, replacing the traditional working class. As Huey Newton saw it (see *To Die For The People*) this will lead to a new class division — technocrat/lumpen. It will be a positive development in that it will break the mutual dependence of bourgeoisie/proletariat but it will also be extremely dangerous, leading possibly to genocide, since the bourgeoisie/technocrats will no longer depend on the masses (here the lumpens) for production. Just as the enclosures of land and the rise of land rent expropriated the peasants from their land and made possible the generation of a new class — the proletariat — automation in the long run and the transfer of the manufacturing base in the short run is leading to new class formations in the United States.

To go further along this line, let's consider the patriarchy, which as Engels pointed out in *Family, Private Property, and the State*, is based upon the reproduction of labor. Just as the lumpens are not directly part of the production system, queers are not directly part of the reproduction system. Queers are like the lumpens of patriarchy. As biotechnology develops, and as reproduction is increasingly automated, the transfer from man/woman to biotechnocrat/queer will also signal an increasing class contradiction in patriarchy. So as Huey Newton pointed out, the vanguard class for the destruction of capitalism in the United States is not the white working class but the mostly non-white lumpenproletariat. In the same vein, I

would also argue that queers are the vanguard class in the destruction of patriarchy. But that's just my own interpretation. I welcome any feedback.

Comment: But will this new lumpen class be big enough to be a revolutionary vanguard? If it goes back to the situation of Marx's day (a 20/80 ruler/oppressed split). I would say absolutely, the lumpenproletariat (deprived of the means of production by postindustrial capitalism) are the vanguard. [...] If the lumpenproletariat is rather small, and if they act without solidarity among the working class, then the government will have the working class's support to crush any emerging vanguard.

Writer: If you look at the history of the Russian Revolution, you'll see, of course, that the vanguard at that time, the newly emerging proletariat, was in the vast minority compared to the peasants. The reason they were the vanguard was not because they were the majority, but because they were the newly emerging class with the most advanced line. Similarly, the lumpenproletariat in the U.S. has, I believe, the most advanced line and class consciousness. I never said that they would not act without solidarity among the working class. Of course they would have to. Just as the proletariat in Russian Revolution had to work with the peasants in order to carry out the revolution. There will always be a significant number of working class who will support the government. Especially given conditions in the U.S. If enough were won over to the revolution, however, then some change might happen.

Comment: Interesting. But if queers don't seek support among the straight population, then the masses could end up supporting the biotechnocrats.

Writer: Again, I said nothing about not seeking support. Queers must seek support among straight people, women most importantly, in order to overthrow patriarchy. As to support among straight men for the overthrow of patriarchy, I'm not sure. Straight men represent bureaucratic agents of capital, keeping women in domestic slavery through control of the reproductive workplace, i.e. the so-called "family." Note: Here I am defining "man" and "woman" not as biological, but as social categories, constructed by the class relationship around reproduction. I follow the Marxist-feminist Monique Wittig in this analysis (see, e.g., her book *The Straight Mind*, particularly the essay, "The Category of Sex").

I've been led to this analysis because, as a queer communist, I have been disappointed by the superficial analysis of sexuality of most of the Leninist left. Most parties pay lip-service to stopping gay-bashing, etc. or are outright hostile (e.g., the Revolutionary Communist Party-USA) but none, to my knowledge, have engaged in a concrete, materialist analysis of patriarchy, let alone queer oppression and its roots in capitalism. So this is what I'm trying to do.

Of all the parties, MIM is the only one I know of who has brought the issue of reproductive technology development into its analysis in any way (some issues of MIM Theory I've read). I also, in following Huey Newton's line on the lumpen-

proletariat, and in simply observing the material conditions of the U.S. and the "Third World," agree with MIM's position on the "labor aristocracy." As to the rest of MIM's stuff, like upholding Stalin, I'm not sure how that applies, one way or the other, to the present situation. I'm perhaps most attracted to the Marxism of the Autonomi/Autonomia left, in particular Antonio Negri and the Wages for Housework movement although I'm not sure about their abandonment of party politics. I'd recommend Guatarri and Negri's book *Communists Like* and anything put out by the Midnight Notes collective as being some of the few non-dogmatic revolutionary analyses of current conditions out there today.

MIM responds: We have a lot of unity with this Writer. It is excellent to have allies in the struggle over the labor aristocracy with Trotskyists and other social chauvinists. The two main points we address here include the role of the lumpenproletariat and gender under imperialism.

First, while MIM upholds the Black Panther Party of 1966-1969 as the vanguard of the Black nation, we do not rely on Huey Newton's analysis of the lumpen presented here. Emphasis and reliance on the lumpenproletariat is the main point of ultraleftism-swinging-right that existed in the BPP line. The BPP emphasized service to the lumpen because it thought it needed the lumpen to be the primary force in building the party. This was a serious error as compared to the practice of relying on students and intellectuals to build the numbers and structure of the party (before beginning to work Serve the People programs).

This reliance was ultraleft in making believe that the BPP was at a point where it could sustain Serve the People programs before it was ready to. The line was rightist in tying the party and its resources to sustaining reformist programs under capitalism and sucking away resources that could have been used to build independent power.

Regarding queers as lumpens of patriarchy, MIM does not treat queers as being outside the context of gender oppression. This is in part because we do not reduce gender to only reproduction, but instead also include other gendered labor and the appropriation of sexuality. No matter whether biological sex is a point of difference between sexual partners, this eroticization of power is present. Queers are not outside the sphere of reproduction of patriarchy because they do in fact participate in it, as is especially clear on a global scale. First World women as a group and many First World queers form a gender aristocracy which is allied with patriarchy, analogous to way that the labor aristocracy is allied with imperialism. (Some First World queers are outright members of the patriarchy.) They are not on the top, but they have power over the bodies of Third World peoples, i.e. the vast majority of the world's people.

Another Party's Problems

Dear MIM Comrades:

I read your post on alt.politics.radical-left [on the Internet] concerning the Peace Corps. I found in to be an extremely well-documented, well-argued position. The Peace Corps in the United States, as well as other "foreign aid" packages of First World Nations are typically means used by the United States to maintain the dependence of developing countries. Other Western countries, including Canada, are equally to blame. Communists must expose the hypocrisy of bourgeois states, as you have done time and time again.

I must admit that I still have many disagreements with your organization (such as your view of the relationship of First World workers to the Western ruling class), but I must commend your efforts in fighting imperialism. Clearly, there is much common ground between us.

I am very dissatisfied with the revolutionary organization that I am currently in, the X. The way in which "democratic centralism" is being practiced seems pretty heavy on the "centralism" and quite light on the "democratic" side. I would like you to describe the way in which decisions are made and the way in which discipline is carried out in your organization.

I also find that the X seems to shy away from engaging in activities which hurt our "respectability." X Comrades in [a city] were chastised for disrupting a meeting of a federal government commission. The commission was studying ways to conduct cuts to social programs. Our [same city] comrades responded by closing down the meeting by turning over tables, and bringing a worker-student demonstration right into the commission proceedings. We received national press. For this action, our Steering Committee censured the comrades involved.

Comrades are frequently expelled for the flimsiest of reasons. A [city] comrade was given the boot for being too much of a "nerd," and not being able to communicate effectively. A [city] comrade was expelled for selling heroin. Another [city] comrade was expelled for refusing *police* orders not to attend an anti-racist demo.

Currently, my own branch, [a city], is being threatened with termination. We have [a number of] members. Most of our branch is composed of university students. The Steering Committee has claimed that our branch suffers from "insufficient development of cadre." I believe this to be a code-word for "you have so many new members joining from outside the downtown core that we can't control."

I also feel that the X subordinates environmental issues to



class struggle. Instead of trying to build links between struggles, it seems that the environment is seen only in terms of the labour movement. Activists who attempted to stop logging on native land [...] were criticized for "blockading union loggers."

What do you make of all of this? How are problems of discipline handled in your organization? In Solidarity,

—A member of a Party in another country

MC234 responds: We would like to print your letter as censored above in our theoretical journal, MIM Theory. The issues you raised are ones that many MIM Theory readers could benefit from. We censored your letter because the information you put in it is not the type of thing that should be said in public; and this includes your letter to another (not-friendly) Party. MIM should also make it clear that we are not in the business of giving advice to revisionist parties. We are more than willing to polemicize over issues of line, strategy and tactics but our intent is to demonstrate (to the non-sectarian masses, mostly, but also to you) the superiority of our position. Our intent is not to help your party be "better" at spreading its revisionism, as that sets back the entire revolution.

However, MIM has said little publicly, at least not in print, about the internal workings of the party. We take this opportunity to do so, and to explain why we often do not. The first reason is security. People often ask questions about the internal make-up or structure of MIM. How big, what the gender and national breakdown is, about specific individuals, exactly how such an issue was decided, etc. MIM refuses to answer these questions because to do so helps only the cops. The second reason is because line is decisive and pragmatism is deadly. What matters it not how many comrades are in the party, but whether the line is correct. All things being the same, large parties are better; but without the line it doesn't matter. People who want a really large organizations should join the Democratic Party or your country's equivalent. And sometimes people meet MIM on the street and ask us questions that are OK in terms of security but which we don't want to answer right away because the emphasis is wrong. People need to be grappling with political issues and not minor tactical questions.

Sometimes people get turned off when MIM doesn't answer such questions, and unwillingness to investigate or to grapple with the more fundamental issues is their problem. For this we cannot be responsible, as catering to opportunists might make a temporarily large cult, but it won't make a strong revolutionary party. It is for these reasons that MIM will not reprint every published nugget of inner-party workings in this essay. People truly interested can find out the little details through struggle. Instead of spelling out all the tactical details, MIM will address a question of line: What is democratic-centralism?

WHAT IS DEMOCRATIC-CENTRALISM?

MIM should be clear that we do not believe your party has

either internal democracy or centralism. We base the statement on the lack of centralism on what we have seen of your U.S. sister-party's practice. We do not know anything about the internal workings of your party, although we cannot imagine how internal democracy exists when so many of the sister-party's comrades are absolutely clueless of their own line, strategy and tactics. MIM's comrades know these issues better than many in your sister party.

First, there is a dialectical relationship between democracy and centralism. They are opposites, bound together, and each element makes the other stronger. Within the party, there is democracy and each comrade is empowered to speak out to try and give direction to the party. Decisions are made by majority rule. Not everything is decided by a party-wide vote however, as structures are democratically set up to allow decisions to be made by units smaller than the whole party. Externally, the party's established line, strategies and tactics are put into practice and defended by all, regardless of whether or not each individual comrade agrees with each decision.

How do these two contradictory elements strengthen each other? First, the full participation of the party members makes the centralism stronger because it tests the line fully, and the process of struggle makes each comrade better able to defend that line. Secondly, by requiring all comrades to uphold the line, it forces all comrades to struggle as hard as they can against that which they disagree. If comrades could do whatever they wanted, then votes would be irrelevant and there would be no reason to become informed and struggle.

MIM thinks it is essential to raise the political level of the masses, both inside and outside of the party. For example, new people are encouraged to speak out, write letters to MIM for publication, or write articles for MIM Notes, MIM Theory and our other publications. New and younger comrades are put into positions of authority so that they can learn through practice. In many of the revisionist parties, only a tiny group of leaders are allowed to write for the organs, and there is no accountability to the rank-and-file, for example.

POLITICS IN COMMAND

Maoists make political decisions based on politics. The line is decisive, not other issues. It would be counterrevolutionary for MIM to expel (or harass) a comrade for being a "nerd." What's next? Does your party also expel people with speech impediments, or facial disfigurements? Maybe your Party should expel its Black and First Nation members so that the racist white workers won't be put off. Every revolutionary has something to contribute, and any division in the proletarian forces besides issues of revisionism is a disservice to the revolution.

MIM isn't going to spell out internal party structure in this forum. Say you'd like to know how often certain types of votes take place, or who can propose what kind of votes. You aren't going to get that answer here. But the serious and interested reader and MIM associate can get the general picture through

practice and struggle. MIM associates come to learn that our interest in raising the political level of recruits is not just in words only and they can see how MIM responds over time to correct criticism.

Consider another example of MIM practice. MIM tries to keep its recruiting relationships on a professional basis. MIM comrades do not recruit their friends and are not friends with their recruits. Of course we are friendly, but we are not friends. An example: a comrade won't go out for pizza or a basketball game with a recruit. (But they might eat pizza with the recruit during a long day of political work.) We also don't have sex with recruits. (Some parties find this a successful recruiting strategy.) Why no recruiting friends and no dating the recruits? Because we want people to choose MIM because of our political line, not because they like us as individuals. To recruit friends is to confuse the issues and make rational choices more difficult.

Other organizations will give out membership cards at rallies and sign up anybody who walks in the door. MIM only allows people to join who have unity with us on our fundamental principles (see page two of any MIM Notes or MIM Theory), who are highly dedicated, and who have a period of practice to stand on.

RULES

It's a good thing for a Party to make strategic decisions as to what other issues and concerns can effect the main struggle. For example, MIM's comrades are not allowed to break the law without the permission of the Party. This most certainly includes selling heroin and also includes using it. MIM has decided that drawing even more attention from the police onto the party increases the risk that we could face political repression under the cover of attacking an individual's drug habit. MIM's majority made the decision that this was a necessary rule, a necessary "restriction" on individuals for the good of the revolution. MIM doesn't know if your party has such a rule about breaking the law or even just drug dealing. Maybe the expulsion of this comrade was just a random act by your party's leadership. We have no idea.

What happens when centralism is broken? The party has to deal with it. Comrades are expected to make self-criticism, correct their errors and transform their political outlook so that it doesn't happen again. Comrades who make repeated errors and fail to make progress can be suspended or even purged from the party if necessary. This whole process takes into account the severity of the error. A comrade committing murder is worse than a new comrade making a political mistake because they didn't know the party's line, but both are errors to be corrected. (*Prisoners of Liberation*, by Adele and Allyn Rickett is an excellent book about criticism and self-criticism. They were arrested in China in 1950 for spying. They spent four years in a Chinese prison and were transformed into better people during the process. Through criticism and self-criticism they came to realize that spying was bad because it hurt the

Chinese people.)

MIM is saying that revolution is worth giving up drugs for. And we also say that on a tactical level we might have to listen to the cops, sometimes. The sharp reader will ask the question: "But when do you listen to the cops if you oppose them?" When you can't win, in order to win another day. This requires a knowledge of the subjective and objective conditions. MIM knows nothing specific about this X party comrade who was ordered by the pigs to not go to a rally. Maybe it would have been better to stay home and to publicize the police threats. Maybe it would have been better to go to the rally, and have the party defend him or her and explain the role of the cops to the masses. We can't tell from here and have no interest advising this party on this type of question.

HOW DOES DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM HELP?

As Mao described in "On Practice," there is a dialectical relationship between theory and practice. Practice produces results which are observed as perceptual knowledge. This perceptual knowledge is summed up along with the perceptual knowledge of other places and people, as well as previous knowledge, to produce rational knowledge. It is this rational knowledge that guides practice, starting the process over. This cycle is also referred to as the mass line.

By unifying the party's practice, it is better able to tell the success or failure of the effort. Simply put, you can't tell how well an idea works if your own people are working against you. If the party majority says that drug dealing is bad for the revolution, and some members of your party think that selling drugs is OK, and they go out and do it, how are you ever going to be able to tell what the effects of selling drugs (or not) is? Does it bring repression down on the party?, does it alienate the people?, etc. There will be no efficient way to learn from practice.

Or take an example from socialism. If the party decides to emphasize industry, and a dissident faction decides to emphasize agriculture, and puts its resources into agriculture, it will be impossible to tell what the effects on the economy as a whole would be of an "emphasize industry" program. Therefore, it's impossible to correct the course, even if emphasizing agriculture would have been better.

It should be noted that democratic-centralism exists to various degrees in bourgeois society, although not in the same dynamic way that it exists in the Leninist party. Notice the way dissidents within corporation executive boards keep quiet and away from the media as they maneuver internally. Or what happens when the Surgeon General strays too far from the official position on masturbation — she gets fired. The point is not to raise Chrysler or the White House as an example to follow, but to make a point that the enemy is organized. They have more guns and money than we do, so we need to make sure that we are at least more organized and disciplined than they. (Remember also, that even when the bourgeoisie breaks centralism it is only a minor problem for them, as their class, if a

different faction, controls the media. For the proletariat to break ranks in front of an antagonistic enemy is to allow a major unnecessary victory for the bourgeoisie.)

Democratic-centralism itself is also a weapon against the enemy. It makes it more difficult for the state to split and destroy the party. The lack of a real, functioning democratic centralism really weakened the Black Panther Party. There was no real centralism, so it was really easy for the state to figure out which Panthers disagree with which, and forge letters between them or others, trying to fan dissent. The FBI was also able to use this information, like they could use the information you volunteered in your letter, in more subtle split-and-wreck ways.

The BPP didn't have much of a worked out line on some questions, such as precisely how they related to armed struggle. This made it difficult for the leadership to tell the difference between inexperienced comrades with wrong ideas, and agent provocateurs. Internal education for Black Panther Party members was also reportedly weak, although external education and agitation was good. This failure to advance the rank-and-file cadre made the BPP even weaker once the leadership was removed than it should have been.

A REVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE

Mao wrote: "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."

Compare the revolutionary science to steering a boat. Certain principles are learned, such as the relationship of north to south and Africa to the Atlantic Ocean, and certain other tools, such as maps and sextants, are used. The boat pilot continually sums up all this information to stay on course and continually corrects that course with new information. All of this training and all of the tools are necessary. No one is born with the knowledge of a boat pilot, and the same can be said for Maoists.

Regardless of whether a decision is made by the classics, or on some sort of national or local level, it still needs to be applied by individual comrades. Truly applying the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism requires that the political level of everyone be raised to the highest level possible and focused with the strongest discipline against the enemy. Such is the duty and task of democratic-centralism and nothing less will do.

MIM strongly recommends that interested readers read Lenin's *What is to be done?* and Mao's "On Practice" and "On Contradiction" in Volume 1 of *Selected Works*, in *Selected Readings* or in "Four Essays on Philosophy."

Individual, Alienation — What Next?

Dear Editor(s),

I picked up your publication at [a New York area university], where I am an alumnus. I must say that it caught my attention because certain anti-capitalistic sentiments have been fomenting in my mind for quite some time. I have a Master's Degree in Philosophy, yet I find academia to be nothing but a state of mental conformism. I come from a working class background but have always abhorred the prospect of working daily at something which deadens my mind and spirit, which is all that a position in capitalistic society offers me. Till now, I have not found my niche in society, and as any iconoclast, find I must pay dearly for it. The problem is that I like to read books, and neither my family nor society has any tolerance for that. It was in my peregrinations in the writings of other thinkers that I came across Marx and realized that my unhappiness was not an isolated phenomenon; others, like myself, were so alienated due to the structure which allows others to prosper, while the lower classes slave their lives away.

I have been observing life in America ever since, and my place in it; this occurs every time I have to go out and earn my living, which has been pretty frequent. I am not a slacker; I write fiction and am debating over what is the least humiliating form of employment which I must subject myself to in order to eke out an existence for myself. I have decided that teaching in a university seems the best route, therefore I will probably return for my doctorate. I want to say that in a sense I have been overly surprised at the fact that there actually exists organizations which are against capitalism, for in America, you grow up thinking that everyone in the world wants to be like us. It surprises me even more that Communists exist here as well. I have always thought that Marxism was something which existed only in the writings of the man. As it is, however, I am not a Maoist, so perhaps your organization is not for me. The reasons for this are in respect for the truth, which is never assumed under one person's name; therefore I think it an injustice towards one's individual integrity to give power over to a group, an ideal or a slogan, because it reeks of fanaticism and fanaticism reeks of a lack of integrity (towards oneself).

I form my thoughts best when I am apart from crowds, and from those who seek to initiate me into some "higher" knowledge. But this does not do away with the alienation we as individuals must face, along with the daily degradations



concerning our attempt to survive and develop our minds. For me, the idea of becoming a revolutionary is an exciting possibility because it is the antithesis of American bourgeois thinking; all politics is corrupt and American intervention abroad is always a self-interested fiasco. Along these lines, I agree that capitalism only serves those who have power and that the disenfranchised must stand up and fight, or at least educate themselves about their condition. However, I am not an advocate of violence, because it always ends up hurting those who are weaker. I imagine that you must have a hard time keeping your activities clandestine, but feel you should consider yourselves lucky in that were not this a democratic society, your activities indeed would be wholly suppressed. Here in New York we even have a Marxist School, where one may study anti-capitalist theories. I am not one who hates America, because I believe that biting the hand that feeds you is a sign that one doesn't know how bad things could be. I just feel that Americans are misguided and put their faith in the wrong ideals. I have yet to come up with a solution to the vast problems that America faces as a nation.

It would be interesting if there was a third political party which had the ability to facilitate change in the way of anti-capitalist programs. Yet I am wary of the untenability of communism as a practical solution, because of the despots who have always hid behind the communist banner. You should know that, because the history is there for anyone who cares to see it. The problem involves ambition, for any one seeking political power seeks it for themselves first. Anyway, I have yet to refine my views on this, so excuse me if I sound ignorant. I would like to gain more access to your organization, and wonder if you happen to publish a newspaper in this area; I am interested in working for such a publication as an editor.

I may even like to hear a lecture on the subjects which you offer others as teachings, though I realize that Mao's writings are accessible in any library. This is not my interest, because I don't think that an Asian can understand the mind of a North American, or even a European; I prefer Marx to elucidate me on these matters. However, if there are any talks in the New York City area, please let me know. But I do not want to be targeted by the government as a communist, so I cannot subscribe to your publication. At this point, I am interested mainly in the theoretical basis for and against capitalism, and would like to see if there are ways I can become a participant in this movement. I am very dissatisfied with the present living situation under which myself and countless others live, and I have no aspiration to become a full-fledged capitalist. My future lies in writing and helping others to wake up and use their minds so that they may live a better life and have a better future on this earth. I hope that your organization has similar goals. You may print this letter if you like, and please send me any pertinent information regarding my becoming further educated about your movement.

With Sincerity, Comrade K

February 1995

MIM responds: Revolutionary organizations do exist within the belly of the beast, although they are a small minority. In fact, there is a material basis for this minority status, despite the claims of some self-proclaimed revolutionaries or Marxists. The tremendous wealth brought to this country from Third World superexploitation by U.S. imperialism has allowed it to buy off the majority of this country. Most workers in this country, particularly the white ones, receive what are essentially bribes from the bourgeoisie to the point where they are no longer exploited. They may still be oppressed and alienated by the system as you describe, but they get so much stuff that they are willing to deal with this alienation.

Now some members of the labor aristocracy (as Leninists call these bought-off workers) can be split over to the side of the proletariat and to revolution. This is important work, although we cannot expect the majority of the labor aristocracy to do so, and therefore we must ground ourselves firmly in the Third World proletariat and peasantry, and well in the proletariat in the internal colonies within U.S. borders.

UNIVERSALS

We at MIM are Marxist-Leninist-Maoists. As such, we recognize as universally applicable the contributions not only of the individuals Marx, Lenin and Mao, but also the practice that came out of the leadership of these individuals. Marx's greatest contribution was the critique of capitalism. Lenin's was the organization of the Party and of bringing Marxism into the age of imperialism. Mao further advanced upon these theories by proving the revolutionary potential of peasants (which is essential for revolution in the colonies and neocolonies), and for recognizing that the potential for capitalist restoration exists under dictatorship of the proletariat, or socialism.

This is not a question of "assuming the truth [to be] under one person's name," but rather it is giving credit where credit is due. There is a science to revolution, and Marx, Lenin and Mao made the three largest contributions to the development of that science. Those contributions were of course only realized through the struggle of millions of oppressed people, taking action to improve their lives.

So there really is no basis to say that "I don't think an Asian can understand the mind of a North American." Marxism, Leninism and Maoism are critiques of society with a practice to implement that critique. People sometimes say that Maoism is uniquely Chinese, and is not universally applicable. But these critics are unable to explain how the supposedly "European" ideas of Marxism-Leninism were applied in China! This is not to say that cultural differences do not exist between Europe and China and North America. This is not to say that the specific realities of the conditions surrounding the creation of Marxism, Leninism or Maoism did not affect their creation. Far from it; these conditions created Marxism, Leninism and Maoism as much as, if not more than, these individuals did. Merely, we are saying that each of these theories and practices produced a theory and a practice that is univer-

sally applicable.

INDIVIDUALISM

Individualism is a bourgeois conception that must be overcome if we are to advance to the next stage in society: socialism. This is especially true for people in this country. You state: "I am not one who hates America, because I believe that biting the hand that feeds you is a sign that one doesn't know how bad things can be." Most Americans do quite well. But Amerikanism makes life hell for the majority of the world — about 4 1/2 billion people. So for people like you, it's an individual choice: Will you commit nation, class and gender suicide to side with the world's majority against your own material interests? Don't bite the hand that feeds you. Chop it off! It's a genocidal hand that needs to be stopped!

For most people in the First World, this is a moral question. Most will side with imperialism. Some will not.

SECURITY

There is an interesting contradiction in your arguments regarding security. On one hand, you want to work for a New York publication as an editor, yet you will not subscribe to MIM Notes because you "do not want to be targeted by the government as a communist." Reality is that you take some risk writing to our (likely watched by the pigs) PO Box. But that's less of a risk than MIM's comrades and close supporters take every day. And this risk by MIM comrades is less than that taken by our comrades in the Third World where government death squads operate openly. (And the U.S. government carries out its own extra-judicial executions within these borders when it deems it necessary. The murder of Black Panthers

Fred Hampton and Mark Clark is one such example.)

We all take risks. Again, the question is: is it worth it? How important is the liberation of humanity to you, and what is the most important contribution you can make?

UNITY-STRUGGLE-UNITY

We do have some basic unity, and through study and struggle we can build some more unity if you are willing. MIM Notes is just one of our agitation tools. We currently do not have a newspaper that is local to New York, but you are welcome to write for our continent-wide publications. Anything you are willing to do — write, edit, finance, distribute, etc. — is possible and much needed.

MIM newspapers (MIM Notes, Maoist Sojourner, Notas Rojas) are agitation tools, and as such they don't go into much depth on theoretical issues. There just isn't space. We put this type of question in our theoretical journal, MIM Theory. MIM Theory is \$18/year for 4 issues. (Cash, stamps, or check/money order made out to "MIM Distributors".) We also have a 16-page pamphlet called "What is MIM?" that contains a number of different essays that give you a good overview. You can get this from the address above for \$2.

We want to recognize the initiative you took to write your letter, and we call upon you to take the next step and study revolution seriously and work with us.

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Psychology & Gender

For a decade, MIM has been advancing a revolutionary materialist critique of imperialist patriarchy that analyzes gender oppression and privilege in an internationalist manner, speaking from and to the perspective of the world's oppressed majority. We define gender oppression both as the exploitation of reproductive labor and as the appropriation of sexuality. Although MIM sees gender as a strand of oppression separate from class and nation, we see that those other strands help define gender independent of biological sex.

In other words, because of imperialism, it is possible for biological men to be gendered female and biological women to be gendered male. In this context, how one is "gendered" speaks to the power one has to exploit the reproductive labor and appropriate the sexuality of others, or the lack of power one has to combat these forms of oppression. This chapter tackles gender in relation to psychology, a bourgeois pseudo-science that appeals to First World women for its middle class ideology of individualism, even as it undermines feminism by individualizing the problems women face as a group.

As we approach this topic, MIM uncompromisingly criticizes the abusive institution of psychology (as in our

review of the film *Dialogues with Madwomen*) at the same time as we criticize its nation-, class- and gender-privileged social base among First World men and women. From our analysis of psychology as a pseudo-science that treats social problems as individual problems, we begin to outline an alternative, materialist method to address such issues. We stress that an individual's psyche, personality, intelligence or "nature" can never be isolated from material and historical circumstances.

Gender and psychology are closely intertwined under patriarchy. In this chapter, MIM opens with a materialist analysis of the oppression of children in the patriarchal family, understanding that these issues are often explained or treated psychologically. MIM also analyzes feminist critiques of psychology from sources including Maoist-inspired feminists of the 1970s and lesbian feminists of the 1990s. Criticizing so-called feminist therapy as an exercise of privilege, MIM calls upon all women to forsake psychological thinking and take up revolutionary science instead, to work for real feminism that uplifts the majority of the world's women.

The Oppression of Children Under Patriarchy

by MCB52

In this article MIM examines the oppression of children in the patriarchal family. In studying the reasons that adults abuse children, and the consequences of that abuse for children throughout their lives, we again come face to face with Freudian psychology. And as always, communists must confront the bourgeois pseudo-science of psychology with materialist analysis. The psychological literature generally discusses child abuse in ahistorical terms such as Freud's theories of "penis envy" and "oedipal desire." Materialists, on the other hand, look to the real world and to the society in which children are raised. We analyze the structures that oppress children in patriarchal capitalist society, weigh the options or lack thereof that they face, and disavow individual psyche or personality as causal factors.

Looking internationally and across time, it becomes obvious that chronological age does not explain childhood. Ten-year-olds may be entirely dependent in some contexts, or may be independent brave revolutionaries in others. So we define children in the current context by the structures that bind them, principally enforced by the patriar-

**'Do you
charge us with
wanting to stop
the exploitation
of children by
their parents?
To this crime
we plead
guilty.'**

**— The
Communist
Manifesto**

chal family. We ask questions like, does the person have any access to means of survival without his or her parents? On the level of the state, which enforces the family: Can the person be taken away from or forced to stay with his or her parents? Can the person be tried as an adult in court?

These questions take us out of the narrow definitions of age and into the materialist category of social location. In the same way that biological sex does not determine gender oppression or privilege, neither does age determine childhood and adulthood. Using these social definitions, we underscore that children as a group do not have independent power and are subjected to patriarchal/parental power in particular. This oppression is not isolated from the fundamental social order and does not reflect individual bad parenting, but rather the low social value of children under capitalist patriarchy.

The bourgeois press, and the psychologists and police from whom it gets its information, most often present child abuse as "ritual abuse" or other dramatic stories far removed from ordinary relations. The more unusual the case, the more their emphasis masks the fundamental property relation that underlies the patriarchal family and hence the

oppression of all children (to varying degrees). The standard by which the dramatic case is evaluated is "good" care of children under conditions of social, political and economic inequality within the family.

Like pseudo-feminists who want to make clear distinctions between "sex" (rape they like) and "rape" (rape they don't), so-called child advocates want to make clear distinctions between "normal care" and "child abuse" in a way that makes the fundamental unequal relationship between all parents and children under capitalist patriarchy legitimate. Communists, on the other hand, do not fight for women to be raped more enjoyably, or for children to be abused less grossly, but rather for rape and the oppression of children to end completely. Toward this goal, we are building public opinion and independent power to wage revolution to end the oppression of people over people.

In imperialist society, children cannot opt out of the patriarchal family. If they are removed from one family, the state will place them in another or an orphanage. They are completely physically subordinated in relation to their parents and do not have access to weapons to overcome this discrepancy. In fact, the higher levels of reporting of child abuse among older children (ages 12 to 17) may suggest that as this physical discrepancy decreases and/or access to weapons increases, children are challenging their caretakers' physical superiority and turning outside the family.(1)

Children almost completely lack the means of supporting themselves independently of adults. Their choices are essentially: (1) living in the given situation, (2) turning to the state which they may not understand or trust; and, (3) living on the streets. Even if we accepted that the latter two are real options, children are largely ignorant even of these. Toddlers for instance do not know how to access the state, and older children understand that foster care provided by the state may be different, but may not be better than what they've got at home. Toddlers and young children cannot live on the streets, and older children are capable of assessing the great risks involved and their "choice" not to turn to the streets is similar to their "choice" not to kill themselves, that is, not a terribly meaningful one. In cases of physical or sexual abuse, there is strong sanction (such as threat of death) to ensure secrecy, which isolates abused children and cuts off their communication with outside members of the society.

In many ways, MIM's analysis of gender and the gender aristocracy is applicable to the situation of children, but the question of complicity is different. The majority of women in Amerika have concrete choices, even if those choices are sometimes horrible ones. Battered women can usually leave the relationship and still survive. MIM would contend that women, unlike children, do not have choices in only very few situations.

HOW ABUSE IS EVALUATED

The standard legal definition of child abuse is "infliction

of physical harm by the caretaker," and it is determined and enforced locally according to "community standards." According to the New York Times, about 600 women kill their children every year in the United States. This is likely an underestimate (and does not even include murders by fathers); the threat to children is pervasive. Homicide is the third leading cause of death for children ages five to fourteen,(2) and the leading cause, "accidents," probably includes more cases.

But physical violence (that can be detected by teachers, doctors, police, etc.) is only one form of abuse that children suffer. Parents can also withhold necessities such as food or medical care. Other, nonphysical domination, is always enforceable by the implied threat of violence. In particular cases in which physical abuse reaches a life-threatening level, MIM cries out the urgency of those cases. There is little that MIM can offer at this time for children in such situations, but as we build there may be a way to create havens for such children as we develop independent power.

According to pig-generated statistics, oppressed nation children face more abuse — by the standard definition of physical injury — than their oppressor nation counterparts.(3) One explanation for these figures is that they are skewed by the fact that oppressed nation children are closer to the pigs; social workers are scrutinizing them for any evidence of abuse (even if it means taking the child away from a mother who is guilty of only a light slap) — while Americans are not watched as scrupulously. Teachers are biased to look more carefully at the poor and oppressed nations, private doctors are less likely to report a family they know than are those who give care to the oppressed with the government looking over their shoulder, and the list goes on.

But there is also a second point of contention with these statistics: MIM recognizes that the whole lives of oppressed nation peoples are full of brutality, whether in the form of malnutrition, exploitation, lack of health care, or pig violence. It smacks of Judeo-Christian moralism to say "look at those people beating each other up," as pious whites say about gang violence. No society can have peaceful oppressed people. If it is true that the stresses of poverty may indeed lead to greater abuse (though MIM is not prepared to grant this case), then we should attack the parasitic state and its constituents that feed off poverty, not moralize to its victims.(4) As the Amerikan nation keeps beating the oppressed nations down, its accusations against them for their (lesser) violence is grotesque.

Engels described child neglect among proletarians in this way:

"[T]he social order makes family life almost impossible for the worker. In a comfortless, filthy house, hardly good enough for mere nightly shelter, ill-furnished, often neither rain-tight nor warm, a foul atmosphere filling the rooms over-crowded with human beings, no domestic comfort is possible. The husband works the whole day through, perhaps the wife also and the elder children, all in different places; they meet night and morning only, all under perpet-

ual temptation to drink; what family life is possible under these conditions? Yet the working man cannot escape the family, and the consequence is a perpetual succession of family troubles, domestic quarrels, most demoralizing for parents and children alike. Neglect of all domestic duties, neglect of the children, especially, is only too common among English working people, and too vigorously fostered by the existing institutions of society. And children growing up in this savage way, amidst these demoralizing influences, are expected to turn out goody-goody and moral in the end! Verily the requirements are naive which the self-satisfied bourgeois makes upon the working man!"(5)

Bourgeois society still expects from oppressed people quite unreasonable conformity to bourgeois norms — which the bourgeoisie only hypocritically upholds! MIM does not excuse violence against children by proletarian and oppressed nation adults, but we more harshly condemn the hypocritical, bourgeois "Save the Children" reformists who use their so-called child advocacy to increase the police repression of oppressed nations. Such "advocates" just want the children to grow safely into adults who will then be exploited as such. MIM condemns all violence against oppressed nation people, children or adults, and it recognizes that the key to alleviating it is not moralizing with people but by working for their self-determination. We are not saying "children first," but rather "children, too."

OPPRESSOR NATION CHILDREN

The property relation between parent and child is mitigated by class and nation, which is to say that a sort of child aristocracy exists in which children, while still objectified and subordinated, gain materially from the patriarchal imperialist system in which they join their parents as parasites.

But if children cannot opt out of the patriarchal family, then we cannot consider oppressor family children as enemies in the same way that we do their parents. However, we can learn from the children during the revolution in China who were able to understand and criticize their oppressor status. Even in a society in which filial piety had been a principal focus of morality for centuries, children took responsibility and denounced their parents. And so while we can make generalizations about which side the oppressor children as a group will likely take in revolution as they grow up, we also realize that children are more receptive to struggle and put great hope in winning many of them over to the side of revolution.

NON-ACCOUNTABILITY AND EROTICIZATION ALLOW ABUSE

Since the social reforms in imperialist countries near the beginning of the 20th century, oppressor nation children have been excluded from productive labor. Children's uselessness to the larger society feeds the failure to respect the intrinsic value of their lives. (MIM does not uphold or advocate child labor in an exploitative mode of production; rather that under socialism, children will be able to contribute to production.) Children who are physically abused are made more aware of

their devalued status. But whether or not children are aware of it, the fact that they do not have important roles in the larger society prevents the larger society from being held accountable for children's well-being. And as long as the society is not held accountable, it will not be capable of preventing abuse. (More on accountability below in the description of children under Maoism.)

In a pornographic society that eroticizes powerlessness, and one that keeps children most powerless, children are the targets for domination. In pornography, images of women have gotten both younger and more violent. Women are shaved and dressed like children, or actual children are used. Going beyond *Hustler*, the image pervades advertising. The waif as super-model is upping the stakes in the eroticization of children's subordination in mainstream representations.

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Child abuse in all its manifestations has a profound impact on children. Analysis of what the ubiquitous form (objectification and subordination without fear for life) does is difficult because isolating it from other factors of personalities in Amerika is impossible. There are also risks of being ahistorical because specialists in psychobabble will point to any behavior and attribute it to child abuse. Some psychologists hold that discrete outcomes are entirely determinable by discrete causes; they present child abuse and certain behaviors as "if p then q." This is not dialectical.

So-called psychological problems do not have one particular cause, as Freud suggested, but rather are the product of geographic, economic and historical environments. Crucially, these problems are not caused or cured by altering processes of thought, but by changing the environment on a social scale. Materialists do not scan only the first five years of life — poking around for an event or invented desire to blame neuroses on — but rather look at the social environment of children and adults to gain an understanding of all behavior, whether it is defined by pseudo-scientists as "normal" or "abnormal."

Other psychological models include the "bio-psychosocial" model which combines an analysis of genetic components, "psychological" ones seen as individual to the patient, and social components.(6) However, even these less dogmatic practitioners do not understand that the "psychological" traits are socially created, not biologically inherited.(7) "Every individual is a product of material circumstances."(8) Even the more materialist-sounding psychiatrists will never adequately explain the causes and effects of child abuse or any other social phenomenon until they abandon individualism and psyche-driven explanations — in other words, until they abandon psychology altogether.

We can generalize that the behavior of children is shaped by their social position. If hyperactivity and aggressiveness among children are particular to capitalist society, then we can conclude that something in this society causes these behavior patterns. Further, we can speculate that the competition and

individualism foisted upon children brings these behavior patterns about. Similarly, survivors of life-threatening physical or sexual abuse face certain problems characteristic to this abuse. For example, the secrecy that usually shrouds such abuse leads to isolation of its victims and thus their alienation from the community around them.

All children are taught to be helpless. More viciously abused children may have profound feelings of helplessness that can lead to more general feelings of inefficacy and hinder them later in life. While in fact children who survive physical or sexual abuse are no less capable than anyone else, more struggle may be needed to counter incorrect ideas pounded in with deep emotional impact. This is similar to combating gendered female socialization which leads female revolutionaries to doubt their worth to the movement. Certainly we do not face the problems posed by this socialization to the same degree in all women, but recognizing that it does in fact exist helps to address it. And so harmful or problematic behavior patterns characteristic to survivors of child abuse are challenged as political line, just as those characteristic of gendered-female socialization are.

Survivors of severe abuse are also made more aware of their mortality than other children are, and may have good reason to believe that death is better than their options living trapped as a child. Mao's analysis of Miss Chiao's suicide was that she did not want to die, but to live, and chose death only because the latter option was not open to her.(9) Similarly, "life" for severely abused children is not usually a choice, and so suicidal tendencies are well-founded. While still children they usually lack access to weapons or other such means, death is made a real option early in life. This does not mean that survivors are going to kill themselves first chance they get. We cannot say that child abuse "causes" suicide in a linear way, because that would deny the dialectic, but we can say that it is a forming influence because it affects their consciousness.(10)

Here MIM is quite distinct from "survivor support groups" because we do not agree that these (or other) mistaken beliefs have to be changed before engaging in political struggle. Anyone is capable of contributing to the revolutionary struggle.

When MIM posted an article about the political ramifications of child abuse on an Internet newsgroup that exists to provide survivors "support," the response we received was hostile, asking how we could expect the readers of the group to focus on political issues when they have healing to do. The fact is, if individuals are old enough and aware enough to be discussing their experiences on the Internet, then the resource can be used as a tool of political struggle for those who really do want to end children's oppression. Since we are not welcome on that group, we must build our own dialogue and improve our line through our own media. As Mao admonished of Chinese women, MIM calls on survivors of child abuse to denounce the oppression of capitalist, imperialist patriarchal society so that the trap of "individual recovery" can be forsak-

en for good in a society that treats children justly.

CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION

Children are by definition dependent, and while we aspire to create a society in which children become independent earlier, some dependence on adults for a certain amount of time seems inevitable.

Unlike gender oppression among adults, relevance of the difference between children and adults is not only a manifestation of dominance (11), but to some extent exists prior. Children will never be economically independent in the way that women will be under socialism. And so we ask ourselves the question: can we create a society in which children are not oppressed?

We turn to the experience of socialist China for guidance. The first thing to tackle is providing communal child care both to liberate women from their burdens under patriarchy and give children an environment in which they can flourish. *Groups* of adults supervise *groups* of children, which helps caregivers to give up old behaviors. For example, while the first impulse of a frustrated caregiver might be to slap a child, with others present they are pressured to behave correctly. They are not isolated and without help, but part of a "multiple parenting" (we adapt the term from the Chinese one, "multiple mothering") team that keeps frustration to a minimum.(12)

Multiple parenting must not be confused with serial parenting, which is a reality for many children in Amerika today whose mothers do not care for them full-time and rely on various sitters and day cares. Children do benefit from building bonds with adults and their peers. Socialists in power would not immediately sever children from their biological parents, but rather make the current unrealized ideal of a more egalitarian and less pressured parent-child relationship possible.

Children must be made aware that it is their responsibility to ensure that their care-givers act appropriately and children must be given opportunities to make criticism. As children are older, such as in the elementary school years, learning to criticize their teachers is a good way for them to learn the way that the larger society is structured.

Accountability cannot end with the care-giving group. Even within this controlled arrangement, adults may abuse their power over children. Children must have access to the party in power in case their voices are not heard in their own schools or other environments. One anecdote published by Amerikan observers in revolutionary China told of an elementary school child who was punished for criticizing her teacher and wrote to the *People's Daily* explaining the situation. The newspaper came to the conclusion that she had been wronged and so held up the teacher for criticism by the whole society.(13) Small stories like this can serve as a model of how to empower children.

Subsumed within this framework is a dedication to providing all children with their material needs. Ending the violence of poverty will curb the violence of child abuse as a

whole. Here materialists must maintain the conviction that all children are capable of (and worthy of) being useful members of society. There is no room for IQ testing and tracking of children in a society that does not accept as valid the notion of innate and immutable personality traits. If some children are better at some things, then let them help the slower ones. Finally, therapy is not the answer for child abuse. Revolution is. Historical experience reveals there is nothing better for oppressed children. All those serious about ending child abuse should get out of the psychobabble trap, struggle with MIM and work for communist revolution.

- Notes:
1. Joseph Cappelleri, John Eckenrode, and Jane L. Powers, *American Journal of Public Health*, November 1993, p. 1622.
 2. 1994 Statistical Abstract No. 127.
 3. The rate of child abuse and neglect for whites was 4.32 per thousand, while the rate for Blacks was 7.68 per thousand. *American Journal of Public Health*, p. 1622.
 4. Poverty is very significant in the pig stats. Those making under \$15,000 per year had an incidence rate of 8.73 per thousand, while those with incomes over \$15,000 had a rate of 2.13 per thousand. *Ibid.*, p. 1623.
 5. *Conditions of the Working Class in England, 1844. The*
6. George L. Engel has been the most prominent proponent of the biopsychosocial model of disease. See for example his article "The Clinical Application of the Biopsychosocial Model", in *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 137:5, May 1980, pp. 535-544.
 7. See Lewontin, et al, *Not in Our Genes*, and MIM's article debunking IQ and *The Bell Curve*, in this issue of MIM Theory.
 8. "Abolish Psychology," MT2/3, p. 39.
 9. Stuart Schram, ed., *The Political Thought of Mao Tse Tung*, Praeger Publishers, 1969, pp. 134-7.
 10. The correlation between sexual abuse and suicidal desires is strong. One study found that 13% of non-sexually active 8-10th grade women reported plans of suicide, 21% of sexually active but not abused reported them, and 34% of sexually abused reported them. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, June 7, 1995, p. 1658.
 11. Catharine MacKinnon, "Difference and Dominance" in *Feminism Unmodified*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 32-45.
 12. See Ruth Sidel, *Women and Child Care in China*. New York: Penguin, 1972 for a description of the practice.
 13. William Kessen, ed., *Childhood in China*. South Braintree, MA: Alpine Press, pp. 140-1.

No "Feminist Therapy": Wage Revolution

by MC44 & MC12

Traditional psychoanalysis, based on the theories of Freud, has been under criticism from feminists for several decades. In the 1970s, women writers exposed the patriarchal process by which women patients were counseled to individually accept and adjust to their social subordination. Deviant or resistant behavior was labeled as mental illness and women patients were medicated, institutionalized, or both.(1). Shulamith Firestone, in *The Dialectic of Sex*, argued that Freudianism and modern feminism arose at the same time in response to the same social phenomena, and that Freudianism — with its uncritical embrace of the nuclear family and patriarchal power relations — won. This kind of analysis forms part of the foundation of MIM's criticism of psychology.(2)

But whereas MIM has argued to replace the entire pseudoscience of psychology with materialism and the science of revolution, many First World feminists have developed a body of literature and practice called "feminist therapy." Traditional therapy was one mechanism by which those in power retained power — by counseling the powerless to adjust to or enjoy their position. Feminist therapy arose to address the "low self-esteem" of women caused by "the harmful effects of the sexist society in which we live."(3) Feminist therapists argue that if women can understand their problems as socially imposed, rather than self-generated, they will not exacerbate those problems with self-blame. Because MIM shares some of the same

criticisms of traditional psychology with feminist therapists, we devote this article to reviewing some of their ideas through a revolutionary feminist, Maoist lens.

We conclude that, seeing gender as the principal contradiction in society, and therefore seeing First World women as objectively oppressed, feminist therapists have extended pseudofeminism into the psychological arena. They have developed a practice that substitutes personal therapy for revolutionary change, and that therefore promotes the perpetuation of their condition as privileged parasites on the oppressed peoples of the world. Their practice, another form of making already-privileged women feel better without hurting the patriarchy, exists as a partner to traditional Freudian therapy rather than as a revolutionary alternative.

THE PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION

The argument that gender is the principal contradiction within society is fundamental to literature on feminist therapy. In the words of Ellyn Kaschack, author of *Engendered Lives: A New Psychology of Women's Experience*:

"The most centrally meaningful principle on our culture's mattering map is gender, which intersects with other culturally and personally meaningful categories such as race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation."(4)

While feminist therapists include class and "race" in their

analysis of the social forces which create psychological problems, therapists see these as merely influencing the centrally important category of gender. And crucially, the notion of a "psychological problem" remains essentially unchallenged. MIM recognizes race, the social construct, as a distinct category from the political economic (material) category "nation." We don't use the term race because it applies to a reform of psychology rather than a systemic change — in this case, national liberation.

For example, according to the literature, a good feminist therapist understands that women of different "races" have different relationships to the white beauty ideal propagated by dominant ideology and culture, and incorporates that understanding in her therapy. While it is certainly true that for some women that beauty ideal is unattainable by definition, and that might create a host of different feelings about beauty and identity, MIM argues that the whole issue should be taken out of the realm of the psychological (self-hatred and depression) and pushed firmly into the realm of political critique and struggle. Women who are oppressed by beauty culture should organize to smash the patriarchy, and not waste time and money seeing therapists for the depression they feel as a result of it. While traditional therapy functions as a means of social control of women, MIM believes that engaging in feminist therapy to feel better about oppression is to exercise class, nation and gender privilege. For most "psychological" problems, revolutionary politics is the best social as well as individual treatment.

But "mental illness" such as schizophrenia? Lynne Rosewater, in "Schizophrenic, Borderline, or Battered?" argues that battered women exhibit similar behavioral traits as schizophrenics, including "social isolation or withdrawal; marked impairment in role functioning as a wage earner, student, or homemaker; blunted, flat, or inappropriate affect; digressive, vague, overelaborate, circumstantial, or metaphorical speech; ideas of reference (paranoid ideation.)"(5)

Rosewater is arguing that feminist therapists must understand "a woman and her problems in the context of the society in which she lives," and they must influence diagnostic tools of mental health institutions to do the same. This means being able to tell the difference between schizophrenics and battered women, "whose psychological needs are far different."(6) The difference, according to Rosewater, is that the aforementioned symptoms reflect a clear "grasp of reality" on the part of the battered woman, as opposed to "the total lack of touch with reality characteristic of the schizophrenic."(7) She does add that those qualities in a schizophrenic can result from external conditions such as child abuse, and that a feminist therapist: "working with the woman labeled borderline also can validate the sexist realities that the woman is encountering and at the same time help that woman to be aware that other alternatives exist to coping with the dissatisfaction in her life than becoming 'sick.'"(8)

While MIM agrees with the last part of this sentence — that there are alternatives for women to "mental illness" — we

also argue that therapy of any kind is not going to provide those alternatives. Serving the people through revolutionary political struggle will. On this point MIM is studying the practice of revolutionary China in "treating" schizophrenics in the political realm.(9) MIM also refuses the paternalist argument that a battered woman who withdraws from society is acting on a "grasp of reality." We think battered women, aware of the social context of their problems, are capable of more than that!

Most importantly, MIM sees the principal contradiction globally as between imperialism and oppressed nations, including the oppressed internal nations within the United States. Within the white nation (which produces the bulk of feminist therapist literature) we see youth as the potential revolutionary vehicle.(10)

THE THERAPIST-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

According to Lynne Rosewater and Lenore E. A. Walker, feminist therapy has always been committed to gender equality and "an egalitarian relationship between therapist and client."(11) In practice, feminist therapists want the client relationship to be a meeting of two "experts" — the therapist an expert on psychological theory and the client an expert on her own experience.(12) This model is posited against the hierarchical relationship in traditional therapy where the client relates her experiences to an expert therapist who interprets those experiences and counsels accordingly. But the feminist therapist remains an expert in deed, if not in word.

Maoists have a critique of bourgeois hierarchies, as well as a critique of bourgeois expertise. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the Maoists wanted "to turn bourgeois experts into proletarian revolutionaries, and to turn proletarian revolutionaries into experts so that all may be both 'red' and 'expert.'"(13) And in revolutionary China between 1949-1966, the psychologist-patient relationship was made more egalitarian, in deed as well as in word. Doctors lived in the institutions along with their patients, and criticism-self-criticism and political struggle was central to the therapy process. When feminist therapists critique hierarchy, they are merely "renaming" the therapy relationship in word while leaving the institution of patriarchy perfectly intact. MIM calls this a form of anarchist idealism.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

The best of feminist therapy literature promotes "social change" activity on the part of patients in conjunction with their therapy. These therapists understand that therapy alone will not change power relations on a social scale. But, ever anarchist idealist, the literature is not specific about what social change means, nor does it offer any leadership about what kind of political work clients should engage in. To do so, according to their political line, would be an inappropriate exercise of power on the part of the therapist.

This reveals the anarchist feminist lack of understanding of power. Not wanting to engage in power on an individual level (even though the therapist/client relationship is inherently

a power relationship under capitalist patriarchy), these feminists miss the opportunity to organize to confront the power of the state. The enduring mantra of the 1960s, "the personal is political," has been transformed from a recognition that personal relationships do not exist outside social relations into a justification to attend only to personal relationships at the expense of organized political struggle. Again, MIM believes this has a material basis in the class, nation and gender privilege of First World feminists. While we encourage First World women to fight the socially controlling and oppressive institution of psychology, we also understand that it is their privilege which helps to sustain the institution in the first place.

MIM calls on First World feminists to commit class, nation and gender suicide, join a Maoist party and truly get out of the trap of the patriarchal pseudo-science of psychology.

Notes:

1. See for example, Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness*.
2. "Abolish Psychology," MIM Theory 2/3, "Gender and Revolutionary Feminism."
3. Lynne Bravo Rosewater and Lenore Walker, eds. *Handbook of Feminist Therapy: Women's Issues in Psychotherapy*. Springer Publishing Company: New York, 1985, p. 33.
4. Ellyn Kaschak, *Engendered Lives: A New Psychology of Women's Experience*, Basic Books: New York, 1992. p. 211.
5. Rosewater and Walker, *Handbook of Feminist Therapy*, p. 217.
6. Ibid, p. 216, 217.
7. Ibid, p. 217.
8. Ibid, p. 224.
9. See MIM's article about psychology in Maoist China in this issue of MIM Theory.
10. For an analysis of youth in American psychological institutions, see MIM's article on private mental health institutions in this issue of MIM Theory. See also MIM's article analyzing child abuse in this issue.
11. Rosewater and Walker, *Handbook of Feminist Therapy*, p. xx.
12. Ibid, p. 7.
13. William Hinton, *Turning Point in China*, Monthly Review Press: New York, 1972. p. 46.

Feminist attack on psychology: Redstockings Made It Half Way

by MC53 and MCB52

Of the feminists of the 1970s, the Redstockings were the best thing going. MIM has written about them in general terms, but we take this opportunity to address their line on psychology and consciousness-raising in particular.(1) The Redstockings' biggest advance in this area was to recognize "psychological terrorism" as a liberal tactic damaging to revolutionary groups. This tactic includes character assassination and attacks on methods of argument, instead of struggling with the political content of the argument.

However, Redstockings fall short in believing that consciousness was the only thing holding First World women back from waging revolution. In fact, oppressor-nation women objectively benefit from imperialism and patriarchy. Imperialism puts free food on their tables and patriarchy forces oppressed-nation women to do their gendered work and suffer sexual exploitation. That is why MIM has argued that First World women are gendered male under imperialist patriarchy: they benefit from the gender oppression of women. Given that privileged reality, efforts to get First World women to support revolution have to rely on changing their consciousness, as Redstockings did. But they made the mistake of using consciousness-raising to convince privileged women that they were oppressed. Instead, MIM believes most First World women will not support revolution — and those that do will have rejected the privilege of imperialism and patriarchy, what MIM calls committing class, nation and gender suicide. When privileged women come to think they are oppressed, they practice pseudofeminism, which advances their interests at the

expense of most women and men in the world.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS AS A WEAPON OF LIBERALISM

Kathie Sarachild describes attacks based on the method used to persuade others toward the correct line, or the character of the person supporting a line, as opposed to attacking the correctness of the line itself. In order to determine the most correct path forward, Maoists engage in struggle. Liberals attempt to obstruct the struggle by using diversionary tactics such as psychological attacks, which the Redstockings call "psychological terrorism." Mao Zedong, in "Combat Liberalism," explained that "liberalism rejects ideological struggle and stands for unprincipled peace, thus giving rise to a decadent, philistine attitude and bringing about political degeneration."(2)

The Redstockings, influenced by Mao, saw this as something that aids the cause of the oppressor. It benefits the dominating group and clouds the true line of the oppressor. An argument such as "You have hostility toward me" is an argument based in liberalism, and the person using the argument avoids admitting the truth of "you disagree with me" and taking the issue on as one of line. They seek a false peace. And when the issue becomes one of morality, one of who plays more nice, the liberal only seems to be in higher standing. In fact, since the liberal does not threaten the status quo, the liberal objectively is less "nice" than the radical. As Sarachild points out, "tolerance and peace are the liberal's main aims, rather than truth and justice."(3)

Maoists want to find out what the truth is. We clash in our

quest for that, which may not be very pleasant for some involved, but without contradiction there can be no progress. Women, especially, are socialized to avoid confrontation and an assured tone, but if they want to make radical progress there is no other way.

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

The Redstockings said the main obstacle to women being revolutionary is political consciousness. While MIM disagrees with this, and identifies material conditions as more fundamental, the Redstockings' analysis of liberals is illuminating. Liberals personalize every political decision to see how it affects them as individuals. Among privileged women, this trend turns their politics into a tool for continued oppression of the world's majority. The Redstockings are talking about First World women and the development of their political consciousness. MIM focuses on political consciousness within a larger revolutionary strategy, not just as a goal for women in itself. One reason we do not pander to liberal psychological attacks is we need to develop and advance the most correct line possible without wasting time.

The Redstockings focus on the political consciousness of women whose gender, nation and class interest do not include the disembowelment of imperialism and patriarchy. Among the oppressed nations of the world, with the vast majority of biological women, conditions are different. As Carol Andreas emphasizes in *When Women Rebel*, in Peru the development of political consciousness primarily coincides or follows the deterioration of material conditions and organization of women in the work place.⁽⁴⁾ Political consciousness developed among Peruvian women after social relations had changed so that women were forced to work together under exploitative conditions and after the country had been further oppressed as a dependent capitalist country. It was after the organization around issues pertinent to the immediate struggles that women's consciousness of the country's people as a whole came about. Consciousness raising followed from conditions of oppression and socialization.

It is not in the material interests of liberal First World women to disembowel imperialism. And the destruction of patriarchy necessitates cutting off imperialism. First World women as a group, including but not limited to those who advocate liberalism, benefit from imperialist superexploitation and therefore their fight to reform patriarchy so that they have an equal piece of the pie is not genuinely in the interests of abolishing patriarchy. That is why MIM calls it pseudofeminism.

Carol Hanisch's essay relates the development of consciousness-raising groups within the left movements of the late 60s.⁽³⁾ She criticizes the rejection of consciousness-raising sessions by men as well as by women in these groups. She emphasizes studying the individual lives of the activists in order to develop political consciousness and a deeper theoretical analysis. This would not contradict the critique of liberals

that use psychological tactics to ensure that the political strategy benefits them as individuals if the individuals involved were indeed super-oppressed, because the personal is indeed political, and oppressed people achieving this consciousness is important. However, since Hanisch sees no distinctions among women of different nations and classes the effect is to glorify the revolutionary potential of First World women to a point where psychology is the only hold-back. MIM recognizes that consciousness-raising is only valuable if radical goals are set and revolutionaries understand that they are committing nation, class and gender suicide, not finding the quickest fix for the relatively minor problems they face under patriarchy. Liberalism is successful enough at these quick fixes, which is precisely why it has won the allegiance of First World women.

MIM's underlying disagreement with Carol Hanisch's article "An Experience with Worker Consciousness-Raising" is that she promotes the development of political consciousness through relating as individuals to the plight of being oppressed workers. MIM's take is that materialist analysis does not depend on the individual's identity or the individual's ability to relate to oppression of the proletariat through individual personal experiences.

Consciousness-raising is not the same thing as therapy. MIM's critique of consciousness-raising is not the same as our critique of women's bullshit therapy sessions that claim the mantle of feminism only because they are composed of women. But MIM does not use the consciousness-raising method within the Party. Subjective experience is not irrelevant but it is not the focus. Instead, all comrades strive at objective reasoning in internal debate. They do bring their personal experiences into their line — individuals remain individuals after becoming Maoists — but in a way that lacks most specifics and is generalized to the larger picture already.

Because MIM does not rely on consciousness-raising, we can better avoid the problems of psychological terrorism described so well by the Redstockings. When friendships and personal details are brought into the mesh of political debate, the debate is very vulnerable to psychologizing. When politics alone is the organizing force — not identity or social milieu — we can more easily keep the debate on track.

The Redstockings' approach is definitely at a higher level than so-called feminist therapy, but their approach is not as effective as the vanguard party, which works from the vantage point of the international proletariat, not a gender privileged sector of women in imperialist countries.

Notes:

1. See "Redstockings: Maoist feminists of the 1960s" in *MIM Theory* 2/3, p. 153.
2. "Combat Liberalism," *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung*. Foreign Languages Press: Peking, 1971.

3. Redstockings, *Feminist Revolution*. New York: Random House, 1978, p. 60.
4. See Carol Andreas, *When Women Rebel: The Rise of Popular Feminism in Peru*. Westport Hill, 1985.
5. Redstockings, *Feminist Revolution*, op. cit., p. 181.

Review: *Changing Our Minds*

Lesbian Feminism and Psychology

Celia Kitzinger and Rachel Perkins
New York: New York University, 1993

Review by MCB52

In *Changing Our Minds: Lesbian Feminism and Psychology*, Celia Kitzinger and Rachel Perkins challenge the current degeneration of feminism into self-help and therapy for the white middle classes. Both recalling writings from the 1970s, when feminist anti-psychology theorizing was strong, and looking at present writings on both sides, the authors make some good points throughout. Although MIM has fundamental disagreements with the authors regarding their identity politics, with its subsequent focus on only middle-class white lesbians that form their community, we also have much unity with their criticisms of psychology, which we present here.

Kitzinger and Perkins describe some excellent models of non-hierarchical support as an alternative to psychology and therapy. But in their refusal to outline a strategy for making these models sustainable, the authors lapse into anarchism, seeming to hope that individuals in the "lesbian community" will be able to change their society without eradicating patriarchy altogether. MIM believes their progressive ideas could only work when applied within the context of a vanguard which has the discipline and commitment identity-defined groups lack. MIM is happy to hear feminists disavowing psychology, but stresses that the world Kitzinger and Perkins describe is only attainable through socialist revolution.

WATCHING OUR LANGUAGE

One of the most noticeable infiltrations of psychology into the feminist movement is the growth of its language. Among so-called feminists, psychological terminology is increasingly replacing political language to describe the situation of women in society. Psychological language adopts a particular way of communicating experience, and as such, it has political ramifications for feminism. Beyond adding its own terms like "co-dependency" and "internalized homophobia," therapy has co-opted political language like "liberation" "revolution" and "power." These erstwhile political terms now refer to individual transformation rather than social and political change, lending a feminist veneer to objectively patriarchal concepts.

REDEFINING "POWER"

Kitzinger and Perkins write: "When men exercise power, what they are often demonstrating is power over women. Male power is vested in the state that withholds free contraception, abortion, or child care facilities to women, or in governments that outlaw lesbians, endorse police harassment, and sack us

from our jobs ... Kathleen Barry and Andrea Dworkin have shown how male power operates through the widespread use of rape, pornography, and sexual terrorism. Male power means domination, oppression, coercion... That is the kind of power men have. It is real, concrete, and it affects our daily lives."(1)

And what power do women have? "Lesbians know that, even under male domination, we are not completely powerless. We have power over those weaker than us... We have power over other lesbians who are oppressed in ways that we are not — because of their race, ethnicity, class or disability. A lesbian can use a power, of a sort, when she uses 'feminine wiles' to get her own way.... Those are real powers."(1) The authors are not equating these types of power, but they correctly recognize that both types they describe have both material foundations and social backing.

Unlike the power offered by therapy. A power that "lies within ourselves." "Power as good as men's power, but a special 'female' version."(2) The way that psychology would have women gain power would be to reclaim the power of our inner selves. Significantly, this is a form of power that capitalist, patriarchal culture does not recognize! Some of the worst psychological theorists even claim that the feeling or lack thereof of personal power is the decisive element in whether a woman is raped, for example.(3)

Kitzinger and Perkins also address the political implications of child sexual abuse prevention programs that try to "empower" children to "say no."

"Power is seen in individualistic terms as something that can be 'claimed' or 'given away' by a five-year-old. The reality, of course, is that children are *not* 'in charge,' that girls can say 'no' and still be raped, and that men often see children's bodies as *their* rightful property. The slogans and jingles proclaiming children's power conceal this reality," and encourage them to blame themselves for their victimization. (To this analysis, MIM adds that biological women can also be the abusers and biological boys the victims.)

Kitzinger and Perkins maintain that it is crucial to recognize when women and children have power, and when they do not. Fighting for power means working against patriarchal violence, for self-determination, not finding "what is ours already, waiting to be tapped, if only we stand still, breathe deeply, and pretend to be trees."(4)

THE POLITICS OF "HOMOPHOBIA"

While pseudo-feminist therapy and psychology appropriated the language of power from political feminism, "homophobia" is a term psychology itself invented. Any form of heterosexism, whether institutional or individual, is thus defined

as action based on an irrational fear by those who are "sick." Psychology's practitioners have graciously decided that lesbians are no longer "sick," and now apply the "sick" label to those who disagree with the experts' new philosophy.

Kitzinger and Perkins maintain that there is revolutionary potential in lesbianism; MIM disagrees with this while still recognizing the politics of heterosexism. No, lesbian practice or identification is not intrinsically a threat to male supremacy, but that does not make hating lesbians irrational. Compulsory heterosexuality has been a sturdy component of patriarchy for quite some time, and wishing to preserve that is a political, not psychological, wrong. Therefore MIM is not afraid to call opponents of homosexuality wrong. We do not resort to calling them phobic.

The term "homophobia" might be convenient for opponents of heterosexism, since there is a long history of proclaiming one's political opponents "mentally ill." However, to depoliticize the debate in this way is to legitimize the use of this tactic and adds to the prestige of the oppressive institution of psychology.

This tactic has led to the invention of the term "heterophobia" which, like homophobia, is supposedly an illness. Usually those who suffer from it are lesbian separatists, and, never fear, they can be treated by feminist therapists! This equation of the institutionalized practice of heterosexism with the (in MIM's view misguided) political views of lesbian separatists is false. Like the "men's rights" advocates who see themselves as the parallel of those working for women's rights, those who decry the problem of "heterophobia" distort the reality of domination. The concept also of course suggests that lesbians who fear the enforcement of compulsory heterosexuality are doing so irrationally. MIM maintains that it is not the correct political line to oppose heterosexual sex, but at the same time recognizes that fear of heterosexual domination is rational, and not a phobia as defined by psychology.

THERAPEUTIC LIFESTYLES

The rise of therapy among groups of feminists has been a part of the decline of consciousness-raising. Consciousness-raising, which was a fundamental part of truly radical feminist groups like the Redstockings of the 1970s, is the antithesis of therapy because it makes the personal political, while therapy is an inversion of that principle. (See MIM's article on the Redstockings in this issue of MIM Theory.)

Feminist therapists claim that they provide a sympathetic ear to women with ordinary problems. And in this context, sympathetic means non-judgmental. This limits what an (unpaid) friendship relationship can accomplish, as it furthers the agenda of profit-seeking therapists, who are in the business of loneliness.

The therapist is by definition the expert in relation to the client. "JoAnn Loulan [a therapist] compares the power of the therapist to the power of the car mechanic. The only difference, she says, is that 'unlike car repair, which can be learned,

one cannot learn to be objective about oneself.' So you can learn to service your car, but there's no way a responsible owner of a 'psychology' should tinker with that herself: it has to be checked out by a psychological expert."

The hierarchy is also a matter of preferring one personality type to another. Some women are considered "self-actualized" or "fulfilled" while others, even if they are not quite "sick," are in need of healing. The therapist gets to decide who's who. Some therapists think that the most self-actualized lesbian considers herself just like heterosexuals and is beyond activism, while others think that activism is a high stage. Kitzinger and Perkins maintain that even if the therapist agrees with their politics, and counsels her patients to have politics like theirs, a therapy session is not the correct place or mode of imparting these political beliefs. "Therapy replaces the words 'right' and 'wrong' with 'health' and 'sickness,' so concealing the value judgments made."(5)

THE NOTION OF "SELF"

Psychology revolves around a notion that there is a "self" inside each person that can (and should) be discovered and nurtured. This is the goal that therapy says it serves, validating what the patient's "self" wants and so on. Of course, it also makes itself indispensable by maintaining that finding and loving that "self" is a very difficult endeavor. Women ostensibly need to strip away all influences of culture, other people, and morality, in order to get at this elusive thing and attain happiness. What do Kitzinger and Perkins make of this?

"This is a ludicrous and nonsensical notion. It relies on the profoundly individualistic, modern liberal Western concept of what it means to be a person — a version of personhood alien to most of the world's people. We are simply unable to believe in this free-floating 'self,' for the 'self' only comes into existence within a context. Individual and society are not formed apart from one another, "interacting" as though each were external to the other... There is no core 'real self' lurking beneath the layers of social experience."(6)

The influence of American individualism on the women's liberation movement in America has made its theories vulnerable to psychological appropriation. If women don't care about justice, only "self-fulfillment," then psychological solutions are easy.

Not only does psychology invent a "self," it sees that "self" as wounded, fatally so unless adequate care is taken. Therapy does not provide any sense of perspective on the relative suffering of First World women and Third World women. Kitzinger and Perkins quote Wendy Kaminer, who contrasts 12-step groups with women's groups in Cambodia:

"There is more laughter and lightness in these meetings of vulnerable, impoverished survivors of genocide than in any twelve-step group I have attended, where people pursue recovery with deadening earnestness. Twelve-step groups

depress me—so many people talking about such relatively trivial problems with such seriousness, in the same nonsensical jargon. The Cambodian women's groups enhearten me—such resilience these women show.”(7)

Fact is, not all “womanhood” is equal. MIM argues that First World women enjoy class, nation and gender privilege in the world of imperialist patriarchy. Real feminists do not focus on invented frailties, appealing to therapists to heal them, but work to eradicate oppression of people over people.

And the authors of *Changing our Minds* make the point that there is no pre-requisite for being capable of doing political work, as the fans of “loving yourself first” proclaim: you learn to wage revolution by waging revolution.

In sex-therapy, the judgmentalism of non-judgmentalism is clear. If a woman finds a contradiction between radical feminism and lesbian sadomasochism, then she is “erotophobic” or some such disorder. Feminist therapists show their libertarian colors, the conventional wisdom among them endorses any sexual practice that’s “fun.” Kitzinger and Perkins recognize that singling out s/m for condemnation may not be the point, saying “if it is true that differences in power lie at the root of sexual desire, then this is a problem for lesbian feminism, and something we would want to change...Recognizing what is actually happening is not the same as accepting its legitimacy—and certainly does not mean ‘celebrating’ it.”(8) MIM holds that power is indeed at the root of sexual desire, and is working to abolish the patriarchal system that makes that hold.

Therapy asserts that it would be cruel to hurt a “wounded self” with criticism. Kitzinger and Perkins are highly critical of the anti-leadership bias among feminists that led to and reinforced the notion that women are weak. Revolution should therefore wait until women are “healed.” But “what kind of revolution waits until its soldiers are happy and fulfilled before confronting the enemy?”(9)

Kitzinger and Perkins go into what they think should be done to create a lesbian community in which lesbians could support one another with consideration, not just doing “what feels right,” and instead opting for sisterhood based on ethical debate and political action. MIM does not think this endeavor can work, precisely because it is based fundamentally on identity and not on politics. Trying to get all the people who claim a certain identity to adopt a political line is impossible. Lesbianism does not a feminist make, (and maleness or heterosexuality does not a non-feminist make). To put politics in command, it is necessary to form the group around political line. Politics formed around social and romantic relationships cannot be scientific.

SOCIAL DISABILITIES

Even those who agree that most women do not need therapy may believe it is necessary in extreme cases, such as suicidal depression, anxiety so extreme a woman is afraid to go out alone, or a feeling of compulsion to spend hours performing cleaning rituals. Kitzinger and Perkins call such debilitating

behavior “social disabilities.” The term is good in that it recognizes the nature of so-called mental illness: a social problem that should be dealt with socially, not in the individual therapy context of isolating these women from their society in order to analyze their particular problems.

Marginalization and exclusion is not a good way to deal with women (or men) who exhibit these behaviors. Sometimes others do not believe that women with social disabilities are suffering, that their behavior is just an act best ignored. This is callous and acts on a long held and incorrect notion that women in general should not be believed. Still another form of marginalization is to say to women with social disabilities, “I know how it is, I get depressed sometimes too.” This is the arrogance of a therapeutic culture that always draws false parallels to the personal experience of the listener.

Kitzinger and Perkins suggest that the lesbian community can offer practical help to women with social disabilities by doing whatever possible to help such women lead normal lives. If, for example, a woman believes that she cannot go out on certain days, then others should let her know that they disagree that going out would cause trouble, but at the same time take care of her needs.

MIM has had some experience providing this kind of support for comrades with such social disabilities, struggling with them to take responsibility for their actions as political line, and keeping the focus where it should be — on the proletarian pole. This support is not paternalistic, but important to further the goal of making the comrade fully functional again for the party and the people.

Of course, MIM has something over the ill-defined “lesbian community” Kitzinger and Perkins describe. Revolutionaries have a commitment to their comrades (through their commitment to the international proletariat) that lesbians lack for their fellow lesbians. And MIM does not use its resources according to identity politics. We use them to assist revolutionaries in furtherance of the struggle.

Kitzinger and Perkins speak of the need to create true asylums, that is “a shelter, a sanctuary, a safe inviolable place of refuge,”(10) as an alternative to oppressive psychiatric hospitals. This is sometimes a crucial part of care for comrades with severe “psychological” problems as well. If others can make sure that their material needs are met, then much of the stress of the debilitation can be alleviated. Fortunately, MIM has only had to deal with short-term problems so far. The challenge of revolutionaries with more long-term problems may be great indeed, but we are certainly better equipped for it than ad hoc groups such as those the authors describe.

GOING BEYOND “CHANGING OUR MINDS”

Kitzinger and Perkins hope that lesbians will abandon the current fad of “validating” poor arguments and instead use principled political debate to find the best arguments out there. MIM hopes that everyone will. Concretely, however, MIM recognizes that the women that the authors preach to have a

material interest in the status quo and does not indulge in liberalism with lesbians any more than anyone else. The struggle against the pseudo-science of psychology will be more difficult than Kitzinger and Perkins realize, but it is possible through the development of independent power and the establishment of socialism. *Changing Our Minds'* authors ring hollow with their cries of "after the revolution," but MIM forges ahead on the theory and practice of revolution with confidence.

- Notes:
- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. p. 39. | 9. p. 141. |
| 2. p. 40. | 10. p. 176. |
| 3. p. 43. | |
| 4. p. 47. | |
| 5. p. 98. | |
| 6. p. 111. | |
| 7. p. 137. | |
| 8. p. 135. | |

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Film Review:

Dialogues With Madwomen

Directed by Allie Light, 1992

by MC53 and MCB52

Allie Light created and directed *Dialogues with Madwomen* to inform women about psychiatric institutions so they will not commit themselves blindly to them, as she did — and to critique the society in which women make such bad decisions. The film presents powerful anecdotal evidence of six women's experience with repression in American psychological institutions. Here we look at a few themes that ran through the testimonials.

Not all of them condemn psychology or therapy as MIM does. One woman, for example, recites a familiar individualist pseudo-feminist line about how therapy helped her "find her voice." But the film did present descriptions of the harmful effects of sedatives prescribed for depression and the futility and waste of hospitalization as a mechanism for helping women cope in society. Wastes of time and energy included dances held in the hospital for patients too sedated to participate.

Most of the women interviewed were sexually abused as children. As Light points out, Freud had written that his female patients' descriptions of sexual abuse as children were fantasies. She maintains that bourgeois psychologists still do not believe women when they recall such abuse. The oppression of children is indeed pervasive in imperialist patriarchal society, in which children are objects under the ownership by their parents. (See MIM's analysis of the oppression of children in this issue.) Sexual abuse of children particularly demonstrates the cruel realities about gender in American society, in which domination and subordination are eroticized — the more powerless, the more sexy.

Historically, psychology developed as a way to talk about sex, so it is logical that sexuality and psychological reasoning are today so intertwined. A materialist analysis of gender and sexuality is essential to break the monopoly hold that psychology as an institution has over sex and gender. MIM has been advancing such an analysis for years, and in this issue of MIM Theory we unabashedly tread on psychology's turf, continuing

the important work we last summarized in MIM Theory 2/3 "Gender and Revolutionary Feminism." Psychology focuses on individuals as though they existed in a vacuum, which is both an incorrect reading of an objective situation and an ineffectual way of solving problems. MIM's work on gender and sexuality is therefore explicitly anti-psychological, and, contrary to previous anti-psychology movements, also explicitly feminist and anti-imperialist.

Dialogues with Madwomen does address ways that women deal with sexual abuse outside the institution of psychology. After one woman endured living with her abusive father, she regularly mutilated herself. She said that the wounds were one thing that she could call "real." After being abused as a child, she thought the one thing she wanted was attention. She knew she could get this through having sex. She said anyone that wanted to have sex with her could. Unlike women that search for individual power over individual men through sex, rejecting other options, this woman as an adolescent only had access to individual power. This caused further complications because she got pregnant, did not know who the father was, and was subsequently institutionalized for a "nervous breakdown."

One of the women included in the film developed multiple personalities as a child in order to deal with the contradictions between her different environments. She eventually had a "nervous breakdown" when the personality usually present in social interactions such as school emerged and endured rape — a situation another personality was accustomed to dealing with. This woman describes being under the complete control of her father, who developed rules for the household prohibiting her from wearing clothing or closing doors and invaded every aspect of her life. She says: "To survive as a child you have to forget."

This is a dramatic indictment of the realities of children having to bear gross abuse. Of course some live through it. They have no choice. It is too often a life of being terrorized by those entrusted with their care without accountability. But there can be no thorough analysis of child abuse without the imperative of anti-patriarchal revolution. Patriarchy perpetu-

ates the contradiction between children's oppression and the idea of nuclear family values.

Two of the women included in the film described intersections of gender and national oppression. The most piercing analysis was given by a Chinese woman who grew up in a middle class white neighborhood in San Francisco and tells us that "it was understood that I just didn't exist." Showing internationalist consciousness, she spoke of observing the brutal conditions Blacks lived in and her own relative privilege. She hated Amerika and all things Amerikan and went on to join a Marxist-Leninist organization, the Chinese Progressive Association. MIM is not knowledgeable enough of this organization to form a broad critique, but readily condemns the practice she describes: she was thrown out of the group following a breakdown. MIM does not abandon comrades, and her story is tragic. Since she had devoted her entire life to revolutionary politics, she had no bourgeois credentials and no one to turn to. She remarks about the prospect of filling out job applications describing herself as "an ex-communist madwoman." Among limited options, she chose to turn to psychiatry. She has scathing tales of psychiatry's abuses, asserting that "Thorazine kills the hope."

A lesbian told about being excluded from the feminist movement because she was a lesbian and from the lesbian movement because she was supposedly crazy. She said that when she began activism, straight feminists wanted to keep lesbians out of the movement because they feared being labeled "queer." But lesbians wanted to disassociate themselves from the notion of lesbians as deranged individuals bound for clinical despair.

A Black petit-bourgeois woman described the discrimination, isolation and need to assimilate into the camp of the oppressor at Stanford that led her to leave school and move to an "intentional community." The leave of absence was supposed to be free from ruling-elite domination, but as with all commune-type societies, the microcosms cannot escape the larger relations of production and consequent hierarchy of

social relations. At the intentional community the woman was raped in the legal sense. The woman said, "if this was what [she] could expect from [her] species, [she] needs another reason to stay." She isolated herself from others and eventually lived on the streets. Her repulsion brought about by the rape was more of a result of realizing the contradictions within the larger society. The rape served as a catalyst for her to see the concrete ways her schools, for example, tried to eliminate her national consciousness and worked to assimilate the Black nation as subservient to white society. The action caused her to see her systematic oppression.

MIM agrees that individual acts of violent rape are microcosmic examples of patriarchal power struggles. The solution to fighting the frustration of assimilation, however, is not to escape to a community in the hopes that the social relations of patriarchy do not exist there. The solution to that and to resolving the problems with being violently raped is to look at the best way to abolish patriarchy. The individual that runs to escape from social relations, or stops interacting with others to heal herself, will not find a solution to her own problems or the broader social problems. Instead of just trying to heal themselves, women need to demolish the system that perpetuates all oppression.

Some of the women interviewed recounted the systematic use of force in Amerikan psychiatric institutions. One described being grabbed suddenly and put into handcuffs while she was doing nothing dangerous. She pleaded that if they had asked, she would have gone where she was told. But psychiatric personnel have no stake in maintaining any freedom of will for the incarcerated. This woman recognized that they just wrote off her ability to think, considering her discredited by virtue of being institutionalized. "These people think you're dumb. I mean, being crazy doesn't mean you're dumb." Of course, MIM would contest this woman's, as well as the institution's definition of "crazy," but the point of theft of decision-making ability is an important one.

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Psychology in Practice

Attacking current mainstream psychiatric care as a tool of social control is important, and in this chapter MIM analyzes both private and public mental health care that pursue profiteering and state tyranny respectively. MIM examines the practice of psychiatric hospitals in Maoist China to see how care can be revolutionized under socialism, as well as MIM's own experiences combatting problems such as substance abuse and alienation among our own comrades. Finally, this chapter of MIM Theory includes a testimonial from a woman revolutionary that outlines her process of combatting suicide through criticism-self-criticism, which Maoists uphold as the model with which to change behavior.

Private Profiteers

Mental 'Health' for a Profit

Bedlam

Joe Sharkey
St. Martin's Press
1994

by MC17

The subtitle to *Bedlam* — "Greed, Profiteering, and Fraud in a Mental Health System Gone Crazy" — is a play on words, because Sharkey does not really believe the system has gone crazy, but that greed and profiteering are the result of market competition. *Bedlam* gives an excellent and very current look at for-profit mental health institutions around the country and their outrageous practices of kidnapping people, forcibly keeping them in institutions, making up treatments that consist of torture, and then kicking people out on the day their insurance runs out. (The nature of the public mental institutions is explored in another article in this issue.) *Bedlam* also provides both historical and current examples of MIM's contention that the psychological establishment uses politically motivated definitions of "mental illness" as a reactionary tool of social control.

Sharkey, in contrast to MIM, does not disavow the institution of psychology, merely the corruption inherent in its privatization. He concludes that although he could clearly see that the for-profit mental institution industry is ruining the lives of many and treating non-existent diseases to make money, he still believes that many Americans are functioning better today "because of quality psychiatry."⁽¹⁾ The social democratic implication is that psychology itself is OK as long as it is not in the private sector. This formulation denies the political and

social benefits the bourgeoisie derives from the institution as a whole regardless of whether it is private or public.

So while Sharkey is critical of the profit-motive, he does not see that capitalism and imperialist abundance created the institution of psychology from the outset, and the egregious practices that he exposes are part and parcel of the bourgeois, idealist enterprise of examining the internal psyches of individuals apart from their material and historical circumstances — and leaving society unchallenged. In an imperialist social order built on the oppression of people over people, the effort to make the oppressed and the oppressor "adjust" and be "mentally healthy" is itself corrupt. Still, we review this book because it is important to expose the rampant profiteering in this field as one way to de-legitimize the field itself.

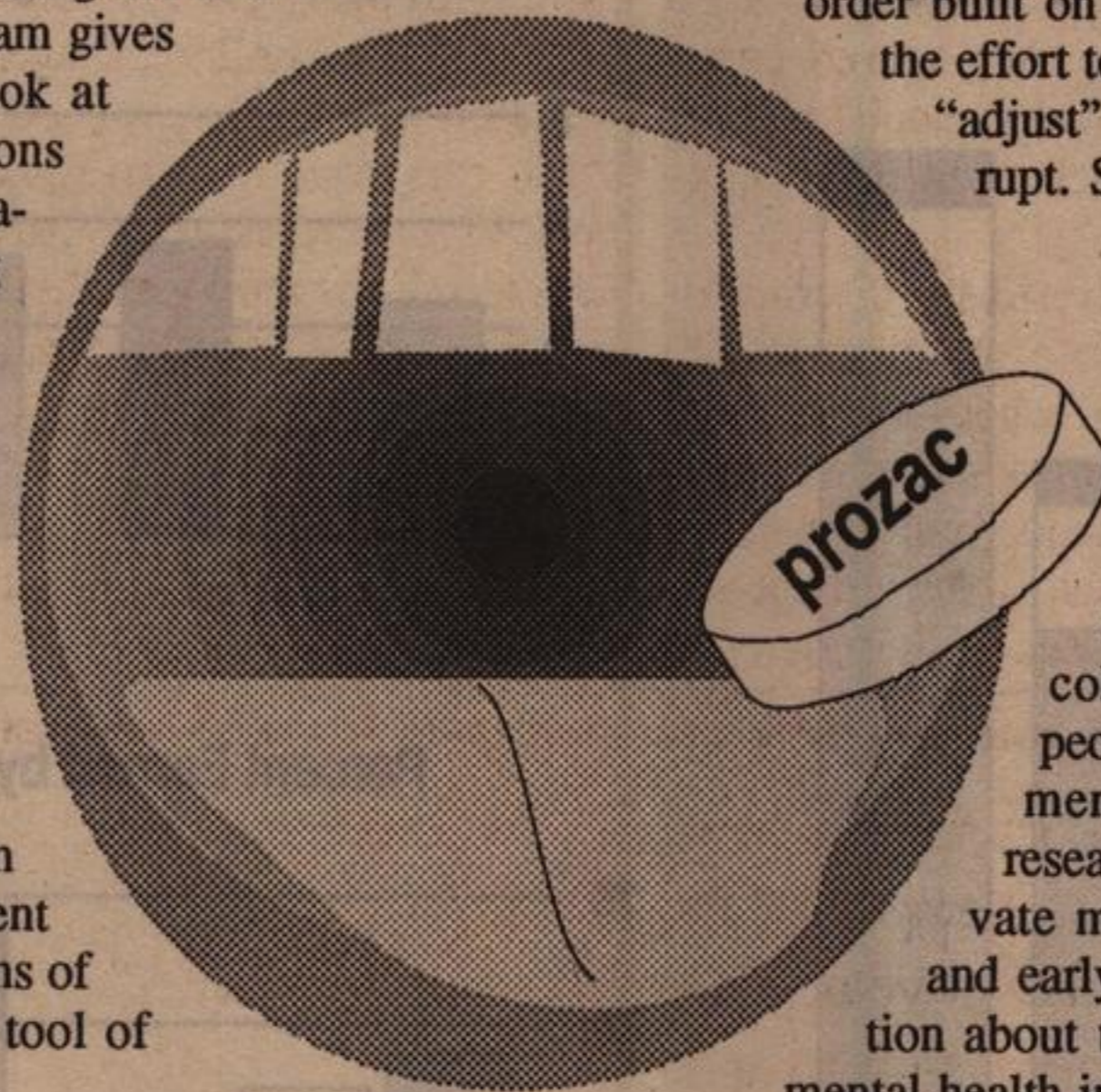
THE STUDY

Sharkey, a journalist, spent a few years traveling around the country collecting stories and information from people who had been abused by for-profit mental institutions. He also did a lot of research into the history of the boom in private mental health institutions in the 1980s and early 1990s. This, combined with information about the few times in the last 10 years that mental health institutions have been actually prosecuted

for their practices, creates a very readable account of the for-profit mental health industry. By 1991 there were four companies that made up nearly 70% of the for-profit psychiatric beds in the United States: Charter Medical, Community Psychiatric Centers, National Medical Enterprises, and HCA. Sharkey details the abuses of these and other smaller psychiatric institutions.⁽²⁾

THE HISTORY OF ABUSE

Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of



Independence and the chief physician of the continental Army, is seen as the father of American psychiatry: his image is on the official seal of the American Psychiatric Association. Among his contribution to the field of mental disease classification

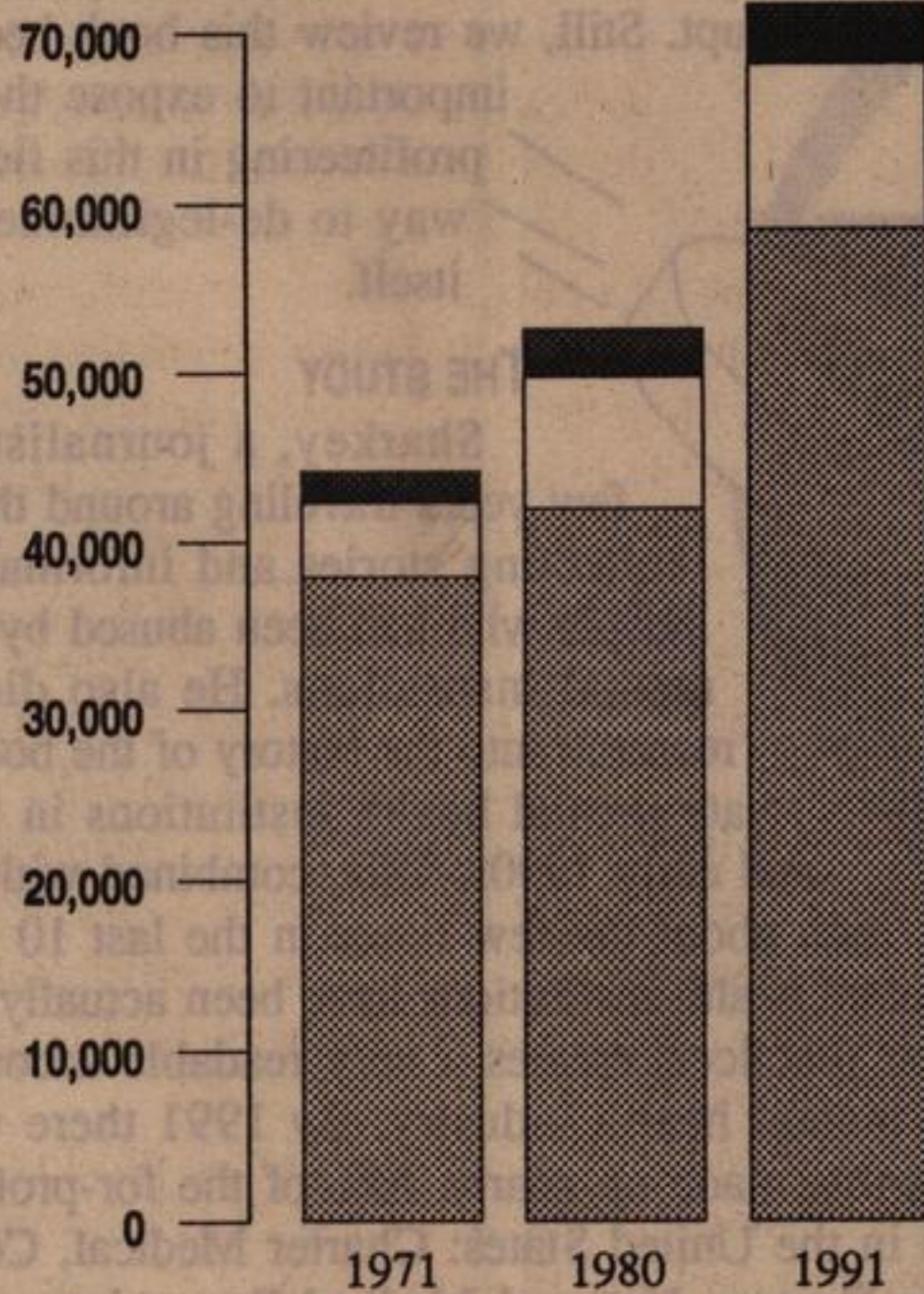
was "anarchia," which he defined as a brain disease of people who were unhappy with the new American political system.

Before the Civil War, psychiatrists in the American South

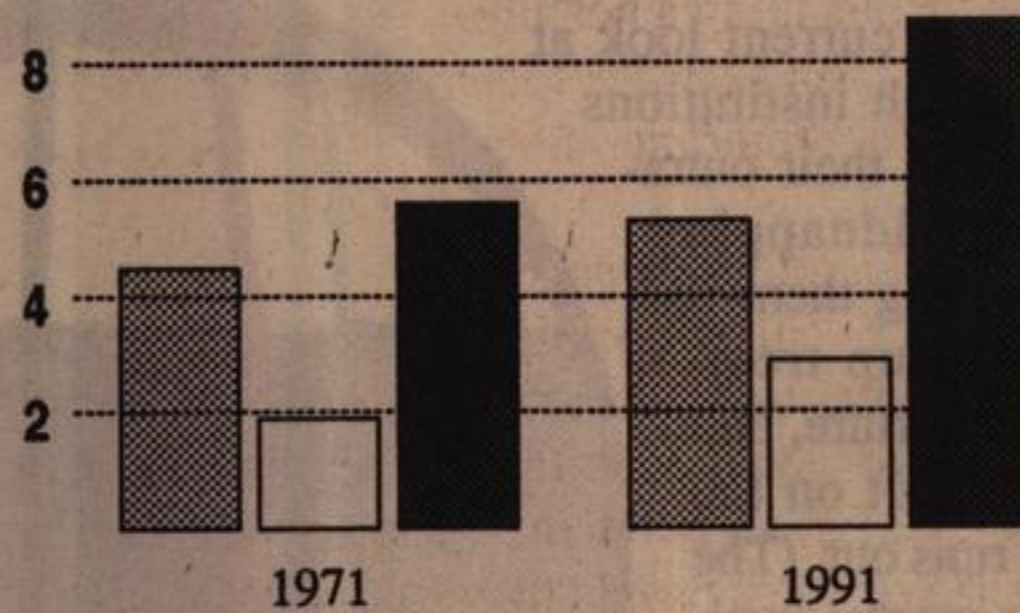
PSYCH *ological profile*

The number of Bachelor's, Master's and PhD degrees in Psychology has boomed in the last 20 years. The Census Bureau lists Psychologist as one of the fastest growing occupations. In each category of degree, a greater proportion is going to Psychology now than 20 years ago. And the field is increasingly dominated by women.

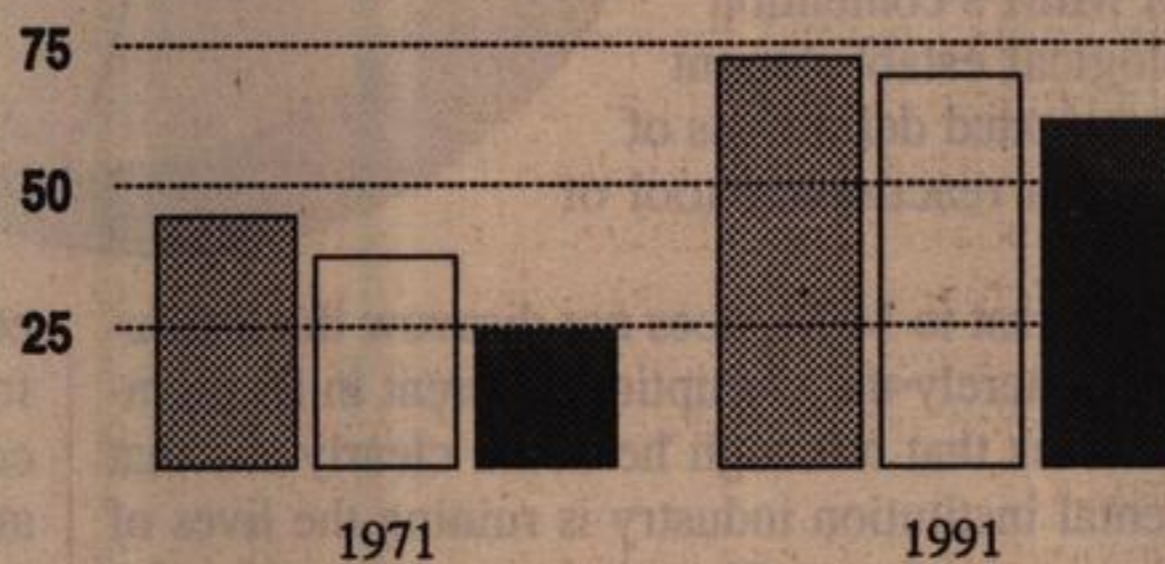
U.S. Degrees Earned in Psychology, 1971-1991



As Percent of All Degrees Earned



Percent Earned by Women



Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994, p. 189-90.

added to the growing list of mental illnesses the discovery of "drapetomania" a disorder that occurred only in Black slaves and was characterized by a desire to escape.(3)

Throughout the history of psychology and psychiatry this profession has been used to justify political and social ends. Whether it was to define as diseased people who were not happy with their position in life, or to keep firmer social control over a population, mental "health" continues in its longstanding reputation as a tool the people in power use against those who are not in power.

THE CURRENT SYSTEM

One interesting aspect of this book is its exploration of the oppression of the middle class in Amerika by the mental health industry. All of the people interviewed for *Bedlam* are well-off enough to be covered by comprehensive medical insurance. The vast majority of them are white, educated, and many are property owners. That is the nature of for-profit mental institutions: they make a profit off of insurance claims and so their target population is the middle class who is covered by health insurance. While the poorest of the United States population, principally oppressed nationalities, are imprisoned when they become a problem to the social order, the for-profit mental institutions police the white middle class and weed out any "deviants" — while also making a healthy profit off of those that would not be considered deviant, even by Amerikan standards.

Many of the people interviewed for this book tell stories of being forcibly dragged into mental institutions, with the authority of a court order, on the orders of someone who had never even seen them. Others described being coerced into entering an inpatient mental health facility by counselors, priests, or other people they trusted. Many were told they were suicidal and constituted a danger to themselves (one prerequisite to being forcibly institutionalized) even if their only problem was a drug addiction.

People calling supposedly non-profit information help-lines were really calling mental institutions whose only purpose was to get them into the institution (if they had the appropriate insurance coverage). Once inside the institution, even for those voluntarily admitted, conditions do not get any better. Treatments include "chair therapy" where children are made to sit in a chair all day long; tormenting someone who is held down as an "aggression release" therapy; and many forcibly administered drugs.

All of the people coerced into and kept in these for-profit institutions had insurance that covered their stay and all of these people were kept the maximum number of days they were covered for and then immediately declared cured and kicked out on the last day of coverage.

Social workers, school counselors, probation officers, crisis hotline workers, addiction counselors, doctors and ministers are just a few of the people paid for referrals of people who can be forced into these institutions. Some people receive as much as \$1,800 for referring patients to a mental health institution. In addition, the institutions send people to raid non-profit meetings such as Alcoholics Anonymous, trying to pick up anyone they could find to bring in to their institution, convincing them that they could not be cured without inpatient treatment.(4)

TARGET: YOUTH

Beginning in the early 1980s kids began going crazy in record numbers, or so we would be led to believe looking at the numbers of young people admitted to psychiatric institutions.

A 1989 study demonstrated that the amount of trouble that children cause adults is the driving force in determining their referral to a mental institution.(5) This form of social control of youth who are defiant of authority corresponds to a capitalist society that demands conformity. Youth, who do not yet have concretized material ties to capitalism, are the most likely portion of the white population in Amerika to become revolutionaries and oppose the outrages of the imperialist government. Nipping this defiance in the bud early on, mental institutions have worked effectively to define defiance as a mental disease (not much different from the disease "anarchia" from the early years of psychiatry).

Branching out into new markets, for-profit mental health institutions began chasing after kids beginning in the early 1980s. They found that the profit margin on a child was higher because they required less attention, could be charged more, and referrals from schools and parents were easy to obtain.

Parents were easily convinced that "Johnny's" problem with his homework or "Susie's" defiant attitude were really mental illnesses that needed immediate inpatient treatment so that they could be "cured." Again we see the politically defined and profit-driven definitions of mental illness. For instance, when "behavior disorders" were no longer acceptable as a claim for insurance payment, mental institutions came up with new definitions around depression problems to fit the claims requirements.(6)

At the end of the 1980s the National Institute of Mental Health (a federal government agency that determines mental-health funding) declared that one-fifth of U.S. children under the age of 18 suffer from a diagnosable mental illness.(7)

The latest edition (1987) of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM- III-R) came up with some great justifications for the hospitalization of children. Included in this list is

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“oppositional defiant disorder,” which is defined as a child who has at least a few of the following “manifestations of the disease:”(8)

1. often loses temper
2. often argues with adults
3. often actively defies or refuses adult requests or rules, e.g., refuses to do chores at home
4. often deliberately does things that annoy other people, e.g., grabs other children's hats
5. often blames others for his or her mistakes
6. is often touchy or easily annoyed by others
7. is often angry and resentful
8. is often spiteful or vindictive
9. often swears or uses obscene language

Based on these definitions, the majority of Amerikan youth is mentally ill. (And since the psychiatric establishment insists that this illness is at least in part a result of genetics, doesn't this “prove” that Amerikans are genetically inferior to many Third World populations where the children do not have time to spend on the above problems because they are too busy worrying about having enough to eat?)

An advertisement from College Hospital stated, “studies indicate that anti-social behaviors in adolescents usually are not ‘reactions’ to home, school or community involvements. They, more often than not, are disorders of neurological development.”(9)

A 1986 study conducted in Illinois showed that 53% of youth who were admitted to inpatient hospital psychiatric programs were diagnosed with adjustment or conduct disorders. This study was conducted before the heaviest marketing to parents and youth got underway. A study in Kentucky in 1990 found that in one psychiatric hospital 80% of kids admitted were diagnosed with a “conduct disorder.” By 1990 the diagnoses of “oppositional defiant disorder,” “conduct disorder” and “adolescent adjustment disorder” made up more than one-third of all psychiatric admissions for youth in the country.(10)

Corydon Clark was a California psychiatrist who became disgusted enough with the system to publicly condemn its activities. In 1992 he wrote:

“I have personally participated in every aspect of these unscrupulous and deceptive practices. I can state with complete confidence that at least 65 percent of all these admissions were not medically necessary. Distressed families are, in my opinion, routinely presented (by admissions staffs) a very misleading portrayal of services and benefits their child would receive during hospitalization. Psychiatrists, during the evaluation process that follows admission, routinely commit what amounts to fraud by concocting diagnoses which are more in tune with what they know the insurance will reimburse than actual psychiatric disorder evident. ... Thousands of children and adolescents and their parents are directly harmed every day by the current system.”(11)

Finally, the federal “Youth Violence Initiative” is a four-year, \$400 million project to identify inner-city kids who have biological and genetic defects that supposedly indicate a propensity for violence later in life. In 1992 Dr. Goodwin of the National Institute of Mental Health explained that “there is a genetic contribution to any social personality disorder. The environment does not cause one to be violent or to develop a criminal record if there isn't a vulnerability already there.”(12) According to these vulgar servants of imperialism, class status is also genetic (see the Bell Curve review in this issue).

ADULT DEFIANCE

The National Association of Sexual Addiction Problems estimates that 10-15% of the U.S. population are addicted to sex. More than 20 million Americans are addicted to gambling, according to the national Council on Compulsive Gambling. And a leader of the “codependency” movement estimates that more than 200 million Americans suffer from the effects of abusive, addicted “or merely critical” parents.(13)

Referrals for adults are also deceptive and deceitful. One toll-free suicide hotline in the San Antonio phone book referred callers to a 1-900 number which charges \$2-a-minute. Another toll-free suicide and depression hot line in California begins its calls by asking the caller if they have insurance. If they did they were referred to a private psychiatric hospital and the hotline got a referral fee. If they did not they were referred to a 1-900 number to pay \$2.50 a minute to receive alternate referral information on public help.(14)

In 1986 (the last year such statistics were kept), 49% of all inpatient admissions to private psychiatric hospitals were for diagnoses of “affective disorders” (later renamed mood disorders). This diagnosis includes those who are undergoing a “manic episode” which according to the psychiatry's official clinical definition of the disorder is when a person does not “recognize” that he or she is ill.(15)

PROFITS WITH FEW CONSEQUENCES

The mental health industry estimates that in 1991 total costs for mental health care and addiction treatment exceeded \$125 billion, making it the fastest-growing segment of U.S. health care costs. By 1990, 25% of spending on employee health insurance went into psychiatric and addiction treatment benefits, 85% of which went to inpatient hospital treatment. Between 1984 and 1988 the number of psychiatric hospitals in the United States went from 220 to 444.(16) In 1991, two researchers at the University of Michigan demonstrated a direct correlation between number of days of inpatient treatment covered by a patient's insurance and the number of days they are kept in a mental institution.(17)

A former director of the alcoholism program at Fair Oaks Hospital in New Jersey conducted a follow-up study on addiction-treatment patients there. He found that the rate of abstinence from drugs or alcohol three months after the conclusion of treatment was the same (65%) whether the person was in an

inpatient or outpatient program. Outpatient treatment cost about 5% of inpatient care.(18)

In 1993 the federal government raided National Medical Enterprises' (NME) offices as a part of an investigation that turned into an exposure of many of the systematic abuses of the mental institutions nation-wide.(19) The insurance agencies who had, up until then, been paying all the claims without a murmur of protest, had no interest in speaking up because 11 of the 25 American health insurance companies had a total of \$1 billion invested in psychiatric hospitals and facilities.(20) At the time of this investigation of NME, the other major corporations including Charter Medical, Community Psychiatric Centers, and HCA came under fire and recorded serious declines and even losses in profits.

But don't be fooled into believing that this federal investigation solved the problem. After all this, in 1993, the latest study from the National Institute of Mental Health concludes that 28% of the adult population now suffers from a mental

disorder.(21)

As more mental "diseases" are defined and marketing continues to reach out to people across Amerika, convincing them that their inner child is sick and in need of treatment, for-profit mental institutions continue to operate as centers of deceit that accomplish nothing of medical good — but do make a lot of money.

Notes:	11. p. 125.
1. All notes from <i>Bedlam</i> . p. 285.	12. p. 283.
2. p. 89.	13. p. 146.
3. p. 182.	14. p. 158.
4. p. 81.	15. p. 180.
5. p. 127.	16. p. 11.
6. p. 90.	17. p. 101.
7. p. 96.	18. p. 280.
8. p. 100.	19. p. 271.
9. p. 114.	20. p. 273.
10. p. 117.	21. p. 278.

State Tyranny

Non-Profit Mental Institutions

by MC17

This article is about state run mental "health" institutions in Amerika. The review of the *Bedlam*, by Joe Sharkey, looks at for-profit institutions which are similar to state run institutions in many ways but which have a different target population: the medically insured or those rich enough to pay.

First a word about prisons and mental institutions. Prisons in Amerika are used for social control. Historically, people who disagree with the ruling class in Amerika have been branded as crazy, brainwashed or just stupid. To protect themselves from these social deviants (deviant because they don't accept the existing order), the ruling class locks these people up. There are two possible places to put these people, prisons and mental institutions.

The "criminals" locked up in prisons are generally male, members of oppressed nations or poor whites, and frequently framed for a crime they did not commit or punished for a crime they did commit but for which a wealthy white person would not be punished; the imperialists run free murdering thousands of people worldwide and getting paid to do it.

WHO IS LOCKED UP?

The alternative to prisons is mental institutions. These have become the prisons of the whites, females, and youth of Amerika who do not fit in to the existing social order. As discussed below, the mental institutions target youth who are displaying "defiant" behaviors. While the oppressed nations are

Blacks are more likely to be put in prison while whites are more likely to be put in mental institutions.

disproportionately locked up in prisons, the proportions of whites in mental institutions is equal to their representation in the general population. Women are much more likely to end up in mental hospitals than prisons. These different groups are locked up for different reasons, but they are all deemed incompatible with "normal" society.

A number of studies have looked at the differences between youth sent to mental institutions and correctional facilities in different populations. These studies all conclude that Blacks are more likely to be put in prison while whites are more likely to be put in mental institutions, and that psychiatric diagnosis does not affect where a youth is sent. When "race" and gender are taken into account,

mental institutions are no different from prisons as far as what is considered to be "wrong" with a youth. The following paragraphs summarize these studies.

WHITHER YOUTH?

In addition to finding that members of oppressed nations are more likely to be sent to prisons, one study conducted in 1988 in South Carolina found that Blacks were twice as likely as whites to be involuntarily committed to the psychiatric institution. The diagnoses of Blacks also differed from whites. Whites were two times more likely to receive a mood/anxiety diagnosis (even controlling for type of admission and gender) while Blacks were more likely to receive an "organic/psychotic" (organic, schizophrenic, unspecified psychotic, and perva-

sive developmental disorders, moderate and severe mental retardation) diagnosis.(1)

In Connecticut over the course of one year all adolescents in an urban area who were sent to the only correctional school in the state were compared to all adolescents from the same area who were admitted to the adolescent unit of the only state psychiatric hospital serving the same area. Looking at violent acts that were similar in nature committed by the two groups of adolescents, they found that the level and nature of violence was not different between the two groups.

Looking at the differences between girls and boys they found that girls were more likely to be hospitalized while boys were more likely to be incarcerated. In addition, a greater proportion of Black youth were sent to the correctional institution than were hospitalized. They also found that the ratio of Black to white boys was significantly greater in the correctional school than in the hospital. They conclude that "in the lower socioeconomic sectors of the urban area studied, violent, disturbed black adolescents were incarcerated; violent, disturbed white adolescents were hospitalized."(2)

A study at the University of Pittsburgh's psychiatric institution looked at all new referrals 13-18 years old between November 1982 and December 1989. They found that Blacks admitted represented the lowest class while the whites were overrepresented in the higher class. Whites were more likely than Blacks to be diagnosed with an eating disorder while Blacks were more likely to be diagnosed with a conduct disorder.(3)

A study comparing a state operated juvenile corrections facility with a state operated psychiatric hospital for children and adolescents in Richmond, Va. looked at all people age 12-15 admitted to either facility during a 5-month period in 1989. They too found that Black youth were more likely to be sent to correctional institutions while white youth were more likely to be sent to the mental institution. In addition they found that the mean socioeconomic status (a measure of class) was lower for the youth in the correction institution, although both groups were at the lower end of the class range.(4)

A study in New York state in 1988 looked at all youth age 10-18 admitted to mental health facilities and residential correction systems. In their sample 23% of the mental health admissions were Black while 56% of the correction system admissions were Black. Compared with the proportions of these groups in the general population, Blacks were disproportionately overrepresented in both mental institutions and correction facilities.(5)

METHODS OF CONTROL

These studies that look at youth admissions to prisons and mental institutions paint a pretty clear picture of the differences in methods of social control used in Amerikan society. The difference between the people being sent to prison and the people being sent to the mental institutions is not behavior, but nationality, gender and income level. So Amerikan society views mental institutions as a more respectable way to deal with whites, females and wealthier people who do not abide by the rules of imperialist society.

Notice that Blacks admitted to mental institutions are usually diagnosed with "conduct disorders." Remember that Amerikan society considers actively disagreeing with the dominant social order a "conduct disorder." Whites, on the other hand, are admitted for "mood/anxiety" diagnoses. Elsewhere MIM has discussed the decay and decadence of imperialism and its effects on the general population. It is no surprise that many people, especially youth, have a hard time dealing with this fucked up society.

It is important to bear in mind that overall far more non-whites are locked up in prisons and mental institutions combined than whites. This is true even though whites make up the majority of the people in this country. This confirms that Amerikan imperialism recognizes its internal oppressed nations as a serious threat

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while only a small part of the white nation needs to be controlled beyond the usual parameters of acceptable social control — and that the level and type of control is different for different populations. Most people sent to prison are not intended to fit into "normal" society again. The plan is for them to be locked up or heavily policed forever. Those in mental institutions have a greater chance of being "cured" of their "disorder" and returned to "normal" society.

Another study found that unemployment rates were the single factor that could be used to predict admission rates to mental institutions in Britain. Higher unemployment rates meant more admissions to mental institutions.(7) Britain is similar to Amerika and this is good evidence that "mental illness" is not a genetic problem. It is determined by social conditions and the definitions of the oppressor.

Feminist activist Kate Millett wrote several books about her experiences in and out of mental institutions after her family decided she was crazy because she was devoting all her time and money to progressive political causes. Other activists, especially female activists, have been locked away in mental institutions as a way to get them off the streets and out of the effective political organizing they were previously engaged in. When Allyn and Adele Rickett returned from China after five

years in prison there, and declared that they had been correctly imprisoned by the revolutionary government because they were spying for the state department, the Amerikan public moved quickly to declare them brainwashed and in need of mental "health" treatment.(8)

In 1990 there were 270 state and county mental hospitals and 967 private mental hospitals in the United States. The state and county mental hospitals have 98,400 devoted psychiatric inpatient beds and the private hospitals have 30,700 devoted psychiatric inpatient beds. In addition to these institutions devoted to mental "health," there are a number of general hospitals, veterans administrations, and other institutions that have a total of 98,800 inpatient psychiatric beds. This does not count private psychiatric office practices and psychiatric service modes of all types in hospitals or outpatient clinics of Federal agencies other than the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In total there are 111.5 inpatient beds for every 100,000 people in the U.S. The total number of psychiatric inpatients in 1990 was 229,700.(9)

In 1992 "psychoses" was number 5 among the top causes of admission to a hospital for men. For women it is probably number 6 (this data was unavailable beyond the top 5 and delivery of babies pushes every admission cause down one for women). Among men age 15-44 years of age "psychoses" was the number one cause of admission to a hospital with 240,000 men or 4.1 per 1,000 men admitted under this diagnosis. Men stayed an average of 11.8 days for treatment for "psychoses." Women in this same age group had "psychoses" listed as the number two cause of admission (outdone only by delivery of a baby). The number of admissions for women and the rate per 1,000 people was the same as for men but women stayed a longer average number of days, 12.6.(10)

ON THE INSIDE

Once inside the mental institutions, many patients are locked in, as these places don't even pretend to follow the law.(6) A more subtle method of forcing mental institution patients to stay is to declare them temporarily unfit if they try to leave. This allows the institution to lock them in and drug them "for their own good" under the pretense that anyone who would try to leave a mental institution must be insane and dangerous to themselves.

A big problem in mental institutions is suicide. There is a high suicide rate in these places, something that is difficult to document but generally agreed on by all who study psychology. The institution response to this is "it would be more abnormal if these people had not been connected with a psychiatric unit. Then we would be worried that we weren't reaching them at all," as a nurse from the Edith Morgan Centre commented.(6) But this response does not tell us why these people are not being saved from suicide by mental health institutions that are supposed to help them. There are many accounts of people being put in mental institutions who were not originally suicidal but who are unwilling to live in such a place and end up

killing themselves as a way out. MIM can only offer anecdotal accounts of this happening, and similar information in the literature, because the mental institutions do a good job of covering their tracks by diagnosing everyone as suicidal and a threat to themselves. This makes proving the cause of the suicide particularly difficult.

Notes:

1. "Influence of Race on Diagnosis in Adolescent Psychiatric Inpatients," Mark D. Kilgus et. al., *Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 34:1, January 1995.
2. "Race Bias in the diagnosis and Disposition of Violent Adolescents," Dorothy Otnow Lewis, et. al., *American Journal of Psychiatry* 127:10, October 1980.
3. "Do Caucasian and Black Adolescents Differ at Psychiatric Intake?" Horacio Fabrega et. al., *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 32:2, March 1993.
4. "Characteristics of Children and Adolescents in a Psychiatric Hospital and a Corrections Facility", Robert Cohen et. al., *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 29:6, November 1990.
5. "A Note on Racial Bias in the Admission of Children and Adolescents to State Mental Health Facilities Versus Correctional Facilities in New York," Stuart Kaplan and Joan Busner. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 149:6, June 1992.
6. "A Litany of Complaints," Jane Seymour. *Nursing Times*. January 31, 86(5), 1990. p.19.
7. "Unemployment rate as predictor of rate of psychiatric admission," Kammerling and O'Connor. *British Medical Journal*. 307(6918):1526-9. December 1993.
8. *Prisoners of Liberation: Four Years in a Chinese Communist Prison*, by Allyn & Adelle Rickett. Double Day Anchor Press: New York, 1973.
9. *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, p.134.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

**YOUR ARTICLE, LETTER, POEM,
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Psychological Practice in The Chinese Revolution

by MCB52

This article examines the practice of psychiatry in revolutionary socialist China in order to critique and apply lessons to our present and future work in North America. In MIM Theory 2/3, MIM defined psychology as "the worst of bourgeois social sciences — as the pseudo-science of finding human motivations, or development processes in thinking, to explain human behavior. Psychiatry is the practice ... of trying to alter individual behavior through the application of psychological theory to the individual."(22)

Much of what is dealt with by psychology today is a reflection of decadence — parasitic people who use the psychological establishment to garner greater privileges, such as opting out of all work, avoiding unpleasant relationships, or just getting subsidized drugs to live in la la land. On the other hand, much of what psychology attempts to individualize and "solve" is really healthy alienation — pissed off people rationally resisting the hegemonic culture one way or another. This especially affects youth and women, and rather than trying to "cure" it — we celebrate it!

The flip-side of this is the inability of people to survive mentally in an oppressive system. The answer to that on a social scale is not teaching people to cope better (through drugs, TV, therapy or whatever) but changing the society to meet the people's needs, which requires revolution. However, there are serious immediate problems under this heading as well, and that is the main subject of this article: drug addictions, schizophrenia, serious neuroses and mental retardation, for example. Helping to resolve these as part of the revolutionary struggle is a humanitarian effort for the affected people, and it increases their revolutionary potential by focusing their potential capacities in a revolutionary direction.

Most of the behaviors called "neuroses" under the present system were understood by the Communists to have social causes and were combated with social means, and MIM would follow that lead. Addictions of whatever sort, for example, can be addressed socially. (That these ailments have a physiological aspect does not imply that their resolution must be purely individual.) What the Chinese called mental illness was dealt with in a comradely manner, as were all contradictions among the people, which are by definition non-antagonistic.(1) In a socialist society, only the former oppressors should have a hard time coping with the dominant culture. Unlike in imperi-

AND THE REVOLU- TIONARY STRUGGLE TODAY

alist society, it is progressive to struggle to get people to fit in. MIM looks to this example in the first place to see how we can help people cope enough to contribute to revolutionary struggle — to avoid incapacitation at the hands of the system. In the second place, we want to develop practices to implement more widely among the masses as we gain independent power and eventually socialism.

MIM seeks the abolition of the psychological, or individual, approach to various problems — replacing it with social prevention through social revolution. We admonish those groups socialized to support individualist approaches — youth and women, principally — to see "personal" circumstances as

material circumstances, created socially and resolved through social struggles.

But as a revolutionary party organizing in North America, we face a staggering number of people engaged in the mental health system — voluntarily or not — and how we get from here to there with these people is an increasingly pressing question. Maoists believe in creating a society free from oppression of people over people — the only kind of society in which all humans can reach their full potential.

Clearly, the Amerikan institution of psychology differs greatly from the one that was in place at the time of China's liberation. MIM does not confront the psychiatric problems posed by malnutrition on a grand scale, for example. While in China there was a real dearth of doctors, in North America the very surplus is part of the cycle of psychiatry's entrenchment: the psychiatric industry and the culture which sustains it. And psychology as an institution is much more entrenched, has much more ideological sway among the people who seek out its individualist solutions, and will be much harder to tear down in Amerika.

A MAOIST PRACTICE

From 1949 until 1965, the Chinese developed a psychiatric practice that was both effective and consistent with socialist practice. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), they were ready to stem the growth of psychiatry as a practice and abolish psychology as a field of study. By examining how they came to that point, and learning from MIM's own experience thus far, we can construct a path to the era beyond psychology.

When we say psychology, we mean that pseudo-science

that studies human behavior in an atomized way, with psychiatry as the branch of medicine that treats problems identified as psychological. We include all areas of psychology that seek to find individual causes for social problems.(23) Communists are interested in the psychological establishment in the same way we are interested in the state. Communists look at the Amerikan state, recognize its oppressive nature, and work to abolish it. However, we do not leave a void in its place, but rather a socialist state that can provide a transition to statelessness. Classes and class interests still exist under socialism, and a state is necessary to maintain the class power of the proletariat over its former rulers, even as it paves the way for the eventual abolition of the state.(24)

And so it is with psychology. Communists look at the Amerikan practice of psychology, recognize its oppressive nature, and work to abolish it. Alienation and injustices will still exist under socialism, and so a socialist practice that tackles issues currently claimed by psychology is necessary to bring the people affected into productive membership in the new society. We will have to deal with the neuroses of the former bourgeois individuals, for example.

Some idealist anarchists would rather not dirty their hands with state power or psychology. Dismantling mental hospitals under the present system, while progressive, has not been successful, as many former patients are now often unable to cope or survive without an adequate support system. Many suffered damage from psychotropic drugs and other psychiatric "treatments" and are now homeless, for example.

MAOIST RESEARCH

Much of the psychological research in China between the time of Liberation and the Cultural Revolution was incorrect. By looking briefly at the development from 1949 until 1966, when the discipline was abolished altogether, we can see its progression to a more correct analysis.

The first phase in research, which lasted from 1949 until 1958, was adopted primarily from the Soviet Union. Like the research in the USSR, it stressed the physiological/neurological basis of behavior. The research was based on Pavlov's work, among others, and essentially excluded class analysis from the understanding of the individual.(7)

During the Great Leap Forward years of 1958-1959, the masses made criticisms of psychologists and called them out of their laboratories to do practical work among the people. This is the time when an activist attitude gained ground in psychology. From this point, research focused on practical ways to bring real individuals into the revolutionary society rather than basic research with no application, that focused on the body in isolation. The mechanical materialist position was being challenged by a dialectical

approach that stressed active consciousness along with physiological phenomena.(8)

The Cultural Revolution marked a synthesis, in which psychologists were finally brought into line with the revolutionary society and the vestiges of their nonpractical work ceased to be funded in favor of illuminating the struggle of active consciousness as the supreme factor in human behavior. The emphasis on brain function was discarded in favor of the action output of human beings performing a social act. This does not mean that Maoists pretended that brains do not exist, but rather they noted that human potential is astoundingly great.(9)

A RATIONAL DIRECTIVE IN PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT

While psychotherapy was not recognized as a specialty in Maoist China, a sort of psychotherapy was in practice. They did not follow the Western doctrines of psychoanalysis, as developed by Freud and his successors. Instead, they developed their own practice rooted in their own experience. Studying dialectical materialism was the basis for the struggle toward rationality, which is appropriate for treating mental illness because dialectical materialism aims at both understanding problems and solving them. While the Chinese used Pavlovian interpretations for a time, with their conditioning to strengthen or weaken inhibitions, they were not considered essential in practice and were virtually discarded by the time of the Cultural Revolution.

A dialectical approach in psychotherapy can be understood as the struggle between irrational and rational aspects of the individual. It is materialist because it is based on the conviction that there is a real world that can be understood, and that all people are capable of understanding it. The truly mentally ill are confused in their understanding of the world, and their confusion may be cleared up through study and treatment. The message is not, "There is a real you, let's find it," but rather "there is a real world, let's get you back in it."(2)

The main outlines of Chinese rational directive in psychotherapy incorporated the forces of conscience, the call for individual effort, and engagement by education and reeducation within the framework of the social conditions and dialectical materialism.

In China, a mentally ill person was not viewed as a passive witness to the illness or suffering, or the object of medical treatment by means of medication. The patient was called upon to fight the disease and its symptoms. At the start of treatment, the psychiatrist would explain to the patient the origin, nature, and course of the illness, and the course of treatment to undertake.(3)

The Chinese process of psychotherapy can be divided up into three basic elements:

1. Call on a sense of responsibility from

HUMAN
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GREAT.

the mentally ill, and encourage optimism in the prospect of rapid recovery.

2. Help the patient understand the illness. Its origin, development, deterioration, and recovery follow an objective and regular pattern. Once patients understand this pattern, they can adopt actions that push toward recovery.

3. Stimulate the patient's own activity against the behavior. Patients can relate the objective pattern of their behavior to the environment and their own personalities to formulate a practical approach to combat the behavior. This is a long-term proposition that includes structuring a life with a proper balance of work, exercise, and recreational activities.

As many as 80% of Chinese patients achieved lasting and significant improvement.(4) Results like this come from social consciousness and the impetus to fight the disease.

In the case of hospitalized patients, physicians and staff strove to create good relationships with the patients, because this social relation fostered recovery. Patients were engaged in collective cultural activities and politics to fight their isolation. This could be considered "collective therapy" more than psychotherapy; it differs from the American version of "group therapy" because politics is in command and it fits into greater social objectives.(5)

Study of Mao's writings was not just a way of understanding problems, but in true Marxist form a way of solving them. Mao pointed out: "What Marxist philosophy regards as the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thereby becoming capable of explaining it, but in actively changing the world by applying the knowledge of its objective laws."(6)

So the treatment of neurotics was not fundamentally different from the treatment of spies or delinquents. Rather than giving moralizing sermons, China strove to create in individuals a social conscience. This started with a public confession, not to create a feeling of shame, but to create the possibility for help from the community.

THE STRUCTURE OF MAOIST PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

After Liberation, the number of beds in Chinese psychiatric hospitals increased by 14 times.(10) At first, the new institutions were expansions of the old. However, in the 1950s the hospitals became a part of the revolutionizing of society. The conduct of the staff, which had been primitive and cruel even by American standards, changed radically. Isolation, confinement, punishment and repression were abolished. Electroshock therapy was rare, and finally abolished during the Cultural Revolution.(11) In part of the attack on hierarchy, it

ISOLATION, CONFINEMENT, PUNISHMENT AND REPRESSION WERE ABOLISHED.

was decided that staff should share the living conditions of the patients, eating and sleeping in solidarity with them. The patients were now encouraged to stay clean, and assisted if they needed it. Crucially, they were assured that upon release they would have jobs waiting for them, and their families were supported during their absence to minimize the stress of hospitalization.(12)

Old Chinese psychiatric hospitals, like American ones, relied on sedation to keep life within the hospital smooth. But in revolutionary China patients' minds were kept as active as possible. They were taken to public displays, and the staff explained daily news to them. Work was of course also important, whether it was simple domestic tasks, semi-industrial labor, or recreation like singing or dancing.(13) Although a regulated lifestyle was considered important to cre-

ating mental stability, care-givers worked against monotony. Medical treatment was given when needed, but the emphasis was on the conviction that patients worsen when they are submerged in their own pathological thoughts, and so must not be isolated from society. This spurred the preference for acupuncture, during which a patient is conscious of what is happening.

DRUG ADDICTION

As a consequence of British imperialism opium addiction was a widespread problem in China before the revolution. The Chinese Communist Party eliminated the existing supply, and provided alternative employment for those engaged in its distribution, struggling with those who were willing to struggle, and punishing those who were not. The main way to combat substance abuse for the users, in addition to taking the substance away, is at its root. When a meaningful way to live life, such as waging revolution, is a real option far fewer people turn to drugs in excess. The mobilization of Chinese revolutionaries and the subsequent eradication of opium from Chinese society gives us hope that we can eradicate the excessive use of drugs, including alcohol, in North America.

Alcoholism is a good example of how MIM has attempted to apply Maoist practice to very real problems we face in this society. As we develop independent power, MIM is advancing a strategy separate from existing institutions. We can apply the three principles China did: making the person aware of the problem, calling on a sense of responsibility, and aiding in structuring a new life. MIM makes alcoholics aware of the damage their behavior does to the revolutionary struggle.

Unlike Alcoholics Anonymous, MIM does not tell lies about who must change. There is no higher force; the responsibility is on the person to change. MIM helps the person find a

dry living arrangement with sober friends or comrades and structure a new lifestyle that does not include drinking. This newer practice has been successful on the whole, and is superior in principle to herding revolutionaries into AA meetings. "Until communism" is a better commitment than "one day at a time." In at least one instance, an individual who had just given up substance abuse devoted the majority of their time to political work — substituting the new activity to the benefit of the party of the international proletariat.

MENTAL RETARDATION

Most of what retardation did exist in China was caused by malnutrition, vitamin deficiency, parasitic infections (particularly worms), and many diseases in youth that retard brain development. After Liberation, however, the frequency seemed to decline. It is not possible to measure because the communists did not make distinctions among children and label those who were slower as "retarded" (or use the medical term of "oligophrenia"). Instead, children who learned faster were encouraged to help the slower ones. By refusing to isolate them, educators brought them into the society as full functioning members.(14) Interestingly, parents of children with mental retardation in North America often try to get them into the "normal" classes, but other parents want them kept out because they do not want their children to "fall behind." Even when the children are not isolated, they are scorned by others concerned with "getting ahead."

Though MIM has not had the opportunity to bring in revolutionaries whom the bourgeoisie defines as "retarded," part of putting into practice the principle of "red not expert" has been to work against the hierarchy that sees only the most "intelligent" as worth bringing into scientific understanding. In study groups, we are vigilant to make sure that none are left behind. As MIM grows, we are facing problems, such as illiteracy, that will challenge comrades with strong reading abilities to help those without. We operate on the conviction that everyone, without exception, is capable of being incorporated into the revolutionary struggle.(15)

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Schizophrenia is still not well understood, and MIM has so far only had to deal with it in theory. The Chinese believed that there was a biochemical basis, and while MIM is unsure of the evidence, a biochemical *component* is not the same as a biochemical *basis*, and either is less dangerous in theory than genetic theories, which are widespread among Americans.(18) China developed simple ways of dealing with such patients, for example, exploring which

dietary plans reduce the symptoms of nausea and prolonged comas. The manifestations of schizophrenia are social even if there is a chemical component or basis. The gross individualism and violence in Amerika may lead people diagnosed as schizophrenics to shoot up a McDonald's or worry about constant surveillance, while in a socialist society their behavior would manifest itself differently. Even before socialism, a revolutionary party can divert this energy to meaningful political work. The key is good politics.

PROBLEMS OF DECADENCE

Neuroses were not as widespread in revolutionary China as in the imperialist countries. Dealing with neuroses in a fundamentally different way, China recognized them as social, not psychiatric, problems and addressed them through educational and other means.

Imperialist culture is in decay in its excess and so Americans have a lot to be neurotic about. MIM has had to deal both with what the bourgeoisie would define as real psychiatric problems and also the more standard depression that pervades parasitic culture. In MIM's experience, it is not very practical to just say "it's all in your head" to revolutionaries with such problems. Instead, we follow the three principles, using self-criticism at times as a mechanism in which people can explore their incorrect behavior and shape new behavior. Comrades cannot necessarily find conclusive roots of the problems individuals face, and therefore problems cannot often be "solved," but they can provide the support system necessary for reform. Being totally happy under imperialism is unlikely unless you don't care about oppression, so revolutionaries should do their best to get by while getting their highs on revolution and the people's struggles.

One common example of a characteristically petit-bourgeois problem comrades have had to deal with is eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia. Such problems do not confront revolutionaries working in the Third World (16), but they are very common among First World students, a population MIM heavily works with. Mainly young women suffer from this ailment, and MIM cannot shirk its responsibility to assist them. In MIM's experience, it has been useful to address eating disorders as an incorrect line on gender, persistently calling people out on these and other harmful manifestations of that thinking. (See Letters.)

WHY CALL ON THE INDIVIDUAL?

It may seem unfair that Maoists call on individuals to solve problems that have been caused by society. Is this not like Christian salvation? No, it is its opposite, because we don't care about

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blame. Take an analogy: MIM knows that it is the First World's fault that the Third World is oppressed. We could therefore argue that Third World peoples should just chill and make Americans take responsibility for ending oppression. Plenty of Trotskyists do. But MIM cares about finding the best — and quickest — road to liberation and socialism. It sucks that the Third World has to wage armed struggle to get what it "should" already have, but it's better than continued oppression.

The situation in psychology is different, because we cannot readily identify groups against groups and barriers to justice. Yes it sucks that people have problems caused by social structures we can't fix today — and we call on them anyway. However, we justify this because we are not into the moralizing of it. Telling people to take responsibility for changing is not the same as telling them it's their fault for being fucked up. We take this responsibility for all sorts of things that are not our fault. Who else is going to do it?

MIM only calls on individuals to make individual change when they are working with us. This distinguishes us from the conservative "up by the bootstraps" approach which thinks that individual solutions are the answer to social problems. These individual-focused approaches will decline after the revolution, and we use them only with care and with constant vigilance and not to place blame.

At this point in the struggle, MIM cannot come close to the effectiveness that China had. We can only change living conditions moderately (e.g., get sober), and so we are still essentially caught fitting individuals into society as it is. However, MIM is distinct from friends, communes, co-therapy and so on because we do not see functionality in a dysfunctional world as an end in itself. Full functionality is not even a necessary prerequisite. We do not expect perfect sanity from comrades in an imperialist-run world, and we tolerate minor neuroses and whatnot, but we provide the support needed for individuals to work for revolution. But we recognize that tolerating behavior that hinders revolutionary political development is liberalism, not compassion. This means MIM advocates diverse avenues to maximize comrades' effectiveness, whether that means healthy diet and exercise or leisure-time support groups.

Putting high expectations on individuals brings in questions of how much we can expect from people, without risking their "self-esteem" and making them discouraged. First off, "self-esteem" does not exist in the abstract. Why should disgusting parasites feel good about themselves? MIM offers people the best way to improve that much-coveted "self-esteem" — we offer meaningful lives. Doing worthwhile things is the only legitimate way to get "self-esteem."

Notes:

1. Martha Livingston and Paul Lowinger, M.D. *The Minds of the Chinese People*. Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1983, p. 112.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
3. Ari Kiev, MD, ed., *Psychiatry in the Communist World*. Science House: New York, 1968, p. 234.
4. Livingston, op. cit., p. 156.
5. See MIM's criticism of so-called "feminist therapy," in this issue of MIM Theory.
6. "On Practice," July 1937, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung Volume I*. London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 1955, p. 292.
7. Robert Chin and Ai-li Chin, *Research in Communist China: 1949-1966*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969, p. 18.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-62.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 209-212.
10. Livingston, op. cit., p. 156.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
13. Kiev, op. cit., p. 255.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-2.
15. R. C. Lewontin, Steven Rose, and Leon Kamin, *Not in Our Genes*. New York: Pantheon, 1984.
16. See MIM's discussion of anorexia in MIM Theory 2/3 pp. 190-2.
17. Kiev, op. cit., pp. 238-9.
18. See *Not in Our Genes* by Lewontin et al, who argue that while schizophrenia does seem to be heritable, the evidence is inconclusive about whether it is genetic or environmental, nor is it clear whether the chemical abnormalities precede the disorder or are manifestations of it.
22. MT2/3, "Gender and Revolutionary Feminism," p. 39.
23. Other areas of psychology, such as cognitive psychology, are sometimes less reactionary, as they examine brain development or other subjects that may be worthy of study.
24. See MT8, "The Anarchist Ideal and Communist Revolution."

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Review Essay

Prisoners of Liberation

*Prisoners of Liberation:**Four years in a Chinese Communist Prison*

Allyn and Adele Rickett

Doubleday Anchor

1973

by MC31

This book tells the story of a successful political re-education program implemented by the Chinese Communists right after Liberation in 1949. The targets of the re-education were two Americans (husband and wife) who went to China in October 1948 on Fulbright scholarships. The Ricketts were asked by the Naval Intelligence, before their trip to China, to "keep their eyes open" and report back any information they could find.⁽²⁾ After the American Consulate withdrew from China in early 1950 following the defeat of the Nationalists, the Ricketts continued to engage in espionage and feed information to the British government.

The Ricketts were imprisoned in 1950, in separate prison cells for men and women, and underwent an intensive thought reform campaign. Back in America for 15 years after their release, the Ricketts still valued their political re-education in China, believing it made them happier and more active.⁽³⁾

We include a review of *Prisoners of Liberation* in this issue of MIM Theory because it is an important illustration of the arduous and intensive process of criticism/self-criticism and "thought reform." The introduction, written by Victor Li, starts out by saying that the term thought reform is an unfortunate one: "What must be done to get people to act in a particular manner — that is, to have people avoid certain 'undesirable' actions and undertake certain other 'desirable' ones? . . . Perhaps this entire area would be more understandable if we called it socialization rather than thought reform."⁽⁴⁾

Li's introductory remarks are correct in explaining thought reform as a process that spans a wide range of activities and purposes. There can be the purpose of reform of an individual and his/her actions, as well as the purpose of creating a society where the deviation from the established social norms does not occur in the first place. If this type of process were undertaken in a systematic way in imperialist capitalist society it would be fascism. In China after Liberation, social norms were defined by Maoist principles, dedicated to eradicating oppression, exploitation and poverty. MIM argues that it does matter what the content of the social norms are; in other words, we only advocate thought reform on a mass scale when communists are in power to implement it.

In addition to thought reform for criminals and other deviants, "thought reform is also used in a much more positive and constructive sense to increase political consciousness, to

explain social policies, to teach specific techniques, or even to raise the cultural level of the public."⁽⁵⁾ Rather than approaching problems of deviance as individual psychological problems to be treated with traditional therapy or drugs — thought reform, or the process of criticism/self-criticism, was used in China under Mao to re-educate the masses, and engage them in political struggle.

Prisoners of Liberation has been an important tool in advancing MIM's ability to successfully use the process of criticism/self-criticism to address what are thought of as "psychological problems" as problems of political line. This issue of MIM Theory argues that psychology as conceived in America is a tool of oppression; a psychological approach to anti-social behavior takes agency away from the individual and the masses, and has as its goal teaching people to learn to adjust to their oppressive conditions (or their role as an oppressor) rather than struggling for political change.

**They were expected to be fully honest
about their feelings and beliefs,
acknowledge their wrongdoings,
and struggle to correct them.**

At the time that the Ricketts were engaged in spying they believed they were doing nothing wrong, and in fact believed they were righteously helping their country. In retrospect, after their long period of imprisonment engaged in thought reform, they understood that they had been counter-revolutionary and that the Chinese Communists had the right to try to convince them of the error of their ways, not just imprison them because they had broken the law. There was no physical force, deprivation of food, or "psychological torture" used by the Chinese Communists against either of the Ricketts. There was sustained demand that they be fully honest about their feelings and beliefs, acknowledge their wrongdoings, and struggle to correct them.

In the beginning the Ricketts felt as if they had to say what they thought the Chinese Communists wanted to hear, and they believed that they could get away with an insincere self-criticism. They soon learned that insincerity or half-hearted attempts at self-criticism were unacceptable, because the Communists took thought reform and political struggle far too seriously for that. In order to work self-criticism must be sincere. This kind of deep soul searching takes time and effort and pain; it can be a rollercoaster of progress and regress. The

process is intense, involved and does not happen overnight. In the case of the Ricketts in prison, other petty criminals participated in the process and had the right and the legitimacy to criticize as well. There is a dialectical process of criticism/self-criticism where wrongdoers of different kinds help each other through their thought reform.

The difference between psychology and politics is fundamentally that a political approach such as that used in thought reform requires the person to not only recognize and understand and be honest about his or her feelings, but to take political responsibility for them and to be prepared to accept the consequences of one's actions and beliefs. Psychology concentrates mechanically on the internal psyche of individuals, whereas political self-criticism evaluates the individual dialectically as a social being. The Ricketts finally understood, after a long period of struggle, that their imprisonment and period of thought reform was appropriate; in fact, in other societies they would have been executed or tortured.

In an epilogue written in 1972, 15 years after they first returned from China, the authors wrote that they still believed the process of thought reform and criticism/self-criticism. They noted that they saw the "so-called political consciousness-raising" (6) groups of the 1960s and '70s, as well as drug and alcohol addiction group therapy, as an attempt at a similar process. Of the consciousness-raising sessions they said: "All too often we have found such sessions motivated by unrealistic idealism or by a simple desire to release one's own frustrations rather than any solidly based desire for personal reform." MIM would continue that analysis by noting that there is little desire for genuine social or political reform as well. MIM has found the process of criticism/self-criticism useful within its own ranks because there is genuine desire and motivation to make communist revolution and the knowledge that struggle is continuous.

"[F]or thought reform to be successful on a national scale, genuine, not sham, criticism and self-criticism must be applied constantly, especially among persons in positions of authority. Furthermore, it must be carried out under a strong, united, and dedicate leadership armed with a theory inspirational in terms of goals, realistic in terms of current social conditions, and flexible enough to meet changing situations. On the individual level, it must never be forgotten that the purpose of criticism and self-criticism is to solve problems, not win arguments; to achieve the common good, not personal gratification."⁽⁷⁾

The Chinese Communists understood that people are products of their society, and that to make a good society and good people the society needs to dismantle the oppression of people over people. Furthermore, those involved in an individual's thought reform process need to provide positive reinforcement when the individual recognizes his or her errors. Those who were working with the Ricketts understood that the Amerikans were products of their society, rather than treating

them as individuals with exceptional personality traits that made them support imperialism. Allyn Rickett once revealed in one of his self-criticism sessions that he did not understand why the Chinese were so upset at the Amerikans' use of biological weapons in Korea, thinking that it was mere jealousy that they did not yet have those weapons themselves.

The Chinese prison supervisor who participated in the thought reform process of Allyn Rickett said this to the other Chinese who were exasperated with the lack of progress that Rickett was making in his self-criticism and genuine understanding of what he had done:

"He's the product of a society which makes a virtue of total warfare, and can see nothing morally wrong in the wholesale slaughter of innocent women and children. . . He's been filled with these ideas for almost thirty years. You can't expect him to get rid of them overnight. Reason with him. Ask him how he'd feel if an atomic bomb or plague germs were dropped on his wife or mother and father back home."⁽⁸⁾

MIM highly recommends this book as an interesting and readable account of conditions in China right after Liberation, and as an example of the commitment and dedication required of communists to the process of criticism-self-criticism. Criticism-self-criticism should be used on an individual level to address and correct wrongdoings, and on a mass social scale in the process of socialist construction and the move toward communism.

Notes:

2. *Prisoners of Liberation*. p. 2.
3. p. 344.
4. p. vii.
5. p. viii.
6. p. 343.
7. p. 341.
8. p. 168-9.

From MIM's MUST READ Collection:

- *The Fundamentals of Political Economy*. A basic introduction to Marxist political economy and the economic laws of socialism and communism. Shanghai People's Press. Required text for all MIM members. \$15 post-paid.

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Disavowing suicide

Testimonial of a Woman Revolutionary

This testimonial was written by a woman who, through arduous struggle, self-criticism and study, and revolutionary practice made the conscious choice to devote her life to the cause of the international proletariat, rather than to concede her life to the reactionaries through suicide. We print this essay here to provide a model for others who have been driven to suicide by an oppressive and exploitative society. MIM says over and over throughout this issue of MIM Theory that there is an alternative to psychological treatment for alienation and depression. In this article, we say that there is also an alternative to suicide. All power to the people! —ed.

I am not planning to kill myself. That right there is a pretty remarkable declaration because at few other times in my life would I have said the same thing. This testimonial is an altered form of the self-criticism that I wrote taking responsibility for a suicide attempt. It is presented here because I want others who have considered suicide as an option to hear the arguments I have found compelling, and to choose revolution instead.

The details of my life situation are pretty irrelevant. I analyzed them somewhat in my self-criticism, but there is no reason to include the dirt here. For the purposes of this testimonial, it's enough to say that I grew up under shitty conditions by Amerikan standards and, like many around me, lived life as though it were disposable. I never had to come up with drastic reasons to kill myself beyond the amorphous recognition of myself as a parasite. Anyway, I believe it's impractical to ask the question in this way. On a philosophical level, I uphold what Mao says: life has intrinsic value. However, that argument is just not compelling a suicidal person. Going into platitudes that life is a beautiful thing when someone is profoundly miserable isn't worth shit as suicide prevention. Living is much tougher than committing suicide so it needs more compelling, tangible reasons to be chosen as the option. Especially in the case of suicide with drugs, the violence involved in death is so much smaller than that involved in life. I have never deceived myself into thinking that living is not a conscious choice.

I used to live my life one week at a time, deciding that I would live until my appointment on Friday or whatever short term goal seemed pressing. As each event passed I would have to come up with a new one. I drank, did drugs, and ran away often, seeing these as very practical short-term ways to avoid life's obstacles. The

timing never seemed quite right to die, and drinking and drugs helped bear a pretty shitty existence. A couple of friends killed themselves and I basically believed I was destined for the same fate eventually. Further, I saw my dawdling in carrying this out as selfish since I was such a drain to my family and everyone else.

This attitude started to change when I came into contact MIM. I really liked lots of the politics, and dove right in to reading party literature and took on party work shortly after. It was a thrill, and I practically stopped thinking about suicide for a while. I was still drinking heavily, doing plenty of illicit drugs and otherwise being self-destructive, but I started to see all this as detrimental to what I wanted, which was to be a part of the overthrow of the fucked up system. But when a personal trauma came along, I was immediately back in the planning stages. I was coming to the conclusion that if I was going to kill myself someday, it might as well be before dragging myself through a miserable life. I reprimanded myself for wasting so much of MIM's time when I would never amount to anything. I thought I would contact the party one more time to say good-bye and then "disappear."

That turned out to be dramatic. I was cryptic about what I had in mind, saying to my contact that I might run away and only flippantly saying I might kill myself, as though it were an afterthought. To my surprise, the MIM comrade addressed my words directly and sharply. S/he demanded that I declare I was sure I did not give a fuck about the international proletariat before I abandoned them. I remembered the Sartre quote in which he says that if you are not working on the behalf of the oppressed, you are accomplice to their oppression. The harsh words I received over the course of those couple of hours made me aware for the first time of my responsibility to live. My mind seemed to

*I want others
who have
considered
suicide to
hear the
arguments
I have found
compelling,
and to choose
revolution
instead.*

go snap that evening. Here was someone I respected representing a party I believed in saying my life was worth something. A major change from most past messages to say the least. Along with abandoning illicit drugs, I made the decision then that suicide was no longer an option, and I held that the conviction was a permanent one.

In discussions with MIM thereafter, I exaggerated details of past suicide plans as though they had been closer to success because I was afraid they would not take me seriously — I feared they would think that I was just another silly girl who jabs about suicide but is too cowardly to do it. This was very gendered-female behavior. I did not yet trust MIM to take me at my word. I felt compelled to make them extraordinarily aware that I was a person who had been to the edge. This exaggeration did not even seem like a lie to me at the time because I felt the truth would not be heard. I saw my dishonesty simply as insurance in case I lost it again. Obviously this insurance did not work. Perhaps that's because I assured MIM in short order that suicide was no longer an option, that almost magically I had lost this impulse overnight. Only a nagging doubt remained at that time, and it was not compelling. Comrades believed my enthusiastic mood and (more importantly) political reasons to be decisive just as I did when rational. And they did not harbor the slight nagging doubts I did when irrational.

Those next couple months felt different from the whole rest of my life had until that point. I delved deeply into political activity and worked out my psychological hold-backs with my new tools: science and much help from MIM members. I was gradually replacing my base of irrationality with science. I was coming to know that my personality traits were far from fixed and that I could leave things behind to become a member of the revolutionary struggle. Despite my extreme self-doubt, MIM made time to struggle with me. Getting constant attention and shaping my life just about exclusively around political work helped me to make huge transformations in my behavior. There were some desperate times, especially as I was quitting drinking, but on the whole I was making progress and building confidence in my potential as a valuable revolutionary.

Prior bourgeois commitments I could not easily get out of led me to relative physical isolation — a drastic change after months of much attention. The changes I had made in order to do political work (especially quitting drinking and drugs) isolated me from the social scene I had been a part of before. My impressive changes were more tenuous than I had imagined. Perhaps a more stable person would have been more able to

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cope with less than constant interaction, but I had not developed the self-reliance I needed. Rather than rising to the occasion, I desperately focused on a couple of points I thought I could handle (like staying sober and keeping appointments to meet comrades) and felt more and more like I was falling into my own abyss. It wasn't the sort of depression where you "feel down" or whatever; it was a desperate, passionate, debilitating depression. At times I would have what I now call "emotional breaks," when I became too agitated to think rationally. Letters on a page I was reading would fail to make up words, or people who were speaking would suddenly seem to no longer be speaking in English, and my frustration was violent. A minor set-back would cause me to completely lose control. Sometimes no set-back was necessary — I would simply break down for no apparent reason. I began to fear that I was completely losing it.

How could a pattern of suicidal behavior be reintroduced if such dramatic change had indeed taken place? This question is similar to asking how bourgeois restoration can happen after socialist revolution. The restoration does not mean that the revolution never happened or that it was unsuccessful, but rather that it was incomplete. Dialectics is useful in understanding the individual as well as social change. In my case, structures of physical isolation and non-accountability remained to undermine the progress made. My nagging self-doubt, now transformed from irrational little-girl insecurity into feelings of political inefficacy, grew in this environment. Without coping mechanisms of drugs and alcohol, the stress seemed even greater than before.

I sensed the danger of backsliding regarding alcohol. People always say that life of past drinkers is a ceaseless battle against that urge. Not one day went by that I failed to remind myself of the correctness of the choice to stay sober. However, I was not similarly vigilant against my desire for suicide which is extremely related since it is also a cop-out. This narrow focus may not have mattered had my confrontation of drinking been more comprehensive and involved more explicitly my responsibility to the revolution. But like most people I was sober essentially for sober's sake and emphasized personal gains. Committing to living sober with the option of death was much easier than committing to living sober period. Not drinking was a pretty straight-forward goal I felt capable of succeeding at, unlike the more all-encompassing goal of leading a useful life. Looking back, I almost laugh at my reasoning that, hey, I might be a failure in general but at least I ain't a lush.

Though I was doing a fair amount of political work, I was

not in a position of accountability. I mistakenly thought in my newness to Maoism that while doing work would be a good thing, my not doing it would not be missed. The masses simply had not come to expect my presence yet so they would not notice my absence much. (I realize now the baselessness of the conception of "being missed," and deal with it below.)

Timing was key to everything. I cannot pinpoint the moment that I began as before to see my eventual suicide as a given, but the detail of timing was the only question. The most pressing deadline to me was to get out before I would be missed. It seemed to be my last chance to cop out, giving a pressing urgency that made me feel rushed in my plans.

I was hoping comrades would figure out what I was up to and take the trouble to restore my will to live by some magic means without my taking on any part. In accordance with gendered-female socialization, most of my communication was indirect. If I had said "I am going to kill myself tomorrow," they would not have had any option but to dissuade me regardless of how worth saving I was because they would have felt too guilty. No one personally would let someone just kill herself, so I would have no way of knowing whether they thought I was politically valuable. (Of course I realize now that the political reasons to prevent suicide would have been decisive.)

But with somewhat cryptic suggestions, I thought I freed them to act as they saw fit. I said, not long before the attempt, that "the only thing" that kept me from doing "something drastic" was that I had a hundred papers and I did not want the pigs to find them and implicate the party. This threat was couched in emotion, and a comrade has told me since that s/he never thought I was literal, that I could easily be interpreted to mean that political work was too important. However, I meant precisely what I was saying through euphemisms — the risk of endangering the party was the only thing preventing me from committing suicide. In my mind, giving this description allowed me (albeit unfairly) to put some responsibility on the party. I was letting them know that they had until I distributed this stack of papers to change my mind. If they failed to do anything, I felt obligated to do what I said I would. Indeed, I reasoned it would be dishonest to not follow through. I had given what I perceived as fair warning. The morning of my attempt, I distributed the newspapers, removed other evidence of my connection to MIM, and fulfilled my prophecy.

Even as I tied up so many loose ends, I did feel a bit guilty about abandoning the party. My rationalizations could only go so far in convincing myself that all work I would do, however imperfect and inferior to party members I so admired,

would be of no worth whatsoever to the Third World proletariat. I mean, the oppressed just can't spare many friends. But I did have political reasons justifying my choice to kill myself. I was taking a huge amount of comrades' time because of my inexperience and ineptitude, and I thought that MIM should use its time with care. Though I believed that there are no "hopeless cases" as far as potential communists go — in communist China former "psychotics" were brought into the revolutionary society — I thought I was too difficult and irrational for a party to deal with any time before state power.

Like many women, I did not see myself as intrinsically valuable simply as a human being and thought I was only useful after much study and work. The little knowledge I already had was mostly in antiquated fields, and I felt I was years from having a good base in useful things. This would not have mattered so much — red *and* expert is the key — except that my redness was questionable while I was so caught up in my desire to kill myself. This was a sort of circular argument: I was suicidal because I was not useful and I was not useful because I was suicidal. I imagined streams of young radicals out there that MIM could be training were I not taking up their time with my seemingly ceaseless struggles against profound inadequacies. Since the party could not or would not realize that I was not worth their resources, I believed I had the responsibility to end the drain myself. (To be extra fair, I gave them warning so if they really wanted me around they could do something.) I could have chosen to do this by ending contact with the party, but life as meaningless as the one I was leading before I came into contact with MIM seemed too miserable an option. Thus I decided that suicide was not only the answer to my own selfish desires, but also the correct political choice.

As it happened, a final warning was received, and people got me to the hospital. The following week being sedated in a mental institution prevented me from analyzing my behavior. I began to write a self-criticism a week after my release and am working with help from comrades to develop a strategy to prevent suicidal behavior in the future.

Self-criticism is much more than producing a document; it is a process. Unlike my experience in the mental institution, where I was merely the object of so-called treatment (injecting me with sedatives so I could hardly think and asking me about my problems in a fake touchy-feely way), self-criticism is not something I have endured, but something I have created. At the hospital, I knew the way to get out was to lie: make up a nice tidy story to explain my misery, act happy, and promise to go into therapy. With

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suicidal.*

comrades, it was honesty with no holds barred. The goal was not to get out, but to grow through the process.

One of the first things comrades helping me make change did with me was read *Prisoners of Liberation*, the story of two Amerikan spies in a Maoist prison. This book gave us a framework within which to consider the use of individuals' own subjectivity to make progress. It also helped us get over our initial defensiveness and be frank about what we were thinking — that is, to admit to past mistaken reasoning and not jumping ahead with pretensions of having had the correct analysis all along. Perhaps most importantly, it helped us realize that self-criticism isn't mere excuse-making, but rather a long process with the goal of transformation. Accordingly, we set up an extensive program including frequent meetings and made sure I had constant access to someone to talk to should I need to.

That comrades shouldered this burden amazed me at the time because I did not fully appreciate what the dedication to communism means. Their entire lives were interrupted by a most difficult woman, and they took it in stride. I was extremely moody and did not really know how to control the swings into depression. They had no way of knowing when I would explode. I was doing pretty well for a month or so, giving a sense that the worst was behind us, but I regressed for a lull. Comrades did not give up. As time passed, we gradually developed strategies for minimizing the stress of emotional breaks. For example, I am not compelled to answer the question "what's wrong?" when I am too agitated to express myself rationally — this results in further frustration. We agreed that I would come to people when I need help and could discuss things when I have calmed down. The dips into depression became less frequent and less debilitating.

I had to immediately make some excuses to prevent rash action as I was still close to the edge. I moved to a living situation in which I both received the material support I needed to get by while I was engaging in political struggle and self-criticism; and which prevented me from doing anything bad which would reflect back on the people I lived with and put them at risk. Also, I made a point of starting to become accountable, taking on assignments and using my particular skills. These actions were a sort of behavior band-aid while I tackled the underlying causes of my suicidal desires. Self-criticism is also called "thought reform," and for good reason. Changing thoughts is crucial not because psychology is decisive but because long-lasting changes in behavior rely on such change.

In the months following hospitalization, I was still think-

ing about suicide a lot. And so it was necessary for me to abandon the gendered behavior of emotional signal sending and euphemisms regarding suicidal plans in favor of honest communication. Comrades also accept that it is even more paternalistic to ignore emotion-laden pleas of inefficacy than call people on them and deal with them as political line. Just because the bourgeoisie defines self-doubt as a psychology issue completely divorced from politics does not mean that materialists should. I've been very frank, letting them know at one point that, were it not incriminating to them, I would definitely have tried to kill myself again. With reporting of suicidal thoughts, comrades have been able assist me in routing them. And because I trusted (and continue to trust) the party, I decided to fake it for a while until suicide would cease to be my default. At the beginning of the self-criticism process, I had only these excuses to live but not reasons. Now I rely on both.

At the beginning of the self-criticism process, I had only these excuses to live but not reasons. Now I rely on both.

I have excellent reasons to live. I have learned through study and practice that I am a valuable part of the struggle against oppression. Not absolutely essential — I'm not foolish enough to believe the vanguard would fail without me — but valuable. I can hasten the demise of imperialism and help put socialism in its place. My growth in politics has been great, and I continue to move forward and become an effective worker on behalf of the Third World proletariat. These are not empty platitudes, and I'll expand on them below, but it is important to say right here that if all I had were these long-term goals, I might not make it through the day to day struggle so full of set-backs (and small rewards). Now my excuses are less morbid than before, not only excuses not

to die but tangible commitments to political work. I think things like "if I don't finish this project, it will make MIM look bad." While it would be superior never to rely on such short-sighted reasoning, I am not yet a perfect communist and still rely on excuses to supplement my understanding of the long-term, of the reasons to live.

That said, the reasoning that my death would not matter because no one would miss me had entirely the wrong focus because that presents revolutionary work as only individual tasks and commitments. Looking at political work in terms of personal obligation to this or that group or place is short-sighted and forgets the long-term goal of working for the liberation of all peoples. The word "missed" is not as accurate as "lacking." MIM is most lacking among those who don't even know it exists. And the international proletariat is certainly the worse off for the lack. I am young and have decades of political growth before me; impatience and defeatism are unwarranted.

Responding to my impressions that dealing with me was a waste of the party's time, comrades have addressed me directly by pointing out that even if my self-criticism took months, the comrade-months involved would be worth a lifetime of the political work I would do. Such a cost-benefit analysis isn't the point anyway, because as humanists we believe that human life has worth. The reason communists work for revolution, after all, is so that people may live meaningful lives. The most meaningful existence for members of parasitic Amerika is to work for communism to destroy it. And so it's worthwhile to bring everyone willing to struggle into that fight. Even if someone knows nothing about socialism, never heard of China, and has only the conviction that the oppression of the world's peoples must end, MIM has the responsibility and the ability to engage that person in the struggle.

That I turned the legitimate desire to be as good a communist as others (who have been into politics a good deal longer than I have) into a wish for it to be easy for me to be like them is sheer laziness. No one is born a communist and it was mysticism on my part to think that the road was smooth and easy for MIM comrades. Serving the people is not easy — but it's worth the work.

Especially in a group as small as MIM, any contribution is valuable. My training thus far only adds to this intrinsic good and means I have additional contributions to make. I am dedicated to the party's goals, so the waste of my life would be a waste of valuable knowledge, experience and growth that comrades (and I) have already put much energy into.

I recognize that though society has contributed greatly in

making my life miserable, I have the ability to contribute however little to abolishing that society and releasing others from similar (and greater) oppression. I shouldn't shrink before this opportunity, but rather should put every possible effort into seizing it. Mao, in discussing suicides of women in pre-Liberation China, did not blame them for taking that action but did call them to revolutionary action. He said that dying in struggle against oppression is superior to being killed without a fight. It's not my goal to die in the struggle. Fuck martyrdom. If I throw away my life, I throw away a valuable tool against imperialism and patriarchy. So if in waging revolution I risk death, I'm ready, but I better take the enemy's troops down with me.

I wish I could close this testimonial with some glorious statements about how I have this exuberant will to live and all that, but that would be dishonest. I still don't smile superfluously, but at least I am far from the murkiness of severe mood swings I lived in. Debilitating emotional breaks are rare, and I sometimes go days without thinking about death. And I do have a commitment to live. As I said before, I am not making plans to kill myself. Hell, I even look both ways before crossing the street. So if what I have said throughout sounds negative, that is only because I do not want to be over-optimistic and underestimate the dangers of regressing. This whole process has been superb and I am confident that I will avert suicidal tendencies should they reoccur with the help of comrades and by engaging in constant self-criticism.

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.

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- *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.
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- *Rebolusyon*. Theoretical journal of the CPP. \$4 per issue.

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The 'Nature' of Human Behavior

In this chapter MIM takes on *The Bell Curve* as only the latest in a series of pseudo-scientific justifications for the perpetration of national oppression. Rather than just addressing the book in isolation, MIM confronts the whole false premise of IQ as an inborn trait. A prisoner contributes an analysis of the revolutionary psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, who, while drifting at times into mysticism, is a valuable dialectician whose work remains popular and useful, especially in prisons. We also discuss Mao's own views on the concept of "human nature," denying that such a thing exists beyond the common ability to exercise creative potential and be agents as well as objects of social change.

Maoism on Human Nature

by MCB52

Central to the debates about psychology, intelligence and IQ, and other issues in the internal realm of human experience is the existence or not of an essential "human nature." The promotion of an essential human nature, divorced from material circumstances, has historically been used by bourgeois philosophers, rulers, and educators to justify the "inevitable" condition of class, nation and gender oppression and exploitation. But revolutionaries do not cede all discussion of the human mind and will to the reactionaries. No, we treat these matters in dialectical relation to material conditions and to the development of the revolutionary forces — not as a universal essence. We know it is people who make and sustain the revolution and that consciousness matters. And we follow the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line that philosophy of human nature, as all other philosophy, is based on the class struggle:

"The foundation is the class struggle. The study of philosophy can only come afterwards. Whose philosophy? Bourgeois philosophy, or proletarian philosophy? Proletarian philosophy is Marxist philosophy. There is also proletarian economics, which has transformed classical economics. Those who engage in philosophy believe philosophy comes first. The oppressors oppress the oppressed, while the oppressed need to fight back and seek a way out before they start looking for philosophy. It is only when people took this as their starting point that there was Marxism-Leninism, and that they discovered philosophy. We have all been through this. Thus we came to engage in class struggle, and to engage in philosophizing."(1)

In order to understand Marxism fully, we should grasp Marxist political economy, scientific socialism, and Marxist philosophy.(2) It is from this standpoint that we can criticize revisionism and advance the revolution. Like Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Mao, MIM maintains that understanding is not enough: the purpose is to enact revolutionary change. Because we work for complete revolution, of both economic structure and political and cultural superstructure, we look for a basis from which to understand this elusive "human nature" because we seek to change it. "Philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however is to *change* it."(3) So we consider the role of human nature in the struggle for socialist revolution, as well as the struggle for continuing the revolution and opposing capitalist restoration.

Mao spoke most clearly about the concept of human nature at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art:

"Is there a such thing as human nature? Of course there is. But there is only human nature in the concrete, no human nature in the abstract. In class society there is only human nature of a class character; there is no human nature above classes. We uphold the human nature of the proletariat and the masses of the people, while the landlord and bourgeois classes uphold the human nature of their own classes, only they do not say so but make it out to be the only human nature in existence. The human nature boosted by certain petty-bourgeois intellectuals is also divorced from and opposed to the masses; what they call human nature is in essence nothing but bourgeois individualism, and so, in their eyes, proletarian human nature is contrary to human nature." (13)

*'Is there a such thing as human nature? Of course there is.
But there is only human nature in the concrete,
no human nature in the abstract.'*

—Mao Zedong

In other words, in the bourgeois formulation, anything that deviates from individualism, such as socialist construction, is "contrary to human nature." Bourgeois China-watcher Edwin O. Reischauer said, of work incentives in communist China "I think Mao or people close to him ... just do not want to admit that people were people and were going to act like human beings. That is one of the great failings of communism everywhere. It has always tried to change people into something they are not, and then it finds it cannot."⁽¹⁴⁾

Because the bourgeois concept of human nature is anti-scientific, Reischauer can use this idealist concept to criticize the supposed idealism of Marxism. In the process, Reischauer

Freedom and necessity exist in dialectical relation to each other . . .

ignores the material reality that the supposedly "duped" Chinese masses increased production by several times over the course of the revolution. Because Mao understood that the masses are capable both of understanding their interest in the common good and in working for subjective gain, he understood that the free-supply system would not result in less work output of efficiency than the use of a work-point system or other wage gradations during the Great Leap Forward. In the use of the free supply system, in which all commune members could take supplies according to their need without anyone checking their work, the CCP went beyond even Lenin's dictum that "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." Through the free supply system we see the very beginnings of communist labor starting to develop. Although it was only practiced on a small scale and only temporarily (in communes as well as in the army) its successful implementation proves that people will work even if they won't starve for want of doing so.

Since the development of capitalism, the bourgeoisie has promoted a set of psychological assumptions that workers are lazy and lack ambition, which means they only work to avoid starving to death, therefore there is no reason to pay them more than near-starvation wages because no more work can be eked out. But communist materialists understand not only that these are lies concocted to mask the extraction of surplus value, but that work attitudes are not independent of the mode of production. Crucially, communists make no psychological assumptions about workers, who are the agents and not just the means of management in socialist society. While recognizing that some material incentives will continue to exist in socialism, because the consciousness of the workers will bear residual capitalist superstructure and must be revolutionized, there is no reason to expect them to be large or long-lasting.⁽¹⁵⁾

So it is clear that we cannot make generalizations about what the "true" human nature is. At the Yen-an forum, Mao did

not advocate conformity to the genetic predetermination of human behavior, but he was advocating a bias toward the oppressed. MIM likewise does not believe that stripped of all social experience and material conditions, humans are "by nature" collectivist. This is because there is no way to strip humans of social experience or material conditions. Instead, we work to abolish the exploitative mode of production with its attendant social structure of individualism and antagonistic contradictions and create an equitable mode of production with a corresponding social structure of collectivism and non-antagonistic contradictions.

FREEDOM AND NECESSITY

Communism includes among its goals the maximization of freedom. Central to dialectical materialism is the notion that freedom and necessity exist in dialectical relation to each other, and that in transforming necessity we can attain freedom.

MIM confronts two basic types of arguments regarding freedom. First, Americans and other imperialists advocate an individualist understanding of freedom. Second, revisionists push mechanical materialism and the theory of productive forces. The latter is perhaps more dangerous insofar as it misguides revolutionaries who have decided that they want to work for communism, but individualist freedom of the first type is also a great threat to the revolutionary movement in imperialist countries. MIM has written about anarchism within the Party to illustrate that point.⁽⁵⁾ Here we focus on the revisionists of the restorationist trend.

Explaining why the Department of Rural Work had been disbanded, Mao wrote: "It devoted itself exclusively to

. . . and in transforming necessity we can attain freedom.

accounting on the basis of the individual household, to propagating the 'four freedoms' — freedom to lend money, to engage in commerce, to hire labor, and to buy and sell land."⁽⁴⁾ None of these freedoms increase the freedom of the masses, and to cater to these so-called freedoms is to allow capitalism to continue unchallenged.

Revisionists have a different understanding of the freedom/necessity contradiction, and one-sidedly emphasize necessity. Claiming the mantle of Marx and Lenin, they maintain that all that is needed to make humans more free is to increase production. Revisionists in the Soviet Union held that increasing production and increasing human freedom were one in the same struggle, and so they justified any means to increase production even if it sacrificed the development toward freedom to develop human creativity among the masses. Part of this lingo lies in Marx, who categorized freedom as

being that which comes after necessity is taken care of. Marx said that after humans have satisfied production through rational socialist means "beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with the realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the work day is its basic prerequisite."(6)

But Marx did not uphold the line of putting production forces universally ahead of production relations. Even according to Marx, freedom does not come automatically. Marx points out that necessity is not just a given, rather it is transformed. "With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants."(7) So freedom cannot happen just by meeting current necessity, but by transcending it.

Mao said:

"Freedom means the recognition of necessity and it means the transformation of the objective world. Only on the basis of recognizing necessity can man enjoy freedom of activity; this is the dialectical law of freedom and necessity. What we call necessity is an objectively existing law. Before we recognize it our behavior cannot be conscious; it has elements of blindness."(8)

Mao went beyond Marx and Engels' formulation to further illustrate the dialectical relationship between freedom and necessity. "Engels spoke about moving from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, and that freedom is the understanding of necessity. This sentence is not complete, it only says one half and leaves the rest unsaid. Does merely understanding make you free? Freedom is the understanding of necessity *and* the transformation of necessity — one has some work to do."(9)

So when Mao talks about the unlimited creative potential of the masses, he is not one-sidedly focusing on freedom. On the contrary, his basis in necessity has been established, and since his main enemies were in the productive forces camp, he rails against these eloquently. When he says that "the masses have unlimited creative power" this does not mean he is forgetting their limits imposed by reality, but rather that he is rejecting the pessimism of the revisionists and aspiring toward communism under which necessity will be minimized and freedom maximized.

COMBAT INDIVIDUALISM — NOT INDIVIDUALITY

Petit bourgeois intellectuals will often protest that Maoism advocates a world of clones, and that there is no room for individuality under communism. While it is true that communists resolutely struggle to combat individualism, and MIM has written extensively on this subject, here we focus on the idea of individuality.

We argue that the socialist concept of "from each according to his/her ability to each according to his/her needs" presupposes some individuality. There is much less gradation in both ability and needs than in the bourgeois (particularly the

Amerikan) formulation, but Maoists recognize the unity of opposites of universality and particularity. This means that in all things there is both likeness and uniqueness.(10)

There is unity among all individuals in that all individuals possess consciousness. They use this subjective consciousness to interact with objective changes in society. If Mao did not recognize that humans have this independence via activist consciousness, he could not have held them responsible for their actions and called on them to root out the incorrect ideas of bourgeois individualism and create a new consciousness of identity with the masses and collective struggle.

And, according to Mao, under socialism the development of human energy is an end in itself. "We must bring about a political climate which has both centralism and democracy, discipline and freedom, unity of purpose and ease of mind of the individual." (11)

The Hundred Flowers campaign was a recognition of the diverse nature of ideas among the people. All those ideas which are not simply counter-revolutionary were given free airing so as to be open to criticism and develop out of the non-antagonistic contradictions among the masses. Within the party, the idea is the same (See "On correct handling of contradictions among the people"). Like the CPC under Mao, MIM does not seek a uniformity of ideas, but rather free debate among those on the side of the people in order to determine the correct path. If these non-antagonistic contradictions did not exist, we could not make progress. (One of the criticisms that Maoists make of Stalin is that he failed to recognize that the class struggle continues under socialism. Therefore, he did not see the "poisonous weeds" as they sprang up as the bourgeois line within the party.(12))

Certainly, human individuals do exist and have distinct characteristics, but the bourgeois philosophers study the development of individuals in isolation from the development of society. MIM argues that this is a counterrevolutionary psychological exercise. In the contradiction between individuals and society, universality is the principal aspect and particularity is the secondary aspect. By focusing exclusively in the secondary aspect of the contradiction, metaphysicians cannot understand the individual or society. And since their concept of "self-actualization" is set up as divorced from class struggle, it is a bourgeois luxury. The potential of the individual changes with the potential of humanity, and trying to achieve full "self-actualization" is a nonsensical idea from the outset since individuals develop in dialectical relation to society, not in autonomous relation to it.

In the psychological and psychoanalytic camp, with which much of this issue of MIM Theory contends, idealists focus exclusively on conflicts within the individual, which are held to be constant across time and place. However, by not even noticing the presence of class struggle, which is the principal driving force in human action, they are unsuccessful in even explaining, much less changing, human behavior. Contradictions within the individual are reflections of contra-

dictions in society, not autonomous from those contradictions. We define a person's character not in terms of the aspects of the individual as related to each other, but rather in terms of the individual as related to society through the individual's participation in it. An individual's struggle to resolve internal contradictions is dialectically related to other individuals and the struggle of human society as a whole to resolve conflicts in society.

Within a Maoist party, for example, we know full well that differences in ability exist between members. But we focus on how abilities are put into use: is the person working on the side of the people or against them? The focus is always on political line, and differences outside that are minimized through an attitude of collective creativity and cooperation instead of individual competition. The goal is not to abolish all differences between individuals, but rather to abolish all differences between what an individual is capable of and what that individual accomplishes through assistance of a party built on criticism-self-criticism-unity.

Constant among all human beings is not an essential "nature" but the ability to transform. If we did not believe that this ability existed, we could not expect individuals to commit class and nation suicide, as MIM does every day when it struggles to build a revolutionary party in the belly of the beast.

Notes:

1. Mao Zedong, "Talk on Questions of Philosophy," in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, Stuart Schram, ed., New York: Random House, 1974, pp. 212-3.
2. These are the subjects that the authors of *Fundamentals of Political Economy* say are necessary to be good Marxists.
3. Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Philosophy*, Lewis Feuer, ed., p. 245.
4. Mao Zedong, "Talk on Questions of Philosophy," in Schram, op. cit., p. 216.
5. See MT8 pp. 45-61.
6. *Capital* Volume 3, quoted in K. Venu *Philosophical Problems of Revolution*, Kottayam, Kerala (India): Vijayan Book Stall, 1982, p. 7.
7. *Capital*, Volume 3, quoted in Venu, op. cit., p. 7.
8. Mao Zedong, "Talk at an Enlarged Workers Conference" in Schram op. cit., p. 180. See Venu p. 8-11.
9. Mao Zedong, "Talk on Questions of Philosophy" in Schram, ed., op. cit., p. 228.
10. See "On Contradiction," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung, Volume I*, London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., p. 298.
11. Party Constitution adopted at Ninth CCP Congress, 1969, in Schram, ed., op. cit., p. 13.
12. See K. Venu, op. cit., pp. 77-100.
13. Mao Zedong, "Yenan Forum on Art and Literature," in *Selected Works*, op. cit., Volume 4, p. 90
14. Quoted in by Carl Riskin, in *China's Uninterrupted Revolution, 1840 to the present*, Nee and Peck, ed., New York: Random House, 1973.
15. See Riskin, op. cit., pp. 416-451.

Essay:

Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*

"The revolution itself must not by any means be regarded as a single act."

—V.I. Lenin, *What is to be Done?*

by a New York prisoner

The Wretched of the Earth is a dialectical analysis of colonialism and national liberation written by a revolutionary nationalist, the psychiatrist Frantz Fanon. Despite its shortcomings, the science in this book is most progressive especially for a book that was written prior to wide recognition of the post-Stalin Soviet capitalist restoration. Fanon gives us a look into the process of the struggle for national liberation, but he goes a step further than the ordinary revolutionary nationalist by recognizing that after national liberation socialist revolution must follow lest the newly liberated nation fall back under imperialist domination.

This critique will attempt to clarify and correct Fanon's shortcomings, including his sometimes murky class analysis. Fanon's book can contribute to understanding and developing a more scientific analysis of the situation of the oppressed

nationalities within the borders of imperialist countries like the United States as well as the Third World.

The preface was written by Jean-Paul Sartre, who has unity with the nationalist and socialist struggles in the Third World.

PREFACE BY JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

The preface, directed toward Europeans, is very progressive. Sartre recognized the decadence of European and American imperialism. Sartre correctly does not exclude himself; he recognizes that he too has benefited from colonialism:

"With us, to be a man is to be an accomplice of colonialism, since all of us without exception have profited by colonialism, since all of us without exception have profited by colonial exploitation. And that super European monstrosity, North America? Chatter, chatter: liberty, equality, fraternity, lover, honor, patriotism, and what have you. All this did not prevent us from making anti-racial speeches about dirty niggers, dirty Jews, and dirty Arabs. High-minded people, liberal or just soft hearted, protest that they were shocked by

such inconsistency; but were either mistaken or dishonest, for with us there is nothing more consistent than a racist humanism since the European has only been able to become a man through creating slaves and monsters.”(2)

Sartre speaks to the European, but what about the oppressed nationalities in Amerika? Are they also guilty? Have they also benefited from colonialism? Surely they have felt the scars of slavery, surely they have bled and toiled under Euro-American bullwhips and shotguns. Up from slavery to become what? Ally of the oppressors? Allies of our Third World relatives who are enslaved and toil under Amerikan-supplied machine guns? They must decide. They do live better than our Third World relatives, but are nationally oppressed by the Euro-American nation.

“Very well then; if you’re not victims when the government which you’ve voted for, when the army in which your younger brothers are serving without hesitation or remorse have undertaken race murder, you are without a shadow of a doubt executioners.” Sartre spoke this to Europeans, but let’s look at oppressed nations, who vote and even some of their Black (mis)leaders encourage them to vote, even participate in Amerika’s military, but are also victims: Watts, L.A. 1992, constant police brutality, national guard occupying our semi-colonies. “But if the whole regime, even your non-violent ideas are conditioned by a thousand year old oppression, your passivity serves only to place you in the ranks of the oppressors.”(3)

Where do internal colonies stand? This depends on whether they unify with the Third World to destroy Amerikan imperialism, carry the banner of Maoism and stop begging the oppressor for more blood money from the Third World — or, alternatively, support the Amerikan military, abhor Maoism, vote and beg Amerika to exploit the Third World more so they can live in more luxury and ignore the millions of screaming voices gunned down by Amerikan-backed guns. In their struggle for national liberation they will not only liberate themselves but also their relatives who are oppressed by Amerikan imperialism.

The avowed communist George Jackson clearly stated in *Soledad Brother*: “International capitalism cannot be destroyed without the extremes of struggle. The entire colonial world is watching the Blacks inside the U.S., wondering and waiting for us to come to our senses. Their problems and struggles with the Amerikan monster are much more difficult than they would be if we actively aided them. We are on the inside, We are the only ones (besides the very small white minority left) who can get at the monster’s heart without subjecting the world to nuclear fire.”

Sartre points out that “in order to triumph, the national revolution must be socialist; if its career is cut short, if the native bourgeoisie takes over power, the new state, in spite of its formal sovereignty, remains in the hands of the imperialist.”(4) This is why any national liberation struggle must be led

by a genuine Maoist revolutionary party to completely succeed. We must also be on the lookout for those national revolutionary parties that claim to be socialist but their bottom line is bourgeois. This is why it is necessary for us to thoroughly study the most advanced revolutions in the history of humanity, i.e. the Soviet Union and China.

Sartre is correct to point out that, among the oppressed, “petty thefts mark the beginning of the resistance which is still unorganized.” However, Sartre errs when he states that “in order to free themselves [the oppressed] even massacre each other. The different tribes fight between themselves since they cannot face the real enemy ... the man who raises his knife against his brother thinks that he has destroyed once and for all the detested image of their common degradation...”(5)

One of the main reasons for the rampant crime that occurs in the colonies is national oppression. The colonized live in areas where there is unemployment or underemployment, crummy housing with high rent and poor education. The colonized kills and fights over the money that secures necessities. The capitalist ladder, be it corporate or criminal, is built with the bodies of others. In order to succeed you must be cut-throat and restrict others from occupying your position — violently if necessary.

This reality afflicts the nationally oppressed in the most harmful ways. The nationally oppressed does not hold state power nor the economic power to compete with the oppressors. Crime results in a sort of self-inflicted genocide with the help of the oppressors. The national bourgeoisie even finds it hard to compete with the oppressors. So the rampant crime in the colonies is not due to self-hatred but national oppression and capitalist culture and policy. So Sartre is correct when he says that “you can count on colonial policy to keep up [oppressed peoples’] rivalries.”(5)

Sartre also deals with the labeling of mental illness and how the study of psychology and the practice of psychiatry is used as a tool to develop hypotheses in order to justify their constant oppression: “‘Those people kill each other’ they said. ‘That isn’t normal. The Algerian’s cortex must be underdeveloped.’ In central Africa, others have established that ‘the African makes very little use of his frontal lobes.’”(6)

Shifting his focus to Europeans, Sartre says: “for we too during the last few years must be victims of ‘frontal sluggishness’ since our patriots do quite a bit of assassinating of their fellow-countrymen, and if they’re not at home, they blow up their house. ... Yet our frontal lobes seem to be in perfect condition.”(6) Yes, this can be seen today in Amerika with different geneticists who attempt to explain crime or lack of education are genetically caused [See the *Bell Curve* review in this issue of MIM Theory —ed]. This is why MIM recognizes the oppressive nature of psychology/psychiatry and seeks to abolish it. Fanon can assist in this as well.

CONCERNING VIOLENCE

“Man is mad in such a way that in general he does not

permit himself to be exploited at will; this is why he must be coerced and oppressed."

—Kostas Mavrakis, *On Trotskyism*

Fanon starts off by recognizing that national liberation requires armed struggle. Unlike focoists, Fanon recognizes that the objective and subjective conditions must be present. "The need for this change exists in its crude state, impetuous and compelling, in the consciousness and in the lives of the men and women who are colonized."(7)

"Without any period of transition, there is a total, complete, and absolute substitution. ... To tell the truth, the proof of success lies in a whole social structure being changed from

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the bottom up."(8) True indeed. However, as Fanon later points out, when there is a national liberation struggle led by the national bourgeoisie we do see a transformation, but one that does not lead to socialism. So the emphasis needs to be on the leadership of a genuine Maoist vanguard. Prior to armed struggle, the people's consciousness must be raised and it must be clearly understood the revolution does not end once the vanguard seizes state power. The people must learn that understanding the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is necessary in order to change the world.

Fanon clearly points out the futility of individualism. Concerning the colonized "individualism is the first to disappear. The native intellectual had learned that the individual ought to express himself fully. The colonist bourgeoisie had hammered into the native's mind the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his own subjectivity, and whose only wealth is individual thought. Now the native who has the opportunity to return to the people during the struggle for freedom will discover the falseness of this theory. ... Hence forward, the interests of one will be massacred — or everyone will be saved. The motto 'look out for yourself,' the atheist's method of salvation is in this context forbidden."(9)

Individualism serves to divide the oppressed, as per the common saying: "It's your thang, do what'cha wanna do." This incorrect tendency of thinking must be combated through struggle. These slogans must be replaced by revolutionary slogans such as "in unity and struggle." It has come to a point where certain sectors of the oppressed nations look at unity as being for suckers or cowards. Fanon correctly points out that

this transformation from individualism to collectivity is brought about through the struggle for national liberation. The oppressed are oppressed as nations and not as individuals.

Fanon does clearly and correctly point out that the nationally oppressed desires to live an oppressor's lifestyle of wealth and relaxation. This is because bourgeois thought permeates society at large and the nationally oppressed partly adopt this view of life in ordinary times, i.e., until their consciousness is raised to understand the conditions in which wealth is acquired in imperialist society and show them that genuine Maoism is the best way to break the chains of oppression.

Fanon tells us: "Compromise involves the colonial system and the young nationalist bourgeoisie at one and the same time. Compromise is equally attractive to the nationalist bourgeoisie ... Thus it is that the rear guard of the national struggle, that very party of people who have never ceased to be on the other side in the fight, find themselves somersaulted into the van of negotiations and compromise."(10) The national bourgeoisie has drawn colonies more into the blood soaked money of imperialism. With the failures of the '60s it is evident that the national bourgeoisie cannot lead us to socialist national liberation. This must be led by a genuine Maoist party.

However, it is necessary to recognize that an alliance with the national bourgeoisie is progressive, as Mao pointed out in China in 1926. "The ... national bourgeoisie ... feel the need for revolution and favor the revolutionary movement against imperialism ... when they are smarting under the blows of foreign capital and ... oppression ...but they become suspicious of the revolution when they sense that ... the revolution is threatening the hope of their class to attain the status of a big bourgeoisie."(11)

Fanon correctly points out the principal contradiction: "Today, peaceful co-existence between the two blocs provoke and feeds violence in the colonial countries."(12) MIM has pointed out that the price of peace in imperialist countries is war against oppressed nations. Fanon also clearly realizes the oppressive nature of the post-Stalin Soviet Union. However, at times Fanon does not distinguish between social imperialism and genuine socialism.

But he does recognize the necessity for any national liberation movement to be socialist, as he says: "A socialist regime, a regime which is completely oriented toward the people as a whole and based on the principle that man is the most precious of all possessions, will allow us to go forward more quickly and more harmoniously, and thus make it impossible that caricature of society where all economic and political power is held in the hands of a few who regard the nation as a whole with scorn and contempt."(40) He also points out that this must be done independently and applied to the concrete conditions of that given society.

Most progressive is that Fanon states that "Europe is literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from underdeveloped peoples."(13) This is also true for Amerika. Fanon goes on to

argue that the imperialist countries must give "large scale investments and technical aid ... to underdeveloped regions." (14) Sorry Fanon, but we're gonna have to do this on our own. Their investments and technical aid is a means by which the exploit and control the oppressed colonies economy. We want reparations — not aid.

What Fanon incorrectly does throughout the book is mystify armed struggle and makes it look as if it is some type of spiritual awakening and cleansing. Instead the awakening is a raising of consciousness in understanding the science of revolution and the material conditions at hand in order to change them.

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS IN SPONTANEITY

This chapter is basically dealing with the peasant and lumpenproletariat class and the unorganized rebellions that they initiate, their defeats and triumphs and the raising of revolutionary consciousness through revolutionary activity.

For starters Fanon errs in his class analysis. Check it:

"In capitalist countries, the working class has nothing to lose; it is they who in the long run have everything to gain. In the colonial countries the working class have everything to lose, in reality it represents that fraction of the colonized nation which is necessary and irreplaceable if the colonial machine is to run smoothly: it includes then conductors, taxi drivers, miners, dockers, interpreters, nurses and so on. It is these elements which constitute the most faithful followers of the nationalist parties, and who because of the privileged place which they hold in the colonial system constitute also the 'bourgeois' fraction of the colonized people." (15)

Fanon is incorrect for saying that the working class in the Third World has everything to lose and constitute the bourgeois fraction of the colonized. The reason the working class rallies behind the nationalist parties is it recognizes the need for national liberation from imperialist oppression and exploitation. The nationalist parties that Fanon is talking about are the national bourgeoisie. It must be pointed out that in the beginning the national bourgeoisie's interest is the same as the people's, viz. to be free from imperialist aggression and oppression. However, once this is obtained the national bourgeois divides between their own and the people's, with some going against the people.

Fanon's analysis would be correct if applied to the imperialist working classes, i.e. the labor aristocracy, which have everything to lose. Fanon is correct to point out that in normal times "the peasantry as a whole are the least aware, the worst organized and at the same time the most anarchical element. They show a whole range of characteristics — individualism, lack of discipline, liking for money and propensities towards waves of uncontrollable rage and deep discouragement which define a line of behaviour that is objectively reactionary." (16) In the imperialist countries this is mainly true for the nationally oppressed criminal element which has a potentially revolutionary nature but is not organized into a revolutionary force as we

saw in the 1960s with the Black Panther Party, who went about to organize the criminal elements of the Black nation.

The majority of spontaneous rebellions that occur in Amerika are made up largely of the criminal element. We also see gang truces: "Families which have always been traditional enemies decide to rub out old scores and to forgive and forget. There are numerous re-conciliations... The national unity is first the unity of a group, the disappearance of old quarrels and the final liquidation of unspoken grievances." (17)

What is the national bourgeoisie's stance toward this?

"The nationalist parties make no use at all of the opportunity which is offered to them to integrate the people ... to educate them politically and to raise the level of their struggle." (18) "The illegal minority is made to feel that they are undesirables and are shunned by the people that matter. The illegalists, therefore, will get into touch with the intellectual elements whose attitude they were unable to understand a few years back; and an underground party, will be the result of this meeting." (19) "The prostitutes too, and the maids who are paid two pounds a month, all the hopeless dregs of humanity, all who turn in circles between suicide and madness, will recover their balance and once more go forward and march proudly in the great procession of the awakened nation." (20)

So Fanon is right that spontaneity does have its strengths insofar as unifying the oppressed nationalities but its failures are greater than what it achieves. Fanon makes a strong argument that a genuine revolutionary party is needed in order to direct the people's rage in the correct direction. That is why MIM sees the principal task right now as building public opinion and raising the consciousness of the people before armed struggle. Emotions will not bring liberation. Revolution is scientific and develops in a step by step process. A strong discipline is needed and that's what the vanguard is there for.

"The oppressor, who never loses a chance of setting the niggers against each other, will be extremely skillful in using that ignorance and incomprehension which are the weaknesses of the lumpenproletariat ... The enemy is aware of ideological weaknesses, for he analyzes the forces of rebellion and studies more and more carefully the aggregate enemy which makes up the colonial people." (21)

Fanon does well in pointing out the necessity of raising the consciousness of the oppressed and exposing the nature of the oppressors and the national bourgeoisie. This is the only way that the people will not be duped. As for the necessity of organization:

"All this taking stock of the situation, this enlightening of consciousness and this advance in the knowledge of the history of societies are only possible within the framework of an organization, and inside the structure of a people." (22) "The task of bringing people to maturity will be made easier by the high intellectual level of its leaders. The force of

intellect increases and becomes more elaborate as the struggle goes on, as the enemy increases his maneuvers and as victories are gained and defeats are suffered.”(23)

As for the social forces at hand:

“The political educator ought to lead them to modify this attitude by getting them to understand that certain fractions of the population have a particular interest. The people will thus come to understand that national liberation independence sheds light on many facts which are sometimes divergent and antagonistic. Such a taking stock of the situation at this precise moment of the struggle is decisive, for it allows the people to pass from the total indiscriminating nationalism to social and economic awareness. The people ... realize as they go along that it sometimes happens that you get Blacks who are whiter than the whites and that the fact of having a national flag and the hope of an independent nation does not always tempt a certain strata of the population to give up their interest or privileges. The people come to realize that natives like themselves do not lose sight of the main chance, but quite to the contrary seem to make use of the war in order to strengthen their material situation and their growing power.”(24)

MIM has much agreement with this and puts this into practice. This is why we say that a concrete analysis of society must be made. There are certain would-be revolutionary parties out there who ignore this fact, like the Revolutionary Communist Party-USA ignoring the reactionary nature of the white working class. When these necessities are not done they “would contribute to the bewilderment of the people.”(25) MIM does not want to confuse the people. We want them to completely understand what is what.

THE PITFALLS OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

This chapter is a very explosive because Fanon shows what happens when the national bourgeoisie comes to power and what happens when a national liberation war is led by the national bourgeoisie. This shows why the struggle must be led by a genuine Maoist party in order to achieve genuine national liberation.

“The national middle class which takes over power at the end of colonial regime is an underdeveloped middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace. In its narcissism, the national middle class is easily convinced that it can advantageously replace the middle class of the mother country. But that same independence which literally drives it into a corner will give rise within its ranks to catastrophic reactions and will oblige it to send out frenzied appeals for help to the former mother country ... They mobilize the people with slogans of independence, and for the rest leave it to future events. When such parties are questioned on the economic program of the regime which they propose to install, they are incapable of replying, because, precisely they are

completely ignorant of the economy of their own country.”(26)

As we see it, the bankruptcy of the bourgeoisie is not apparent in the economic field only. “They have come to power in the name of a narrow nationalism and representing a race; they will prove themselves incapable of triumphantly putting into practice a program with even a minimum humanist content. ... When the bourgeoisie is strong, when it can arrange everything and everybody to serve its power, it does not hesitate to affirm positively certain democratic ideas which claim to be universally applicable.”(27) Some revolutionary nationalist parties in Amerika this. They don’t go to all ends to educate the people about the Soviet Union and China nor do they go into depth of what must be done. They don’t teach the people the relevance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the nature of national bourgeoisie, the labor aristocracy, of the oppressed nationalities and also the comprador class.

We must be on guard against these nationalist parties that call themselves socialist but are really bourgeois. Of course, they are beneficial to the advancement of national liberation and are an ally for a time, but there can be no unity with them without struggle and criticism. Their practice and policies must be exposed to the people. They must constantly be made to answer to the people concerning matters that are of utmost importance.

What is exceptional is Fanon’s analysis of the national bourgeoisie:

“In underdeveloped countries, the bourgeoisie should not be allowed to find the conditions necessary for its existence and its growth. In other words, the combined effort of the masses led by a party and of intellectuals who are highly conscious and armed with revolutionary principles ought to bar the way to this useless and harmful middle class. ... The theoretical question that for the last fifty years has been raised whenever the history of underdeveloped countries is under discussion — whether or not the bourgeois phase can be skipped — ought to be answered in the field of revolutionary action and not by logic.”(28)

Thanks to the experience of Mao’s China we’ve learned that in order to restrict the national bourgeoisie from leading the nation down a death path the national liberation struggle must be led by a genuine Maoist party. However, Fanon goes on to point out that the national bourgeoisie is beneficial towards bringing the nation to national liberation. Also the necessity for the raising of consciousness of the people and that every thing must be explained to the people.

“Everything can be explained to the people on the single condition that you really want them to understand. ... The more the people understand, the more watchful they become, and the more they come to realize that finally everything depends on them and their salvation lies in their own cohesion, in the true understanding of their interests,

and in knowing who they enemies are.”(29)

This is something MIM stresses — knowing who are our friends and who are our enemies. Without a profound understanding of this it will be impossible. As Mao pointed out, each revolutionary was exhorted to “regard himself both as a motive force and a target of the revolution.” “People must know where they are going and why. The politician should not ignore the fact that the future remains a closed book so long as the consciousness of the people remains imperfect, elementary and cloudy.”(30)

During the Cultural Revolution in China, this was put into practice. The people learn through revolutionary struggle: learning how to run their own affairs and operate the means of production and constant struggle against the new bourgeoisie that arises within the bureaucracy and state, thus causing the rise of a genuine revolutionary consciousness.

ON NATIONAL CULTURE

“Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it.”(31) On cultural nationalism, Fanon writes, “I am ready to concede that on the plane of the factual being the past existence of an Aztec civilization does not change anything very much in the diet of the Mexican peasant of today. I admit that all the proofs of a wonderful Songhai civilization will not change the fact that today the Shonghais are underfed and illiterate, thrown between sky and water with empty heads and empty eyes.”(32)

Let’s see what Huey P. Newton had to say about cultural nationalism:

“Cultural nationalism, or pork chop nationalism, as I sometimes call it, is basically a problem of having the wrong political perspective. It seems to be a reaction instead of responding to political oppression. The Cultural Nationalists are concerned with returning to the old African culture and thereby regaining their identity and freedom. In other words, they feel that the African culture will automatically bring political freedom. Many times Cultural Nationalists fall into line as reactionary nationalists.”(33)

Back to Fanon: “The native intellectual nevertheless sooner or later will realize that you do not show proof of your nation from its culture but that you substantiate its existence in the fight which the people wage against the forces of occupation. ...You will never make colonialism blush for shame by spreading out little-known cultural treasures under its eyes.”(34)

This is very important because there is a lot of “Black & Proud!” rhetoric being espoused. A people’s revolutionary is not proud of being oppressed by the genocidal system of imperialism. It is better to take pride in being a genuine Maoist than spending energy arguing over who the founders of monotheism were, unknowable facts not applicable to our current situa-

tion.

How do we destroy imperialism by knowing that Imhotep was the first to say “Eat drink be merry for tomorrow we will die”? It simply has no relevance. The only history of interest to me is the history of the oppressed struggling against their oppression, the history genuinely revolutionary struggles.

Further on Fanon goes to show that the only true culture of the oppressed is a revolutionary culture that is built up throughout the struggle for national liberation. “It is national

The people’s culture is not some far off distant thing. It is alive and developing out of the people’s struggle against oppression and exploitation.

liberation which leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history. It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows. And this two-fold emerging is ultimately the only source of all culture.”(35) The people’s culture is not some far off distant time that has long ago burned out in some distant land. It is alive and developing out of the people’s struggle against oppression and exploitation.

COLONIAL WAR AND MENTAL DISORDERS

This chapter deals with the disorders that occur due to national oppression. Fanon differs from psychiatry in that he recognizes how psychiatry is used to label the oppressed and justify oppression. Fanon presents several case studies of patients he dealt with during the war of liberation in Algeria. The cases mainly presented are victims of torture, brainwashing and other forms of rampant bloodshed. However, Fanon goes on to refute the oppressor psychiatrist/psychologist explanations and diagnosis of the oppressed nationalities. The oppressor psychiatrist said Algerians are psychopathic murderers, genetically inferior, as Fanon states. “It was confirmed that the Algerian was a born criminal. A theory was elaborated and scientific proofs were found to support it. This theory was taught in the Universities for over twenty years.”(36) Fanon points to the causes of strife and crime in the colonies due to the colonial situation by bringing to light the “pecking order”: “The corn which is thrown to the hens is in fact the object of relentless competition. Certain birds, the strongest, gobble up all the grains while others who are less aggressive grow visibly thinner. Every colony tends to turn to a huge farmyard, where the only law is that of the knife.”(37)

Now, while Fanon does recognize that this competition is due to the oppression of the colonial situation, he tends to fall off into subjectivism by labeling the colonial conflicts as an

expression of self hatred: "The objective of the native who fights against himself is to bring about the end of domination."(38) A lot of this talk of self hatred has been circulated around the Black nation here in Amerika in order to explain the violence and crime that we see in the semi-colonies. This completely ignores the material conditions that cause crime. This "self hatred" had also been used to silence the voice of revolutionary nationalists who criticize people like Al Sharpton — they are accused of expressing a hatred of self (Black people): "We always putting our leaders down," "we always got something bad to say about each other," etc., etc. But when Al is criticized by revolutionaries it is because of his politics and policies which fail to combat imperialism and national oppression. Not because we hate ourselves.

There is no doubt that the nationally oppressed suffer from different types of Euro-Amerikan defined "disorders," but these disorders are in no way psychological; they are material. When white people go to the beach to get tan, or when they get lip injections, or when Europeans go to war with each other we do not say that they are suffering from self-hatred. When Amerika's military invades Third World countries and guns down men, women and children, and robs them of their labor and natural resources we do not call them psychopaths. We must understand that the maladjustment's adjustments that we see are due to national oppression; in order to succeed you will have to adapt in several ways to the dominant culture. Black women that straighten their hair are adapting to the dominant culture. The alienation, maladjustment, and so on cannot be explained away by psychology/psychiatry. "All these should have primordial importance in the revolutionary conscience."(38) Instead of giving moralizing sermons we must create in individuals a social conscience. [See other chapters in this MIM Theory to learn about how MIM has critiqued the bourgeois understanding of these problems. —ed]

These issues are also addressed in Fanon's book *Black Skin, White Masks*, where he reaches clear past materialism with examples of psychological explanations at times. For example, one Black woman described pined after white boyfriends "because she wanted to turn Blacks into whites," and failing that became a laundress because she wanted to bleach the world white. This is as absurd as saying that Euro-Amerikans go to the beach to get a tan because they want to be like internal colonies.

So when reading Fanon, a materialist must be cautious and analyze the departures from science. With this awareness, much can be learned from his analysis.

CONCLUSION

Fanon ends this book with a summation of Europe and its practices towards humanity. What I find most interesting is his analysis of the European workers, "for they believe, too, that they are part of the European spirit."(39) Fanon realizes that the fate of the world lies in the hands of the oppressed nationalities of the world. The European workers are in alliance with

the European monster and so are Amerikan workers.

Despite its shortcomings *Wretched of the Earth* remains a very progressive revolutionary book and should be read by all revolutionaries who wish to understand how people undergo revolutionary transformation by raising their consciousness through revolutionary theory and practice. As Fred Hampton said, "Theory without practice ain't shit!"

Notes:

1. *The Wretched of the Earth*, by Frantz Fanon, Preface by Jean Paul Sartre, Translated by Constance Farrington. Grove Weidenfeld Press, New York: 1963. All citations are from this unless otherwise noted.
2. pp. 25-26.
3. p. 25.
4. p. 11.
5. p. 18.
6. p. 28.
7. p. 36.
8. p. 35.
9. p. 47. See the essay on Mao and Human Nature in this issue of MIM Theory.
10. p. 62.
11. "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society," *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung*, p. 12.
12. p. 80.
13. p. 102.
14. p. 105.
15. p. 109.
16. p. 111.
17. p. 132.
18. p. 117.
19. p. 125.
20. p. 130.
21. p. 137.
22. p. 143.
23. p. 146.
24. p. 144.
25. p. 144.
26. pp. 149-51.
27. p. 163.
28. p. 175.
29. p. 191.
30. p. 193.
31. p. 206.
32. p. 209.
33. Philip S. Foner, ed. *The Black Panthers Speak*, New York: 1970, p. 50.
34. p. 223.
35. p. 248.
36. p. 296.
37. p. 308.
38. p. 309.
39. p. 313.
40. p. 99.

If you're reading someone else's copy of MIM Theory, why haven't you subscribed? If you're not in prison, you should send \$\$\$ like prisoners do. Putting this stuff out isn't cheap!

Bell Curve Lessons: IQ Against the Oppressed

by MC12

Concerned MIM Theory readers have no doubt read and discussed the publication of *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*.⁽¹⁾ This following review stresses those points that only MIM and other genuine communists bring to bear. But first, on the book's factual conclusions.

FACTUAL POINTS

1. We don't believe there is a single measurable thing called "intelligence"; we don't believe that any cognitive ability is fixed at birth or determined "genetically." We reject the arbitrary division between some skills and abilities on the one hand and some supposedly underlying "intelligence" on the other. We believe that the either/or dichotomy between genetics and environment is an undialectical, misleading construction. Genetics contribute to many aspects of development, but in social human beings genetics never act alone. Every genetic influence acts in an environmental context. To pick an obvious but often overlooked example, if researchers think they have found a gene that contributes to alcoholism, that obviously would not lead to alcoholism in a society with no alcohol. The same is true of the search for a "fat gene," something which is only relevant in a society where overeating is possible. Evolution itself reflects nothing more than the dialectic of environment and genetics.

We do, however, believe that the conditions of poverty and oppression cause untold damage to their victims, including damages to their physical and mental development and overall health. We reject a relativistic concept of development that says all children are OK and equal, when in fact most children in the world, who are oppressed, are definitely not OK. Ending oppression will mean healthier conditions for all children and adults.

Most critics of the reactionary *Bell Curve* thesis reject the "genetic" causal explanation because they think it exonerates white people and the U.S. government from blame for the oppression of Blacks, or they think it means such inequality is inevitable in the future. But from a communist point of view, with regard to the past there would be no excuse for perpetuating inequality even if one group of people *were* genetically inferior; and with regard to the future, even if there *were* "genetic" inequality, that would not mean society is helpless to

**Communists struggle
for a system in which
mutual cooperation
brings collective benefits.**

**We do not strive to
determine a better way
of measuring intelligence
for purposes of doling out
material rewards.**

change it.

For all we know, genetic engineering may one day help humanity, but there is no reason to pursue that when vast human inequalities exist and we have the social means to eliminate them — revolution. In a nutshell, this means revolutionaries see the importance of ending lead poisoning and malnutrition, for example, but condemn eugenics and other genocidal attempts to control the lives and reproduction of oppressed people. This argument has to take place within the framework of political economy.

2. We believe that IQ tests, as well as SAT/ACT tests (college admission tests) and so on, reflect a narrow, learned ability (including the ability to take such tests). These skills correspond with the skills needed to succeed in schools in the

U.S. Empire. At the same time, the oppressive factors which restrict oppressed children's development of these skills also restricts their success in school, so a correlation develops between test performance and school performance. These tests therefore serve the imperialist education system and culture well.

3. We do not believe human "races" exist as distinct genetic or biological groups. The so-called races are socially created, with membership determined by cultural, not biological, forces which change rapidly over time compared to genes.

THEORETICAL AND POLITICAL POINTS

1. The theory of white supremacy, to which the *Bell Curve* openly subscribes, aims to unite the white nation, to strengthen Amerika against its Black, Aztlan, First Nation and other oppressed-nation enemies. By insisting on white supremacy independent of class and gender, this theory serves to keep working-class and biologically-female whites tied to the system of Amerikan imperialism and white domination. This population is in general very willing to subscribe to the theory. The book and its hype are a powerful ideological attack on the oppressed nations within Amerika.

2. True Liberalism believes that a moral society is a "meritocracy," that people achieve wealth and power by virtue of their "merit," however defined. *Bell Curve* authors Herrnstein and Murray are ideologically true to this tradition in all of its cynical history — even if they falsify the evidence in their work — and to refute them only by claiming they misrepresent

the causes, or measurement, of people's "merit" is to engage the debate on such Liberal terms. While we refute their facts where they are wrong, we do not argue for a system that "truly" measures and rewards merit.

Alternatively, communists struggle for a system in which mutual cooperation brings collective benefits. We do not strive to determine a better way of measuring intelligence for purposes of doling out material rewards. We don't want a system where rewards are proportionate to ability, however those abilities are attained. In the socialist system — transitional to communism — people should gain material rewards according to the social value of the work performed, as determined by the average amount of time needed to perform the task under current conditions. In that system, which replaces the system of capitalist and imperialist exploitation, someone who works faster or harder may make more money than others. Through a long period of political and ideological struggle — the continuing revolution — we hope to see such individual incentives completely replaced by cooperation as the guiding principle and social incentive. Thus, we reject arguments against the *Bell Curve* that say, "we want to be judged as individuals, not as a group."

3. The publication and hype of the *Bell Curve* teaches an important lesson about the need for independent revolutionary media of all forms, including books. This book reflects a capital investment in ideological hegemony by the right wing of the imperialist class. It came out over the objections of establishment academia. Then the bourgeois media took over the debate, ensuring the widespread propagation of its reactionary ideas. Without our own ability to independently build public opinion, we will not win the ideological struggles that fuel revolution. So this article will also pay some attention to who supports this work and what that means for revolutionaries.

INTELLIGENCE

Several academic scientists have published critiques of the *Bell Curve*, which are largely correct in specific criticisms even if we disagree with their ideological premises. One of the best of the these was Stephen Jay Gould's review in the *New Yorker*.(2)

At the outset, Gould explains that the *Bell Curve*, "with its claims and supposed documentation that race and class differences are largely caused by genetic factors and are therefore essentially immutable, contains no new arguments and presents no compelling data to support its anachronistic social Darwinism." This argument is based on four essential premises: "intelligence, in their formulation, must be depictable as a single number, capable of ranking people in linear order, genetically based, and effectively immutable." All of these are unproved.

One source of confusion is that IQ scores, regardless of what they measure or don't, are somewhat heritable — that is, children's IQ scores are likely to be close to their parents', other things being equal. This is not at all the same as genetic,

and can be caused by anything. However, as Gould explains, "The central fallacy in using the substantial heritability of within-group IQ (among whites, for example) as an explanation of average differences between groups (whites versus blacks, for example)" may be illustrated by using height. Take for example measuring height in a poor village where there is a lot of malnutrition. Suppose the average height is 5-feet-six-inches, and

"Heritability within the village is high, which is to say that tall fathers ... tend to have tall sons. But this high heritability within the village does not mean that better nutrition might not raise average height ... within a few generations. Similarly, the well-documented fifteen-point average difference in IQ between blacks and whites in America, with substantial heritability of IQ in family lines within each group, permits no automatic conclusion that truly equal opportunity might not raise the black average enough to equal or surpass the white mean."

Although MIM has objections to this liberal formulation as we outlined above, the scientific point refuting the *Bell Curve* is clear.

There is strong counter-evidence to the genetic claims of the book, and Gould cites a few: Poor Black children adopted into rich white homes have IQs closer to white children's (despite racism against them); many whole countries increased IQ averages 15 points when they increased general education after WWII (during which time their genes could not have changed much); and there are no differences between children fathered by Black and white U.S. soldiers in Germany and raised as Germans.

IQ tests are supposed to measure *g*, for general intelligence. This was identified by correlating test scores on different kinds of questions using factor analysis. Taking any set of variables and finding their correlation can produce a new single variable. For example, correlating hits, runs, and runs batted in for baseball players, you could produce one number and say it represents general excellence in batting (call it *b*). But, as Gould points out, the same intelligence data, using factor analysis intended to find *different strands* can just as adequately prove multiple types of intelligence with no *g*. That is, if you are *looking* for two dimensions — say, hitting power and hitting consistency — you could use the same data to prove that there are really two kinds of hitting skill. So the concept of *g* as the general level of intelligence is a construction used to serve the interests of IQ test developers. This argument has been bolstered by the research of Howard Gardner, who claims seven types of "intelligence," and who argues that IQ measures principally verbal and mathematical intelligences.(3)

Still, IQ tests do test something, and IQ scores are correlated with success in school. Some of what they test may be good skills to learn, such as math and language abilities or strategies for thinking. Reuven Feuerstein and Alex Kozulin wrote that "The fact that some manifestations of intelligence

can be measured does not imply that intelligence itself is a stable substance." IQ tests include measures of vocabulary, for example, that are obviously learned. Even the more basic math and memory test items can be learned by practice. They add, "To present intelligence in this reified way — as a concrete, stable quantity — is a scientific anachronism."(4) And yet a majority of psychologists in a major poll said they believe in the concept of *g*.(5)

Again, preconceived ideas or ideological agendas interfere with understanding. A Newsweek writer wrote, "Throughout the developed world, raw IQ scores have risen by about 3 points every decade ... meaning that a performance that drew a score of 100 in the 1930s would rate only 85 today. Unfortunately, no one has discovered a regimen for raising *g* at will."

The supposed-mystery is answered in the sentence itself: economic advancement and years of general education appear to be "a regimen for raising *g* at will." Likewise, people cite correlations between the IQ scores of identical twins raised apart as evidence that IQ is genetic.(5) These studies fail to take into account that identical twins are genetically identical in every way — including all visible traits — that also affect the way people are raised and treated. If one is tall, has a deep voice, etc., so does the other, and their interactions with society are correspondingly similar as a result. This small example illustrates the problem with trying to treat the social world as a controlled experiment. Dialectical materialism does recognize that society is an arena for experimentation. But we do this by studying whole societies, classes and movements — and engaging in and learning from revolutionary practice — not by trying to identify causes for individual traits in individual people.

The *Bell Curve* mythology also goes against a new strain of research that shows the brain developing at early stages of life in response to interaction with the world. This research has the positive effect of breaking down the arbitrary distinction between physical and mental. And it shows that "intelligence" cannot be fixed at birth or conception.(6) Even Alfred Binet, who devised early intelligence tests, said they didn't identify something innate or permanent.(7)

Some people are so ready to jump to genetic conclusions that their arguments are laughable. For example, Leslie Lenkowsky wrote that because some scientists think they have found a gene connected to dyslexia, this "powerfully supports" the idea that "much of intelligence is inherited."(8) This is like saying that a muscular dystrophy gene would prove athletic ability is genetic. It is also contradicted by cases in which people who can't learn to read because of dyslexia have average IQ scores.(9)

In their argument that intelligence determines the outcome of people's lives — that is, that U.S. society is a "meritocracy" — the *Bell Curve* authors try to show that IQ can be used to predict life outcomes better than other variables, such as parental income. But they conceal the fact that the relation-

ships they found are very weak. The number that tells you the strength of the relationship, called the R-square (R^2), is in an appendix instead of on the graphs. The authors wrote (in the appendix): "In the text, we do not refer to the usual measure of goodness of fit for multiple regressions, R^2 we ... consider the regression coefficients themselves ... to suit our analytic purposes better than R^2 , and that is why those are the ones we relied on in the text."(10) Gould concludes: "Indeed, almost all their relationships are weak: very little of the variation in social factors is explained by either independent variable [IQ or poverty]." There is a small effect, which they exaggerate.

"In short, their own data indicate that IQ is not a major factor in determining variation in nearly all the social behaviors they study.... the vast majority of the conventional measures of R^2 , excluded from the main body of the text, are less than 0.1. These very low values of R^2 expose the true weakness, in any meaningful vernacular sense, of nearly all the relationships that form the meat of the Bell Curve."

MIM's quick calculations show that in the 59 different regressions in the appendix, the median R^2 value is .0744, and 71% of them are under 0.1. In English, this is generally taken to mean that the equation predicts 7.44% of the variation in the dependent variable (in this case, for example, divorce). That means that the vast majority of variation in divorce rate, for example, are not explained by IQ, poverty, or the other independent variables in the equation. Despite this, and the quick and comprehensive critiques by a series of academics, Murray — playing martyr to p.c. — said, "I know I am in for another rough year [best sellers are hard to live with, aren't they? - MC12], but ... we are dealing with big, fat, robust results."(11)

Interestingly, the authors tried to prove the importance of IQ by showing how much IQ determined the outcomes of *white* people's lives. This was ostensibly to show that there weren't racist. But it also furthers the fallacy of their claim for IQ differences between groups, because it only explores IQ as a within-group influence. MIM wouldn't be surprised if IQ scores were more determinant in white American society than among members of the oppressed nations, because whites do live in more of a meritocracy than non-whites, for what that whole line of thinking is worth.

The bourgeois media used the *Bell Curve* debate as an attempt to further mystify science to the masses, as in Newsweek: "Social scientists traffic in correlations, and these are strong ones."(5) That's not true, but the fetishization of scientific language allowed the myth to spread. Gould is correct to challenge people to understand these debates. He says of the book: "The blatant errors and inadequacies ... could be picked up by lay reviewers if they only would not let themselves be frightened by numbers." The *Bell Curve* fostered these fears by breaking the book up into sections designed for readers at different "levels." At "the simplest level" it's only 30 pages long — that is just reading misleading chapter summaries with no demonstrated evidence. The "next level ... is accessible to any-

one who enjoys reading, for example, the science section of the news magazines.”(12) And so on. The authors stop just short of specifying the IQ required for each section (something they might like to see for all books in the future)!

Unsubstantiated claims always work better when planted in fertile soil. In this case, white nation public opinion provided that. A 1990 National Opinion Research Center survey found 53% of people who weren't Black said Blacks were less intelligent than whites.(13) Since the the publication and hype of the *Bell Curve*, that number is likely rising. Without acknowledging the scientific critiques, Peter Brimelow, writing in *Forbes*, called the book “massive, meticulous, minutely detailed, clear,” and said it is being “seriously compared” with *The Origin of Species*, by Charles Darwin, even though the book contains no original research or ideas, but rather tinkers with the numbers from other research.(14)

That feature also makes it harder to judge, because a lot of the research is two steps away from the reader. For example, to back up their claims, the authors say that “ethnic differences in measured cognitive ability have been found since intelligence tests were invented.”(15) Readers who are familiar with works such as Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man* know that the original intelligence tests were largely created and used by eugenicists who were attempting to prove white superiority, and designed their tests accordingly. The *Bell Curve* authors survey 156 studies on average Black-white differences on IQ tests, and then compare those studies to a smaller set of 24 done outside the South and after 1960 — with the same result. To them, this is a vindication of the usefulness of these tests, because their assumption is that after 1960 and outside the South there is no basis for complaining about the legitimacy of the tests.(16) For MIM, that is good to see, because, knowing how racist the early tests obviously were, we can now see that the later tests are no better despite surface appearances. But this requires background knowledge of the earlier tests, obviously not reported in the *Bell Curve*.

Playing to white preconceptions allows the authors to get away with more. For example, they defend the SAT test against charges of anti-Black bias by referring to studies that show the SAT predicts Black college performance as well as it does white college performance.(17) We know, however, that college and the SAT tests exist in the same social world, with the same factors working against Black success, including not only racial discrimination but also economic factors, and so on. The logical fallacy is simple, but it goes unchallenged. They can only get away with this because, contrary to their constant protestations to being oppressed by political correctness, they are not under strict scrutiny. For example, after the *New York Times* parroted this justification for the SAT without comment, a letter writer called it “an astonishingly blatant reasoning error,” which it was — but the damage was already done.(18)

The low level of scrutiny also allows them to contradict themselves without shame. After describing a declining trend

in SAT scores among whites, they write:

“The SAT score decline does underscore a frustrating, perverse reality: However hard it may be to raise IQ among the less talented with discrete interventions ... it may be within the capability of an educational system — probably with complicity of broader social trends — to put a ceiling on, or actually dampen, the realized intelligence of those with high potential.”(19)

And yet when people have suggested that lower Black performance on standardized tests reflect the effects of “an educational system — probably with complicity of broader social trends,” they rebuff the argument and fall back on genetics!(20)

The authors briefly dismiss research challenging the genetic conception of IQ heritability. For example, comparing whites and non-whites of equal socioeconomic status reduces the IQ gap between them. Going further, they cite one study that, statistically “holding constant” a wide range of environmental variables — including not just education, occupation and income, but also home ownership, family structure, mother's attitudes toward achievement, etc. — reduced the IQ gap to “near zero.”(21) They dismiss this research, however, because they believe that all those differences in environment were *caused* by genetic differences in intelligence in the first place, so they say all those statistical controls are really doing is matching up whites and nonwhites with the same IQs, and determining that they have the same IQs. This is a logical tautology — no argument or evidence can penetrate its circular defenses.

Their reliance on secondary sources allows the *Bell Curve* authors to spread and legitimize the lies told by a whole group of openly racist intelligence researchers whose work has already been discredited by liberals. One of these, J. Phillip Rushton, has argued that everything from “altruism” and “law abidingness” to brain size, penis size, and ejaculation distance all prove that differences between the “races” reflect an “ordering” of the races from lower to higher. Herrnstein and Murray brush off Rushton's critics, writing, “Rushton's work is not that of a crackpot or a bigot” (22), but elsewhere Rushton has claimed: “Even if you take things like athletic ability or sexuality — not to reinforce stereotypes — but it's a trade-off; more brain or more penis. You can't have everything.”(23)

Still, the *Bell Curve* does not rely as much on Rushton's work as it does on the racist drivel of Richard Lynn. Leon Kamin says Lynn is “widely known among academics to be an associate editor of the racist journal ‘Mankind Quarterly’ and a major recipient of financial support from the nativist, eugenically oriented Pioneer Fund” (More on the Pioneer Fund below). They use Lynn's work to compare Africans to Blacks in North America. Their argument is that if low IQ scores reflect “discrimination” against Blacks, then Africans will score higher on IQ tests, because obviously there is no discrimination against racially-defined Blacks in Africa, they say.

When Lynn tells them that Africans in fact have lower IQs, that is proof of a genetic inferiority. While this argument is almost comically ridiculous — as if Africa has not faced oppression greater than the “discrimination” experienced by Blacks — the research is also blatantly shoddy. Lynn concocted his “IQ” scores from standard deviations on other tests, not IQ tests. The tests he adapted don’t produce bell-curve shaped results and are therefore not at all comparable. And these tests were *more* biased than even here, as they assumed the subjects were familiar with Western cultural forms, and they didn’t account for the poor English skills of the African pupils tested.(24)

The *Bell Curve* is at the top of a pyramid of genocidal pseudo-scientists. At the bottom are the open eugenicists and ground-level research fabricators. They publish their results in disreputable journals like *Mankind Quarterly*. But these results are cited even as their methods are concealed — as in Lynn’s case, when he claimed to study previous studies — until finally the research is fully laundered in a mainstream publication like the *Bell Curve*.

The book rides along with an underlying denial of widespread inequality (except in intelligence) and oppression. Nowhere is this worse than in the discussion of “crime,” in which they conclude, among other things, that people with low IQ scores are more often convicted because “it may be ... that they are less competent in getting favorable treatment from the criminal justice system.”(25) How much does intelligence help against the justice system? Was Mumia Abu-Jamal railroaded and sentenced to death for murder because he was unintelligent? Or could it have to do with the active frame-up by the police, the unwilling court-appointed lawyer, the genocidally-racist judge, the Blacks excluded from the jury, etc., etc. In *Bell Curve* land, these are all minor influence compared to the overwhelming importance of naturally-endowed intelligence.

This flies in the face of their own evidence. Murray and Herrnstein concede that white IQs today are as high above the whites of two generations ago as they are above the Black scores of today.(21) This is widely believed to be the result of more general education and better living conditions. In other words, this trend alone could shoot down any genetic theory. And yet in *Bell Curve* land, Blacks and whites live in equal conditions today, so any difference between them reflects different innate characteristics, not different social conditions. In fact, many studies have shown a gradual convergence of Black and white scores, probably reflecting the advancement of some Blacks after the Civil Rights Movement. Murray and Herrnstein note this, but simply say it’s too soon to judge its causes.(26)

RACE

To return to the subject of “race” for a moment, Murray and Herrnstein use the U.S. government’s definition of “race.” They decided to “classify people according to the way they classify themselves.” This is the only way to assign racial clas-

sifications — socially — and it undermines any attempt to make them genetic categories.(27)

In the genetic argument, the easiest reason to debunk genetic human races is by pointing out that there is greater variation among races than between them. For example, blood types cross “race” lines, so that defining races by blood type would be more valid than skin color or other visible trait. The vast majority of genetic variation among humans occurs within races, and the genes that control such visible traits as skin color are independent of more underlying traits. However, “most anthropologists” now say that “races are mostly arbitrary categories invented by people to fit a misunderstanding about how human beings evolved.”(28)

THE AGENDA

The political purpose of the *Bell Curve* is older than American slavery, as Henry Louis Gates Jr., pointed out when he quoted Frederick Douglass:

“When men oppress their fellow-men, the oppressor ever finds, in the character of the oppressed, a full justification for his oppression. Ignorance, depravity, and the inability to rise from degradation to civilization and respectability, are the most usual allegations against the oppressed. The evils most fostered by slavery and oppression are precisely those which slave-holders and oppressors would transfer from their system to the inherent character of their victims. Thus the very crimes of slavery become slavery’s best defense.”(29)

The *Bell Curve* authors and their investors promote a eugenicist outlook veiled by backhanded multiculturalism. On the ideological level it promotes white supremacy; on the practical political level it promotes social policies: principally eliminating affirmative action and privatizing education.

Eugenics, a term coined by Charles Darwin’s cousin Francis Galton in 1883, referred to the attempt to

“improve the human species by affording ‘the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable.’ ... Galton was thoroughly familiar with the impressive effects of careful breeding as a means of bettering crops and domestic animals alike. ‘Could not the race of men be similarly improved? ... Could not the undesirables be got rid of and the desirables multiplied?’”(30)

New York Times science writer Malcolm Browne tried to distance the *Bell Curve* from eugenics, since eugenics led to the practices of genocide by Nazi Germany (with extermination of “races” in concentration camps) and Amerika, with sterilization of those deemed criminal or mentally retarded. But Browne even tries to save eugenics a little, by saying eugenicists’ “ideas were appropriated and perverted by the Nazis as the rationale for the Holocaust.”(31) MIM argues, rather, that the Holocaust was a predictable outcome of the

racist eugenicist theory.

While not suggesting traditional eugenics policies, Murray and Herrnstein express their belief that the future of inequality "depends on which women in which group have how many babies at what ages." (21) And the perceptive Browne says "it is hard to believe that these writers would oppose a eugenically motivated program designed to influence patterns of reproduction." The idea sounds good to Browne, who then asks, "Is it wrong to regard a hereditary predisposition to lower intelligence as a kind of genetic disease and to find ways to cure it?" (31)

Imperialist science is laying the groundwork for a new, more sophisticated eugenics. The *Bell Curve* provides important ideological and political support to this movement. The medical angle is being federally funded at the National Institutes of Health, which spent \$58 million in 1994 to study the "genetic" causes of violence. (32)

In text that could be straight out of *Brave New World*, Murray and Herrnstein say they want different ethnic groups to come to appreciate their natural limitations, and not feel bad if they're not "smart." They relate a conversation they supposedly had with a Thai: "Americans have technology and capabilities that the Thais do not have, he said, just as the elephant is stronger than the human. 'But,' he said, 'who wants to be an Elephant?'" (New Republic 10/31/95, by Murray and Herrnstein.) They claim to seek a "wise ethnocentrism, in which, 'Given a chance, each clan will add up its accomplishments using its own weighting system, will encounter the world with confidence in its own worth and, most importantly, will be unconcerned about comparing its accomplishments line-by-line with those of any other clan.'"

Avoiding "line-by-line" comparisons serves the interests of the white nation, which has certain bottom line inequalities it fears: reparations for slavery, returning stolen land, and genocidal wars around the world. The bottom line is, Amerika has to pay up.

LIBERALISM

Murray claims the tradition of Liberalism, saying, "My political aspiration is the restoration of the Jeffersonian republic." (33) And he is in that tradition. In England, for example, IQ tests were used as part of "a revolt against patronage and particularism and a plea for individual justice." Poor kids who scored well were supposed to be able to advance. (34) This was an important part of labor-aristocracy advancement — that is, working class English whites being able to break out of their class and move up. The English imperialists didn't give anything up for this, of course. If their kids had any trouble with the tests, they could always buy a top education anyway.

If a "pure" capitalist system with no imperialism and no national oppression could exist, and where everyone got an equal education, this form of Liberalism would mean that the ranks of oppressors were relatively more open to members of the proletariat. In actual imperialism, such Liberalism has

never existed beyond the ranks of the oppressor nations, or even completely within them; those in the oppressed nations had no such opportunity at all. Therefore, this Liberalism does nothing more than improve the conditions for some labor aristocrats, and further strengthen their ideological attachment to imperialism.

One Liberal *Bell Curve* critic called the book "grossly deterministic and grossly materialistic," because it considers people as part of groups instead of as individuals with the ability to affect their destinies. "I am repulsed ... because I would like to believe that what I will achieve in my life will be owed to myself and not to my group." (35) This Liberalism is anti-communist, and is nothing better than the *Bell Curve*.

BOURGEOIS BACKING

In the "free market of ideas," imperialists have the most money to buy the market. MIM argues that we can't beat the imperialists on their media turf; instead, we work to build an independent media to represent the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples of the world. In the marketplace of ideas, the imperialists don't fight fair, and no one expects them to.

Murray got \$1 million from the Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation to write the book while he was at the American Enterprise Institute. The Foundation supports "school choice," with public funds for private and religious schools. It has assets of more than \$400 million. (36) In that capacity, Murray took advantage of the work of academics on the payroll of the Pioneer Fund, which spends about \$1 million per year to support white supremacists. They fund tenured professors at Smith College, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Pennsylvania, and other state universities. (23)

The Fund was founded in 1937 by Wickliffe Draper, a textile magnate. The first president, Harry Laughlin, was a renowned eugenicist who was granted an honorary degree from Nazi Germany, given him by the Nazi's "scientific advisor for the extermination of the handicapped." This was for his work creating the 1922 Model Eugenical Sterilization Law, "which was adopted in one form or another by 30 states and resulted in the forced sterilization of tens of thousands of people in the United States." Thomas Ellis, an advisor to Jesse Helms, served on the Pioneer Fund board; Arthur Jensen received more than \$1 million from Pioneer, and Phillippe Rushton got their money as well. The Pioneer Fund also subsidizes the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which crusades for immigration restrictions. (23)

WAR ON OPPRESSED-NATION CHILDREN

The *Bell Curve*'s ideological assault comes in the context of a material war on Black children as well. Now that this article has dispensed with notions of inherent genetic inferiority, we want to point to some of the effects of poverty and oppression on members of the U.S. Empire's oppressed internal colonies. These effects make it harder for oppressed-nation children to grow up, or survive, healthy in mind and body.

One basic measure of wealth is household net worth, or the value of everything a family owns minus the size of its debts. The Census Bureau reports that in 1988, white household net worth was 9.6-times greater than Black household net worth: \$44,408 compared to \$5,345.(37) This means that even when measures such as income are closer between Blacks and whites, inequality in the underlying economic security is much greater.

In March 1994, Black children were officially 3.4-times more likely to be in poverty than "non-Hispanic" whites, or 46.1% compared to 13.6%. Of children living with one or both parents in 1993, 64% of Black children lived in rental housing, compared to 27% of white children. Education is especially hard for children living with stressed-out, overworked or very poor parents, and single parents in these conditions have it even worse. More than half (54%) of Black children live with their mother only, compared to 18% of whites. That makes for hard economics, as Black female householders with no spouse present have a median income of \$11,905, which is 55% of the \$21,649 median earned by non-Hispanic white women in the same situation.(38) Misogynist imperialist ideology blames the single parents for this situation; MIM blames imperialism itself.

Early childhood development is generally thought to be hindered by low birth-weight as well, which results from poverty and its various manifestations. Black children, taken as a nation, rank 71st in the world-compared to other countries in rates of low birth-weight.(39) And by the time schooling starts, the advantages of health and wealth are compounded by unequal education. In 1993, 66% of white kids in nursery school were in private schools, compared to 26% of Blacks. In elementary school, 10% of whites compared to 5% of Blacks are in private schools.(38)

Many Black and other oppressed-nation children also suffer from lead poisoning, a virtual plague that has negatively affected the development of millions of children. It is a good example of how combined effects of poverty and oppression pile up on children of the oppressed.

Lead in the bloodstream causes a variety of developmental problems, including basic problems in visual motor abilities, which lead to reading, writing and math problems. Hurting fine motor skills, lead can also make it harder to take tests, and harder to concentrate. Equal exposure to lead can lead to different blood levels in different children, depending on other factors such as a low calcium or iron diet. By one estimate, one-third of Black children age 1-5 in large cities with poor parents have hazardous levels of lead in their blood.(40) The Alliance to End Childhood Lead Poisoning estimates that up to 50% of children in poor Black urban areas suffer from lead poisoning.(41)

While leaded gasoline, lead solder in soda cans, and new lead paint have all been cut down, other sources of lead persist in urban areas, include old buildings, industrial emissions, old schools and public housing projects, and soil. Lead paint in old

housing remains the biggest source for lead poisoning. While there have been large decreases overall, there is still a huge disparity between Black and white children. The U.S. Government says that the white rate of what is now considered lead poisoning fell from 85% to 5.5% of children, and the Black rate fell from 98% to 21%, from 1980 to 1990. In large central cities, Black children had a 37% rate, compared to 6% for whites in the same areas.(42)

With the blood of so many Black children literally poisoned by the industries that represent wealth and progress to imperialism and the white nation, it is obscene to talk about any real or imagined cognitive differences between Black and white children without eliminating the basic sources of poverty and oppression.

EDUCATION

But instead of working to eliminate these effects, imperialism and its minions work to increase them. In the education system, IQ tests are rampantly used against oppressed children. The *Bell Curve* authors complain that "for thirty years, IQ has been out of fashion among American educators."(43) But the truth is that three-quarters of school districts still use IQ tests, and almost half of those kids in "gifted and talented" programs came from the top quartile of IQ test scores.(44) So IQ testing is used to help determine the future of millions of children.

Further, the education system seeks out testing more on Blacks than on whites, to excuse the poor education they get. One study found that Black children have a higher mental retardation rate than whites, but not before the age of 6, when they enter school. Carolyn Drews, the epidemiologist who did the study, "said the study supported findings that teachers were more likely to seek IQ testing and special classes for minority children, and the minority children from poor backgrounds might lack the skills needed for traditional IQ tests."(45) So white children having trouble in school might be carried along till they catch up, while Black children are quickly separated out and given IQ tests to pin them down in low success tracks.

To feed the current white frenzy against supposed "reverse discrimination," Murray and Herrnstein help convince whites that the government is working against them in its education policies. "At present, there is an overwhelming tilt toward enriching the education of children from the low end of the cognitive ability distribution," they write. But this conclusion is completely wrong. They say that in fiscal year 1993, of \$8.6 billion spent by the Federal Government, 92% went to programs for the "disadvantaged," compared to just .1% for the "gifted."(43) They act as if this is the whole education system. In fact, private schools alone spent more than \$20 billion in 1993. In 1991, federal education spending was 5.7% of the total spent on elementary and secondary education, state was 43.6%, and local was 40.6% (46). So, a majority of some "special" money may go to the "disadvantaged," but the vast majority of education resources go into the mundane education of children in a system that maintains the national oppression

of internal colonies by white Amerika.

And it's not getting any better. In the name of stopping "violence," Amerikan schools are cracking down on oppressed-nation youth and their parents. An influential 1995 Heritage Foundation study recommends: increases in school security personnel, removing "disruptive" students from regular classrooms and creating special programs for them, using breathalyzer tests in school, and holding parents legally accountable for children's behavior.(47)

More and more schools have metal detectors, security guards, random locker searches, and restricted access to school buildings.(48) Twenty years ago the courts ordered New York City to end a system of separate schools for "violent" children, calling them "dumping grounds" mostly for nonwhites. Now they want to start the separate schools up again, this time stressing "behavior modification" and "family therapy" to improve their image.(49)

PSYCHIATRY

In the oppressor white nation, the greatest contradiction is between children and adults. White youth have the greatest potential to rebel against their privilege and choose a course of opposing oppression. Psychiatry is one tool for stopping that rebellion. (It is also used against oppressed-nation children, of course.)

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry recommends that parents seek "professional help" if certain behaviors persist, including "violent actions, rebellious behavior or running away," or even "persistent boredom"!(50) They also call "refusal to go to school" a "serious illness" for older children and adolescents, which "often requires more intensive treatment."(51) Resisting the Amerikan education system is one definition of mental "illness," according to psychiatry.

Parental abuse and alienation in a parasitic society causes a lot of suicide among whites. While suicides are hard to measure, or even define — shooting cops is suicidal, but when the cops shoot you back it doesn't get counted as a suicide — but by official measures white youth have the highest rates. Official teen suicide rates in the U.S. Empire have been increasing rapidly, more than doubling since 1980. The suicide rate for all 10- to 14-year-olds went from 0.8 to 1.7 per 100,000 from 1980 to 1992. For 15- to 19-year-olds it increased from 8.5 to 10.9 per 100,000. For young Black males, the overall rate increased 20%, but it increased four-times for Black males 10 to 14.(52)

Children of the oppressed nations in North America are attacked from all sides. The *Bell Curve* is an ideological attack that strengthens their white oppressors, and it rides along on an oppressive material reality that causes death and suffering of great proportions. Even white children are restricted and repressed by the imperialist education system; if they don't play by strict rules they can be incarcerated or drugged as "mentally ill," or kicked out of school, or put in prison. When

the oppressed nations settle up with Amerika, the reparations must include payment for the ongoing oppression of children.

Notes:

1. *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray. Free Press: New York, 1994. Page or chapter numbers in the text refer to this edition. Herrnstein was a disciple of B.F. Skinner and later a Harvard professor. At Harvard in the 1970s, his classes were often disrupted by student protestors. Obituary, *New York Times* 9/16/94, p. B8.
2. "Curveball," Stephen Jay Gould, *New Yorker* 11/28/95. Gould's progressive anti-racist work goes back to his 1981 book *The Mismeasure of Man* and beyond. We're glad to use this work and will save our criticisms of him for another day. "Two books and no fewer than four conferences on the book's assertions are scheduled" for 1995 (*Washington Post* 1/16/95, p. A3).
3. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books, 1983. See, more recently, *Outsmarting I.Q.: The Emerging Science of Learnable Intelligence*, by David Perkins. Free Press: New York, 1995.
4. "The Bell Curve: Getting the Facts Straight," *Educational Leadership* 4/95.
5. Geoffrey Cowley, "Testing the Science of Intelligence," *Newsweek* 10/24/94.
6. "Scales of Inequality," Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Washington Post* 11/6/94. George Johnson writes: "The genes can carry only enough information to specify the most general features of the brain — the rough shape of this glob of neurological clay. The fine sculpting that makes us who we are comes from the experience of living. Neurons continually form new connections, called synapses, with other neurons, growing the wiring needed to navigate through life's mazes. The very essence of the brain is this malleability, and that is what makes many biologists skeptical when social scientists or psychologists claim ... that they have found evidence that intelligence is essentially inherent." "Learning Just How Little Is Known About The Brain," *New York Times* 10/23/94, Week in Review.
7. "Alfred Binet, who invented the first usable I.Q. test in 1905 ... said the test had one purpose: to help identify learning-disabled children who needed special schools." "The 'scientific' War On The Poor," by Brent Staples, *New York Times* 10/28/94, 1994 p. A30.
8. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* 11/29/94.
9. Sarah Glazer, "IQ Controversy; Is Intelligence Inherited?" *Washington Post* 6/7/94, p. Z10.
10. pp. 593-4.
11. *Washington Post* 1/16/95, p. A3. After all the criticism of the low R2 levels, Murray then declared in the same Post article they were "meaningless" for the type of regression equations they did. This is contradicted by what he wrote in the book: "The size of the R2 tells something about the strength of the logistic relationship between the dependent variable and the set of independent variables..." p. 594.
12. p. xix.
13. Letter to *New York Times* Book Review 11/13/94. A *Times Mirror* poll in October 1994 documents the shift in white attitudes toward Blacks and immigrants. They found that 51% of whites agreed "the United States has gone 'too far' in pushing equal rights." That is up from 42% just two years earlier. Meanwhile, the number of whites agreeing that "'every possible effort' should be made to help minorities" dropped from 29% to 25% in the same time. Also during that time, the number of people saying the U.S. government should restrict immigration increased from 76% to 84%. *USA Today* 11/2/94, p. A8.
14. *Forbes* 10/24/94.

15. p. 270.
 16. pp. 276-8.
 17. p. 280-1.
 18. 10/16/94 New York Times Book Review; 11/13/94 New York Times Book Review.
 19. p. 427.
 20. Also, the *Bell Curve* frequently uses the SAT as a stand-in for IQ, to much consternation of Nancy Cole, president of Educational Testing Service, which makes the SAT. She said it was "scientifically invalid" and "personally abhorrent" that SATs in the *Bell Curve* are "misused to promote a position about inherited and immutable racial inferiority." (Education Week 1/11/95.) The SAT years ago changed their acronym from Standard "Aptitude" Test to Standard "Achievement" Test, to avoid IQ-test type controversy. Now when their test turns out better for whites, they can freely blame the public schools instead of racism in their test.
 21. Murray and Herrnstein in the *New Republic* 10/31/95.
 22. p. 642.
 23. "Professors of Hate: Academia's Dirty Secret," by Adam Miller, *Rolling Stone* 10/20/94, p. 106-14.
 24. Review by Leon Kamin, *Scientific American* 2/95, pp. 99-103.
 25. p. 247.
 26. Richard Nisbett in the *New Republic* 10/31/94.
 27. This is illustrated by the Census Bureau report that First Nations populations rose 72% from 1970-1980, and another 38 % from 1980-1990. This is a result of more people checking the box that says "Native American," not a population increase. "You're Smart If You Know What Race You Are," Steven A. Holmes, New York Times 10/23/94, Week in Review.
 28. "Forget the Old Labels: Here's a New Way to Look at Race," Washington Post 11/16/94. See Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man* for the best overall account of this issue. See also *The Evolution of Racism: Human differences and the use and abuse of science*, by Pat Shipman. Simon and Schuster: New York, 1994 (reviewed in MIM Notes 95, 12/94).
 29. The *New Republic* 10/31/94.
 30. Shipman, op cit, p. 111.
 31. New York Times Book Review 10/16/94.
 32. Washington Post 1/29/95, p. C1.
 33. *Forbes* 10/24/94.
 34. "How the Left Betrayed IQ," Adrian Wooldrige column 2/27/95.
 35. Leon Wieseltier, the *New Republic* 10/31/94.
 36. "Who is Backing The Bell Curve?" Barbara Miner, *Educational Leadership* 4/95.
 37. Census Bureau press release 1/26/94.
 38. *The Black Population in the United States: March 1994 and 1993*, by Claudette E. Bennett, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports P20-480, 1995.
 39. Max Weiner and Bruce Cooper, letter in *Education Week* 1/11/95.
 40. New York Times 3/21/95, p. C3.
 41. Washington Post 7/27/94, p. B1.
 42. Washington Post 7/27/94, p. A2.
 43. Chapter 18.
 44. Washington Post 6/7/94, Health.
 45. New York Times 3/31/95, p. A17.
 46. *1995 U.S. Statistical Abstract*, p. 151; p. 154.
 47. "How State and Local Officials Can Restore Discipline and Civility to American's Public Schools," by Stephen Wallis, 1995.
 48. Washington Post 1/30/95.
 49. Daily Report Card 3/8/95.
 50. "Teen Suicide" pamphlet, 10/92.
 51. "Children Who Won't Go To School" pamphlet 10/92.
 52. Chicago Tribune 5/1/95.

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More on Anarchism

In MIM Theory 8, "The Anarchist Ideal and Communist Revolution," we took the time to detail the historical failures of anarchism to achieve its lofty goals, principally in the Spanish Civil War and France in 1968, as well as other examples. Here the debate continues, with anarchists once again resorting to idealism: the habit of pitting ideals against practices, declaring ideals superior, and returning to a state of self-justified futility. As materialists with a practice of defeating imperialism and building socialism, Maoists take these arguments head on. Because anarchism is as rampant in the decadent First World as it is irrelevant in the oppressed Third World, MIM continues to take some responsibility for combatting this trend in our journal. Responses are again encouraged.

Open Letter to Maoists (and Potential Maoists) Who Truly Want to End Oppression

This article and response continues the debate started in MIM Notes 95 (December 1994) with "An Open Letter to the Better Anarchists." Subsequent responses appeared in MIM Theory 8, "The Anarchist Ideal & Communist Revolution." —ed.

by a member of the Love & Rage
Revolutionary Anarchist Federation

June 1995

(representing my views, not the Federation as a whole)

I am writing this in response to the Maoist Internationalist Movement's printing of "an open letter to the better anarchists" in the December 1994 issue of their newspaper, MIM Notes [and in MIM Theory 8]. I have taken their bait and responded partly because I am interested in the political debate, and partly because I think there are a lot of anarchist-leaning revolutionaries who end up getting into Leninism for lack of seeing a coherent anti-authoritarian alternative. While I think MIM's "open letter" had some condescending parts to it and probably won't be taken seriously by many anarchists, it does bring up some issues I find important, and there might be some people who are trying to figure out where they stand between anarchism and Marxism who are interested in the discussion.

I define my political perspective as 'revolutionary anti-authoritarian' or 'anarchist communist,' to differentiate from revolutionaries who are attempting to put themselves in positions of power — either by getting elected to bourgeois governments, or by militarily seizing state power and creating a "dictatorship of the proletariat" with themselves as the new ruling class.

TAKE MARXISTS SERIOUSLY (BUT CRITICALLY)

But even from an anti-authoritarian perspective, I still study and learn much from Leninist and Maoist theory and practice. Marx, Lenin and Mao should be studied by any serious revolutionaries, simply for the fact that they are revolutionary leaders whose ideas and actions have inspired millions of people to fight for their liberation. That said, I think that it is painfully obvious to anyone who wants to see, that despite the successes of Leninist and Maoist revolutions and ideologies in actually overthrowing governments, the Leninist model has only led to disaster, defeat and continued capitalist and patriarchal oppression. None of the Leninist or Maoist "explanations" of the defeats of the revolutions in China, Russia, Eastern Europe, etc, are convincing to me. They make certain good points about things like production relations, external imperialist interference, and the like but I think they miss the heart of the matter. They never critique the internal factors which, when combined, I think lead directly to the authoritarianism and state capitalism that has emerged in every single state socialist country. These factors are: a centralized "vanguard" party who believes they have a lock on "truth" or "science" seize state power and attempt to run the state machinery by themselves "in the interest of" the masses rather than helping to create instruments of direct popular rule. The "withering away of the state" that Marxists promise hasn't happened and won't happen — there's no material basis for a new ruling class to give up its power. I believe it's incredibly simple: authoritarian structures will not produce egalitarian or free societies.

MAO, CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND 'POWER TO THE PEOPLE'

To Mao's credit, he acknowledged that a new bourgeoisie emerges within ruling Communist Parties, and tried to come up with a solution to that problem. His solution was the "Cultural Revolution" — a revolution that happens after the Communists have state power, which mobilizes the masses to

attack the remnants of bourgeois ideology in the realm of culture, and also attacks the privileged elite which has gained power inside the Communist Party and is trying to preserve that power rather than advance revolution.

I think that during the early years, the Cultural Revolution was an exciting and real mass revolutionary movement which was attacking exactly the problems mentioned above. From early on though, the various factions within the Communist Party (including Mao) tried to "steer" that mass movement away from "going to far" with setting up direct popular rule, such as with the aborted Shanghai Commune. Instead they encouraged the masses to attack their political opponents within the party and simply replace them with new leaders. I think the masses were ready to go further, at least in places like Shanghai. But this would have threatened the power and control of all the ruling factions, so it was opposed.

While the different factions had different political visions, I don't think the "revolutionaries" and "capitalist roaders" are always clearly distinct and I don't think it can be reduced down to just an ideological struggle. There is a human level to the struggle, and there was a lot of personal power and prestige at stake. I think that on some level it did come down to personal power struggles within the party, and the different factions saw the mass movement as something to harness to destroy their rivals. Even Maoists acknowledge that different factions in the party organized Red Guards to attack their political opponents and that these attacks weren't always principled. And whether Maoists admit it or not, the Gang of Four (Maoist leaders in the Cultural Revolution) made serious errors by trying to control the mass movement to attack their enemies, and this made them increasingly unpopular among the masses as time went on.

I feel like I'm getting deep into the politics of the Cultural Revolution, which is a topic much bigger than this letter. So let's take a step back for a moment and look at Mao's answer to the problems encountered in trying to get to "communism" through creating a huge, centralized state controlled by one party which believes itself the holder of scientific truth (Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung-Thought, it was called at the time) and which owns all the means of production.

Doesn't creating a huge, centralized, ideologically monolithic, bureaucratic state apparatus seem like a strange way to get to its opposite — a world where people have control over their daily lives — a world without capitalism, patriarchy, and national boundaries? Marxists explain this contradiction by calling it "dialectical." But after 100 years, it seems that this particular dialectic keeps veering off trajectory. I think this is a

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dishonest (or naive) use of dialectic logic to justify an authoritarian strategy.

I think the combination of factors that make Maoism (and all other Leninist trends) inherently flawed are — believing that there is an 'absolute truth'; believing that Marxism embodies that truth; believing that one's particular party is the only one with the correct interpretation of that truth; and then attempting to seize state power to make your "line" the law over the masses. These factors combine to basically ensure that — despite the best intentions of many individual members of Leninist groups — any "successes" they achieve will head an authoritarian and state capitalist trajectory.

BASHING THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT VS. BASHING ANARCHISM

It's certainly easy to take cracks at the "anarchist movement" in North America. I'm sure that I share many if not most of the criticisms that Maoists would make of the North American anarchist movement. But so what? Just because you have criticisms of the anarchist movement, it does not follow that therefore you should support authoritarian alternatives. Yes, the anarchist movement is largely white (although some of the best new ideas in anti-racist theory have come from anarchists, and the Black anarchist trend is growing), it's mostly stuck in one counter-cultural milieu (punk rock), and is excessively academic (non-activist), individualist, and often shallow theoretically. But to abandon anti-authoritarianism as a basic principle, just because I have disagreements with many people who call themselves anarchists would be to abandon the basic principles underlying everything I am fighting for. To abandon the critique of and struggle against all authority relations and hierarchy is to abandon any chance of real liberation.

I agree with Maoists that the anarchist movement in the u.s. would do well to do more study of historical revolutions, and to pay more attention to theory and ideology in deciding strategy for what to do now. But it is absurd to say that Maoism is "Universally Applicable Revolutionary Science" and anarchism is "incorrect" just because the anarchist movement failed in China while the Maoists succeeded.

ANARCHIST "FAILURE" AND MAOIST "SUCCESS" IN CHINA

Clearly the anarchists in China did not have the best strategy to overthrow feudalism & capitalism, and to then build toward the liberated society they desired. The Chinese Communist Party was better prepared to lead mass movements, and to organize the peasants to overthrow the old order. But again I ask, so what? The Chinese communists were utter failures for decades, too, while anarchism was the leading revolutionary trend in China from 1905 to 1930. All the 'major players' in the Chinese Communist Party were anarchists

before taking up Marxism, including Chairman Mao himself. And I think elements of anarchism remained influential in the Chinese Communist Party, which allowed them to break with enough Marxist dogma to try more creative approaches than Communist Parties in other countries.

The Chinese communists themselves were only 'successful' after nearly being wiped out — a situation they found themselves in from following Marxist-Leninist ideology too dogmatically. The only reason the Chinese communists survived and were successful was that they finally bucked Leninist & Stalinist orthodoxy on the primary role of the industrial proletariat, as well as on many strategic questions. This ought to tell you something. Yes, learn about and learn from Marx, Lenin, Mao, and even Stalin. But certainly don't treat their experiences, ideas and formulations as orthodoxy, or even as your "guide to action." Don't you see where your guide to action is guiding you? Even if the Chinese revolution was "successful" in 1949, was it "successful" in the Great Leap Forward? Was it "successful" in eliminating the basis for a new (capitalist) ruling class during the Cultural Revolution?

Yes, Mao remains popular among the Chinese people today. Again I ask, so what? George Washington, the founder of the "u.s. nation" is popular among the north american people, but that doesn't mean that north amerikans understand anything about Washington's ideology. And similarly Mao remains popular among Chinese people as "the founder of the Republic", but my sense is that that popularity is not due to Maoist ideology, but because he is the forefather of modern China, in the same way that Washington is seen as the forefather of the U.S.A.

In fact, while Mao believed the Cultural Revolution to be one of his greatest achievements, by the 1970s there was — and there still remains — widespread hostility toward the Cultural Revolution era in China. The Gang of Four — the faction most closely associated with Mao — was by the early to mid 1970s especially disliked by many of the Chinese masses.

It's interesting that you would say that the current Deng regime in China is "socialist in words, fascist in deeds." What has Deng done that is "fascist" which Mao didn't do? If your justification for Maoist China is that life-spans doubled, health care, education and production improved, then why not support Deng too? Production has also increased under Deng. But "productivity" by itself is a capitalist tool of measurement. For that matter, the u.s.a. would deserve support too if these were our only ways to measure "success." And the health care and education improvements, while distributed more fairly to more poor peasants and workers by the communist govern-

ment, came largely as a result of improved technology and distribution — something that could have been done by any system — bourgeois democratic, state socialist, state capitalist, fascist, or whatever. That's not to take away from the Chinese communists for improving health care, education, and other services, because credit is certainly due for good things. But it still is not even close to any sort of "proof" that Maoism is the universally applicable revolutionary ideology.

TUNNEL VISION ON THE SHINING PATH: MORE THAN ONE WAY

Unfortunately for Maoists, we don't live in a black-and-white dualistic world. There are more choices than just dualities like "outright anti-communist reaction or Maoism" or "anarchist idealism or Maoist materialism." I'm not an anti-communist reactionary or a Maoist. I criticize idealism and use the framework of dialectical and historical materialism, as did Bakunin and many other anarchists.

There are many potential roads to liberation, but I think history has shown the results of creating a new repressive state apparatus—even one that calls itself socialist. Concentrating power in the hands of one tight centralized group who believe that they have an exclusive grasp on 'absolute truth' has led to disaster again and again. It is inherently authoritarian and will never lead to a new society where "the people" actually govern their own lives.

So to Maoists and potential Maoists out there who truly desire a world without oppression, who truly want to abolish all authority relations — keep your commitment to revolution, to anti-imperialism and internationalism, but ditch the claim to "scientific truth," ditch the state power trap, and break out of the tunnel-vision orthodoxy. Study and learn from Marx, Lenin and Mao. But they don't have a monopoly on revolutionary ideas, and there's no reason to replicate the authoritarian organizations and nations they created. We simply don't have to, and they haven't gotten us closer to a world without oppression or created situations of direct popular rule in a collective, egalitarian way.

Maoists are right that we need to build revolutionary organization —but not another group which believes it is the only one with the "correct line" based on some "science." While we should analyze society and try to figure out the best way forward, we need to have the humility to admit that we may be wrong and others may be right. No ideology and no party has a lock on the truth, and other revolutionary groups whose ideologies differ slightly from yours are not the enemy. We don't need to create groups that want all the power for themselves — we need to build revolutionary organizations that see their role as building alliances with other groups and social forces, in order to

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Another thing that Maoists (and revolutionary nationalists) have right is that we need to struggle to liberate territory. As Malcolm X said, revolutions are fought for control over land. But fighting for land does not mean that you have to set up a government or state on that land. Land can be liberated and then popular power can be expressed in different ways. I repeat, creating a new repressive state apparatus is a dead end and I don't see it playing a progressive role in the struggle for liberation.

I believe we need to honestly sum up the experience of the socialist and anarchist movements, as well as other experiences of mass uprisings and resistance, and try to come up with new forms, new ways of liberating territory and expressing popular power. The old ways have proven to be failures. In this respect the Zapatistas have been an inspiring and refreshing influence in raising the cry for "land and liberty" and liberating territory, but breaking out of the mold by encouraging new forms of popular power to develop outside of their exclusive control within their liberated areas.

The world is in chaos, and unless we come up with new solutions, things will just keep spiraling further into chaos. We need to get organized — but in new anti-authoritarian ways. While many former anarchists have certainly become Leninists or Maoists, many former Leninists have broken with authoritarianism and joined the anarchist movement. As the anarchist movement becomes better organized, I'm confident that many more will follow. Hope to see you there!

State Power Won't Bring Liberation!

There's No Such Thing as "True Revolutionary Science!"

Smash All Power Relations! Liberate Your Desires!

The writer of this letter can be contacted clo Love & Rage-DC, PO Box 18672, Washington DC 20036

MC12 responds: In response to every historical failure of anarchism to produce any of the ideal situations it claims to fight for, this writer's best argument is, "So what?" People who follow such arguments should know what they are in for, as one anarchist movement after another ends up in the dustbin of history, so much proud idealism and so little concrete accomplishment. There are no new arguments or new evidence presented here. People who choose to believe in circular idealist logic may do so in order to "liberate" their "desires," but they won't do so if they hope to end oppression.

According to the writer, Marx, Lenin and Mao deserve attention "simply" because they led successful revolutions. If only it were that simple, this writer might be a Maoist.

Of course, at this moment, the most "successful" system in the world is imperialism. Everything else is a relative failure. That's looking at everything frozen in time, with no change happening. The imperialists are in power, so they are successful, so success is not a measure of a revolutionary ideology and strategy. Therefore, there is no need to compare the

relative successes of revolutionary movements, because they have all failed, so — hooray! — we can liberate our desires without worrying about such "simple" things as revolutionary success.

The writer claims to use "the framework of dialectical and

In response to every historical failure of anarchism to produce any of the ideal situations it claims to fight for, this writer's best argument is, "So what?"

historical materialism." But after noting that Maoist explanations of state capitalism "make certain good points about things like production relations," the writer goes on to say, "they never critique the internal factors" as if "production relations" are not internal to the society. Perhaps by "internal" the writer really means "psychological," as in a "personal power struggle." Surely, however, this type of theory is not consistent with "the framework of dialectical and historical materialism," as can be seen in abundance throughout this issue of MIM Theory.

When it comes to the accusation about the Shanghai Commune (1967), the anarchist writer throws claims up in the air without evidence or argument, only bald assertions: "Instead [of "direct popular rule"] they [communists] encouraged the masses to attack their political opponents within the party and simply replace them with new leaders. I think the masses were ready to go further, at least in places like Shanghai. But this would have threatened the power and control of all the ruling factions, so it was opposed."

The Cultural Revolution in Shanghai is relatively well documented. Anyone near a library or a MIM literature list could do better than this argument. For the sake of other readers, here is some of the evidence.(1) With the inauguration of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the Communist Party recognized and led rebellion against capitalist-roaders in the Party leadership. As a result of the Party leadership and the masses' relentless struggles in Shanghai, the former party leadership in Shanghai was overthrown. This represented the combined efforts of workers and students, in many different organizations, with the clear support of the Party's Cultural Revolution leadership in Beijing.

When the newly-empowered organizations came together, they decided to form a government for the city on the model of the Paris Commune, called the Shanghai Commune. Shanghai had, as the writer points out, a higher level of political consciousness than most places, in part because of the domination of workers and partly because of the students.

When the leaders of this movement went to Beijing to

meet with Mao, he was critical, uttering the words that to anarchists mean Mao was really just a dictator at heart, and never wanted to give power to the people. Mao 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 a '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."(2)

Mao suggested that instead of the commune structure, the Shanghai rebels should go with the revolutionary committee leadership being used all over the country at that time, which combined leadership of members of mass organizations in the majority, with a minority of members of the army and the Party. And he added: "Communes are too weak when it comes to suppressing counterrevolution."

The anarchist writer concludes that the commune "threatened the power and control of all the ruling factions, so it was opposed," but where is the evidence for this claim? The Communist Party had just finished participating in the widespread overthrow of its corrupt members and leaders. As Mao looked at the whole country, not just at Shanghai, he saw clearly that the forces of counterrevolution were still very strong, and even still in power in many places. Creating a very open, democratic system with these people still holding so much power risked losing everything to them. Simply put, the Chinese revolution was not ready to do without leaders; the question was, who would lead and in what way.

Mao believed that Communist Party leadership would be necessary for the foreseeable future in China. Presumably, as in the Cultural Revolution, it would be gradually decreased through a continuous process of revolution. Therefore, anarchists are free to conclude that Maoists are just the same as imperialists, because they all want leadership and hierarchy to continue. And anarchists are just as free to piss away every revolutionary opportunity they face, as they have so far in history, and as they tried to do in Shanghai.

It is always easy for the anarchist to throw stones. Like this one: the writer poses as opposites on the one hand, "a huge, centralized, ideologically monolithic, bureaucratic state apparatus," and on the other hand, "a world where people have control over their daily lives — a world without capitalism, patriarchy, and national boundaries" — as if these are two options, and the big bad communists choose the first. In fact, these are an apple and an orange. The continuation of state power under socialism is a tool, not a "world." And the communist "world" described is only attainable by some social tool. Communists propose national liberation struggles led by proletarian feminist communism, leading to socialism, continued revolution and eventually communism, as the tool of

choice. Anarchists propose a new world without all those messy steps in between, a world presumably, but not demonstrably, attainable by such means as "revolutionary organizations that see their role as building alliances with other groups and social forces, in order to create and enable situations of direct popular rule." This is a liberal mish-mash that shirks responsibility for leadership (what "other groups and social forces"? Who decides?), while avoiding the urgent necessity of a deliberate strategy that can be tested and improved over time.

The writer believes that the scientific arrogance of Marxists "basically ensure[s]" an authoritarian and state capitalist outcome. A political ideology with no successful track record to speak of can easily point at Maoism and say that ANY feature of Maoism "basically ensure[s]" state capitalism, because state capitalism followed from Maoism in China. There is no proof or evidence offered or required for this kind of casting stones in hindsight. By the same token, Maoists could look at any feature of anarchism and declare that THAT feature causes the continuation of imperialism and all of its death and suffering, because anarchism has always only led to more imperialism. There is no science in either of these arguments; they are tautological and therefore useless to revolutionaries intent upon finding the best way out of imperialism and patriarchy.

But this anarchist writer does claim progress, declaring that "some of the best new ideas in anti-racist theory have come from anarchists." MIM would be glad to hear these, and compare them in practice to the revolutionary nationalism of the Maoist-oriented Black Panther Party and other communist-led groups. The letter-writer includes no references. If the reference is to Anarchism and the Black Revolution, by Lorenzo Kom'Boa Ervin, our review is in this issue, and we fail to find it leading with "new ... anti-racist theory" of practical use. We go so far as to doubt in advance the usefulness of "anti-racist theory" when human "races" are a myth and "racism" is only a small part of the superstructure of national oppression. Of course, we are willing to listen.

In response to the many questions lobbed at us about the

Anarchists are free to piss away every revolutionary opportunity they face, as they have so far in history, and as they tried to do in Shanghai.

Chinese revolution, we can only repeat that no revolution is completely successful at everything. But it is only those who have no record to defend who have the ideological luxury of casting stones at everyone who accomplishes anything but fails to accomplish utopia. In fact, the supposed evidence against

the Chinese revolution that the writer presents is a great testimony to the strength of Marxist revolutionary science. Even from just the writer's letter, we learn that Chinese Marxism was able to adapt the science of revolution to local conditions, to survive massive defeats, and to integrate into the revolution all those who were willing to contribute to the liberation of China and the international proletariat. As our review of anarchism in China shows, also in this issue, most Chinese anarchists ended up supporting imperialism in China and the world. It is a tribute to Maoism that some were saved and were able to contribute to the revolution.

In the attempt to tie China's current leader, Deng Xiaoping, with Mao Zedong, the writer takes anti-communism to a new low. Presumably, the writer is saying that Mao's decision that the Shanghai Commune should instead be a revolutionary committee is on a par with Deng Xiaoping's massacre of protesting students in Tienanmen Square in 1989. This unbelievable amorality is only possible because the writer purposefully confuses the unprecedented improvements in the standard of living of the vast majority of Chinese under Mao with a supposed increase in "productivity" under Deng.

What did Deng do that Mao didn't do? Restore capitalism and exploitation, dismantle the agricultural communes, driving millions of peasants off the land and into the cities as unemployed laborers, restore prostitution, drugs, corruption, and national oppression to the country, and much more.

We find it hard to believe the writer really believes these words: "If your justification for Maoist China is that life-spans doubled, health care, education and production improved, then why not support Deng too? Production has also increased under Deng. But 'productivity' by itself is a capitalist tool of measurement."

Who introduced "productivity" as a measure of success? The writer. Here the apple is improvement in the quality and length of life for a billion people, and the orange (raised by the writer) is the bourgeois accounting concept of "productivity." If the anarchist answer to improving life for one-fifth of humanity is "So what?" then let the whole world see anarchism for the morally bankrupt idealism that it is!

The icing on the cake is this: "For that matter, the u.s.a. would deserve support too if these were our only ways to measure 'success.'" The U.S. Empire has caused the deaths of hundreds of millions of people all over the world through conquest, slavery, war and exploitation. Maybe an anarchist would look at the United States only from the perspective of the tiny number of its people (on a world scale) who reap the benefits of this genocidal reign of terror, but don't try to pin that on communists! If the anarchist is saying socialist China achieved its success through the oppression of others, then come up with the evidence — you can't.

The writer also apparently also believes that "any system" could produce "improved technology and distribution" leading to "health care and education improvements" in the Third World. Well, idealism is as idealism does. Maybe in anarchist

dream land "any system" could produce the benefits achieved in socialist China, but no system has done it yet! By what theory in "the framework of dialectical and historical materialism" can "any system" produce such wonders? According to anarchism, then, living standards are irrelevant and can be achieved by "any system," but what really matters, liberating our desires, is only possible through anarchism. This is not only easily disproved factually, it is also a blatant expression of First World privilege, underscoring once again why anarchism is, and appears doomed to remain, a lifestyle choice of the rich, not a political movement of the oppressed.

The writer proclaims that revolutionaries "need to have the humility to admit that we may be wrong and others may be right." Any good communist agrees and carries this out in theory and practice. MIM has on many occasions learned from others and admitted it was wrong, as did the Chinese Communist Party (even in the writer's own example), and any other successful communists. The bogey-man of phony communism doesn't scare MIM. We also don't declare that "other revolutionary groups whose ideologies differ slightly from yours are ... the enemy." Examples of these sorts of baseless charges would be welcome, and can easily be refuted.

The writer admits that Maoists are correct to emphasize the liberation of land as integral to revolutionary struggle. But then the writer claims this can be accomplished without "a government or state on that land." Intriguing! How could that be done? Maoists would love to know. Reading on, we find the answer: "different ways." Well, we would like to hear about them. The romantic description of the Zapatistas in Mexico is not enough. MIM supports the struggle of the indigenous people to liberate their land from imperialism, but we don't see a Zapatista strategy capable of doing that. To pick an obvious question, how will "other ways" of organization lead to the economic development necessary to withstand and defeat the attacks of imperialism? If the Zapatistas have a method of revolution superior to the People's War led by a Maoist party, MIM and other genuine revolutionaries would love to see it.

MIM welcomes this debate, but we're disappointed that the writer didn't take the theoretical questions more seriously, and answer more questions instead of asking more. This or other anarchists who are willing to do a little research and present some evidence are welcome to carry on the debate, at MIM's expense in printing and distribution costs. So far, anarchist idealism has proven itself no weightier than the hot air inside the paper tiger of imperialism. And revolutionaries sincerely looking for a path to communism can only side with Maoism.

Notes:

1. Some details are in *A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, by Jean Daubier. Vintage: New York, 1984. See also *The Chinese Cultural Revolution*, by Jean Esmein. Anchor: New York, 1973.
2. *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*. Monthly Review Press: Pantheon, 1974. Stuart Schram, ed. pp. 277-8.

Review:

Anarchism & the Black Revolution

Lorenzo Kom'Boa Ervin
Monkeywrench Press, Philadelphia
1994

by a New York Prisoner

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin has a history of involvement with liberation struggles throughout the late 1960s which includes the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Black Panther Party. He had several run-ins with the Amerikan empire's repressive forces, which caused him to go into exile, first to Cuba then to Czechoslovakia, where Amerikkkan agents found him and arrested him. He served 15 years within U.S. prisons. During his incarceration he converted to anarchism. Lorenzo's case was widely publicized and he was finally released with the help of an international defense campaign.

Lorenzo's book starts off with a call for new Black autonomous politics in which he asserts his separation from plain old European anarchism.

"The new Black autonomous politics differs from European anarchism in that we know that we are oppressed both as a distinct people and as workers. Currently, European anarchism places its greatest contradiction with the state in the the state's ability to hold back a free lifestyle, and this is exactly what we cannot limit our critique to." (p. 4)

Lorenzo's analysis of the white working class is progressive compared to other anarchist and even some so-called communist movements. He clearly recognizes that white people "have been the beneficiaries of our oppression, and whites are part of the social control mechanism of the state." He also says: "so-called 'white' people are a super-contrived nationality designed to help the capitalists keep workers of color in their place and safeguard the status quo. So rather than see the white industrial working class as a potentially revolutionary class, instead we see it as an opportunistic, collaborationist body." However, despite Lorenzo's recognition of the reactionary nature of the white working class, he still places confidence in the labor aristocracy by stating that the white working class should "just be redefined and reorganized if it is to constitute a reliable ally and have any ability of fighting in its own interest as a new class." The white working class's own interest has historically been in allegiance with the oppressors in exploiting and plundering the darker nations of the world in order to live off the superprofits extracted thereof.

Lorenzo goes on to negate revolutionary nationalism and the right of self-determination by clearly stating that he is "not seeking to build a Black state" and that "Black nation state-ism will defeat our ability to obtain full freedom." Lorenzo clearly

misses that imperialism will suffer severe blows by the oppressed nations building up their own nation-states. This will advance the struggle to completely defeat imperialism. It's typical of anarchists to clearly ignore the step-like process of revolution. For the oppressed to establish national territories of their own is very progressive. Lorenzo and anarchists like him want to negate the State, now or the day after a victorious armed struggle. Of course this is just wishful thinking and sounds-good-ism. Anarchists seem never to learn from their mistakes. They are in a complete cycle of incorrect ideas and failed practices. They have not gotten off the ground one iota of accomplishing a successful armed struggle, which proves the emptiness of their eclectic theories. Anarchists have been around since Karl Marx's times and to this day they have not succeeded in liberating no one.

ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN REVOLUTION

In Part 2 of Lorenzo's book he makes some very progressive suggestions for organizing the oppressed. But call for a social revolution obliterates his entire anti-authoritarian stance. Lenin wrote:

"Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? Revolution is undoubtedly the most authoritarian thing possible. It is an act in which one section of the population imposes its will on the other by means of rifles, bayonets, cannon, i.e. by highly authoritative means. ... either the anti-authoritarians do not know what they are talking about, in which case they merely sow confusion; or they do know, in which case they are betraying the cause of the proletariat. In either case they serve only the interests of reaction." (1)

Lorenzo goes on to show his betrayal and his questionable stance with the outright lie that "Lenin came up with the idea of a transitional state, which would 'wither away' over time." Now, to get it right, Lenin himself said, "Engels' words regarding the 'withering away' of the state enjoy such popularity, they are so often quoted, and they show so clearly the essence of the usual adulteration by means of which Marxism is made to look like opportunist, that we must dwell on them in detail." (1) Marx clearly recognized that there must be a transitional period from capitalism to communism "Between capitalist and communist society — Marx continues — lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the former into the latter. To this also corresponds a political transition period." (1) This transitional state is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lorenzo also accuses Marxist-Leninists of lying about anarchists "because it [anarchism] is a competing ideology with a totally different concept of social organization and revolutionary struggle." Of course he never proves this and this

itself is an outright lie! So I think Lorenzo should be made to answer: why does he blatantly lie to the people about Marxism-Leninism? He can't be truly working in the interests of the people if he lies to the people.

Lorenzo goes on his little mission in a sorry attempt to discredit the people's struggle by saying:

"Both Lenin and Stalin killed millions of workers and peasants, their left-wing ideological opponents, and even members of the Bolshevik Party. This bloody and treacherous history is why there is so much rivalry and hostility between Marxist-Leninist and Trotskyist parties today, and it is why the workers states, whether in Cuba, China, Vietnam, or Korea are such oppressive bureaucracies over their people. It is also why most of the East European Stalinist countries had their governments overthrown by the petty bourgeoisie and ordinary citizens in the 1980s."(p. 70)

It's this type of reactionary bullshit that we must fight against. It's disturbing to see Lorenzo call himself a revolutionary for the people and then blatantly lie to the people and then help the oppressors advocate these fallacies about the people's struggle against their oppression and exploitation. First of all, Lenin and Stalin did not kill millions of workers and peasants. A lot of workers and peasants died due to civil war under Lenin and then the Germano-Russian war under Stalin. A lot of deaths also occurred due to the fact that Russia was in the process of industrializing herself and "to this day there is no record of bloodless industrialization."(2) This is a matter of fact: revolutions are bloody, fierce, violent — and yes, people do die. It is true that Stalin executed left wing opponents and members of the Bolshevik Party.

It's typical of anarchists to completely ignore the circumstances and situations presented themselves during these times. It is important to note that "despite all these repressive actions that Stalin took, the total number of former Soviet citizens who took up arms on the enemy side was approximately one million."(2) The enemy was Nazi Germany. During the time of Stalin, when Nazi Germany was on a mission to conquer the world, Stalin was correct in containing those who were sabotaging and disrupting certain social institutions. There is no question that the Nazis were successful in setting up fifth columns in other European countries it conquered. Stalin was aware of this "There is no question that the Germans have managed to have their agents in the USSR penetrate the most responsible positions."(2) As it was, there was a fifth column in the Soviet Union, albeit a weaker one than in the Western countries. Lieutenant General A. A. Vaslov led the effort rounding up 90 Russian battalions to fight for Hitler by May 1943. "The eradication of the fifth column in the Soviet Union happened in several ways: first by executing enemies; second, by internally deporting peoples unfavorable to the regime; and third, by successful foreign policy maneuvers that prevented quick victories by Hitler."(2) When conditions require it, the penalty for treason is death. Some left-wingers and Bolsheviks

carried out actions that constituted treason.

The reason that there is so much rivalry and hostility between Trotskyists and Marxist-Leninist-Maoists began with the fact that Trotsky was a betrayer of the revolution. He was very national-chauvinist in his criticisms toward Stalin. A lot of Trotsky followers expressed their distaste for the Asiatic people and went as far as to call Stalin "petty Oriental despot."(2) In the present, just like anarchism, Trotskyism has done nothing to offer to advance the struggle of the oppressed throughout the world. Trotskyism has largely appealed to the national chauvinistic labor aristocracy. There are good reasons for animosity toward Trotskyism.

Second of all, the reason why Cuba, present day China, Vietnam, north Korea and so on, have such oppressive bureaucracies over their people is because they are bureaucratic capitalist societies that are governed by a bourgeoisie — not because Marxist-Leninist-Maoists disagree with Trotskyists, as Lorenzo implies. The reasons the Eastern European countries had their governments overthrown by the bourgeoisie and their allies is that after the capitalist state is smashed the bourgeoisie still exists not only in society but also in the party. This is why Mao developed the theory of the Cultural Revolution during the dictatorship of the proletariat. Anarchists act as if as soon as you destroy the state you destroy the entire bourgeoisie and its ideology. What ignorance!

Anarchists have no grasp on reality. If they would have been successful in Russia during Lenin and Stalin's time Germany would have conquered Russia with the easiness of a hot knife through butter. The dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary because when the bourgeoisie is overthrown in one country it still remains strong due to its global ties and influence, its fierce determination to retain power once again, and its residual ideology still exists. And the (necessary) power of the communist party makes it possible for a new bourgeoisie to arise. Therefore the dictatorship of the proletariat is called for in order to hold power in the interest of the oppressed and exploited. The theory and practice of the Cultural Revolution is initiated during this period. This is a harsh struggle that is waged by the people against the bourgeoisie and its ideology. When the dictatorship of the proletariat has been successful globally and the people have won successive Cultural Revolutions against the bourgeoisie, then we can gradually begin to negate the state and enter the stage of communism.

AGAINST DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

In Lorenzo's vain attempt against the revolutionary science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism he tries to shoot down democratic centralism by saying that democratic centralism:

"is a totally undemocratic procedure, which puts the leadership above criticism, even if it is not above reproach. It is a bankrupt, corrupt method of internal operations for a political organization. You have no voice in such a party, and must be afraid to say any unflattering comments to or about the leaders."(p. 71)

Tsk tsk tsk, Lorenzo Lorenzo Lorenzo! The more you talk the more one wonders what side of the fence you stand on. Willingly deceiving the people is a shame. Democratic centralism is an inner-party democracy and a hierarchy, true. This is done for various reasons. We must make sure that we have a very disciplined party that is both steered in theory and practice. We need professional revolutionaries that can stand up to the fire of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is a disciplined class itself and can only be challenged by the iron hearts and the best of the best of disciplined professional revolutionaries. Therefore we have a strong party that have a cadre and chosen leaders — those who are the most advanced will rise up in the ranks. Everybody develops in revolutionary science unevenly. Some people are more receptive than others, some are more diligent than others, and some are more courageous than others. We simply want the best of the bunch. Unlike the bourgeoisie, those who are strong in our party do not prey on the weak. Instead our duty is to protect and uplift the weak; the educated does not ridicule and disrespect the ignorant. Instead we seek to wisen and enlighten the ignorant. How can the anarchist have any type of army that can withstand the bourgeoisie's armed forces without having an authoritative hierarchy? Who is going to issue orders and lead the troops? What is bankrupt is not democratic centralism but Lorenzo's absurd anarchism.

With democratic centralism when a practice or theory is put forward a vote is taken on it and the majority rule. This does not mean that the minority voice goes unheard; in fact this is what inner-party struggle is about. The majority rule simply means that this practice or theory was voted for or against and must be carried out accordingly to one's best ability. How can this possibly be undemocratic? How can one have no voice? Democratic centralism is for the sole purpose of making sure everybody has a voice, even the minority whose duty it is to persuade the majority that their (minority) theory and practice is progressive. How can the leadership be above criticism? Mao was not only criticized for the Great Leap Forward, he engaged in self criticism and let the people know his errors and took responsibility for his errors. Mao warned against the tendency "to say nothing to people to their faces but to gossip behind their backs, or to say nothing at a meeting but to gossip afterwards," and "to say as little as possible while knowing perfectly well what is wrong."⁽³⁾ So, Lorenzo, how can one be afraid of saying unflattering comments to or about the leadership?

Anarchists try to be free of all blame because they have not done anything, so they go around taking a pseudo-independent stance which is really eclectic and they make these worthless criticisms of everything. But for the past 100 years they offer no concrete practice that has liberated the oppressed.

Even Alexander Berkman, a prominent anarchist that Lorenzo quotes throughout the book, was quoted saying, "There are moments when I feel that the revolution cannot work on anarchist principles. But once the old methods are fol-

lowed, they never lead to anarchism." This is still true today: the anarchists fail and never learn from their failure. Lorenzo and anarchists like him fail to realize that you can't play both sides of the fence and stand firmly with the people.

Throughout Lorenzo's book he vacillates, sometimes siding with the bourgeoisie in denouncing the people's struggle and communism and sometimes with the communists in denouncing capitalism. Then he sides with the Maoists in denouncing the revisionist capitalist roaders that call themselves socialist and communist by stating that "They have slandered the names of socialism and communism." Well ain't this something! What in the hell does Lorenzo think he's doing? Is he not also slandering the revisionists and the bourgeoisie by putting together his own lies, deceptions and misinformation about socialism and communism? By saying "they have slandered the names of socialism and communism," he vainly tries to take sides with the genuine Maoist revolutionaries who point out that the revisionists (in Russia, China, Korea, Vietnam and all other governments claiming to be communist) are really capitalists in communist disguise. They say that they are communist but they practice capitalism and imperialism. So Lorenzo, take responsibility for your futile attempts because you also have attempted to slander the names of socialism and communism. But as long as there are genuine revolutionaries like MIM your attempts will be in vain and your questionable stance will be exposed for all to see and you will be forced to disclose your true colors! Most of all, you along with all the other anarchists will have to take a firm stand on one or the other side. The choice is yours. Make it wisely.

SOME GOOD POINTS

Notwithstanding Lorenzo's questionable opportunist revolutionary stance, he does make some good points and also suggestions concerning the drug epidemic that plagues the oppressed nations, such as setting up drug education classes that show how the empire is tied into the plethora of drugs that find their way into our communities, exposing those drug dealers that work hand in hand with the pigs. But he also calls for guerilla warfare against big-time drug dealers. This focoist action would intensify the situation and force would-be allies to the other side. Those drug dealers who work with the police already show their allegiance with the empire. The empire's repressive forces will see an interest in locking up the revolutionaries while letting the dealers go. This will also result in losing battles. Waging wars against drug dealers in the community is like fighting the heads of the hydra. This would bring no harm to the empire and no advancements for the people. The empire will go as far as to supply more drugs, and even training and weapons. Since the empire is the life line to the drug epidemic, we must focus on the principal task. Once we stop the main organs from functioning the body eventually deteriorates and dies off. This is inevitable. Guerilla warfare against drug dealers now is adventurist focoist moralizing

romanticism.

Lorenzo's suggestion for armed defense of Black communes has a tinge of focoism to it. True, we must learn how to defend ourselves properly, but there are ways to handle this when the revolutionary forces are out-manned and out-gunned and the battle is definitely not in our favor. In our current situation the political is principal and the organizing of the oppressed around a solid political line in order to build and construct our own independent institutions is the primary task. There is no doubt that the growing right wing forces and white supremacist organizations must be challenged, but this must be done not by moralism/focoism/adventurism but by organizing the people on a realistic basis to confront this problem with intelligence and discipline. We must learn from our past experience, something the anarchists fail to do, and realize that the adventurist focoist cells that existed during the 50s, 60s, and 70s and early 80s, did "not demonstrate the weakness of the imperialist state but instead made themselves Christian martyrs who are useful to the imperialists in search of public proof of their invincibility. That is to say the focoists will unintentionally convince the masses more than ever before of the myth that the imperialists cannot be defeated."(5)

In another section of Lorenzo's book, "A Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network," Lorenzo goes into the politics of prison. He correctly points out how the prison system is the armed fist of the state, something Lenin did in "State and Revolution." I can dig where Lorenzo is coming from when he suggests that the oppressed communities should practice more concrete contact with the prisons in their state. However, Lorenzo gets into some Hollywood Rambo idealist focoist shit when he starts suggesting rushing and liberating entire prisons. Very adventurist. Lorenzo needs to understand how a revolution is really waged.

The last part of Lorenzo's book, entitled "Anarcho-Syndicalists of the World Unite!" is filled with him expressing his aspirations to cater to the labor aristocracy. He still thinks the principal contradiction in America is between, as he says, "capital and labor" and then he goes on to lay down a platform on how to unite with the white workers. How sorry can this guy get! Lorenzo actually thinks that "the unity of Black and white workers is indispensable to combat and overthrow capitalism." But brother Robert F. Williams called it how it is and kept it real:

"The fact of the matter is that the Afroamerican wants and has been seeking brotherhood with the white masses since his enslavement in the New World. A people as brutally oppressed as American Negroes cannot wait forever for the support of mythological and theoretical allies. Most white workers in the USA today have a vested interest in the status quo. The present system grants them special privileges in a jungle society. The cow of production may be lean and diseased but the Negro is the only herdsman limited to the cutlets of feet and tail."(6)

Malcolm X also called it:

"The history of America is that working class whites have been just as much against not only working class Negroes, but all Negroes, period. ... There never has been any good relationship between the working class Negro and the working class whites ... I think one of the mistakes Negroes make is this worker solidarity thing."(6)

Lorenzo exposes himself to the fullest when, after saying all this junk about the people and the working class don't need no vanguard party to represent them and they don't need no one speaking for them, he says this: "The working class needs a group like the International Working People's Association or the Industrial Workers of the World with a program for today's worker." Well there you have it. I would not suggest this book to anyone. Despite some points it is overall poison. Lorenzo simply talks out of his ass because his mouth knows better — and I'm giving him the benefit of the doubt. Any revolutionary that wanna know about the professional genuine revolutionary struggle should read MIM Theory 7 and put Lorenzo's opportunistic book to rest.

Notes:

1. Lenin, *State and Revolution*.
2. MIM Theory 6.
3. *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung*.
5. MIM Theory 5.
6. MIM Theory 7.

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Review:

Anarchism in China

Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution, by Arif Dirlik
Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture, by Peter Zarrow

by RC42

Why is it important to study the history of anarchism in China? By learning the content, progress and fate of anarchism in China — especially how anarchism compared to the later dominant and more effective Maoism — we can get a better understanding of anarchism today in North America. [See also MIM Theory 8. —ed.]

The following is a summary of an essay that reviews and compares two books about anarchism in China during the first quarter of this century: *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution* by Arif Dirlik, and *Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture* by Peter Zarrow.(1)

According to the reviewer, Zarrow's book is "dedicated to summarizing the anarchist thoughts and hundreds of years of related intellectual history in China... [with] ... historical and intellectual context for the anarchist movement ... Zarrow's are helpful services to those seriously considering anarchism." Dirlik's book depicts "the mindframe of the Chinese anarchists and the link of Chinese anarchism to recent intellectual current."

"What we learn is that far from being pure-minded, idealistic and naive, anarchists in China had an uncanny knack for finding themselves on the wrong side of history as far as socialists and progressives are concerned ... we find anarchists actively promoting programs that never had the slightest chance of creating structural change and rapidly frustrating themselves to the point of political capitulation."

DEFINING ANARCHISM

In order to understand Chinese anarchism, we need to compare the ideology and political self-definition of Chinese anarchists with their practice. Zarrow gives several descriptions of his own, and a few from some original anarchist sources. According to Zarrow,

"Anarchism can be broadly defined as the belief that individual freedom and social good can be reconciled without coercive agents. In this view, the state may be abolished or brought to a level of minimal functions ... a broad kind of antiauthoritarianism. ... Chinese anarchism broadly represented a set of beliefs about the moral basis for action. To many it seemed no less possible, no more utopian than republicanism, communism, or any other program for change."(2)

Clearly, this definition differs in basic ways from communism. By proposing that significant change can succeed with-

out "coercive agents," one must wonder how. Will big landowners just give up their land when threatened with a "moral basis for action"? History proves otherwise, that no ruling class has ever abdicated its wealth or power, procured and maintained violently and coercively, without coercion.

Chinese anarchists held widely different opinions on questions of methods. Wu Zhihui (who was in Paris, a promoter of science and language reform, and involved with the Guomindang in the 1920s) believed that true education would lead both to true morality among the people and thence instantly to revolution. He made it clear that his political beliefs were no threat to the republic: "My anarchism cannot be realized before three thousand years."(3)

Liu Shifu, however, in spite of his insistence on individual perfection, placed revolution before morality.(4) Liu's anarchist career began in 1912; he established the Conscience Society (Xinshe). He advised a number of people to remain in China (to fight) rather than study abroad (and improve themselves). He believed that since immorality stemmed from the perversions of the social system, a social revolution would lead to a new moral standard, rather than the other way around. Since social evils stem from the existence of government, once the affliction of government is removed, human morality would in this theory immediately revert to its pure state.(5)

Liu's position gets closer to the communist view of an active overthrow. But the sculpting of a socialist morality will also be an active process, since nothing will "immediately revert to its pure state" without political struggle.

Liu Shifu's Definition of Anarcho-communism:

"[We] advocate the abolition of the capitalist system and the creation of a communist society, all without the use of governmental coercion. In sum, we seek absolute liberty on both the economic and the political planes. ... Through the true spirit of liberty, equality, and fraternity we will attain our ideals: a society without the institutions of landlords, capitalists, leaders, officials, representatives, family heads, soldiers, jails, police, courts, laws, religion, or marriage. Then society will consist only of liberty, only of mutual aid and only of the joy of labor ... Anarchism is the inevitable end of evolution ... Thus, it is mistaken to say that anarchism is idealistic and impossible."(6)

Zarrow tries to answer the question: But how was this ideal to be achieved?

"The root of the matter lay in one's learning to be independent—again, a common theme not unique to the anarchists. International social parties would then overthrow the various nations. Gradually the functions of government would be decreased as people learned to govern themselves

(zizhi). Then contracts freely agreed upon would replace the legal system (an idea of great appeal at the time), until, in this view, they too could be replaced by the human Way (rendao). ... In this ultimate stage the human Way is that of 'pure reason,' and 'real liberty, real equality, and real love' mark the Datong. ... Most Chinese anarchists would later abjure this kind of blatant utopianism, even without the mystical overtones. But they still shared a faith in social evolution, a sense of the perfectibility of the individual, and a determination to rid the entire world of oppression."(7)

What are the historical similarities and differences between anarchism and communism? Why did communism prevail in China?

In the 1920s, the communists and anarchists both started in the same social groups — "primarily the workers and intellectuals — especially the 'cultural elite.' Later the communists would gain ascendancy in the largest social force — the peasantry — but in the 1920s when communism surpassed anarchism in influence in China we cannot say that a difference in where the movements recruited was the reason for the communist triumph ... [therefore] the character of the two ideologies themselves stands as an explanation for the ascendancy of the communist movement over the anarchist one."

Zarrow gives a nice summary of the difference in the ideologies that led to communism's relative importance in China.

"...the intellectual tools of the anarchists included ideas about the evolution of societies, human nature, and human potentiality for which the evidence remains ambiguous. But the Marxist intellectual analysis in China led directly to effective practice: linking communist organization with worker and then peasant movements, in order to give these movements a revolutionary thrust ... In some cases, especially in labor organization, the anarchists were there first ... But anarchist attention to means over ends and organizational weakness were probably fatal in the long run."(8)

"Zarrow goes on to accept the basic anarchist contention that anarchism is 'more pure' than communism because it sanctions no stages of coercion like the dictatorship of the proletariat that is central to Marxism ...[and that] Marxists' compromise with principles ... is the reason that Marxism appears more successful than anarchism as an ideology."

Certainly it would be nice not to need to kill anyone in the process of revolution, but those capitalists just don't seem like the types to give away their property without a fight. The violence that is currently inflicted on the world's people must stop, but purity and abstract principles won't stop it. If "Marxism appears more successful" based on historical facts, then it probably is more successful. To verify that Maoism was indeed more successful in practice, we need to examine what the Chinese anarchists actually did.

The Revolution of 1911 led to the end of the Chinese monarchy in 1912 (9) and "no self-avowed anarchist movement existed in China itself until 1912."(10) The Guomindang

(GMD) "had been created as an open, electioneering political party, out of the revolutionary T'ung Meng Hui and other groups."(11) The Chinese Communist Party was organized in 1921 in Shanghai. The Nationalist Revolution took place from 1925-1928, with Chiang Kai-shek as leader.(12) In 1927, the revolutionary government was dominated by the alliance between the left-wing of the GMD and the communists.

ANARCHIST CAPITULATION

Anarchists in China did not sustain their activist commitments like communists did. Both books provide examples of the eventual capitulation of many prominent anarchists. He Zhen, an anarchist feminist, and her husband Liu Shipai supported monarchism after 1914. He Zhen may also have helped split Sun Yatsen's "Revolutionary Alliance" (Tongmenghui). (13)

Sun Yat-sen was founder of the GMD, and may have been an anarchist himself.(14) However, the GMD was pro-capitalist while under Chiang Kai-shek, especially by the 1940s. Yet other supposedly dedicated anarchists supported the GMD even after the Liberation of China in 1949; several anarchists were on the central committee of the GMD, and many anarchists simply joined the GMD. Some anarchists in the GMD voted to expel communists from the GMD and arrest the communists in Shanghai.

"'Anarchists' joining the GMD, taking posts in the Japanese puppet regime, aiding monarchist governments or movements or accepting government positions in republican organizations would be a much more generally accurate picture of the Chinese anarchist movement than the image of the self-reliant activity of the Liu Shifu types. The anarchists joined the state or proto-state organizations all the while proclaiming their anarchism, whereas the Marxists never claimed to be able to do without seizing state power."

It's understandable why the anarchists ended up without a consistent revolutionary practice: "Anarchists claim to oppose all politics which is impractical because it leaves them no real way to change the world; and leads to compromise of anarchist goals and capitulation to the status quo."

Notes:

1. *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, by Arif Dirlik (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), and *Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) by Peter Zarrow; Reviewed by Henry Park, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 24 No. 2 (1994). Quotes from this article unless otherwise noted.
2. Zarrow, pp. 2-3.
3. Zarrow, p. 65.
4. Zarrow, p. 215.
5. Zarrow pp. 213-5.
6. Zarrow p. 214.
7. Zarrow pp. 216-17.
8. Zarrow p. 224.
9. Fairbank, John King; *The United States and China*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), 1983. p. 220.
10. Zarrow, p. 3.
11. Fairbank, p. 222.
12. Fairbank, p. 236.
13. Zarrow, p. 35.
14. Fairbank, p. 216.

Michael William responds: Fascists & Stalinists

In *MIM Theory 8* we printed an exchange between an anarchist book collective and a Michael William. William's letter to the collective criticized MIM, to which we responded (See MT8.) The following is William's response to MIM, and our follow-up response to William. —ed.

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MIM is in a predictable huff, indignant at any suggestion of a comparison between fascists and Stalinists. However, I am hardly the first to draw a parallel; the list goes back to Orwell and before (for example Souvarine's ground-breaking *Stalin* in the '30s). Without claiming that Stalinists and fascists are identical, there are enough similarities that I personally find it useful to group the totalitarian nationalists together. Some of the features they have in common are:

THE TOTALITARIAN STATE

After seizing power, the fascist or Leninist organization suppresses all rivals and deploys the totalitarian state apparatus to ensure its hegemony.

FÜHRERPRINZIP

Incarnating the organization (and thus "the nation") is the omniscient leader. Here, in scientific socialismese, is Sendero's Presidente Gonzalo on the topic: "Such is the case in every revolution," says Gonzalo, concerning the inevitability of leaders and hierarchy, "therefore such is the case in ours. There are no exceptions. Here the maxim 'there is always an exception to the rule' is inoperative; it is a question in this case of obeying laws. In each process, then, there are leaders. But there is always one leader who stands out from the rest or who leads them."

NATIONALISM

So eager is MIM to corner the nationalism market they even deny that nationalism is a facet of fascism. Fredy Perlman's *The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism*, which appeared in *Anarchy* #37, remains the best overall critique of nationalism and contains a section on Maoism. A French version is available through my P.O. box number below.

BIG LIE TECHNIQUES & REWRITING HISTORY

Stalinist show trials, Hitlerian Jew-baiting and scapegoating; or, in the present case, MIM's hilarious assertion that the Leninists are the real anarchists, inventing quotes (I never called Levesque an "obvious" fascist; because of his declared support for totalitarian nationalists I would, though, in my schema, term him a fascist sympathizer).

INSANE CRUELTY

One need hardly be a pacifist to recoil at Stalino-Hitlerian blood-lust. Stalin for example implemented his own "family values" campaign, as his daughter recounts; "In 1937, my father did not hesitate to exterminate members of his own family: the three Svanidze, Redens, Enoukidze (my mother's godfather) ... The same thing happened in 1948 with my aunts. He considered them dangerous because they 'knew too much' and 'talked too much'." Alexander Orlov, a former high-ranking member of the Cheka (the KGB precursor), notes the generalized nature of this phenomenon: "As a rule Stalin liquidated people who knew too much about his past and who, in light of the monstrous crimes of the final years, were in a position to remember and revise certain shady episodes...." Stalin's murder spree apparently being too much for even MIM to swallow, they acknowledge that "Stalin killed too many people" — but immediately miss the boat by ascribing it to "class struggle" and to "having to fight World War II and deal with traitors." The Leninist campaign to suppress all rivals and, subsequently, Stalin's campaign to eliminate his Party rivals are not about class struggle. And abolishing classes implies removing the Party, the new ruling clique/class from power — starting with Mao and Stalin. In other words, being a "traitor" from the viewpoint of the Party.

ETHNIC CLEANSING

Entire ethnic groups, totaling 4-5 million people, were deported to Siberia (from the Caucasus and the Crimea, for example). The Ukrainians, Khrushchev claimed, "escaped this fate only because there were too many of them...." Activity certainly worth noting for the Mohawks and other indigenous groups.

ANTI-SEMITISM

MIM issues a blanket denial in their "Stalin Study Pack" (no two-four to party with from the Party, this offering is a two-by-four that bludgeons common sense). However, there is no lack of examples to support such an accusation. In the mid-'20s, Robert Tucker reports in *Stalin in Power*, Stalin used "anti-Semitism in the fight against a left opposition whose major figures, Trotsky and afterward Zinoviev and Kamenev, were Jews ... He encouraged the baiting of the opposition leaders as Jews in factory cells. He was identifying his faction as the Party's Russian faction," and his opponents "as the Jewish one." This sort of activity did not escape the attention of the Nazis, attracting praise, for example, in Nazi "theorist" Alfred Rosenberg's organ *Weltkampf*. Jew-baiting in effect became a recurrent feature in Stalin's career. During the great purge trials of the '30s Chief Prosecutor Vyshinsky repeatedly referred to Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Radek as "people without

a fatherland." After the war Stalinist nationalism culminated in a campaign against "rootless cosmopolitanism" that was often virtually indistinguishable from fascism in tone and content. An article in *The Bolshevik*, for instance, railed, "Our people brand with shame the rootless cosmopolitans who lack the slightest feeling of patriotism." To make sure readers understood that many or most of those denounced were Jews, if they had changed their names to Russian-sounding ones, their original names would be placed afterward in parentheses.

Yiddish schools and Jewish theatres, periodicals and publishing houses were shut down by the Stalinists.

But it is perhaps when the question touched closest to home that Stalin's anti-Semitism comes into focus most sharply, i.e. his outraged reaction when his daughter became involved with a Jew.

In their more lucid moments the Stalinists and fascists were quite aware of the similarities between their ideologies. Hermann Rauschning quotes Hitler as predicting that "...Bolshevism will turn into a kind of National Socialism. Besides, we have a lot more in common than differences." As Souvarine notes, "Mussolini did not conceal that he discreetly admired Lenin, and mutual exchanges between the totalitarian regimes multiplied." At the time of the great purge trials in the late '30s Mussolini wondered out loud in *Popolo d'Italia* whether Stalin had "secretly turned fascist." Mao himself backhandedly acknowledged Stalinism's and fascism's close proximity when he said that if a lurch towards "revisionism" occurs, a "Communist Party can turn into a fascist party." Moving from an ideological to a practical level, Hitler and Stalin also shared an admiration for their respective abilities to run a totalitarian state and to crack the whip. Stalin, Souvarine reports, "admired the way Hitler had liquidated his old comrades in arms — those trouble-makers — during the 'Night of the Long Knives' in 1934, and Hitler returned the favor when the Red Army was decapitated." This mutual respect extended to a personal level as well. Nazi armaments minister Albert Speer says that Hitler "talked of Stalin with a great deal of respect ... Above all he thought of Stalin as a kind of colleague." According to Souvarine, Stalin also "considered Hitler a colleague. He was convinced that the two of them would get along. Thinking of himself infallible he became inconsolable about having fooled himself to such an extent about Hitler, and that Hitler had fooled him to such an extent" (concerning the 1939-41 Hitler-Stalin Pact). "Ekh, together with the Germans we would have been invincible," he would reminisce, according to his daughter.

In this already overlong response I am unable to deal with other accusations and challenges churned out by MIM. Briefly, however, concerning Sendero, gays and massacres of indigenous peoples:

MIM's line, according to a BBS exchange, is that Sendero has no line on gays. Information I received from MHOL, Peru's gay and lesbian rights group, however, contained a document which dealt exclusively with Sendero, an article from

France's gay weekly *Gai Pied Hebdo* (October 4, 1990). Homosexuality is a "creation of imperialism," the article quotes Presidente Gonzalo, which "must be stamped out." Gays are typically given one or more warnings by Sendero, according to the article, the message being: get straight or get out of town. The article says that in 1989 30 gays were killed by Sendero.

Concerning massacres of members of indigenous groups: Eighty members of the Lucanamarca community were killed by Sendero in 1983 after they resisted Sendero efforts to control production and to shut down peasant fairs. "The top leadership planned the action and oversaw its implementation," says Presidente Gonzalo. "The main thing was to make them understand that we were a hard nut to crack and would stop at nothing, at absolutely nothing." On Sept. 19, 1984 Sendero carried out a raid against the Huamangilla community, slaughtering 21 men, women and children, the youngest of whom was 10. In December, 1987, 24 members of the Rumirumi community in the province of La Mar, Ayacucho, were taken to a local school and beaten, shot and hacked to death. Sendero frequently "tortures its victims," according to a human rights group; and between August 1990 and July 1992, only 7.8% of those killed by Sendero were soldiers or cops.

—Michael William C.P. 1554 Succ. B, Montreal, Quebec Canada H3B 3L2

RC42 & RC313 respond: William finds it useful to group Stalinists and fascists together, while ignoring questions of ideology and line. Having formalistic features in common is an excellent way to group political trends together if you are an anarchist and principally concerned with the form of the state rather than the ideology of the capitalist class. It is a big and ahistorical lie about Stalinism and communism generally that it simply suppresses rivals for the pleasure of doing so.

In identifying the supposed tendency towards führerprinzip in Stalinism, William ignores any discussion of the benefits or drawbacks of having leaders in a movement. While anarchists flap about the inherent danger of leaders (who must necessarily become overbearing and omnipotent), Maoists recognize that there are leaders in political movements and that it is best to develop an accountable structure for leadership rather than to pretend that we can organize to overthrow capitalism without it. Witness the structure of the magazine whose pages first housed this debate. Does Michael William think that Jason, or himself, are something other than leaders? Does he think it is the natural order of things that some people publish magazines and other people read them? This is the really dangerous position on leadership. The anarchists who think they can safely ignore the existence of leaders and thereby absolve their leaders of all accountability.

William quotes from the Interview with Presidente Gonzalo, conducted by El Diario, "But there is always one leader who stands out from the rest or who leads them [the masses]." Gonzalo is not simply building public opinion for

the maintenance of his position. He goes on to say, "Not all leaders can be viewed in exactly the same way. Marx is Marx, Lenin is Lenin, Chairman Mao is Chairman Mao. Each is unique, and no one is going to be just like them." Here Gonzalo is referring to those leaders who have stood out in the history of revolutionary struggle by applying the science of revolution in a way which turns it into a mode of thought — i.e. Marx, Lenin, Mao and Gonzalo. This does not mean, as William wants to imply, that the leader embodies the whole of the movement. If Sendero Luminoso consisted of blind followers of their "omniscient leader", then how do they carry on while he is imprisoned? Gonzalo recognizes that historically successful revolutions have always had leaders "who in theory and practice have shown they are capable of leading and guiding us toward victory and the attainment of the ideals of our class."(1)

MIM does not and never has claimed that fascism does not comprise nationalism as one of its elements. MIM explicitly delineates between revolutionary and reactionary nationalism. This confusion on William's part came up in his last letter about us as well, in which he referred to reactionary nationalism — criticizing cops for initiating a fire at Oka — but then failed to support the revolutionary nationalism of the people who defended Oka. (2)

The reason MIM states that the Leninists are the real anarchists is because we are the ones with a program to achieve anarchism. The people calling themselves anarchists spend so much time belly-aching over not wanting any sort of power that they fail to recognize the necessity of overthrowing the bourgeoisie. In MIM Theory 8 (where our last response to William appeared), MIM wrote in its article on Spain that the anarchists spend more time, *and place a higher priority on*, worrying about the form of the revolution than they do worrying about its ability to liberate the masses from capitalism and imperialism. MIM asked this question the last time we wrote to William and we ask it again: where were the anarchists in China in 1949, or the Soviet Union in 1917?

MIM apologizes for putting "obvious" in quotes (about Levesque being an 'obvious' fascist) and implying that these were William's words exactly. However, what we said was a little less incorrect than William charges. MIM said that William uses the political affiliations of Levesque to prove his "'obvious' affiliation with fascism." According to Williams' standards, Levesque is an obvious supporter of "totalitarian nationalism," which is equal to being a fascist sympathizer. MIM may have misused the quotes, but it did not conclude anything incorrect by their usage. Thus essentially William should take responsibility for calling Levesque an obvious fascist because that's what his charges amount to. William refers to MIM line: "they acknowledge that 'Stalin killed too many people'—but immediately miss the boat by ascribing it to 'class struggle' and to 'having to fight W.W.II and deal with traitors.'"

Class struggle continues to be a serious issue under social-

ism. If bourgeois classes and ideology did not continue under socialism, with the overarching threat of capitalist restoration, then one could simply take away the means of production from the bourgeoisie, and communism would instantaneously arise. This is not the most helpful argument for the anarchist, since to them workers will spontaneously achieve egalitarian society and abolish the state without ever even discussing it first — because who has the authority to bring it up?

William contradicts the theme of his letter here by implying that the defeat of fascism is not an important concern. If this is in fact his view, then why does he spend so much time talking about the dangers of fascism and the ways to distinguish it from "real" anti-fascism. It seems he is only concerned with how fascism surfaces in anarchist circles in Montreal and not when its threatening to conquer all of Europe.

William is right on in his assertion that the party itself must be eliminated when it begins to represent the interests of a newly developed bourgeois class. This was the point of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China from 1966-76. The authorities in power were criticized for taking the capitalist road and protecting their own interests as leaders and the new ruling class. Yet the point was that they were held accountable to the masses, and this included the young students who were the driving force behind the Cultural Revolution and the mass mobilization to overthrow the bourgeoisie within the party. So not only were the leaders challenged and criticized, they were held accountable to masses for their actions and their lines. This constituted the most advanced form of empowering the masses that has occurred to date.

William charges that Stalin was guilty of "ethnic cleansing." Yet he fails to mention the context of when these actions by Stalin took place. Stalin could not risk an internal uprising at a time when the Nazis were breathing down his neck. This kind of threat to the overall safety of the Soviet Union could not be taken lightly. The charge that Stalin dealt with this internal turmoil through mass relocation is reality, and one sees with investigation the justification for doing so. However this does not equal the charge of "ethnic cleansing." If Stalin really wanted to eliminate an ethnicity of people, couldn't he have figured out a way to do this, given William's own assumption that Stalin was a "totalitarian dictator"? Could he not then have dictated the extermination of these populations? So why didn't he? Either he didn't have the authority (something William does not want to admit) or that wasn't his aim. So which is it, did he lack the control necessary to carry out such a dictate or did he in fact act out of necessity in a way which does not come close to William's charge of 'ethnic cleansing'?

Stalin said of anti-Semitism, "...Communists, as consistent internationalists, cannot but be consistent and sworn enemies of anti-Semitism."(3) Some people want to ignore the inconsistencies of this charge and surmise Stalin was a racist. Yet they ignore that Jews held high positions in the Bolshevik

party throughout the time Stalin was in power.

In the quote William cites from Mao on the close proximity of fascism and revisionism, he misses the point that revisionism is a serious betrayal of the interests of the people. To clarify, revisionism can take many forms, some of which are technology in command, militarism, or putting profit as a first priority. All of these things can lead to fascism because they could amount to betraying the interests of the people while giving lip service to phony nationalism, thus diverting the whole focus of the party in power. William apparently doesn't know that revisionism is an enemy of communists.

William again regurgitates the rumors that the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) executes gays. This has yet to be proven and is both the result of rumor as well as anti-PCP propaganda. The fact that the PCP has no official line on homosexuality is explained by a PCP comrade, "Our view is that homosexuality is not an ideological matter but one of individual preference."⁽⁴⁾ The quote that William cites makes it impossible to tell whether Gonzalo is actually saying that homosexuality must be "stamped out" or is saying imperialism must be stamped out. These are two separate quotes conveniently juxtaposed to back up a frequently stated misconception. The other half of the quotation which states that homosexuality is a "creation of imperialism" is at least clear in the context given. Although this is not a quote MIM is familiar with, even if it was uttered by Gonzalo it certainly doesn't prove that the PCP executes gays. It is likely that they have killed some gay people — for their political activities or actions, not because they were gay. There is one famous case in which the government executed numerous gay people, blamed it on the PCP, but was eventually exposed for its actions. (For more on this topic see MIM Notes 88 and Prison Legal News cited above.)

It is easy for the government to start rumors about the PCP since it has access to newspapers (both national and international), television, holds state power, and controls the military. Misinformation is then embraced by those who seek anything which is anti-PCP (so much so that they disregard where the information originates). Believing rumors about the organization gives the anarchist an excuse to criticize a real revolution which is concretely working for and succeeding in improving the lives of Peruvian peasants. Criticizing from the sidelines is what the anarchists do best. It's no surprise since they get a lot of practice because they never spend any time actually concretely working to change people's material conditions in any significant way.

The charge that the PCP kills indigenous people has no source to back it up. William does say that a "human rights group" reported that Sendero frequently "tortures its victims." He doesn't say which human rights group and doesn't mention where they say this. The last figure, which states that 7.8% of those killed by Sendero were soldiers or cops, doesn't say anything about who the remaining people were or who they were working for. If we assume this is true and that William didn't pull it out of thin air, then we can think about why this may be

the case. There are non-military people who organize people to fight the Shining Path and will give names of communists to the government.

These "non-military" people, like Maria Elena Moyano, objectively help the government and are targeted if they continue to give information which is getting PCP cadre killed. Handing over names of Shining Path members to the government (objectively getting them killed and knowing this), constitutes a pro-military act. Most likely, Sendero would warn the government aids to stop and if they refuse, as Moyano did, then they may be killed. However, these cases do not make up 93% of the people killed by the Shining Path. Bogus statistics are given about Sendero on a regular basis to try and discredit them in any way possible. The government has been exposed several times for massacring people and then trying to blame it on the PCP. If the Shining Path did not enjoy popular support in areas of Peru and peasants were forced to join (as some claim), then why would cadre captured by the government refuse to give information under torture? They have an opportunity to give information which would damage the organization considerably, but they don't give in. Peruvians, especially women, join the PCP because they know it is their best hope for liberation.

In the last letter MIM wrote to Anarchy magazine, the footnotes were cut out of the text. MIM makes it a point of putting footnotes for the information and facts that it states for two reasons: (1) So that people know that we're not pulling facts out of thin air; and, (2) so people reading the article can go look at the sources of information themselves.

Cutting out the sources amounts to sabotaging some of the work MIM put into writing an article and serves to discredit the information which appears without notes to back it up. It is unlikely that Anarchy cut the notes specifically to discredit MIM, since it also leaves notes out of its own articles. Yet this makes it particularly difficult to respond to charges made in Anarchy (applicable specifically to William's letter) since the source of information is not given. In the future, MIM will be sure to include sources in the body of the text when dealing with Anarchy magazine, to assure that they appear with the article.

Notes:

1. Interview with Gonzalo, p. 22.
2. MIM Theory 8, p. 67.
3. Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 803.
4. Prison Legal News 3/94, p. 11, 13-14.

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Sectarian Review

Private Property Next, Sparts?

As is evident from their discussions of gender, Maoism and Trotskyism come from fundamentally different perspectives. While MIM sees three main strands of oppression: nation, class and gender, Trotskyism is a reductionist view that class oppression is at the root of all other hierarchies in society. Thus while MIM Theory 2/3 "Gender and Revolutionary Feminism" discussed a theory of gender oppression, the Spartacist League's Women's Commission puts out a journal of articles ranging from tales of oppressed peoples who are incidentally women to emotional arguments against abolishing patriarchy. By analyzing the journal, we can better understand why MIM is a better option for women and for the revolution overall.

review by MIM associates

Women and Revolution
No. 43, Winter 1993-Spring 1994
Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League
Box 1377, GPO
New York, NY 10116

The Spartacist League says: "As communists, we know that the fate of women depends on the outcome of the class struggle." (1) This statement does not begin to cover the necessary elements of women's liberation. Women & Revolution is a journal of reductionist views of women's liberation. It hails Bolshevik work with "the woman question" as its inspiration, rejecting both Stalinism and reformism. W & R does not acknowledge any advances in the fight for gender liberation since 1924. Third World struggles gain no mention. Examples are taken from the former East Germany as the journal boasts an international scope "from London to Toronto to Sydney, Australia."

The first article in this issue defends a professor who was being investigated by the San Francisco media for his seat on the editorial board of *Paidika: A Journal of Paedophilia*. W & R urges the state to get out of the bedroom and defends the bourgeois "right to privacy," printing a letter from the legal defense organization of the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). "Whatever consensual activity one engages in is nobody else's business" reads the letter. (2) Consent laws are reactionary, the Sparts are right in that, but this is not because the laws attempt to subvert the use of power in sexual relationships between men and boys. It is because they are applied unevenly and without regard for the elements of power in all sexual relationships.

A real consent law MIM could support would account for the fact that no one can really consent to sex under the patriarchy, least of all without studying the implications of "consent" in the context of rape, pornography, etc. MIM sees power in all sexual relationships so we approach the issue of heightened power imbalance between men and boys from this perspective. Those practicing paedophilia should recognize the power dynamics involved. For the adult man, the dominance is easily recognized, but for the boy, too, there is a

power. Sexuality in our society has a lot to do with "coming of age" and so seduction makes young people feel more grown-up. Sex with the most powerful figure in society, the adult male, is the ultimate power to be gained from the boy's position in society.

MIM still supports Catharine MacKinnon's formulation of privacy in *Feminism Unmodified*. MacKinnon argues that privacy is a mythical construct, reinforced by *Roe v. Wade* and *Harris v. McRae*, in which women have control over their sexuality and reproductivity. And, so the myth goes, since women are free and equal in the world of privacy, hermetically sealed and disconnected from the public world, the state does not have the right to trespass upon the private world and infringe upon women's freedoms.

In the real world, of course, this is not the case. The patriarchal inequalities and class wars of so-called "public" life are not somehow magically banished from the "private" world. The private world is not a world free from rape, even if women have the right to contraception and to choose an abortion. (In fact, if a woman uses contraception, it is much harder to prosecute rape in a court of law. If she used contraception, then she must have "freely" chosen to have sex, right?) Under conditions of gender inequality, women's right to contraception and abortion "facilitates women's heterosexual availability." It frees the private world for male aggression.

Privacy "is, in short, defined by everything that feminism reveals women have never been allowed to be or to have, and everything that women have been equated with and defined in terms of men's ability to have." (3)

Finally,

"When women are segregated in private, separated from each other, one at a time, a right to that privacy isolates us at once from each other and from public recourse. This right to privacy is a right of men 'to be let alone' to oppress women one at a time. It embodies and reflects the private sphere's existing definition of womanhood ... It is a very material division that keeps the private beyond public redress and depoliticizes women's subjection within it. It keeps some men out of the bedrooms of other men." (4)

The right to privacy protects people in power. Privacy is

something you buy, like speech. If what you do in private is sanctioned by the state, that is a "right." But rationally, you can see that the claim of "privacy" is only the claim of power.

W & R does not understand the place that this article has in a journal about women. This looks like another attempt to make the oppressors within the patriarchy look like the exploited. From the perspective of the majority of the world's people, this professor is not at all oppressed. Though discussion of paedophilia is valuable in developing a theory of gender since it involves power differences in sex, W & R uses it to show once again that white males are persecuted, ignoring the professor's privileged standing in nation, class, and gender.

The second article in the magazine brings up a case of immigrant women workers who organized to stop their exploitation in a San Francisco area garment shop. The women worked with activists from Asian Immigrant Women Advocates who helped them recover thousands of dollars in back-pay after their employer — who had paid them less than minimum wage — closed shop. The Spartacist League joined in on the rally they held, chanting "Asian, Latin, black and white, workers of the world unite!"(5) The Spartacist League does not address the reasons that these women turned to a special group for Asian immigrant women, nor does the article mention if there was any white worker (or Spartacist League) solidarity with these women before they won their fight.

The women had been working for \$2.50/hour, far below their white "comrades" wages, and so were not protected by them. The white Amerikan working class has no interest in evening out their inflated wages with these women's exploitative wages, so organizing with them would be against their material interests. The Sparts co-opted the Asian women's victory with a cheery chant, but had no part in the struggle. The exploitation these women endured based on their gender is ignored entirely, further demonstrating the Spartacist League's reductionism. The article closes: "As part of the multiracial American proletariat, [Asian women workers] will be among the leaders forging an internationalist proletarian party capable of uniting the working masses across national borders in class struggle against the capitalists' reactionary attacks."(5) The plight of these women does help us understand the need for internationalism. However, the "multiracial American proletariat" is a myth and a single party across national borders is unlikely anytime soon (See MIM Theory 7, "Proletarian Feminist Revolutionary Nationalism on the Communist Road").

The longest article in the issue, entitled "The 'Date Rape' Issue: Feminist Hysteria, Anti-Sex Witchhunt," is a tirade against two enemies: the religious right and women labeled "P.C. feminists." Its author likes Katie Roiphe's book, *Morning After: Sex Fear and Feminism on Campus*, and her condemnation of "anti-sex" feminists like MacKinnon. Of course, Roiphe does not argue convincingly against MacKinnon's theory that all sex under patriarchy is coerced to the extent that it exists within a patriarchal society, she merely

(and falsely) accuses MacKinnon of stepping back in to the 1950s view of women as passive.

Bashing "Feminist Sex-Cops from Hell" and "Feminist Puritans and Dictators" throughout, the argument assumes the reader has a hippie free-love attitude and will be appalled to read that some women do not want to "screw." The false thinking that a woman is more liberated if she changes sex partners more frequently feeds the patriarchy's strength over women. Saying that women want sex is to ignore the issue of consent within the patriarchy. Clearly, the Spartacist League has not read all of *Feminism Unmodified*, or they did not understand what they read. Repeatedly, the Sparts warn of the "war on privacy," despite the fact that privacy serves the patriarchy. As discussed above, the right to "privacy" is the right for those in power to practice dominance. The concept of date rape is said to trivialize "real acts of violence against women"; by this they mean, presumably, those acts committed by poor Black men against rich white women.(6)

Throughout this issue of Women & Revolution, there is a consistent line: women are not victims of oppression by gender, only by class; restrictions on individual behavior are inherently oppressive; the right to privacy is more important than the dismantling of patriarchy. MIM disagrees on all these points, which add up to a backwards view of gender and revolution. Because MIM has developed a comprehensive view of gender, it is the better option not only for women but for all who want to realistically plan for revolution. Though the Sparts try to win the support of the white working class by labeling them the oppressed, and from men by upholding the patriarchy, they do not provide for the liberation of all peoples, least of all those most exploited. This last group's plight is what MIM takes on.

Notes:

1. p. 26.
2. p. 2.
3. p. 99.
4. p. 102.
5. p. 5.
6. p. 9.

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The Revolutionary Community Party-USA and Trotsky: A Literal Comparison

February 1994

by MC5 & MC86

In the imperialist countries and, even in some Third World countries, there is a plethora of Trotskyist organizations bombarding young comrades with idealist nonsense. Sometimes Trotskyists succeed in secretly converting certain communist leaders who then sneak Trotskyism into their "Marxism-Leninism" or even their "Maoism." When the leaders of a political organization sneak Trotskyism into their politics without crediting its source, we refer to that organization as "crypto-Trotskyist." The premier crypto-Trotskyist organization in the United States is the Progressive Labor Party. A slightly more subtle imitation is the RCP-USA.

In this article, MIM brings out quotations from Trotsky that made his politics distinctive from those of Stalin and Mao. We also bring out quotations from the RCP-USA, which demonstrate how the RCP has imported Trotskyism into its "Maoism." To know what RCP Chairperson Bob Avakian was going to say in his special 50th issue of *Revolution* in 1981, it was only necessary to read the works of Trotsky himself and the Trotskyist Ernest Mandel's 1978 book *The Bitter Fruits of Socialism in One Country: From Stalinism to Eurocommunism*.⁽¹⁾

It's been some years since the Communist Party of Peru entered into struggle with the RCP-USA. In that struggle, it has succeeded in getting the RCP-USA to call itself "Maoist" and make a number of other quick line changes.

As the people up front and close to the RCP's practice, however, MIM argues that the RCP has done little to overhaul its general political line. For example, although the RCP calls the document "deliberately provocative" and unofficial today, the RCP still distributes *Revolution* No. 50, which openly denigrates the term "Maoist." *Revolution* No. 50, called "Conquer the World: The International Proletariat Must and Will," is the RCP document that most infuriated the new Maoist forces that formed MIM, and reading it gives one a sense of what it was like to be a Maoist around the RCP in the early 1980s. Another example is the RCP's Black Panther pamphlet, which refers to the "the working class" of North America with no mention of superprofits.

More recently, the RCP has been confronted with the facts of the labor aristocracy and has, if anything, regressed from some of its earlier positions. The Revolutionary Worker opposed the NAFTA in lockstep with the CPUSA and Ross Perot. Another article denounced the MIM line on the Euro-American working class as "counterrevolutionary." (That's just what MIM was thinking about the CPUSA and Ross Perot!)

Throughout all the changes in the RCP's line and its emphases and its local and regional variations, one thing remains the same — its Trotskyism. The RCP has, like Trotsky, consistently maintained that external conditions are the basis of contradiction. In this sense, MIM and the international communist movement was much better off when the RCP openly attacked "Maoism" and called itself "Marxist-Leninist." This was a much more honest position to take than the medley of views that came with taking the Peru franchise. Now the RCP uses the struggle in Peru to adopt a Maoist veneer without changing anything else in its line or practice.

I. THE BASIS OF CONTRADICTION

The basis of contradiction is the most general issue for Marxists, other than the materialist method itself. Unlike Stalin and Mao, Trotsky held that the decisive conditions for the creation of socialism existed *externally* to each society. This is not true for the world's oppressed nations, who do not need change forced on them by the pace of world events. Ironically, Trotsky's external formulation *is* true for the reactionary labor aristocracies Trotsky spoke for.

First, Trotsky quotes Stalin: "The difference in views lies in the fact," says Stalin, "that the party considers that these [internal] contradictions and possible *conflicts can be entirely overcome* on the basis of the inner forces of our revolution, whereas comrade Trotsky and the Opposition think that these contradictions and conflicts can be overcome "only on an international scale, on the arena of the world-wide proletarian revolution.""⁽²⁾

Trotsky then adds, "yes, this is precisely the difference. One could not express better and more correctly the difference between national reformism and revolutionary internationalism. If our internal difficulties, obstacles, and contradictions, which are fundamentally a reflection of world contradictions, can be settled merely by the 'inner forces of our revolution' without entering 'the arena of of the world-wide proletarian revolution' then the International is partly a subsidiary and partly a decorative institution."⁽³⁾

Trotsky:

"In our epoch, which is the epoch of imperialism, i.e., of world economy and world politics under the hegemony of finance capital, not a single communist party can establish its program by proceeding solely or mainly from conditions and tendencies of developments in its own country. ... On August 4, 1914, the death knell sounded for national programs [a reference to World War I—MC5] for all time. ... In the present epoch, to a much larger extent than in the past, the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not *vice versa*.

Herein lies the basic and primary difference between communist internationalism and all varieties of national socialism.”(4)

“It is impermissible, impossible, and absurd to seek a criterion for the ‘sufficient minimum’ within national states (‘Russian prior to 1917’) when the whole question is settled by international dynamics. In this false, arbitrary, isolated national criterion rests the theoretical basis of national narrowness in politics, the precondition for inevitable national-reformist and social-patriotic blunders in the future.”(5)

“Our internal contradictions, however, which depend directly on the trend of the European and world struggle, may be rationally regulated and abated by a correct internal policy based on Marxian foresight. But they can be finally overcome only when the class contradictions will be overcome, which is out of the question without a victorious revolution in Europe. Stalin is right. The difference lies precisely on this point and this is the fundamental difference between national reformism and revolutionary internationalism.”(6)

Plagiarist Bob Avakian:

“Returning to the question of Mao: also linked to the general erroneous tendencies in Mao — too much of a country by country perspective, the tendency to see things too much in terms of nations and national struggle — something else that should be reviewed here briefly is confusion and some of Mao’s errors on the question of internal and external, and in particular the internal basis of change and the external conditions of change and how this applies in the relationship between revolutions in particular countries, on the one hand, and the overall world struggle and the world situation, on the other. ...

“For example in ‘On Contradiction’ the way it’s presented is that China is the internal and the rest of the world is the external. And what we’ve emphasized in opposition to this is viewing the process of the world historic advance from the bourgeois epoch to the communist epoch as something which in fact takes place in an overall sense on a world scale, is a world process and both arises out of and is ultimately determined by the fundamental contradiction of capitalism which, with the advent of imperialism, has become the fundamental contradiction of this process on a world scale. If we want to look to see what is the underlying and main driving force in terms of the development of revolutionary situations in particular countries at particular times, then too we have to look to the overall development of contradictions on a world scale, flowing out of and ultimately determined by this fundamental contradiction and not mainly to the development of the contradictions within a particular country, because that country and the process there is integrated in an overall way into this larger world process. It’s not simply as it was in the feudal era or the beginning of the bourgeois era where you had separate countries more or less separately developing with interpenetration between them; now they’ve been integrated into this larger process.”(7)

“[W]hat has happened in the Soviet Union and China represents, in its essence, defeats inflicted on the international proletariat by the international bourgeoisie, and that the mistakes of the revolutionaries were secondary ...”(8)

The theory of a potential resurgence of a new bourgeoisie within the communist party was a central contribution of Maoism to communist theory. The above quotation from Avakian places him outside of Maoism.

II. SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY

Trotsky: “The conception of the building of socialism in one country is a social-patriotic conception.”(9)

“In the epoch of imperialism it is impossible to approach the fate of one country in any other way but by taking as a starting point the tendencies of world development as a whole in which the individual country, with all its national peculiarities, is included and to which it is subordinated.”(10)

Bob Avakian: “Maoism without Leninism is nationalism (and also, in certain contexts, social-chauvinism) and bourgeois democracy.”(11)

Trotsky:

“Revolutionary patriotism can only have a class character. It begins as patriotism to the party organizations, to the trade union, and rises to state patriotism when the proletariat seizes power. Whenever the power is in the hands of the workers, patriotism is a revolutionary duty. ... And now it suddenly appears that the ideal of the socialist society may be achieved with the national forces alone. This is a mortal blow to the International.”(12)

“We must tell them that we will enter on the path of *real* socialist construction only when the proletariat of the most advanced countries will have captured power; that it is necessary to work unremittingly for this, using both levers — the short lever of our internal economic efforts and the long lever of the international proletarian struggle.”(13)

Bob Avakian:

“There is the specific criticism to be made of Mao on the question of nations, national struggle and the world revolution: not only in the Anna Louise Strong interview and in ‘On Policy,’ but also in the General Line polemic, the tendency shows up to see things too much country-by-country separated from each other, too much in terms of nations and national struggle, and too much in terms of identifying one enemy and rallying everybody against it.”(14)

“This crucial question of what happened to the revolutionary movement particularly from the mid-’70s on ... cannot be understood fully or resolved by looking at it country-by-country and trying to figure out what happened to the move-

ment in this country and why didn't we go further here, or why were we set back there and so on. Again, it's another example of how things have to be looked at first, foremost and fundamentally on an international basis."(15)

"Imagine, for example, what it would have been like if the revolutionary line in China had been more clearly and firmly an internationalist one and, on that basis, if the revolutionary leadership had been able to mobilize the proletariat to keep power in China—which such a line could not have guaranteed but would have made more possible—and then things erupted the way they did in Iran, think about where we would be on that basis now!" (16)

"Since a lot of emphasis has been put on deviations from Leninism, specifically towards nationalism, would Lenin too have made these deviations from Leninism if he'd been around longer to deal with a lot of the real necessity that arose in the Soviet Union? . . . It should be said, at the same time, that his methodological approach, his grasp and application of materialist dialectics, was head and shoulders (unfortunately) above his successors in the Soviet Union, and in particular head and shoulders above that of the main successor—Stalin."(17)

III. AN INTERNATIONAL PARTY?

Trotsky:

"That is why, for us, the policy of the Comintern dominates all other questions. Without a correct international policy, all the possible economic successes in the U.S.S.R. will not save the October Revolution and will not lead to socialism. To speak more exactly: without a correct international policy, there can be no correct policy in internal affairs either, for the line is one."(18)

Elsewhere, Trotsky does not explain at length what it means to have an "international revolutionary party," but simply proceeds from the obvious need for one. See for example, "The Program of the International Revolution or a Program of Socialism in One Country?" which is the first document in Trotsky's book titled *The Third International After Lenin*.

Trotsky: "World economy has become a might reality which holds sway over the economic life of individual countries and continents. This basic fact alone invests the idea of a world communist party with a supreme reality."(19)

Trotskyist leader Ernest Mandel:

"No such struggle is at all possible in the imperialist epoch unless it is international. No consistent international struggle is possible without an international organization. The idea of 'single centre' was profoundly discredited by Stalin when he converted it into a system of bureaucratic command by the CPSU. Yet its undistorted form remains the only alternative for communist militants who really want to rediscover class independence from the bourgeoisie and the Soviet bureaucracy.

"Any 'national communism' in a capitalist country is

condemned to become a 'communism' integrated into the bourgeois state."(20)

RCP-USA: "RIM [the international party led principally by the RCP-USA] is a decisive element and prerequisite for victory in the struggle to emancipate the world."(21)

IV. THE NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE

Trotsky is the grandfather of all supposedly "Marxist" reductionists that MIM refers to as "fundamentalists" for their simplistic and dogmatist stress on the fundamental contradiction between classes on the world scale. Trotsky and the reductionists refuse to acknowledge the class struggle embodied in some national struggles or gender struggles. For Trotsky, it is all quite simple: there are oppressed nation proletarians and there are proletarian women. They engage in class struggle against the bourgeoisie just like their oppressor nation and male proletarian comrades. The national bourgeoisie is no different than the imperialist bourgeoisie says Trotsky, except that it is even more backward.

Trotsky:

"Lenin did not at all place the wars for national liberation above bourgeois democratic revolutions as is now done by Bukharin, [when Bukharin and Stalin shared the same opinions—MC5] after his 180 degree turn. Lenin insisted on a distinction between an oppressed bourgeois nation and a bourgeois oppressor nation. But Lenin nowhere raised and never could raise the question as if the bourgeoisie of a colonial or a semi-colonial country in an epoch of struggle for national liberation must be more progressive and more revolutionary than the bourgeoisie of a non-colonial country in the epoch of the democratic revolution."(22)

"The new and absolutely false theory promulgated by Stalin- Bukharin about the 'imminent' revolutionary spirit of the colonial bourgeoisie is, in substance, a translation of Menshevism into the language of Chinese politics. It serves only to convert the oppressed position of China into an internal political premium for the Chinese bourgeoisie, and it throws an additional weight on the scale of the bourgeoisie against the scale of the trebly oppressed Chinese proletariat."(23)

"China is still confronted with a vast, bitter, bloody, and prolonged struggle for such elementary things as the liquidation of the most 'Asiatic' forms of slavery, national emancipation, and unification of the country. But as the course of events has shown, it is precisely this that makes impossible in the future any petty-bourgeois leadership or even semi-leadership in the revolution. The unification and emancipation of China today is an international task, no less so than the existence of the U.S.S.R. This task can be solved only by means of a desperate struggle on the part of the downtrodden, hungry, and persecuted masses under the direct leadership of the proletarian vanguard—a struggle not only against world imperialism, but also against its economic and political agency in China, against the bour-

insane idea found supporters and half-supporters among the upper leadership of the Comintern.”(30)

Trotskyist leader Ernest Mandel: “Far from being a minority, the proletariat as we have defined it is a social class that represents 70-90% of the active population of the Western imperialist countries.”(31)

As MIM described in the first section of this article, the RCP is on record opposing MIM’s line on the labor aristocracy in favor of the Trotskyist line.

VII. REVOLUTION IN THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

Trotsky addressing a U.S. audience:

“The American soviets would not need to resort to the drastic measures which circumstances have often imposed upon the Russians. In the United States, through the science of publicity and advertising, you have means for winning the support of your middle class, which were beyond the reach of the soviets of backward Russia with its vast majority of pauperized and illiterate peasants. This, in addition to your technical equipment and your wealth, is the greatest asset of your coming Communist Revolution. Your revolution will be smoother in character than ours; you will not waste your energies and resources in costly social conflicts after the main issues have been decided; and you will move ahead so much the more rapidly in consequence.”(32)

Bob Avakian:

“Lenin was not, however, being one-sided about this or adopting a ‘third worldist’ position, that is, writing off revolution in the West or seeing the only possible thrust of revolution coming from the East or suggesting that revolution in the West would only be possible after the flame of revolution had lit up the entire East (and then perhaps things would develop in the West to where a proletarian revolution could become possible. This was *not* Lenin’s view and when it is attributed to him represents a vulgarization of his actual view, although he did correctly recognize the developments which were really only beginning to assert themselves, that is, the shift of the revolutionary center more and more toward the East.”(33)

Flatterer of the middle-class, Bob Avakian:

“In the experience of the Soviet Union (and of socialism generally so far), it has not proved possible to fully implement the policies adopted by the Paris Commune. . . it has not been possible to abolish the standing army as an institution and to replace it with the armed masses themselves. This is largely owing to what has been spoken to before: the fact that revolutions leading to socialism have taken place not in industrially developed capitalist countries where the proletariat is the majority of the population (or at least is the largest class), as Marx and Engels had foreseen, but in technologically backward countries with large peasant popula-

tions where the proletariat is a small minority; these revolutions have occurred not in a number of countries all at once [unless you count Africa, Asia] but more or less in one country at a time (leaving aside the experience of the Eastern European countries in the aftermath of World War II), where there was some transformation in aspects of social relations but there was never a real socialist transformation of society; and socialist states have existed in a world still dominated by imperialism.”(34)

We’re glad Avakian noticed that revolutions have not occurred all at once; however, he is pointing this out to damn these revolutions compared with the ones that could happen in the West. When it comes down to it, Avakian still sees the labor aristocracy and other middle classes of the imperialist countries as a better social basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat than the peasantry and urban working classes of the Third World. The decades of corruption of the imperialist working class receive no weight in the RCP’s calculations (except when prompted by MIM) and Avakian continues to speak of the issue of the militia as if the bourgeoisie were amongst the masses in general and not specifically in the party. Ironically this is more true in the imperialist countries than in the historical experiences to which Avakian refers. (See MIM Theory 5 “Diet for a Small Red Planet,” for MIM’s review of the RCP on the “majority” of imperialist country workers.(47))

The issue here is not militia versus standing army, but what Avakian sees as the best basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Contradicting Stalin and Mao, Avakian continues to hold the Trotskyist line that the imperialist country working class is the best vehicle of revolution.

VIII. WORLD WAR II

Trotsky:

“Stalin and his clique, for the sake of an alliance with the imperialist governments, have completely renounced the revolutionary program for the emancipation of the colonies. This was openly avowed at the last Congress of Stalin’s party in Moscow, in March of the current year, by Manuilski one of the leaders of the Comintern, who declared:

“The Communists advance to the forefront the struggle for the realization of the right of self-determination of nationalities enslaved by *fascist* governments. They demand free self-determination for Austria. . . the Sudetan regions. . . Korea, Formosa, Abyssinia. . .’ And what about India, Indochina, Algeria, and other colonies of England and France? The Comintern representative answers this question as follows: ‘The Communists. . . demand of the governments of the so-called bourgeois democratic states the immediate [sic] drastic [!] improvement in the living standards of the toiling masses in the colonies and the granting of broad democratic rights and liberties to the colonies.’”(35)

Open Trotskyist Ernest Mandel: "By turning the Communist International away from its initial objectives and watering it down into a docile instrument of Soviet diplomatic manoeuvres and particularist privileges, the Stalinist bureaucracy dealt a death blow to proletarian internationalism in the ranks of the movement it controlled on a world scale."(36)

Crypto-Trotskyist Bob Avakian:

"All these policies were frankly a rationalization for and an attempt to make the communist movement's policy an extension of the international policy and line of the Soviet Union. . . . To put it in a nutshell, World War 2 on the part of the Soviet Union, was fought on a patriotic — that is bourgeois-democratic—basis. . . . For example, whatever the Soviet Union did that turned more revolutionary elements away from it when it was carrying out the collective security in the late '30s (or, for that matter, turned more bourgeois-democratic elements away from it when it made the pact with Germany) — all of it is justified on the most contradictory bases which can only be reduced to 'it was good for the Soviet Union.'"(37)

"For example, to move that from the abstract realm and make it very concrete, almost everybody who was around at the time knows the Soviet Union carried out a policy putting its national interests above everything else in and around World War 2, and only some communists are the ones who won't accept it, can't face up to it and will go for any sort of rationalization to try to justify not having to come to terms with a basic simple fact."(38)

Here MIM must comment on the absolutely vile amnesia regarding history that Trotskyists and Avakian are promoting on World War II. The Russian people and disproportionately its communists in particular gave up 20 million dead fighting to defeat the Nazis in the imperialist war — far more than any other nation — and Avakian doesn't even mention it.

Instead, he claims the Soviet Union was promoting its "national interests." Apparently sacrificing 20 million in a war is not enough internationalism for Avakian. Being just the only country that did not capitulate and join in with Hitler after being occupied, that's not internationalism says Avakian. Here we must make it clear that Stalin and the Comintern did make urgent calls for support of the Soviet Union and they deserved every bit of support they got. It was clear to everyone at the time and anyone who followed Lenin's theory of imperialism that the Soviet Union was going to be the object of imperialist attack in a world war. The only question was when. As such, communists internationally were correct to make support for the Soviet Union a cardinal question. Anyone who couldn't apply communist principles in practice and support the Soviet Union didn't deserve the name "communist" no matter how much rhetoric to the contrary.

Anarchists, Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists who have lived too long in a parasitic environment easily lose sight of

the basic facts and get lost in idealist mistrust of all national and state interests. Given the particular role of U.S. imperialism and its passive working class in not stopping Hitler and the other imperialists much earlier, Avakian in particular should be ashamed to make such statements even in passing, never mind in print in a magazine still distributed over a decade later. Like it or not, the Russian people as the first to make socialist revolution were going to pay a heavy international price in World War II, regardless of the policies of Stalin. Despite all the "maneuvers" that Trotsky and Avakian complain about, the Russians still gave their fair share in creating some space free from one of the major imperialist blocs.

IX. THE IDEALIST VIEW OF DEFEAT AND SOVIET AID

Time and again, Trotsky blamed Stalin for the defeat of revolutions. At the same time, Trotsky accepted no responsibility for the defeat of international revolution. In other words, Stalinists everywhere betrayed revolution when they failed, but the failures of Trotskyists to make revolution anywhere in the world were not even mentioned — a double standard possible to maintain only through perfect idealism. Very strangely overlooked by the Trotskyists, it was the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China that supplied troops and material supplies for revolutions abroad including in Spain, Korea (including Chinese troops) and Vietnam, but the Trotskyists have never provided any such support. Instead, what they provide is historical amnesia in thousands of pages at a time.

Somehow it is the Stalinists guilty of not supporting armed struggle abroad according to the Trotskyists — who never led a successful one themselves.

Likewise in the case of Bob Avakian, he criticizes Mao for supposedly raising not giving armed aid "to a principle." Nowhere in Revolution No. 50, where he makes this criticism repeatedly, and even on the final page in an effort to sound tougher than Mao, nowhere does he make historical references to the actual sacrifices in armed struggle the Chinese under Mao made. That includes sacrificing hundreds of thousands dead in the Korean War, something that the masses revere Mao for to this day, because his own son died in combat there and demonstrated that Mao wasn't the kind of ruler that brought his family special privileges. Instead of making the facts known and undoing the bourgeois superstructure's brainwashing, Avakian caters to this historical amnesia with tough Trotarchist rhetoric. When Mao said he would not attack countries outside his borders, he did not rule out being invited in by those countries to defeat imperialist aggression! There's nothing wrong with that principle, and more importantly, there was nothing wrong with China's practice, except for the historically ignorant.

Trotsky:

"We have today a 'theory' which teaches that it is possible to build socialism completely in one country and that the correlations of that country with the capitalist world can be established on the basis of 'neutralizing' the world bour-

geoisie (Stalin). . . . It will be most vitally necessary to spread the revolution to the neighboring countries and to support insurrections there with arms in hand, not out of any abstract considerations of international solidarity, which in themselves cannot set the classes in motion, but because of those vital considerations which Lenin formulated hundreds of times—namely, that without *timely* aid from the international revolution, we will be unable to hold out.”(39)

Likewise, Bob Avakian:

“The victory of the Spanish revolution could have opened up an era of revolutionary overturns throughout Europe and so forestalled the present war. But that heroic revolution, which contained within itself every possibility of victory, was smothered in the embrace of the Second and Third Internationals, with the active cooperation of the anarchists. The world proletariat became poorer in its loss of another great hope and richer in the lessons of another monstrous betrayal.”

Trotsky:

“The mighty movement of the French proletariat in June, 1936, revealed exceptionally favorable conditions for the revolutionary conquest of power. A French soviet republic would immediately have gained revolutionary hegemony of Europe, created revolutionary repercussions in every country, rocked the totalitarian regimes and in this way saved humanity from the present imperialist slaughter with its countless victims. But the thoroughly debased, cowardly and treacherous policies of Leon Blum and Leon Jouhaux with the active support of the French section of the Comintern, led to the collapse of one of the most promising movements of the last decade.”(40)

“Because of the lag of the world revolution, and the fatigue, and, to a large measure, the backwardness of the Russian workers and especially the Russian peasants, there raised itself over the Soviet Republic and against its peoples a new oppressive and parasitic caste whose leader is Stalin.”(41)

X. FORMULATING STRATEGY

Trotsky: “The Soviet proletariat has achieved grandiose successes, if we take into consideration the conditions under which they have been attained and the low cultural level inherited from the past. But these achievements constitute an extremely small magnitude on the scales of the socialist ideal.”(42)

Trotskyist leader Ernest Mandel: “The notion that all the living forces of society can gradually be assembled for a long, perhaps even permanent, siege of the ‘capitalist fortress’ is an idle dream. Capitalism commands innumerable machine-gun nests stationed around its ‘fortress’, within the very social body that is supposed to be besieging it. These defences permit no lasting assemblies or sieges of long duration.”(43)

Bob Avakian:

“And the political point that I want to draw in particular, besides correcting that point in *Mao Tsetung’s Immortal Contributions*, is refocusing attention on the question of what is there in the military strategy Mao fought for that might, spontaneously at least, lead him away from understanding that in the context of a world war it might be correct to in fact strike out in different directions, viewing the world as a whole; that is, to oppose the imperialists in general and to attempt to overthrow them wherever possible in *both* camps, of course taking into the account the particular situation in different countries.”(44)

“Making use of the contradictions among the enemy, defeating our enemies one by one, etc., was precisely a correct policy in those concrete conditions and it can be, under many different conditions, a correct policy. But it is wrong to elevate this to the level of a general principle.

“Just to give a simple example, if everybody in this room but me is a counter-revolutionary and you constitute the main pillars of reaction in the world and I’m capable of whipping up on everybody all at once, why should I defeat you one by one? There’s no principle that says I should defeat you one by one; if I’m capable of defeating you all at one time, I should just take you all on and wipe you out and so much the better for the international proletariat.”(45)

Even if Avakian discovers the Elliptontrotacious Bomb (RCP synthesized hot air?), everyone in the room is going to die at a different time. Dialectics is the nature of life. It’s not likely our imperialist enemies are going to die “all at once.”

Ernest Mandel: “The working class must fight for a *proletarian* international policy, which means an independent class policy opposed to any alliance with one faction of imperialism against another. Today this can be expressed in two formulas: Against armament (especially nuclear armament) and against the war preparations of any imperialist bourgeoisie! For the Socialist United States of Europe!”(46)

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Notes:

1. Ernest Mandel, “The Bitter Fruits of Socialism in One Country,” *From Stalinism to Eurocommunism* London: NLB, 1978.
2. Pravda, No. 262, Nov. 12, 1926 .
3. Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970, p. 62.
4. Ibid, pp. 3-4.
5. Ibid, p. 212.
6. Ibid, p. 65.
7. Revolution No. 50, pp. 34-5.
8. A World to Win, #17, p. 47.
9. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 70.
10. Ibid, p. 42.
11. Revolution No. 50, p. 38.

12. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 71.
 13. Ibid, p. 66.
 14. Revolution No. 50, p. 35.
 15. Ibid, p. 41.
 16. Ibid, p. 44.
 17. Ibid, p. 34.
 18. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 256.
 19. Ibid, p. 5.
 20. Mandel, "The Bitter Fruits of Socialism in One Country," op cit. p. 39.
 21. Revolutionary Worker, Jan. 16, 1994, p. 3.
 22. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 171.
 23. Ibid, pp. 175.
 24. Ibid, p. 191.
 25. Mao Zedong, *Selected Works, Vol. 1*, "Win the Masses in Their Millions..." pp. 290-1.
 26. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, pp. 184-5.
 27. Ibid, pp. 190.
 28. Ibid, p. 209.
 29. Revolution No. 50, p. 35.
 30. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 219.
 31. Mandel, op cit. p. 210.
 32. Leon Trotsky, "If America Should Go Communist," *The Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology* Isaac Deutscher, ed. New York: Dell, 1964, p. 215.
 33. Revolution No. 50, p. 11.
 34. A World to Win, #17, p. 38.
 35. Pravda, issue No. 70, March 12, 1939.)" (Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology* op cit. p. 250.)
 36. Mandel, op cit. p. 37.
 37. Revolution No. 50, p. 22.
 38. Revolution No. 50, p. 23.
 39. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 16.
 40. Trotsky, "The Second World War," *The Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology* op cit, p. 250.
 41. Ibid, p. 282.
 42. Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 66.
 43. Mandel, op cit. pp. 192-3.
 44. Revolution No. 50, p. 34.
 45. Ibid, p. 31.
 46. Mandel, op cit. p. 32.
 47. MIM Theory 5, "Diet for a Small Red Planet." p. 99.

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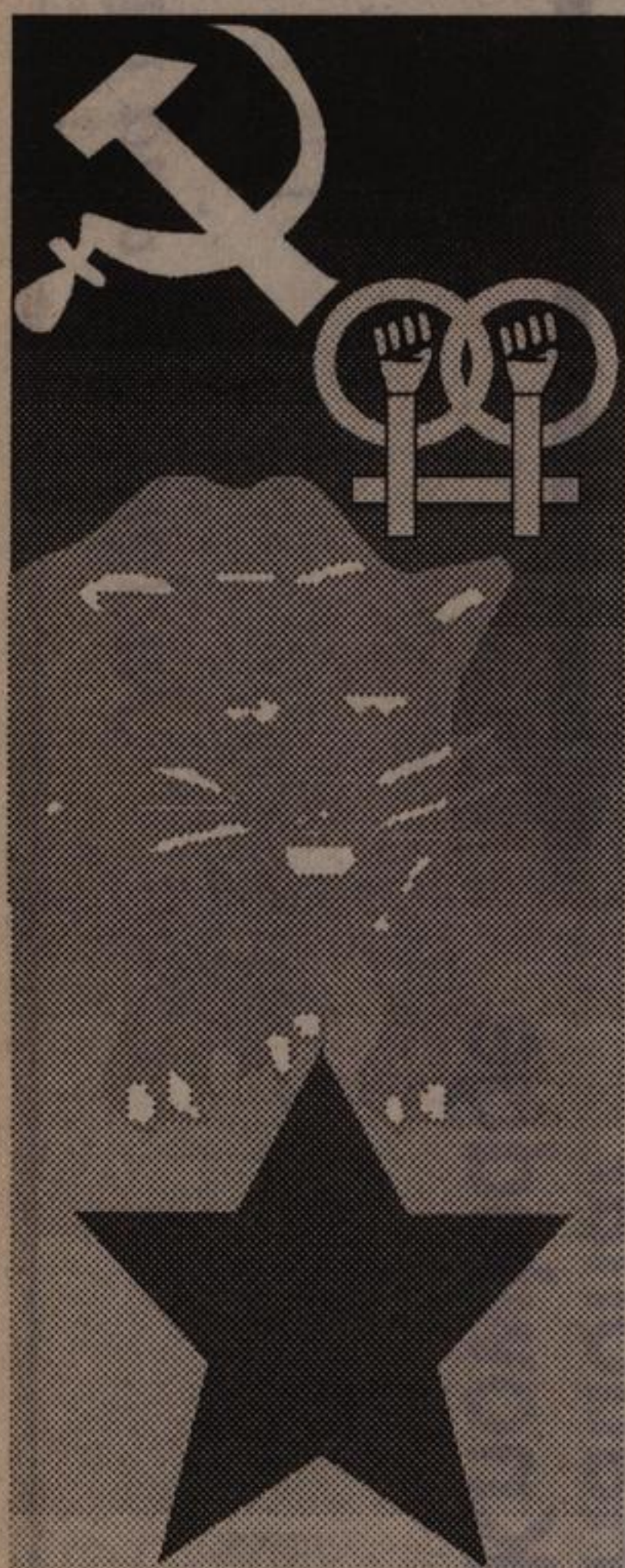
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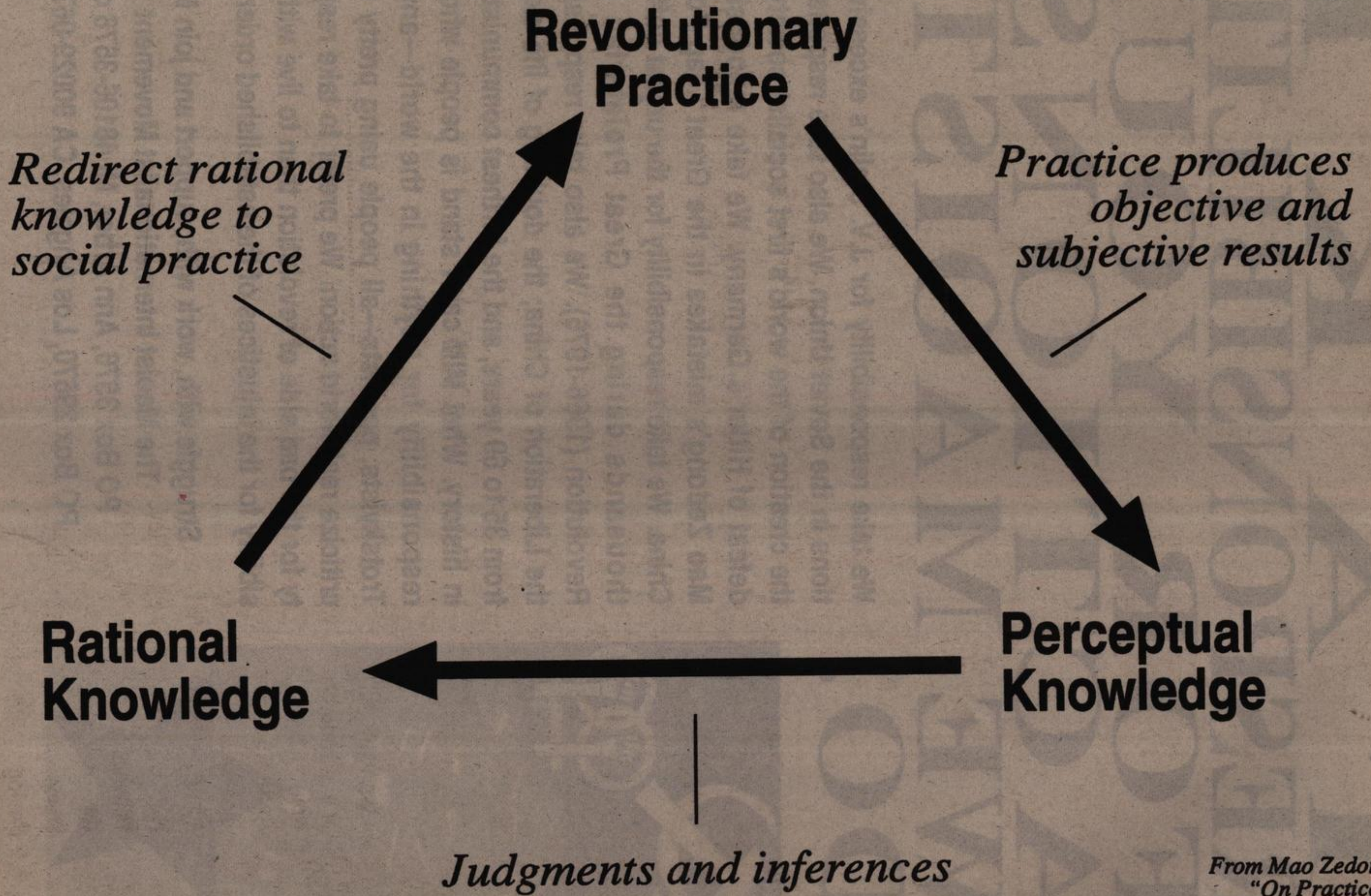
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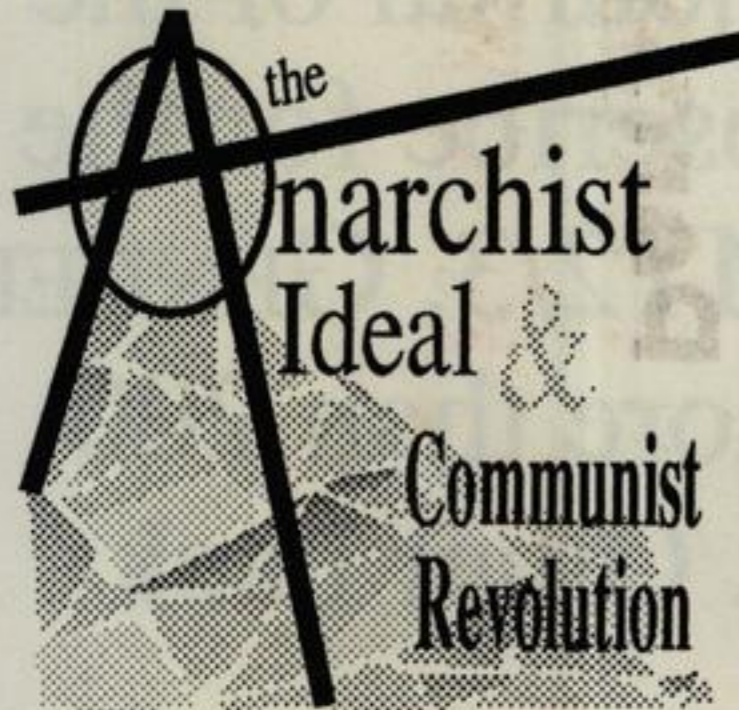
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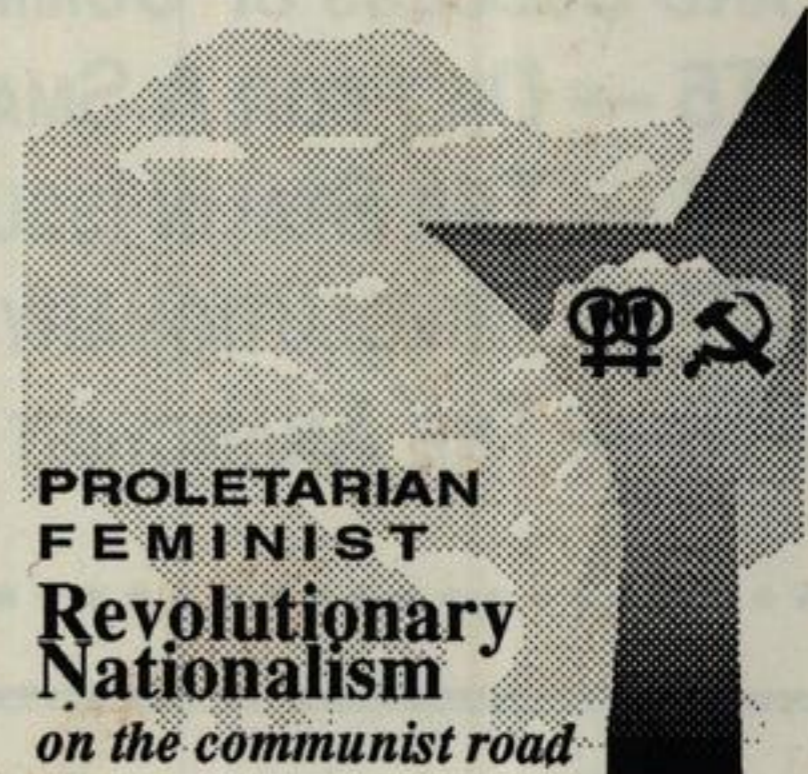
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