

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

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The politics of 'National Accord' and 'Progressive Turn' in the Dominican Republic

REFORMISM OR REVOLUTIONARY WORK?

With this article we are continuing our discussion of the reformist turn by the leadership of the PCT (Communist Party of Labor or "PCT" in Spanish) of the Dominican Republic. The Dominican workers, peasants, students and young people have repeatedly put up barricades and shed their blood in the fight against U.S. imperialism and the local capitalist and landlord rulers. This militancy is mainly expressed today in the brewing revolt among the workers and poor against colossal unemployment and prices soaring out of reach. On the dictate of the international bankers in New York and elsewhere, the regime has saddled the masses with one starvation measure after the next, provoking a number of general strikes and sharp class battles.

Among the main Dominican organizations, it is the PCT which is the closest to the militant masses. In March of last year, a general strike swept the working class barrios. This combative action of the poor was shunned by the social-democrats as well as the revisionist left, including the pro-Soviet CP and other self-styled socialists. The PCT, on the other hand, took part in the general strike, standing with the struggling masses and their barrio Committees of Popular Struggle.

In this position, PCT is a pole of attraction to revolutionary-minded workers and activists. Many of those who work with the PCT are revolutionary-minded and are committed to the class struggle. Unfortunately, the present guiding policy of the PCT leadership is something else. While keeping up revolutionary rhetoric, the underlying policy of the PCT is heading in an increasingly reformist direction.

In our article "On the character of the Dominican Revolution" we discussed the current theoretical arguments of the PCT on questions of strategy. We focused on the PCT's book *The Character of the Dominican Revolution*, criticizing the arguments in this book as steps back from Marxism-Leninism and towards petty-bourgeois democracy and petty-bourgeois nationalism.

The PCT's Fifth National Conference of January 1987:

*For a Progressive Turn in the
National Political Situation*

These backward steps are not only matters of reformist theoretical arguments. Connected to these theoretical views, the political stands and tactics of the PCT have also been drifting towards right opportunism. It appears that this reformist drift accelerated with the PCT's Fifth National Conference held in January, 1987. The political report to the conference was reprinted in a book entitled

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RCPB(ML) condemns Salman Rushdie On their knees before fundamentalism: The rightists vs. anti-religious books

Where does petty-bourgeois nationalism and liquidationism lead? The RCPB(ML) has recently come out against the publication of Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*. These alleged "Marxist-Leninists" are prostrating themselves before the worst excesses of Islamic fundamentalism. Their rightism has so removed them from the spirit of the rebellious proletariat, it has so destroyed any sense of principle or of honor, that they can not even hold aloof from the holy crusade against Rushdie.

The Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (M-L) is closely tied to the Communist Party of Canada (M-L), and both have been carrying out a petty-bourgeois nationalist and liquidationist line for years on end. They are also both supporters of the rightist stands from the Party of Labor of Albania, which, in particular, has been supporting the regime of the Ayatollah Khomeini, the hangman of the revolution and the masses, as the supposed embodiment of the Iranian revolution. And the RCPB(ML) and the CPC(ML) have followed right along in prettifying Khomeini's barbaric despotism.

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Khomeini has called for death to Salman Rushdie for writing *The Satanic Verses*. What stand would the RCPB(ML) take? What matter a little book or two where the RCPB(ML) already closes its eyes to the deaths of tens and tens of thousands of communists and militants in the jails and torture cells of the Iranian Islamic regime. So in the February 25, 1989 issue of *Workers' Weekly* (Vol. 16, No. 8), came out against the publication of Rushdie's book in a front page lead article entitled "Britain should cease its hostile acts against Iran."

The article declares that:

"Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* is a deliberate insult against the religious beliefs of millions of Muslim believers throughout the world, a book published despite warnings from the publishers' consultant in India that it would provoke outrage. Leaving aside its all-round reactionary character and attempts to denigrate anything progressive, the book should be condemned purely on the basis of its calculated insults against the Muslim peoples, against believers in Islam, including tens of thousands of British citizens."

It adds that:

"...it is not correct that freedom of expression should extend to the publishing of materials which denigrate, ridicule or insult the personal beliefs of millions of people, to views which are extremely harmful to the people's interests. The publication of a book which causes such grave insult, which incites such fervour and causes such tensions, and which has already lead to deaths, is not acceptable."

So, according to the RCPB(ML), nothing should be published which "denigrates, ridicules or insults the personal belief of millions of people..." Thus the RCPB(ML) throws out the freedom to anti-religious propaganda or, for that matter, freedom for any revolutionary views. Did not Marxism and all militant working class literature, with its condemnation of the bourgeoisie, "denigrate, ridicule or insult" the bourgeoisie and the oppressors? Or is it only religion which is to be protected? In which case, why single out Islam? Isn't *Elmer Gantry* deeply offensive to the Protestant clergy, and what about *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You* on the Catholic private schools? And didn't millions of religious people

feel deeply offended by the publication of Darwin's theory of evolution, particularly the assertion that human beings evolved from the lower animals?

In order to hide its stand, RCPB(ML) engages in outright lies.

It calls Rushdie a reactionary. Actually, he is a liberal. **The Satanic Verses** is written against Thatcherism in Britain, and has received the disapproval of the British government. He has also criticized the Indian government in other works and been sued by Indira Gandhi. He is only a liberal, not an revolutionary, but it is simply a outrageous lie to paint him as a diehard reactionary.

It talks of Rushdie's work as inciting violence. Actually, it is the Islamic fundamentalists who have carried out this violence. And this has been cynically done as part of political maneuvers. In Pakistan, the ultra-reactionaries used it to go after the Benazir Bhutto government. In Iran, it is part of the internal maneuvers of the Islamic regime. To denounce Rushdie as inciting violence is a gutter lie that would resemble blaming abortion clinics for the violence of the Christian fundamentalist anti-abortion movement.

The RCPB(ML) denounces the hypocrisy of the British and other governments in their stand on the issue of Salman Rushdie's book. They point to the British government's crusade against the publication of **Spycatcher** which talks about British spy activities. Strangely enough, however, the RCPB(ML) is silent in this article about the revival of Christian religious fanaticism in the Western countries and the blocks, bans, and even persecution of anti-religious literature. It is also silent over the actual hostility of the British and Indian governments to Rush-

die's criticism. And it is silent over the Soviet revisionist hypocrisy of smiling on the condemnation of Rushdie for the sake of making time with Khomeini and the bloody regime, a hypocrisy which bears a good deal of resemblance to that of the RCPB(ML) itself. The RCPB(ML) denounces bourgeois hypocrisy only to take up its own petty-bourgeois liquidationist hypocrisy. Apparently its logic is that if the bourgeois governments can engage in hypocrisy over literature, why can't it also?

The RCPB(ML) states that:

"It is scarcely believable that their [the U.S., British and various other European governments] stance could follow solely from the threats to the life of Salman Rushdie from Iranian leaders."

It points to the assassination activities of these governments. But there is a strange omission. The RCPB(ML) article fails to give its own stand on the death threats on Rushdie, unless this stand is implicit in its condemnation of the publication of Rushdie's work. It tries to slur over this issue. What toadies to the Iranian regime! But then again, the RCPB(ML) hasn't condemned any of the mass executions of Iranian communists and activists by the butchers in Teheran, so why should it be concerned with the price on the head of Rushdie?

Here we are not judging the nature or value of Rushdie's works nor how effective or well-considered this or that book of his is. But neither we nor the working class as a whole will consent to the censorship of what it can read by the religious fundamentalists, Christian or Islamic.

Shame, shame on the RCPB(ML)!

Haitian refugees protest detention in Miami

Another spark of struggle flared in the fight against racial oppression in Miami, Florida on January 29.

Four hundred Haitians gathered to demonstrate at the Krome Avenue Detention Center where immigrants are held by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The protesters demanded an end to harsh and discriminatory treatment of refugees from Haiti.

At the Krome Detention Center, Haitian refugees are held indefinitely. One demand of the demonstration was for the release of almost 200 Haitians who are currently being held there.

The INS follows a discriminatory policy towards refugees, one factor being whether the country of origin is considered hostile or friendly to the U.S. government. If the U.S. government wants to overthrow the government of the country, and the INS believes that the refugees may embarrass the government, and especially when it believes

that they may be anti-communist or fervently pro-imperialist, then it tends to favor them. If the country is pro-Western, then the INS shows no mercy towards dissidents, downtrodden workers, etc. Thus, while Cuban refugees arriving in boats from Cuba are let out on bond within 24-48 hours, Haitian boat people are kept here indefinitely. An additional reason for the discrimination against Haitians is that they are black and the INS is racist.

The Miami demonstration also protested deportations of Haitians back to Haiti. The day following the protest, the U.S. Coast Guard intercepted a small boat holding 149 Haitians who asked for political asylum. But the Coast Guard sent all but six back, saying that the boat had not yet reached U.S. territorial waters.

Some time after the January 29 demonstration, 15 Haitians detained at Krome were released. There are plans underway for another demonstration in March.

Punish war criminal North!

Punish the higher-ups!

For the time being, the trial of Colonel North continues.

North waged a secret war on Nicaragua while the White House and Congress sanctimoniously claimed to be at peace with this small Central American country. In reality, North and the CIA financed and organized the contras to bomb, burn and kill the people of Nicaragua in revenge for their having overthrown the pro-U.S. dictator Somoza.

The bourgeoisie is pretending that North is just an innocent scapegoat for higher-ups. But North was an enthusiastic terrorist who boasted of his deeds. He was overjoyed to direct the killing of Nicaraguans, and his sidekick Robert Owen gave him the nickname "Blood and Guts." Now, however, that he is appearing before a judge, even a most sympathetic one like Gesell, he has turned into a sniveling cur, complaining that it isn't fun anymore. Just like the run-of-the-mill bully, who only wants to fight when his opponents' arms are pinned behind his back.

It is true, of course, that North is simply a cog in a machine. A machine that includes the CIA and the White House. But this doesn't mean that North shouldn't be punished. It means that his White House connection, Reagan and Bush, are guilty too.

The trial that wasn't

Meanwhile the government makes a half-hearted pretense at trial. One charge after another is dropped. And the most important charges, that of waging war upon an innocent people, were never laid in the first place. It was taken for granted that the CIA and the Pentagon must have this right. North is being charged only for his personal corruption in this fight and for circumventing the normal chain of command.

The trial is being conducted in a way to prevent anything from emerging that would harm the ability of the CIA to continue waging war upon foreign people. From "independent" prosecutor Walsh to judge Gesell, they are all agreed that nothing shall be done that shall expose the dirty "secrets" of the CIA.

If necessary, the whole trial will be aborted.

The prosecution puts whitewashing Reagan as first principle

In fact, the prosecution's strategy centers on whitewashing the Reagan administration.

North's defense is that he can do anything that Reagan wanted him to do, with impunity, and that Reagan wanted him to finance and direct the contras. And indeed, the whole world knows that Reagan was the backer and enthusiast of the dirty war on Nicaragua.

But not the prosecution. It centers its case on proving that Reagan and his administration were allegedly clean and North was a rogue elephant. For example, take its use of the testimony of former National Security advisor McFarlane. It is not interested in showing that North lied, but in trying to establish that North went too far and betrayed his Reagan administration instructions. It wants to present the Reagan administration as allegedly clean of these lies, which are only the responsibility of North and McFarlane and a few others. It is North's defense team that got McFarlane to say that, although Reagan didn't directly say "lie", he did call for keeping the Iran-contra deal secret. Thanks to the prosecution strategy, instead of this being a damning point for the prosecution, it is supposed to be an embarrassment for them.

Walsh, "independent" prosecutor, independent from what?

Walsh, the head of the prosecution team, bears the title of "independent" prosecutor. He is supposed to be independent of the White House and thus supposedly capable of bringing administration officials to justice. Yet here he is, whitewashing the Reagan-Bush administration for all he is worth.

But not only does the prosecution strategy defend Reagan, but in fact Walsh has teamed up with Bush's Justice Department on the question of secret documents. Walsh accepts the polite fiction that the Justice Department is interested in prosecuting North, and that the Justice Department's only scruple is that it wants to protect some secrets for high-minded and noble reasons. (For Walsh, as well as the White House and Congress, protecting secret wars and CIA spies in foreign countries is a noble cause.)

But Bush's officials are interested in protecting Bush and the White House. And everyone knows that the White House was the director and stage manager of North's crimes. Bush himself, as vice-president under Reagan, was fully involved with North's crimes.

Attorney General Thornburgh has whitewashed former Attorney General Meese, even after a lower-level administration report itself denounced him. It has looked the other way on one sleazy deal after another from Reagan's men. But Walsh seem to know nothing of this. He accepts the Attorney General as a fighter for the prosecution. So too does Judge Gesell, who in his zeal to give credibility to every legal maneuver from North actually accepts the fiction that the Justice Department wants to convict him.

Does Walsh or Gesell denounce the attempts of the Justice Department and the Bush administration to prevent

a trial that is politically damaging to Bush? Not at all. Not at all.

Democrats are mired in the crime too

Meanwhile the testimony of the Congressmen reveals their own complicity in the war on Nicaragua. Democratic Lee Hamilton, head of the House contragate committee, testified about how North lied to Congress during investigations.

But what did Hamilton's testimony show? That Congress had closed its eyes for years.

The congressional contragate investigation came only after the administration role was an open secret. The congressmen had, says Hamilton, seen one newspaper article after another for months on end, throughout 1985 and 86, with the details of this war. Hamilton called it "a flood" of articles. He pointed out that these articles stated that North and the Reagan-Bush National Security Council were secretly raising money for the contras, providing them with military advice, and so forth. This was in violation of the loophole-ridden bills by Congress that the Democrats had trumpeted as stopping this aid.

But, on this and other issues concerning the contra war, again and again Hamilton and his fellow Democrats had accepted the assurances of the Reagan-Bush White House that nothing was going on. The whole world knew about the secret war on Nicaragua, while the liberal Democrats, these great opponents of Reagan, these heroic liberals who pose as lookouts on the front lines of the fight against conservatism, simply couldn't imagine that they were being lied to. Each year they repeated, with great innocent eyes, with touching outrage, "we didn't know, they lied to us again last year."

And then, when arms sales to Iran became known and

the scandal became too great, they held the Iran-contra hearings. And...they just could never find the "smoking gun"!

The Democratic congressmen believed because they wanted to believe. They believed, and then they were blind men who couldn't see the smoking guns and canons and bombs right in front of their eyes, because it was all a big show for the cameras, while in reality everyone knew the score. They believed because they were content to see the war against the Nicaraguan people continue, just so long as Reagan supplemented this war with political pressure as well as military. They believed because they shared a common aim with Reagan, only differing somewhat on this or that tactic.

And today, they still believe. They believe that prosecutor Walsh is conducting the good fight, and they have no objection to his strategy of whitewashing Reagan and working hand-in-hand with Bush's Justice Department.

The only justice will be building an anti-imperialist movement

Whether North gets tapped on the wrist for personal corruption or his trial gets thrown out altogether, justice will not be served. To bring the war criminals of the CIA dirty war to justice, servile courts and forgetful prosecutors will not suffice. The only justice will be building up a powerful movement of the masses to denounce and combat imperialism. Step up the exposure of imperialism! Use the hideous features of North to expose before the working masses the ugly nature of imperialism! Build up a movement to overthrow the role of these fiends! Their overthrow will be the only just verdict for the North case. ■

The Central American summit: More Arias plan pressure against Nicaragua

In mid-February there was another Central American summit of the presidents of five Central American countries. Once again the leaders of four pro-U.S., bourgeois regimes put pressure on Nicaragua in order to accomplish by political means what the CIA-organized contras could not achieve by military means. This is what is called the Arias plan, after Costa Rican president Arias.

After this meeting, the excited news reports said that this meeting decided to expel the contras from Honduras. But the original Arias pact meeting in Esquipulas supposedly agreed to this already--over a year ago. This result was trumpeted up and down at that time. But here it is, being negotiated all over again.

This time, still more concessions were extracted from Nicaragua to obtain this agreement to do what was already agreed on. To be precise, this time it was agreed that the Central American presidents would agree in another three months on a plan to remove the CIA-organized contras from Honduran bases and send them to other countries. So there actually is no agreement, but only an agreement to reach an agreement. But it does provide an opportunity, in another three months, for yet another Central American summit where still more concessions can be extracted from Nicaragua.

Meanwhile Nicaragua was forced to give up concessions in exchange for this. Many concerned the internal political situation. Among other things, the elections for Nicaraguan president were to be rescheduled and carried out faster. This was also aimed at forcing the Nicaraguan government

to agree implicitly that there was something suspect about the last elections. And there was to be more international observation of Nicaraguan elections, to ensure that they be in accordance with the standards of Western imperialism.

Unfortunately for Nicaraguan President Ortega, whose Sandinista ideology seems to blind him to this point, the election standards of Western imperialism are that he (or any party further to the left) lose the elections and the Nicaraguan pro-contra parties win the elections. Until the bourgeois parties win, the elections are by definition unfair according to the White House and the pro-U.S. regimes.

Meanwhile the death-squad governments of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala refused to implement themselves the measures they want forced on Nicaragua. After all, the pro-U.S., bourgeois parties win the so-called elections in these countries, so they are by definition fair and wonderful.

As well, the agreement included international military supervision at Nicaragua's borders. This was to be carried out by Western imperialist governments, such as West Germany and Canada, and there was to be an attempt to bring in bourgeois regimes from Latin America as well. The inclusion of these regimes as alleged neutrals shows that the whole framework of the agreement is to make Central America safe for western imperialism. It also legitimizes a form of imperialist military intervention.

This is the Arias peace plan in action. ■

Squeezing the masses to give compensation to the bourgeoisie How the Sandinistas deal with economic crisis

Nicaragua is in the grip of a terrible economic crisis. Production has been disrupted by the contra war. It is being further eroded day by day by the pro-contra bourgeoisie inside Nicaragua, which is "decapitalizing" its businesses, stripping off anything of value, and ruining the enterprises. Inflation has reached astronomical heights. And thousands of people are fleeing Nicaragua in search of a livelihood.

How is the Sandinista government handling this most severe economic crisis ever for the Nicaraguan revolution?

It is squeezing everyone except ... the bourgeoisie. It is giving yet more compensation and financial incentives for the bourgeoisie. There is to be no more confiscation of landlord land in the country and no more infringements on the capitalists in the city.

A new austerity program

On January 30 Nicaraguan president Ortega presented a drastic anti-inflation program.

Who did he appeal to as the basic force for solving the economy's problems? Did he announce that the economy would be put under the supervision of the long-suffering workers and peasants who have a burning interest in restoring production? Did he announce that the capitalist enterprises would be put under workers' control and the landlord estates would be given to the peasants to farm?

No.

The plan relies on private capitalist investment to get the economy moving. Social services to the masses are to be cut back, but the capitalists are to be given still more incentives.

The aims of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie

Is this because Daniel Ortega and the Sandinistas don't know that the capitalists are pro-contra?

But listen to **Barricada International**, the "international newspaper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front". In the same issue (Feb. 11) that announces the new economic plan it includes an "opinion" article that quotes Gilberto Caudra, the president of the High Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), saying the following:

"We hope that those who lead the Sandinista Front have enough judgment to understand that their peaceful and orderly replacement is necessary, and unless this happens the people, in some way that is not yet established, are going to take power, which will cost a lot of blood, a lot of pain."

So the Nicaraguan capitalists, organized in COSEP, are

demanding the overthrow of the Sandinistas, by agreement or by blood. The article goes on to note that Cuadra's words "reflect the stale aspirations of a sector that in the past put its hopes in a war that has been defeated." That is, COSEP is pro-contra.

But what does this article in **Barricada International** conclude? That

"the businesspeople have ... a big responsibility in the country's reconstruction."

One would think that it would more logical to conclude that the businesspeople have a big responsibility for ravaging the country, for the economy's destruction. But the Sandinista economic plan is to win over COSEP by showering it with money.

More compensation to the millionaires

For example, the Sandinista government has previously taken over the San Antonio sugarmill because it was being ruined by its owners, who fled to Miami with all the profits. Now, when funds are even more scarce and the workers are told to draw in their belts yet another time, **Barricada International** announces that the government is going to pay compensation. (p. 7)

Why, after all,

"the San Antonio mill was the country's leading company and had become a symbol for the private sector."

To win over COSEP, the Pellas family has to be paid compensation for ruining production. They need more money so they can live well in Miami. As **Barricada International** says, "the sugarmill's shareholders will have the last word."

The talk of the mill being "a symbol for the private sector" is quite revealing of the Sandinista plan. The point of paying compensation is not the merits of the case, where the owners ruined this sugarmill, but to create a good atmosphere for the private and foreign capitalists.

Slaves for the "patriotic" landlords

The same thing is also taking place in the countryside. The peasants are being held back from action and told to sacrifice while the "patriotic" landlords are being allowed to squeeze the country.

For example, the Feb. 24 issue of the American pro-Sandinista paper **The Militant** had an account of what was happening on a Nicaraguan farm in Matagalpa Province. It seems that the landlord was firing workers for organizing a union. He was also letting the coffee crop go to ruin, taking capital out of Nicaragua and "probably" banking it in another country. He takes trips to Switzer-

land while his workers are paid less than even other landlords in Nicaragua do. Even members of the Sandinista's own peasant organization say that this landlord denies anyone any rights and "the workers are kept like slaves."

But the Sandinistas hold back the peasants because the landlord "is not a reactionary. He supports the revolution." One of his sons was killed in a guerrilla action organized by the Sandinista in 1967, over twenty years ago. It doesn't matter that he is sabotaging the revolution and trying the peasants into ruin. It doesn't matter that he is violating the law and preventing his workers from organizing a union. It doesn't matter that he is probably a pro-contra bastard. There must be no more confiscation of the land of the landlords, and even the law must bend for them.

Indeed this landlord is a perfect example of the fraud of what the Sandinistas call the "patriotic" bourgeoisie.

Will the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie boost production?

Of course, don't accuse the Sandinistas of a lack of realism. They realize that, despite all their financing of the pro-contra COSEP and coddling of the landlords, that pro-

duction will stay mired in crisis. **Barricada International** stated that

"The president [Ortega] was emphatic in his speech that the government does not have any expectation of an immediate increase in production..." (Ibid., p. 5)

But no matter. In order to keep the Arias pact deal going with the Bush administration and the Central American presidents, the capitalists in the "private sector" have to be lavished with money. The petty-bourgeois Sandinistas have to prove that they can manage the capitalist economy and squeeze the masses just as well as any bourgeois government. Besides, they have hopes for foreign investment and even American investment. To woo this investment, they have to establish the proper atmosphere for investor confidence. The workers are being squeezed, not in order to boost production, but to win the trust of imperialist investors.

Is it any wonder that the class-conscious workers of Nicaragua have built up their own party, the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua, that stands for having the workers and poor peasants run the country? A party that yesterday took part in the insurrection against Somoza and today advocates the revolutionary path out of the crisis? ■

Detroit incinerator protest

Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust, Shut It Down and Let It Rust! Over 100 angry demonstrators, including supporters of the MLP, held a spirited protest at the Detroit City-County Building February 8. They demanded the immediate closing of the new trash incinerator--the world's largest--on the city's east side.

Since December 8 this incinerator has been spewing filth and poison into the air and into the lungs of millions of people in Michigan and Ontario.

The giant incinerator, one of Mayor Coleman Young's pet projects, is expected to be fully operational in May. It has been the target of many demonstrations both because of its poisoning of the atmosphere and because of its construction by a firm with large operations in racist South Africa.

Conditions at the \$438 million incinerator are already so unhealthy that construction and electrical workers struck twice in January. They were protesting being sickened by exposure to the toxic ash produced by burning trash.

Samples of this ash, smuggled out of the plant by a striker, contained levels of toxic metals (including lead, cadmium and mercury) many times the maximum set by lax federal and state standards for burial, and thus legally requires burial in special landfills for hazardous waste. The ash, however, is dumped in an ordinary landfill in the depressed rural township of Sumpter, to the anger of that community's residents.

Despite the test results, Coleman Young insists on going ahead, arrogantly declaring that the ash is "eminently safe", and showing utter disregard for the health of workers and residents. The city claims to have done its own tests showing there is nothing to worry about, but even the state government was forced to acknowledge that

these tests weren't done properly.

A strong mass movement of protests and strikes must be built up against this poisoning.

What Really Causes Such Pollution?

Isn't it amazing that an economic system that produces \$10,000 cars which fall apart in a few years can also produce plastic hamburger containers that will last for centuries buried in the ground? Capitalism--a system where goods are produced on the basis of profitability for the rich rather than social usefulness--is directly responsible for this grossly wasteful sort of production which leaves us stuck with mountains of trash, polluted air, polluted water, and depleted natural resources.

The disposal of waste is a difficult problem. Solving it will require a broad-scale approach, involving both production and disposal. The competitive capitalist system--where exploiters are only concerned with their own profit and don't believe in taking any responsibility for their byproducts and leftovers--prevents any serious, long-term solution to the waste problem.

Only a socialist society can begin to take up both the thorny tasks and the necessary reorganization of society to deal with the problem. Only through socialism, where all industry would be run by the workers for the benefit of the workers, can we produce goods that we need, cut out the waste, eliminate pollution, and pass on to our children and grandchildren a world that's fit to live in. Socialism is a system where the overall result for the people, not the balance sheet of some profiteer, is the guide on which economic decisions are made.

(Based on an article in the March issue of Detroit Workers' Voice, paper of the MLP-Detroit.)

Introducing the 'Bay Area Workers Voice'

From the first issue of Bay Area Workers' Voice this February:

Workers on the picket lines against concessions and takebacks; militants on the shopfloor standing up against overwork and harassment; working men and women fed up with the sellout by the union bosses:

The **Bay Area Workers Voice** is your voice. It is a paper to serve the cause of the working class. It stands for uniting the workers in struggle against the capitalists. It stands for mass action by the rank and file. It stands for organizing the workers independent of the sold-out union officialdom.

Activists fighting racism here at home and against apartheid in South Africa; those standing in solidarity with the revolutionary struggles of the people from Palestine to Central America; fighters for the rights of women, immigrants, the homeless and all the oppressed;

All workers and progressive activists who are sick and tired of their struggles being shackled to what pleases the Democratic Party politicians:

The **Bay Area Workers Voice** is your voice. It is a tool for building a fighting movement. A movement that relies on the initiative of the workers and militant activists. A movement based on militant mass actions. A movement independent of the capitalist politicians.

The daily newspapers, the TV and radio are all mouthpieces of the rich. They are filled with lies aimed at demobilizing and disorganizing the masses. The trade union papers that speak in the name of "labor" have become the voice of concessions to the capitalists. The papers of the reformist groups are edited to serve Democratic party politicking.

To organize the struggle the workers and activists must have their own press -- a press that speaks the truth and spreads the news of the mass struggles in the workplaces and in the streets. It must give the working class viewpoint. Because this is the only viewpoint that can steer the mass movements along the path of revolutionary struggle, that can rise above the capitalist framework and bring the perspective of socialism.

Lend a hand to building the **Bay Area Workers Voice** as part of such a press. Send in reports, letters and articles. Spread the word about the conditions, struggles and issues in your workplace, school or community. Help finance and help distribute the **Bay Area Workers Voice**.

The **Bay Area Workers Voice** is produced by the SF Bay Area Branch of the Marxist-Leninist Party. Our address is:

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Emeryville, CA 94662

Hundreds march in Texas demanding: Release Clarence Brandley!

On January 20, several hundred people from Conroe, Houston, Dallas, and Austin, Texas rallied on the steps of capitol hill in Austin demanding that Clarence Brandley be released from prison. Brandley is a black maintenance man who has served close to nine years in prison for a crime he did not commit. A petition with 6,000 signatures was turned in to the Governor's office. The court, where Brandley's case was up for a retrial, was packed with supporters.

Two years ago, after Brandley had already spent seven years behind bars and was scheduled for execution, two white witnesses came forward and made statements that

Brandley had nothing to do with the rape and murder of a young white woman. They said that, instead, two white men were responsible for this hideous crime. Crucial evidence which would have vindicated Brandley was also "lost" at the time of the original trial.

In November of 1987, the Texas courts recommended a new trial. Only now, 15 months later, is the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals beginning to hear oral arguments in preparation for a new trial. Obtaining justice for a black man in the Texas court system is like struggling to move mountains. But the persistence of the activists who have marched time and time again is having an impact.

"How will they free themselves of revolution, since they're not able to carry on without the working class?" Three years of workers' politics in Portugal

The March 1 issue of the Workers' Advocate carried the article "Portuguese communists mark anniversary: Three years against the tide" from the November-December issue of Politica Operaria, paper of the "Communist Organization--Workers' Policy". Below is the major speech from the celebration, also from this issue of Politica Operaria. Translation by the Workers Advocate staff.

Speech of Francisco Martins Rodrigues

"Workers' Policy"--already the name of this magazine has caused further astonishment. What is this workers' politics? Can politics be working class? Isn't politics for all? Those that are still aligned with the left (and we know that they're no longer numerous) shrug their shoulders in mourning and move forward: **"It is not worth wasting time with these last dinosaurs of leftism."**

If, even so, we succeeded in the feat of being here today to celebrate three years of regular publication, it is because a handful of people still exists for whom this idea of workers' politics says something.

Opposition in crisis - or government?

One thing at least is certain: our "leftism" already doesn't sound so crazy as it did three years ago. Most of those who criticized us for not comprehending the "left dynamic" contained in the candidacies of Lourdes Pintasilgo [a candidate for the presidency who was a Christian liberal, not affiliated to any party--**Supplement**] or Mario Soares [the Socialist Party candidate for the presidency], have to recognize today that their enthusiasm was naive and that we had a certain correctness in not getting carried away in the euphoria.

Because the truth is that, going from hope to hope, we have arrived at the goal towards which we had been thrust ever since Nov. 25 [Nov. 25, 1975 saw a semi-legal coup that purged the more leftist elements from the government; it marked the end of the period of upsurge that followed the revolution of April 25, 1974 against the Caetano dictatorship]. Finally, Portugal has today a good government for the rich. The millions of the European Common Market are distributed, businesses have multiplied, there are already those who call this the California of Europe. Whoever has capital and boldness grows rich for sure. The entrepreneurs are delighted: the economy, which had been stuck for so long, is turning around.

It is clear that prosperity has its counterpoints: workers are fired, they lose the rights they had acquired, and they become afterwards like temporaries; wages are falling; the

hours of work are increasing; the pockets of misery spread. Yesterday, furthermore, you must have read in the newspapers, another child had an arm torn off by a machine; but the minister has already guaranteed that all is under control and that there are only 134 children who work. . .

Maybe you have seen a PEDIP pamphlet which was recently distributed here free; it speaks of the example of Felguiras: in the last year, the district produced 40 million of shoes, half of the national production; the average wage of the shoe workers is 21 contos [one conto equals 1,000 escudos], and Felguiras has this interesting particularity, according to the pamphlet: it is the district where the school dropout rate is greatest, because the children are busy sewing shoes for the factories.

I will now talk about the labor and agrarian pacts, the law of incomes, etc., about which you have certainly heard in recent times. What is interesting to report is that this new situation is producing a social atmosphere which is also new. Today they can return to making the festivals of millionaires, as in the longed-for times of Americo Tomas; Hemano Saraiva, the new director of *Diario Popular* [newspaper], is able to declare calmly that [the late dictator] Salazar "was a genius"; and a new wave columnist revealed with disgust in the *Independente* that **"there is no longer hesitation to take part in talk of letting wages fall behind"** . . .

Well now: in the face of this new situation, is the opposition on war footing, mobilizing the working masses for bringing down the capitalist government? Not a sign of it. The democratic Opposition has more to think about: It is in crisis! It is possible to say that the crisis of the Socialist Party has its own causes, that it has nothing to do with the crisis of the Portuguese Communist Party, for example, or with that of the PRD, or the MDP and the UDP. But, it is certain that, taken all together, they form a **big crisis of the opposition, a crisis of the real left.**

Is it in crisis because of remorse for what it didn't do? Nothing like that. The origin of the crisis is much less noble: for a dozen years, the SP, the PCP, etc., the "left" in power and the "left" in the opposition, dedicated all their forces to pacifying the workers' movement. They did this because it was necessary to re-establish the confidence of investors in order to revive the national economy. But they did so good a job that today capital, in continuing, is already able to dispense with their *services and can govern at last in family* [within its own ranks] with Cavaco and his little intrigues.

Here is where to find the reason for the crisis: The reformists, who played as indispensable, as mediators of

the working masses, see themselves left to the side. They fell into pessimism because they don't know when the ministerial portfolios, the administrative offices, the good life will return: "it is come to where there is no bread," they all rail "and no one is right."

Our analysis, it is clear, is going to appear grossly simplified to some serious persons who concern themselves with politics. But let's not stop being exact. A big vacuum exists in the place where the workers' and popular opposition to the regime ought to be. For that very reason, it is there that we want to install our **Politica Operaria**: we are small but well entrenched and putting fire against the poison.

The workers don't understand

Some of the critics say that our radicalism is "nice" but that, in whatever form, we have no future because we are turned toward the past, dreaming of workers' revolutions which will never again be repeated.

Let us make ourselves clear: we are not interested in weaving garlands of flowers in memory of the "April spirit" [the revolution of April 25, 1974 which overthrew the dictator Marcello Caetano, successor of the tyrant Oliveira Salazar], nor do we put faith that the Russian revolution may be revived by dint of "Marxist-Leninist" orations. It is not our calling to yearn. What died, is dead.

There is no doubt that the revolutions of this century failed. It is enough to see how the affluent capitals of Moscow, China, Hungary have appetites like piranhas, in order to know what was done with the revolution. The friends of order have good reasons for being euphoric.

But there is a **detail** which the counter-revolution has not succeeded in resolving: the workers, whether in Portugal, in Germany, in Upper Volta or Brazil, still don't understand why it is that they have the obligation of sustaining so many people. They say in conversation: "It is well-known that we have rogues **living at our expense. But so many?...**"

And this is a problem for which the official ideologues have not found an answer. They say that productivity is insufficient, that the workers' labor has already no great value, that the robots are going to do all the jobs, etc., but the eternal doubts continue to revolve in the workers' minds. And neither the debates of the Assembly of the Republic, nor the newspapers nor the **lengthy** speeches of President Soares can answer these doubts.

Why is it that the workers, the ones who do the producing, have to earn less than the others--than those who calculate, plan, direct, think, but who don't put their hands in production? Why is it they have to work more hours than the others, to work harder, to get dirtier, to be injured more, to die more than the others? Why is it they have to rise earlier than anyone else to live in more remote and exiled neighborhoods and to travel two and **three hours in vehicles that are unfit for cattle?** Why is it that they have to put their children to work at 14, 12 and

10 while the engineer has his child study engineering (it is not reported that the sons of engineers become workers)? Why is it that they have to be supervised during work like criminals, suffer fines and reductions, and be cast out on the street for whatever pretext or without any pretext? Finally, is producing the possessions on which all live thus a function so low that it deserves only the worst?

The responsible people, clearly, have lost no time to label this **simplified and basic demagoguery**. But they haven't convinced themselves: they pretend not to give it importance but they know that they are sitting on dynamite. From day to day, they have learned not to become very alarmed because they have acquired a conviction, that is at the bottom of all their philosophy: "**They tolerate.**" ... The flock is going to continue to let itself be sheared because it was always thus: the milk cows are going to continue to let themselves be milked, because it is the order of the world.

Only that, sometimes, the slaves satisfy their hunger and throw the trays in the air. And there goes all the beautiful safeguards of the **men of property**, who fire in panic or commence to make low bows to the **courageous workers**. We already have seen such a film, don't you remember? [Referring to the months of upsurge after the overthrow of the dictatorship.] Thus to facilitate the approach of this moment, there is what we call a "Workers' Politics".

What is coming

Only one more word: With this magazine, we want to equip ourselves with new ideas for what is coming. And of one thing we are certain: what we see is not general prosperity, nor democracy for all, nor the overcoming of the class struggle by robots and cybernetics, nor the end of wars by Soviet- American understanding, nor universal disarmament, nor a new international economic order, just and harmonious.

This is what they say. But what we see there is the opposite: there are more Ethiopias and Bangladeshes, more Iran-Iraq wars, more Palestines, more Vietnams, more Pinochets, more stock-exchange crashes, more savage capitalism, more massive doses of stupidity for the consumption of the masses. The system can only continue to give its fruits.

They are always saying to us that from now on all is going to be different, that the world is going to become rose-colored, and that the horrors of the past will not be repeated. But the sinking spiral of capitalism accelerates a little more with each day that passes. And with it must grow the resistance, the struggles, the insurrections, the search for a new world for the producers. We are on this front.

With all this, I am not saying that we have a big magazine. It is still very far from what we want. We have that to learn to put the rottenness of this system in more

naked and crude terms, to be more bold in the investigation of what failed and in the foresight of what will come, to be more convincing when we say that the oppressed have the right to revolt, and to better help organizing the working class.

For this very reason, in conclusion I appeal to you: we

need more collaboration, more news, more subscribers, more financial support. This is the condition for us to be able to reach more workers, to double the actual printing, to come out monthly, to bring to more of the exploited the certainty that there is only one politics which is worth the sacrifice: the politics of its class, the workers' politics.

Swedish Marxist-Leninists on second national meeting of "Dala Uprising" vs. the capitalist offensive

Below is the lead article of the Feb. 15 issue of Röd Gryning (Red Dawn), No. 2, 1989, paper of the Communist League of Norrköping. Red Dawn also reported on Dala Uprising last year (see the article "Swedish Marxist-Leninists on reformist trade union bureaucrats" in the April 15, 1988 issue of the Supplement):

On January 21, the second national meeting of the Dala "Uprising" took place in Falun. About 400 workers and trade union activists, representing several trades and branches all over the country participated--about one hundred less than last time--thereby giving expression to the more and more extended discontent among the toilers against the offensive of capital and the cutback policy of the social-democratic government.

This must in itself be seen as a positive thing, but at the same time it is necessary to put it in its proper context. There is no reason to close one's eyes before the problems with the orientation of the Dala "Uprising", which actually is a direct obstacle for its broadening and development, and which in a very obvious way characterized this national meeting as well as the earlier one, which was held in September 1987 but which was not followed up by anything concrete. At the same time, it can of course not be condemned as simply a creation by "left" social-democracy. The Dala "Uprising" is a reflection of the budding awakening of the working class, with all the political unclearness and illusions of "popular fellowship", of a "welfare" Sweden, which has been an attribute of the broad masses of the working class for decades on end. But the leadership of the Dala "Uprising", with most parts of the "left" as a tail, in order to disarm the discontent instead of developing it, tries to conserve this reflection instead of dealing with how to break it down. Instead of militant mobilization against concessions and cutbacks, they reduce it all to a harmless "expression of opinion"--a somewhat more "radical" version of "the war of the roses".(1)

The experiences from the last "round" [of contracts] should not be forgotten. The consequences of this in

relation to the movement's liquidationist line was that the "wildcat" strikes which took place during the spring of 1988 were carried out in isolation, in relation to each other as well as to the working class in the main. This was the concrete struggle that existed against concessions and cutbacks. Where then was the Dala "Uprising"? Where it will be in this year's contract round is dependent on how the national meeting is now followed up and how the local, rank-and-file activity is developing. Here communists and class-conscious workers do have an important task to carry out! It is to take active part, to join with and try to develop every tendency towards independent organizing and action.

A central issue thereby is that rank-and-file committees must develop work in support of strikes, solidarity with fired workers, etc., as it becomes a question of the moment. And also to put forward demands like, for example, abolition of all piece-work and bonus systems; indexing of wages; 6 hours working day; right to vote within the unions on contracts; free local right to strike; abolition of the anti-union class laws, etc. A real mobilization presupposes also that the rank-and-file committees take up the struggle against the "left" version of the reformist "wage cake" theory which is being put forward by economists like Sven Grassman, and which does not differ from Feldt's and Malm's stands except on how big the "wage space" allegedly is.(2) This because Grassman's and the other "left" social-democrats' main argument for "redistribution to the benefit of the toilers" is the "crisis-free" Swedish capitalism.

Notes from Red Dawn for the foreign reader:

(1) "The war of the roses" was a squabble in 1983-84 between the social-democratic government, then headed by the notorious demagogue Olof Palme on the one hand, and the very top leadership of the trade union movement on the other, on by which methods, and to what extent, wages were to be pressed down.

(2) The theory of the "wage cake" is that the profit of the company in question is seen as a cake, of which a part is

cut off and handed over to the workers--namely, the wages. Feldt is minister of finance in the government, while Malm is chairman of the national trade union center. The debate on the size of this "cake" strictly respected the framework of class collaboration; when the "left"-wing reformist Grassman--a Keynesian--says that the workers should get better paid, his argument is that the employers can afford it very well because Sweden is not struck by any crisis! Another argument of his is that higher wages may help capital to avoid a crisis since it would give a market for the commodities and avoid social tensions!

Also in Red Dawn #2, 1989:

The front page has a drawing with the inscription "Long live the 70th anniversary of the German revolution! The cause of the Spartacists will be victorious!"

The Dala Statement itself is published, along with a brief introduction and criticism by the **Red Dawn** staff. It criticizes the "left" social-democratic views in the text of the statement, while calling for active support for the particular economic demands which are put forward by the statement.

There is also a union statement protesting against the class-collaborationist law of the social-democratic government concerning illegal firings of workers. This law holds that even if the corporatist "labor court" rules that a worker has been fired "without fair reason", the employer can choose between taking the worker back or "buying

out" the worker with some 20 months severance pay. This law is also supported by the main sections of the union bureaucracy.

There is an appeal to a court, by a veteran working class militant who had been fired and "bought out". The appeal opposes the government taking half of his settlement as tax--something that would never happen in a "normal" civil case. **Red Dawn's** introductory comments ("Take up the struggle against anti-worker legislation and for democratic freedoms and rights") to this appeal stress how necessary it is to give the struggle for democratic demands an anti-capitalist orientation.

There are articles in support of the American prisoners Mark Curtis and Alberto Aranda.

The article "Support the struggle for releasing political prisoners in Iran" is from the Stockholm association of sympathizers of the Communist Party of Iran.

Another reprint is "How should the Iranian activists participate in the class struggle in the U.S.?", translated from the Dec. 20, 1987 issue of the **Workers' Advocate Supplement**. The commentary by **Red Dawn** points out that similar problems exist in Sweden as well.

There are news briefs from Sweden and around the world.

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War bases get an extended life in Australia thanks to Hawke labor government

The following articles are excerpted from the February issue of the Australian paper Workers' Voice, P.O. Box 56/Newport, 3015/Australia.

On the 22nd of November last year Prime Minister Hawke and Defense Minister Beazley announced a new ten year agreement with the United States over the operation of the Nurrungar and Pine Gap military communication bases. The renewal of the agreement also extended the termination notice by an Australian government to close these bases from one year to three years.

These announcements once again expose the Labor Government for its subservience to the United States military dictate and its commitment to the aggressive alliance with the U.S. through the ANZUS Treaty. The bases agreement emphasizes the significant role that Australia plays in U.S. war preparations and war fighting strategies. It also demonstrates that ALP [Australian Labor Party] policy on foreign relations, disarmament and defense has two distinct sides.

Words and deeds

As a concession to public opinion and for the purpose of deception there are enshrined policies of empty words, phony gestures and posturing on disarmament issues and world peace in a most generalized way.

On specific foreign relations and defense policies the effective action that is taken is determined by a total commitment to the U.S. Alliance and associated regional commitments in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. ...

A.L.P. 'Left' whines about 'no consultation'

Robert Tickner, a "leftwing" government M.P., criticized the Prime Minister for not consulting the ALP before the new agreement was made. This whining about lack of consultation was the only "criticism" directed against the government. The ALP "Left" also implied that if there was consultation, somehow a better deal could have been negotiated with the United States. Instead of attacking the

presence of these bases and condemning the Labor Government for its complicity in maintaining and reinforcing the reactionary alliance with the United States the ALP "Left" raised the issue of using the bases as bargaining chips to extract rental compensation from the U.S. for Australia hosting the facilities, and to get a better deal from the U.S. in the forthcoming round of trade negotiations.

In the same light the proposals for the anti-bases movement to concentrate its resources on lobbying the Labor Party so as to have its policy on the bases changed and to have a government enquiry or review of the U.S. bases in line with the ALP's disarmament declaration should be viewed.

It is political deception and diversion to lobby the ALP. Instead of organizing and developing the struggle against the bases and raising its class content by rallying the workers against the bosses' Labor Government, attention would be wasted and the aims misdirected into changing the policy of a political party that is committed to the alliance with U.S. imperialism and to the hosting of the bases irrespective of whatever its policies might say in principle. By wasting time and resources on raising false hopes about changing the policies and actions of the ALP, the only beneficiaries are the Australian ruling class, its Labor Party and U.S. imperialism. ...

The major challenge facing the anti-bases movement is to raise its political and organizational capabilities to a consistent anti-imperialist position. The insidious role of the bases in serving the exploitative and warmongering interests of U.S. imperialism globally, and Australian imperialism in the Asia-Pacific region, has to be exposed. It is necessary to ward off the opportunists who seek to keep the movement apolitical and within the influence of the ALP and other imperialist stooges.

It is only by developing a well organized and disciplined struggle amongst the workers and people in general so as to draw their attention and involvement against the bases and the ANZUS alliance that these bases serve, that the movement can find its bearings and develop into an anti-imperialist force against Nurrungar and Pine Gap. ■

Letter to the editor of The Age

US bases are an anachronism

From N. Abbey, secretary of the Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament

At the root of Australia's renegotiated 10-year agreement on the United States' bases/joint facilities is an old-fashioned and inadequate understanding of the complex problems of global security and human survival.

A new international situation is evolving.

First, a new era of detente between the US and the USSR is emerging with profound implications for the rest of us.

Second, the worsening non-military threats to security (including the threats of global economic instability, resource depletion, pollution, food shortages, population pressures and ecological crises) could become as serious as, if not more serious than, the military threats.

Third, there is a growing recognition that real security is common security, that both military and non-military problems can only be solved collectively and in a non-military way.

Meanwhile, the Australian Government has negotiated a new long-term agreement on the bases at Pine Gap and Nurrungar.

Is this act consistent with the aforementioned changes? Sadly, our overall foreign policy direction seems to be a

legacy of a bygone cold-war period.

What, then, is needed? Australia should begin negotiations on a new comprehensive common security agreement with the US and similar agreements with other countries. For instance, climate change or the debt crisis or agricultural trade wars potentially pose a greater threat to the common security of the US and Australia than any real or perceived Soviet "military threat".

Such an agreement, in which the main emphasis might be placed on economic, ecological and cultural components, would replace the narrowly nuclear and militaristic ANZUS treaty. Australia and the US would set a positive example.

And the US bases on Australian soil would be seen for what they really are: a dangerous nuclear anachronism in a new age.

Nicholas Abbey,
Melbourne, Australia

Comments by the Workers' Voice on the letter from the C.I.C.D. secretary to The Age

The Melbourne Age 28.11.1988 published a letter from the Secretary for the Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament (C.I.C.D.)

This letter (reprinted here) discusses a number of matters of serious concern in the most up-to-date terms. At the same time it repeats a range of political "prescriptions" that are neither new nor original. What is more, they have been discredited by history.

Such views express a brand of politics which have a definite class basis. Hence they persist. They should be challenged.

Throughout this modern era of unbridled imperialism, militarism and war, social democracy and bourgeois pacifists of many hues have sought to establish a theoretical basis for detaching the peoples' struggle against war from the class struggle and the fight for a socialist society, which abolishes exploitation.

To this end, constant efforts have been made to "discover" non-existent, objective forces in modern capitalism which, it is alleged, will pave the way for the abolition of war without abolishing the basic social-economic relations which constantly give rise to it.

This non-class approach to the threats imposed by imperialist militarism and war has been the source of pacifist illusions that find expression in calls for "peace" in the most generalized terms which carefully avoid specifying those class forces primarily responsible for preparing war and waging it. So too with calls for various forms of disarmament and schemes to "outlaw war" etc. Enormous importance is placed on inter-imperialist negotiations for

"arms limitations", "arms control" and so on. All the while an arms build-up unprecedented in history surges ahead.

In his letter to **The Age**, the Secretary of the C.I.C.D. echoes these well worn pacifist illusions. Like those who have travelled this path long before, he attempts to justify the arguments on the basis of something "new" in the international situation and on allegedly "special" features of "current problems of global security and human survival".

Regardless of its specific current features, the present international situation evolves on the basis of a definite set of objective social conditions. They derive from definite social-economic relationships--those of monopoly capitalism which has matured to a most advanced stage of decay. The "new age" (of nuclear weaponry) referred to in **The Age** letter, is still the era of imperialism.

The various imperialist powers are still forced to struggle in bitter rivalry to re-divide the world for spheres of economic and political influence. They are impelled to fight one another for new markets. The basic laws of the economic system demand that capital expansion takes place and that business competitors are eliminated, neutralized or absorbed. So the global struggle for a greater share of the spoils of exploitation of the world's natural and human resources grinds on relentlessly.

For the major world powers, this very process generates the absolute need for constant war-readiness on a huge scale. It drives an escalating arms race for supremacy in the fearsome technology of modern armaments. It spawns the totally obscene, but highly profitable trade in military

hardware in which all the major powers (including the phoney "socialist" powers) wallow. This same process generates war daily. It sows the seeds of new wars.

The same social-economic process inevitably gives rise to thoroughly justified armed resistance by working people to imperialist exploitation and military oppression. A war to overthrow the source of that exploitation--a war against the warmonger class--is a just war. So too are the peoples' wars of liberation from colonialism.

Nicholas Abbey's letter to *The Age* deals in detail with the problem of "non-military threats to security". This echoes closely the outrageous proposition promoted by the philosophers of the Soviet superpower who now claim that humanitarian problems facing the world have reached proportions which transcend class divisions and class struggle! From that, it is said in the name of "peace", it is necessary to collaborate with imperialists rather than stand up to them.

Really it is hard to conceive any of these so-called "non-military" problems developing to their present crisis point in isolation from the acute crisis that has developed in the social system.

Is it seriously suggested that "global economic instability" has nothing to do with the scramble for new markets? Or that its deliberate creation is not the stuff of inter-imperialist in-fighting for new spheres of influence? Surely resource depletion and pollution are the ghastly spin-offs from the drive for maximum profits for the wealthy minority class that rules... and from the arms race it consciously promotes? Can we really expect to negotiate a "solution" to food shortages with the same monopolists that stockpile mountains of food as a political lever in desperate trade wars?

This artificial separation of "non-military" and "military" problems from one another and from their common social-political base spreads confusion, blurs the political perspectives of the anti-war struggle and blunts opposition to war, exploitation and suffering. It is a diversion away from the cause in order to deal only with effects. And then, to deal with effects in a most limited way. "Toler-

ated respectability" in the eyes of the capitalist establishment and its media is desperately sought by pushing lowest common denominator demands. "Solutions" are devised that seek to legitimize a method of "struggle" based on the most abject class collaboration.

The ideological and political significance of such politics has never been lost on the warmongering class and its political representatives. Reagan and Bush; Thatcher and Gorbachev; Gandhi and Deng Tsiao Ping; Hawke and Lange [New Zealand Labor Party and government leader]--in any combination you like--are all devoted advocates of world disarmament and peace, the banning of "horror weapons" and so on. They chatter many fine words on these laudable subjects every day as they resolutely go about the business of implementing the militarist policies demanded by the rule of monopoly capital for which they are loyal and dedicated ministerial administrators.

From the earliest years of this 20th century, imperialist domination, wars, and military oppression have been imposed on the peoples of the world in the name of "security"; "peace with freedom and justice" and of course, "democracy". All on the basis of maintaining the political and economic status quo.

In fact, imperialism has been compelled to prepare and wage its wars for profit under the cloak of pacifism--so intense is the instinctive hatred and resistance of the working people to the suffering it inflicts.

For that mass opposition to be given fully effective political and organizational expression the class collaboration promoted by social democracy and pacifism needs to be challenged and defeated.

Workers' Voice would welcome further discussion on these issues, as well as critical comment, in the interests of developing the present day struggle against militarism and imperialist war.

Important to any such discussion is an understanding of current developments in the U.S.S.R. The article "The anti-communist crusade of Gorbachev" ... is reprinted here for study [referring to a resolution from the Nov. 1st issue of the *Workers' Advocate*].

The politics of 'National Accord' and 'Progressive Turn' in the Dominican Republic Reformism or revolutionary work?

Continued from the front page

For a Progressive Turn in the National Political Situation. In this article we examine this report, and the views that have flowed from it, on questions of party building, revolutionary agitation, alliances and fronts.

Progressive Turn is chock full with revolutionary phrases. The 121 pages of the book are mainly taken up with global declarations of loyalty to Marxism-Leninism and to the general principles that the PCT has held in the past. Poking out from under the empty phrases, however, there are the plain features of an anti-Marxist, right opportunist platform. We will contrast the reformist scheming of **Progressive Turn** to revolutionary work and the concrete tasks facing the Marxist-Leninists to build up the revolutionary movement. Our aim is to help the Dominican communists turn into reality the Marxist-Leninist principles that they have been struggling for.

Furthermore, the issues involved are not limited to the Dominican movement. Similar issues are being posed in a number of countries of Latin America and around the world. The questions at stake are therefore pertinent to the international struggle against reformist pressures and for revolutionary Marxism-Leninism.

Liquidationist Pressures and How Not to Confront Them

Progressive Turn puts forth the new orientation of the PCT in the face of the new political situation. The book points to the rise of conservatism in the wake of the 1986 election of the old, former dictator Balaguer to the presidency. It notes the ongoing political domination of two big capitalist parties: Balaguer's Reformist Party and the social-democratic Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD). It discusses the temporary decline of the mass movement despite the economic catastrophe falling on the working people. In the midst of this, the pseudo-Marxist left—from the pro-Soviet CP to the one-time Maoists—is demoralized and crumbling.

In their book, the PCT leaders make a number of correct points about the need to resist the liquidationist and capitulationist tendency. They correctly refer to the need for patient and long-term political work. This is raised in opposition to the "immediatism" that they say is traditional in the Dominican left. This is a tendency to expect the insurrection around the corner, whether or not the class struggle had been raised to the point of revolution. According to **Progressive Turn**, this tendency produced what it criticizes as the theory of "immediate revolution." It attributes this theory to the reformist left at the time of the 1984 mass upsurge.

But what does **Progressive Turn** offer to replace "immediate revolution"? This is its downfall. Because it sets out an equally unrealistic scheme—a scheme equally remote from the masses and the laws of the class struggle. This is the line set down at PCT's Fifth National Conference for a "National Accord to struggle for independence, democracy and the general well-being." Supposedly this will create a coalition of all the "progressive, democratic, and patriotic forces" in the country; which then will create a "progressive political turn"; which will open the way to a "Democratic and Patriotic government." In short, the daydream of "immediate revolution" is replaced by sheer reformist fantasy.

This program is a model of how not to fight against liquidationism. It is itself a liquidationist and capitulationist program. It does nothing to instill the sober, patient attitude needed for work under difficult conditions. To the contrary. It creates expectations that the working masses are on the edge of deliverance from their situation, at least as soon as this miracle-working "National Accord" can be realized. This program undermines the spirit of class struggle and mass mobilization. It strengthens the hands of the social-democrats and reformists. It weakens the work to build up the independent forces of the working class and the oppressed for the next wave of struggle. It undermines the building of the proletarian party and other revolutionary organization in the illusory search for a shortcut which will immediately win the masses in their millions.

What Is to Be Done?

What then constitutes revolutionary work in this hard situation? Impatient conceptions that expect revolution immediately around the corner will not do. Nor will hopes of a "progressive turn" through political combinations with the reformist chieftains. What the times demand is steady

work to link up with the ongoing flurries of class struggle, to elevate the class consciousness of the working masses, and to build up their revolutionary organization. And it is necessary to take this time to correct traditional weaknesses in the organization and practices and theories of the

communist movement.

The PCT leaders skirt around addressing the tasks of this work. In *Progressive Turn* there are plenty of fine phrases about communist work, about raising the ideological level of the party, about the need to revive the party press, and so forth. However, these issues are left at the level of general exhortations in place of concrete plans of work. Moreover, these phrases are overshadowed by grandiose reformist projects. The net effect is that the painstaking agitational and ideological work gets slurred over; and the nuts and bolts of building the proletarian party and other solid organizations of the workers and toilers get short shrift.

Revolutionary work during times of ebb of the revolutionary movement can be painfully slow. The fruits of the work may not be immediately apparent. But this work is absolutely indispensable if Marxism-Leninism is going to make its mark on the next revolutionary wave, or if there is to be the possibility to carry the revolution through to the triumph of the working class and exploited.

Progressive Turn harps on the theme that the PCT has to find a way to become a vast party with a big impact on the national political life. In place of the fantasy of "immediate revolution" it poses another fantasy, that of immediately becoming large and powerful. Work to build up the links of the party with the widest masses is well and good. Indeed, one of the burning necessities of communist work in the present period is to take part in the flurries and outpourings of struggle that take place in order to keep the party linked with the masses. The problem is that the PCT leadership poses this question in a way that actually scorns the slow and difficult work to utilize the present mass struggles, and it poses the question in a way that jumps over the actual agitational and organizational tasks needed to prepare the foundations of a mass party. The PCT poses the issue as becoming immediately huge and influential independent of the level of the class struggle.

The issue of communist agitation and the party press

Take the issue of communist agitation and ideological work. The more the PCT deals with the masses, the more necessary will be vigorous setting forward of the communist stand through the press, in speeches, and so forth. Yet *Progressive Turn*, in the name of dealing with the masses, actually denigrates this task.

"The PCT is in the dilemma," the *Progressive Turn* warns, "of advancing or exposing itself to the risk of standing still and not going beyond being a mere organization of propagandists, in place of converting itself into what it should be, a true communist party of the masses, with ties and roots in the greatest part of the toiling and oppressed population." (page 52)

True, a Marxist-Leninist party cannot be satisfied with "mere propaganda" and must aim at becoming a mass

party. However, this truth is being used to hide something else: the PCT has faced and continues to face a dilemma on the front of agitation, the party press, the setting forth of the revolutionary ideology, and the refutation of

Politics of 'National Accord' and 'Progressive Turn' in the Dominican Republic REFORMISM OR REVOLUTIONARY WORK?

The PCT's 5th National Conference of Jan. '87:

For a Progressive Turn in the National

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reformist and nationalist phrase-mongering. Indeed, a long-term and severe weakness of the revolutionary movement in the Dominican Republic is the lack of consistent Marxist-Leninist propaganda and agitation.

The Marxist-Leninist thesis that a communist party must not be a mere organization of propagandists means that the party must take part in the ongoing class struggles. It does not mean that a communist party can automatically be large in number independent of the conditions facing it. It means that in every situation the party must find a way to maintain its ties in the masses, even when this requires finding new forms and methods of struggle. It does not mean abandoning or denigrating agitation and propaganda, but linking them up with the class struggle and the masses. In the case of the PCT, this requires a tremendous strengthening of its agitation and its party press, as well in its theoretical understanding of what the current struggles should be oriented towards.

The weakness of the PCT in agitation and the party press show up sharply on a series of critical issues, which also involve the theoretical foundations of the party, its revolutionary perspective, its ability to organize and lead struggles concerning with even the most downtrodden masses (such as the Haitian immigrants), etc. Let us examine some of these issues:

Strengthening Class Consciousness

The modern working class has long since come on to the stage as a militant and radical force in Dominican society. Yet the Dominican left has in the main kept within a populist framework, with general phrases about progress, democracy, and independence. This will not do. There is a pressing need for agitation and propaganda to spread the working class standpoint. Consistent and systematic work is needed to arm the masses with an understanding of the struggle between the classes that underlie events. The workers need to be made conscious of their independent position and tasks.

Criticism of the Bourgeoisie and Reformism

Unrelenting and concrete exposures need to be developed against the ruling class; against the reactionary demagoguery of Balaguer; and against the reformism of the PRD and the other social-democrats and revisionists. Without this it is impossible to break the masses from the ideological and political grip of the capitalists and reformists.

Socialist Perspective

The ideas of socialism appeal to revolutionary-minded Dominican workers. The Marxist-Leninists must become the foremost champion of these ideas. Otherwise, the social-democratic and revisionist conceptions of so-called socialism will prevail. Moreover, strengthening socialist

and communist ideals among the workers is essential for the proletariat to play its revolutionary role. The workers will fight with that much more determination and steadfastness if they know that their struggle is not limited to this particular employer or even this particular government but for an end to all imperialist and capitalist exploitation. This is the case in the workers' day-to-day conflicts as well as on the barricades of insurrection.

Proletarian Internationalism

The workers' movement will also be strengthened with a perspective that the workers' struggle is truly international. The framework of general solidarity with the peoples of Latin America and elsewhere, a framework that is traditional in the Dominican left, is not enough. There needs to be an active attitude towards the revolutionary movement in neighboring countries and around the world. This includes campaigns to build support for the workers and toilers of other countries and to propagate the experience of the class struggle in these countries.

In regard to Nicaragua, for example, an integral part of solidarity against U.S. imperialist aggression is building support for the Nicaraguan workers and exploited; for their struggle to build their own party, the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua; for their struggle against both the CIA-sponsored reactionaries as well as the bureaucratic and vacillating policies of Sandinism.

Or, in regard to the U.S., there is the work of support for the class struggle of the American workers, which includes encouraging the Dominican immigrants in the U.S. to take part in the American class struggle. (This is in contrast to suggesting that revolutionary Dominicans who emigrate are somehow traitors. See *Progressive Turn*, page 32.)

Or, in regard to Haiti, there is the pressing task of linking up with the revolutionary movement in Haiti and encouraging the independent strivings of the workers and exploited in the Haitian struggle, a struggle that will have a major impact on all the inhabitants of Hispaniola (the island consisting of Haiti and the Dominican Republic).

Internationalism also demands an active attitude towards the international Marxist-Leninist movement. This is not a matter of formal declarations for ceremonial occasions. Among other things, it means that the revolutionary workers in the Dominican Republic or any other land cannot remain aloof from the international controversies and debates. They need to play their part in the resolution of these contradictions towards the revival of international Marxism-Leninism.

Solidarity with the Haitian Toilers

This is a quite particular point, however, given Dominican conditions, one that needs to be stressed. Several hundred thousand Haitian field workers are trucked in to work Dominican sugar plantations in near slave-like

bondage. The callous exploitation of these Haitian workers is a scandal and a disgrace. Unfortunately, the Dominican left has not confronted this issue as forcefully as it must. Organizing these extremely oppressed Haitian workers is not a simple matter. Nonetheless, the Marxist-Leninists must carry out systematic work against their inhuman treatment and to do their best to link up with them and organize them. They must carry out systematic work to raise up the mass of Dominican workers in active class solidarity with their Haitian comrades. Only by extending an arm of solidarity to the downtrodden Haitian toilers can the Dominican proletariat be trained as the vanguard of the fight against all exploitation.

Reaching out to the Haitian workers is a striking example of protracted and steady revolutionary work. Work that strengthens class consciousness. Work that is critical for the unity of the working masses and building ties with the broadest sections of the workers and poor. Work that separates the Marxist-Leninists from the social-democrats and reformists who are blinded by chauvinism on this question.

Party-building

As well, attention has to be paid to party building itself and to specifically organizational questions. These are among the critical questions that **Progressive Turn** should have addressed. Creating a "true communist party of the masses" is not a matter of simply gaining a general popularity or so many votes in the elections. Indeed, it is the social-democratic and revisionist parties that view party building as a matter of electoral combinations and agreements for the gaining of parliamentary seats. A true communist party, whether or not it takes part in elections, must be built as a fighting organization of the workers built on a solid Leninist structure.

Party Organization at the Workplace

One of the weaknesses in party building that must be dealt with is the question of organizing at the place of work. A true communist party must strive to build up party organization in the factories, mines, fields and other workplaces. Such workplace organization is fundamental for rooting the party among the masses. It provides an unbreakable link with the daily struggles of the workers against the exploiters. It reinforces the party through the gravitation of the proletariat towards organization that is enforced upon the working class by the conditions of large-scale capitalist production. Strong party bodies at the workplace give a party flexibility and strength to withstand the repressive blows of reaction as well as to march at the forefront of the workers' revolutionary actions. The populist and reformist traditions in the Dominican movement (as in many other countries) mean that building workplace organization is a relatively new task that requires a formidable amount of work and devoted

attention. In the early 1980's, the PCT posed these problems and began this important work. The creation of such an organization is naturally a protracted struggle that cannot be solved overnight. Nonetheless, it seems that this problem is no longer a focus of the PCT's attention.

The Party Press

There are other critical questions of party building--such as the strengthening of the collective work of the party committees at all levels--that also need to be addressed. However, the situation with the PCT's party press is one of its most glaring weaknesses. It is well known that all political parties need their voice, their press. Moreover, it is impossible to accomplish the tasks of systematic agitation and organizational work demanded of a true communist party without a communist press.

The **Progressive Turn** is apparently harshly self-critical on this point. It makes ardent appeals to revive the party press and for the membership to fulfill its responsibilities to its paper **Lucha**. This is not the first time, however, that such appeals have been made; and it appears that little has changed on this front in the two years since the Fifth Conference. Something else is lacking. It seems that the failures of the press are connected with the failure to deal in a concrete way with the agitational and organizational tasks of the party as touched on above. Without a clear conception of this communist work, what is the purpose of the press? Without the focus on the fight for the proletariat's political independence, why sacrifice to build the independent communist press?

On the other hand, when the communists embark with full force on combating petty-bourgeois and nationalist phrase-mongering, when they take it upon themselves to link with the most downtrodden and neglected of the masses, such as the Haitian immigrants, when they enthusiastically set forward the communist goal, they will find the need for a voice, a party press, burning and immediate.

Mass Struggle and Mass Organizations

It must be said that we have only touched on some of the tasks of the patient, systematic revolutionary work that is needed. Of course there are others. There is the work of building up the strikes and protests of the workers and poor and strengthening the confidence of the working masses in the mass struggle. There is also the tasks of building up the other mass organizations: the work for a revolutionary trend in the trade unions; the forging of organizations of the rural poor; the further spread of the barrio committees of struggle as militant organizations of the masses; and so forth.

Without repeating what has been said above, all the diverse fronts of mass organizing would be reinforced with the work to build up class consciousness; with the systematic exposure of reformism and revisionism; with the

strengthening of a socialist and internationalist perspective; with entrenching the party organization in the workplaces;

with building the communist press; and with the other tasks of party building.

Revolution Dropped Overboard

This discussion of the tasks of revolutionary work in such a slow period needs to be emphasized because it highlights the gravity of the error in PCT's criticism of "immediate revolution." Yes, the Dominican left has a tradition of petty-bourgeois revolutionism. It has hatched any number of putschist and detached schemes to bring down the government. The PCT leadership, however, wants to correct this for the worse. It wants to go backwards: in place of "immediate revolution," it wants to cloud the perspective of revolution altogether. Instead of protracted revolutionary work, it too is impatient for fast and grandiose results independent of the level of the class struggle.

The **Progressive Turn** has all the obligatory phrases about loyalty to revolution and to the "supreme final objectives" of socialism and communism (page 116). Meanwhile, the whole thrust of the tactics it proposes is that fundamental change is possible without revolution; without revolutionary struggle; without anything at all except a "National Accord" of all "patriots and democrats."

This accord, the PCT leaders promise, is going to "produce a change of government that permits the rise to power of the revolutionary, patriotic and progressive forces" (page 116).

This accord is supposedly going to "contribute to the change of the correlation of forces and the democratic change that we seek to produce in the national political panorama and to march towards a change in the direction of the State, that implies the establishment of a Democratic and Patriotic Government." (page 106)

As we shall further examine, this "change in the direction of the state" is clearly not to come about through revolution, not through revolutionary mass upheaval. But politely--through a gentlemen's agreement among all political forces who supposedly wish such a change.

One can swear on a stack of works by Marx and Lenin about "supreme final aims"--in the future. But what counts is what one advocates today--in the here and now. To preach illusions about what is the road to change means to trample on the ideas of Marx and Lenin and to forfeit the "final aims." The word "revolutionary" can only be applied to those political forces striving for the needed "changes in the direction of the state" through revolution, through the revolutionary overthrow of the present order.

Methods and forms have to be sought to infuse this spirit into all the day-to-day and patient work during times of ebb of the revolutionary movement. This is what it means to be a proletarian revolutionary. There is no simple formula to answer this problem. In cannot be

solved by requiring that the word "revolution" be placed at the end of every article and leaflet. Nonetheless, the sum total of the agitation and work of the party must be aimed at creating hostility towards the present exploiting order and a burning conviction in the need for revolutionary mass struggle. Anything else is opportunism and reformism. Anything else means reducing the "supreme final aim" to a ceremonial icon.

In passing, it may be remembered that for years the PCT had been calling for a "Democratic, Patriotic, and Revolutionary Government". Now the PCT has purged the word "Revolutionary" from the appeal. In itself this means little in terms of content. The petty bourgeois democratic and nationalist concepts behind this appeal do not hinge on the word "revolutionary." After all, even the bourgeoisie in this part of the world makes free use of "revolutionary" titles and phrases (e.g. the Dominican Revolutionary Party--PRD). Nonetheless, this is another sign of change on the part of the PCT. It is another reflection that the petty bourgeois and populist politics that have plagued it are now being stripped of any revolutionary spirit.

Electoralism

How then is the "progressive change" in the Dominican Republic to come about? The PCT avoids giving a direct answer. Nevertheless, it leaves no room to doubt that it is possible and desirable within the framework of the bourgeois elections and constitution.

The so-called "National Accord for a Progressive Turn" is cast in the spirit of an electoral coalition. **Progressive Turn** announces,

"...our party establishes as one of its most important objectives: A PROGRESSIVE CHANGE IN THE NATIONAL POLITICAL SITUATION, with which the movement of the masses will not only find a more adequate political representation, but that would substantially change the correlation of the present forces and the political panorama will be more promising." (page 41)

Similarly, **Lucha** argues for a

"National Accord that links the rising movement of the masses to a national political formula capable of representing it and giving it real perspectives of power." (See "National Accord, Popular Way Out", **Lucha**, December 87)

By throwing in phrases about "prospects of power," an attempt is made to give these politics of electoral combinations a radical sound. But read carefully and all talk of

"power" has been reduced to the miserable level of gaining government seats under the power of the bourgeoisie.

For example, there is a reference in **Progressive Turn** to the PCT gaining "the quota of power that will correspond to us." (page 108) **Lucha** elaborated on the point.

"For the PCT alliances and political accords must never be seen as aims in themselves," **Lucha** explains, "but as important means for ... the development of one's own forces and the conquest of positions and of our own quota of power."

In other words, the alliance the PCT is discussing is aimed at gaining some government posts. And this is covered with social-democratic rhetoric about such posts being "quotas of power," as if in capitalist society the real undivided power did not lie with the ruling capitalists and exploiters. And it is covered with talk of "alliances and political accords" not be seen as "aims in themselves"-- but as a way to gain posts, a way to gain one's proper "quota" of such posts among those that go to the alliance as a whole, as if this wasn't the way which every reformist and bourgeois party regards such alliances, as if the gaining "our own quota of power" wasn't just another name for the traditional bourgeois game of parliamentary leapfrog.

Constitutionalism

Along with illusions about some government posts meaning "power", come illusions about the constitution. The PCT has launched agitation for constitutional reform. The brunt of this agitation is not for specific reforms to remove particularly onerous clauses in the present constitution. Nor is it aimed at exposing the limits of the capitalist constitution. To the contrary. It is aimed at spreading the fairy tale that with a little tinkering and adjustment the capitalist constitution can be made into a guarantee of the rights of the working people and even provide them "instances of power."

Take, for example, the PCT's attitude towards the danger of political reaction. In the article "Let us close steps to repression", **Lucha** discusses the danger of the regime closing down the "democratic tolerance conquered by the people" since 1978.

One would assume that closing the steps to repression is first and foremost a matter of developing the class struggle. After all, it was the mass upsurge of the 70's that forced the Balaguer government of that time to loosen the grip of his iron-fist regime. And it is the fear of igniting the mass struggle that checks Balaguer's hand today.

PCT, however, wants to turn this question into a matter of writing a clause in the constitution. "The establishment of an order of citizen guarantees," the **Lucha** article concludes, "must find a topmost place in the daily labors in the popular and in the properly revolutionary movement." (December, '87) Imagine that! The danger can be averted through pressuring the Dominican government into outlawing repression.

It is one thing for the Marxist-Leninists to demand the enforcement of various rights of citizens. However, it is never permissible to fail to educate the masses in the limitations of such rights under bourgeois rule; in the truth that the bourgeoisie often puts plenty of these rights in their constitutions only to infringe upon them in a thousand and one ways in fact; and in the possibility that such "guarantees" can be scrapped altogether when the ruling class deems it necessary. Above all the Marxist-Leninists must never spread the idea that such "guarantees" on paper will close the door to reaction. During this century the working people of Germany, Indonesia, Chile and elsewhere have learned this lesson at enormous human cost.

Another example of the PCT leadership's constitutionalism is its demands regarding the town or municipal councils. These councils, called "ayuntamientos," exist in a number of neighborhoods and villages in the country and perform various functions in relation to education, sanitation, recreation, etc. The PCT glorifies these councils as organizations of mass initiative and "instances of popular expression." The principal demand that it puts forward for these councils is that they become more fully and officially incorporated into the government structures, "institutionalized" and brought into the "juridical legal process." ("In the struggle for reforms: Let us put attention on the municipal councils", **Lucha**, December '87.) These councils seem to be something like ordinary civic and municipal organizations. However, even if they--or other local organizations--were what the PCT claims, how are they to be strengthened as organizations of mass initiative by integrating them into the capitalist state?

PCT demands that the constitution sanction them as "instances of power in the administration of the cities and towns." (*Ibid.*) **Lucha** even puts this demand as a priority in the struggle for political reform:

"To convert the municipal councils into an instance of power with strong popular presence can and must be an objective to be gained by the democratic and revolutionary movement in the struggle to conquer progressive political reforms." (*Ibid.*)

Even if there were some merit in the demand to upgrade the legal status of these councils, as a bourgeois-democratic reform, it is absurd to glorify this as creating "instances of power" for the masses. Apparently the PCT leaders have not stopped to think that constitutionally-sanctioned municipal government is typical of bourgeois-democratic regimes. A revolutionary party might contest elections to a body of local government in a capitalist regime, but when it wins a majority on these bodies this does not change the nature of the overall regime. To believe that a constitutional arrangement will mean that the capitalist regime will hand over more and more power to the local "instances of power" is a reformist absurdity. It misrepresents the tasks of working-class parties with respect to local government councils, and of revolutionary activists on such bodies, but is suited to the rhetoric of

reformist politicians seeking a way to come to accommodation with the ruling regime. To those who remember, this idea of achieving "instances of power" in city councils and town halls is akin to the infamous "municipal socialism" that was the fad of American social-democrats in decades past. The reformist politicians misrepresented some local reforms and the municipal ownership of some utilities as "socialism" and utterly betrayed the revolutionary utilization of local elections and posts.

Reincarnation of the "Consensual State"

These views of the PCT on elections and the constitution may come as a surprise to readers acquainted with the debates in the Dominican left in the early 1980's. One of the sharpest points of this debate was over the theory of the "consensual state" advanced by the reformist left. The "consensual state" was a state that supposedly was above class conflict and rested on a consensus of the will of the people. The PCT sharply attacked this theory as creating illusions in capitalist democracy and violating the Marxist teachings on the class nature of the state.

In *Progressive Turn* there is a reference to this past debate and an apparent reaffirmation of the PCT's stand against the "consensual state." But maybe not. In *Progressive Turn* there is denunciation of the idea that a "consensual state" had already been achieved by 1982, that "the Dominican state had already been substantially modified, that representative democracy would be perfected more and more." (page 16) This denunciation seems glaringly out of place in a book written to present the PCT's plan for a progressive change "in the direction of the state" and for the perfection of a democracy that "truly represents the will of the people." The only possible logic in it is that the PCT now holds that the mistake of the reformists was to see that these things had already arrived in 1982, whereas the PCT holds that these things are still to come.

Indeed, *Progressive Turn* is saturated with ideas akin to the "consensual state." It stresses "real and authentic democracy"--leaving out the question of a revolution, whether an immediate revolution or not. (page 113) It speaks of "democracy as a system and process in which the people express their will and really express their power." (page 115) There is no end to "democratic" phrases in the book. However, there is not even a hint of the Marxist-Leninist critique of bourgeois democracy: that in capitalist society democracy is merely the shell for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie; that, despite its promise to all the people, so-called representative democracy inevitably represents the will and power of the exploiting classes. Without the spirit of this critique, the PCT's democratic rhetoric belongs to the same anti-Marxist species as the infamous "consensual state" of the reformist marsh.

Use of Parliament and Electoral Blocs-- for What Politics?

One of the themes of PCT's Fifth Conference was that better use needs to be made of legal methods of struggle, including elections. *Progressive Turn* makes passionate appeals to turn the electoral arena into a "plaza of arms for communism." Certainly, communism must make good use of legal methods and the electoral arena when the situation allows and demands it. The PCT's appeal to turn to the electoral arena, however, is gravely flawed. At the root of the problem is that they are entering the electoral struggle not for promoting revolution and communism--that would be to commit the sin of "immediate revolutionism"--but for something else. As a model of that something else the PCT leaders point to the old Communist Party of Spain of the 1930's.

The Example of the CP of Spain in the 1930's

Progressive Turn gives lengthy praise to the CP of Spain and to its participation in the Popular Front election victory of 1936. Special accolades are made for the ability of the CP of Spain to "change the form of struggle" as the communist representatives, in the face of Franco's fascist coup, "passed from the parliament to the trench" in the anti-fascist war. (page 81-88) Presumably this is given as evidence that the CP of Spain did not forfeit its combative and communist character by taking parliamentary seats.

This example, however, slurs over a critical point. The political content is fundamental whatever the form of struggle happens to be--whether in parliament or in the trench. The shortcomings of the CP of Spain cannot be blamed on its participation in elections and parliament. They are due to the fact that by 1936 the CP of Spain was guided by the non-Marxist, opportunist orientations of the 7th Congress of the Communist International. This opportunism of the leadership of the Spanish party was particularly vexing given the enormous heroism and sacrifices of the communists and workers in the civil war against fascism.

Both in parliament and on the battlefield, the CPS became mired in bourgeois democratic illusions. It abandoned any perspective of carrying the the struggle of the workers and oppressed beyond the bounds of the bourgeois republic. The CPS abandoned the independent working class standpoint. It erased the dividing lines between itself and the bourgeois liberals and social-democrats. It choked the revolution of the workers and peasants by binding it to the general patriotic and republican interests of the capitalists and reformists. It raised bourgeois nationalism to a fever pitch, even waging a social-chauvinist campaign against the Moroccans (who suffered bitter colonial oppression by Spain) and effectively cutting off the oppressed Moroccans as potential allies of the revolution.

We have documented this painful history at length in our series on the Spanish Civil War. There is no need to repeat that here. The only point to be made is that by

raising the example of the Spanish CP of the 1930's the PCT is inadvertently sounding an alarm about the reformist orientation that it is adopting today. We have already

seen this in the PCT's turn towards bourgeois democracy. It can also be seen in the politics of its proposed National Accord and the type of alliance that it is aimed at.

A National Accord Acceptable to Social-Democracy and Reformism

The **Progressive Turn** sets down the following "minimum program" for PCT's proposed National Accord:

"1) Struggle for national sovereignty and independence, against imperialism and its local accomplices;

"2) Struggle for political liberties and rights, against all repressive acts and manifestations of repression of the present regime;

"3) Active impulse to and solidarity with the struggles of the masses for their demands, against the painful conditions of life that they are suffering and the measures of the officials and bosses that make them worse;

"4) For a Democratic and Patriotic Government, committed to fulfill the above demands." (page 110)

At first glance, these four points may sound radical or combative. But they must be looked at in the context of Dominican politics (which are like much of the politics in Latin America from Mexico to Peru). Only the more right-wing politicians--Balaguer and crew, and possibly the most conservative faction of the PRD--would refrain from talking against imperialism, for political liberties, for democratic and patriotic government.

In one form or another, this program would be acceptable to major factions of the social-democratic PRD. The PRD politicians have always appealed to the masses with nationalist and democratic phrases. PRD leaders often play the game of posing as sympathizers of the mass struggles. Even when the PRD controlled the government between 1978 and '86, PRD politicians would feign support for the protests against the austerity measures imposed by their own ruling party.

To cut against the political domination of PRDism, the program would have had to have been cast in a different spirit. For example, instead of the general phrase about solidarity with the struggles of the masses, there should have been something specific, such as concrete support for the development of the strike movement (including the general strikes) of the workers and poor against the bourgeoisie. Or, instead of traditional platitudes about national sovereignty, concrete appeals for the renunciation of the debt to the imperialist banks, as well as internationalist appeals for unity with the Haitian workers and for their full rights in the country. These are only being given as examples of demands that address the broadest interests of the working people, but which are not generally acceptable to the reformist politicians and thereby would

help differentiate the communists from the reformist rhetoric of PRDism.

As it stands, the PCT's proposed "minimum program" is acceptable to one and all--from the revisionist CP to the reformist PRD factions. It amounts to an alliance with reformism based on the lowest common denominator of opposition to the present Balaguer government.

Who Is This Appeal Aimed At?

Advocating such a bloc poses a number of pitfalls for the revolutionary movement. And these dangers are compounded by the refusal of the PCT leaders to state openly and directly what this National Accord is and what political forces it is aimed at. Instead, these things are indicated only through hints and catch phrases.

The first hint is that it must not be limited to the left-wing parties and organizations.

"The PCT has said," **Lucha** reiterates, "that the National Accord must not limit itself to an alliance only of the left." ("National Accord, Progressive Way Out", Dec '87)

This accord is supposedly to go beyond the left to "unite all progressive, democratic and patriotic forces of the country."

What forces? Unorganized masses? Barrio committees of struggle or other mass organizations? Or something else? **Progressive Turn** provides another hint. It refers to "accords of political superstructures, agreed to in due time." (page 119) Presumably that means political agreements with other parties and political organizations.

At the PRD and the PLD?

Which parties and organizations? Here there are other broad hints pointing towards the big reformist forces. For example, **Progressive Turn** refers to Pena Gomez's wing of the PRD as competing to replace Juan Bosch and his Party of Dominican Liberation (PLD) "as the aglutinador [the one that brings together] the democratic forces, from bourgeois social-reformist positions." (page 45) In this way, the PCT places the reformist PRD chiefs and the PLD, despite their "bourgeois social-reformist positions," in the camp of "democratic forces." Moreover, when all the hints are taken together, these are the most important targets of the PCT's appeal for a National Accord. If this is not the case, then it rests with the PCT leaders to explain why this is not the case, because this is the only way that their appeal can be interpreted.

There are Democrats and Then There are Democrats

This highlights the worthlessness of empty phrases about "democrats" and "progressives." In his famous work **Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution**, Lenin attacked the Mensheviks for using the phrase "democrats" to slur over the distinctions between different class and political forces. When left undefined, such phrases become as elastic as a rubber band; they lump together class forces and political trends that must not and cannot be lumped together. The net result, Lenin pointed out, is the subordination of the democratic forces of the exploited and oppressed to the self-styled democratic and reformist bourgeoisie. In the Dominican Republic, for example, there are forces of the working masses that may be described as democratic. A rural cooperative of poor peasants, for example. Or possibly a barrio committee of the struggling urban poor (including peddlers, self employed, unemployed, etc.).

On the other hand, there are self-styled democrats which are in fact bourgeois forces, forces of exploitation and capitalist oppression. This includes the big shots of the PRD or other political bosses of reformism and social-democracy. There are also various liberal personalities, petty bourgeois radicals, and others who may be considered as democrats.

The PCT, however, makes no distinctions. It jumbles them together with its democratic phrases. The end result is that the forces of reformism and social-democracy get tinged with glowing colors of "progress" and "democracy." Now, with the PCT's Fifth National Conference, this error has been pushed to the point of declaring that a National Accord with these forces is "the only authentically popular way out" for the Dominican people. (Lucha, December, '87)

Third Congress of the Comintern

Progressive Turn presents its proposed National Accord as being rooted in Lenin's teachings on mass allies. In particular, they try to claim fidelity to Lenin's Communist International and its 3rd Congress of 1921 with its famous slogan "To the masses!" (page 90) To be charitable, it could be said that both discussed questions of the united front and winning the masses. But any similarity between PCT's National Accord proposal and the ideas of Lenin and the 3rd CI Congress ends there.

The 3rd Congress of the CI called for the creation of a united working class front. The basic premise was to mobilize the workers in the class struggle in order to break them from the grip of the social-democrats' alliance with the bourgeoisie. It was openly declared to be a tactic aimed at winning the masses away from class compromise and social-democracy towards class struggle, the proletarian revolution and communism.

With these tactics the communists appealed for united

action with workers under the influence of non-communist political trends--mainly social-democratic and anarcho-syndicalist workers. These appeals were not in the direction of forming a nice-sounding national accord or overall agreement on fine phrases; whether local or national agreements, they were aimed at mobilizing the workers into specific actions, into the class struggle, such as mobilizing the rank-and-file into strike campaigns for the immediate needs of the working masses.

In this context, the CI held that, under certain conditions, united front appeals could also be made to the leaderships of the social-democratic parties. But nowhere in Lenin's writings, or that of the CI of this period, is there the slightest hint that these leaderships or the social-democratic and reformist political trends were "progressive" or "democratic" friends of the workers. Quite the opposite. Even in the midst of making united front appeals to the leadership of the German Social-Democrats or other reformist parties, the communists kept up an unrelenting exposure of the reactionary treachery of the social-democratic and reformist trends, characterizing them as a bulwark of capitalism. The form of this exposure sometimes changed; the sharpness of tone in the language might be calmed down, insults might be removed if it prevented other workers from listening to the communists; but the content of the criticism was to be maintained and made more accurate and sharpened. (For an examination the tactics of the 3rd Congress of the CI see the series "United Front Tactics Are an Essential Tool of the Proletarian Party", **The Workers Advocate**, Jan. 25, 1983 through Dec. 15, 1983.)

PCT's references to the 3rd Congress of the CI only work against them. Serious consideration of the 3rd Congress only shows how far their National Accord is from Leninist tactics. It only brings out in glaring form such failures as the PCT's lack of criticism of the reformist forces.

The majority of Dominican workers remain under the influence of the PLD and the reformist PRD factions. The daily struggle undoubtedly demands the use of various united front tactics towards these workers. When the conditions exist for it, there may be appeals for united actions to the reformist groups themselves. But under no conditions would Leninist united front tactics mean spreading illusions about these groups being "progressive and democratic forces". Under no conditions would it mean giving a 121 page report on Dominican politics without attacking the dirty role of the reformists of the PRD and the PLD in undermining the class struggle and propping up the capitalists and reactionaries.

Failure to Criticize Reformism

In fact, from the **Progressive Turn** one would not know that reformism and social-democracy have been a brake on the revolutionary movement in the Dominican Republic. One would not know that they throw up obstacles to

every big mass action and checks the class struggle at every turn.

Progressive Turn criticizes the past PRD governments and the shameless capitalist corruption of PRD officials. But it has nothing to say about the undermining role of the PRD's reformism. Pena Gomez is a major figure in the Socialist International and a leader of the reformist factions of the PRD, which continue to have a strong influence over a section of the Dominican workers and poor. This influence is one of the political chains keeping the masses bound to bourgeois politics. One cannot talk about a "progressive turn" in Dominican politics without striking this chain. Nor can one speak about overcoming two-party domination. Yet **Progressive Turn** has nothing to say about this critical political question facing the Dominican workers. The only direct reference it makes to the Pena Gomez tendency of the PRD is to note its strivings to be the "aglutinador of the democratic forces."

Likewise, the book carries no criticism of the reformism of Juan Bosch and the PLD. Juan Bosch had been a leader of the PRD when in 1972 he created the PLD with himself as the guiding spirit. The PLD is a reformist and nationalist organization which has historically posed as more radical and more admiring of revisionist Cuba than the PRD is. As the PRD has been wracked by scandal and mass discontent in recent years, the PLD has been making headway. It gained 18% of the vote in the 1986 elections and is reportedly gaining ground.

Nonetheless, **Progressive Turn** fails to even discuss the reformist nature of the alternative the PLD presents. It observes that "not a few persons of anti-imperialist ideas and democratic attitudes have joined the Party of Dominican Liberation." (page 43-44) It goes on to criticize the PLD for "imprecision in strategy, lack of clear programmatic definition and the zig-zags of political conduct." Imprecision or unclarity, however, is not the PLD's main affliction. Despite its particular cultish and peculiar quirks, the PLD is a reformist and nationalist political trend. The PCT, however, refrains from even mentioning this fact. Instead, the PLD is criticized for "sectarian passions" that have supposedly prevented it from becoming "the center of a unitary, anti-imperialist, patriotic and democratic movement".

This is one of the general themes of the **Progressive Turn**. The critique of the PLD and the other forces of reformism in the Dominican Republic gets reduced to the idea that they are mere sectarians who have failed to put

aside their party egoism and join in a single "patriotic and progressive bloc" against Balaguer and the right. Yes, the reformists are often blatant sectarians. Yes, they sabotage united strike actions and break up the unity of the working masses. But why? What is the root cause of their divisive role? It is rooted in their alliance (open or hidden) with the exploiters; in their acceptance of the bourgeois status quo; in their fear of the class struggle; in their bourgeois nationalism. **Progressive Turn** doesn't come close to addressing these issues.

Dangers of United Front Tactics

In discussing the necessity of the communists making use of united front tactics, the 3rd Congress of the Comintern also warned of the dangers involved. It stressed that, in certain circumstances and when wrongly used, united front appeals can strengthen the hand of the reformists and tend to destroy the hard-won independence of the communist forces.

The PCT leaders mock at such concerns. *Lucha* ridicules warnings that "whatever party of the left that arranges alliances or political compromises with parties that are not of the left" face the danger of "losing their independence and being absorbed by the allies." ("National Accord, Popular Way Out," December '87) It is unclear from what angle the unnamed critics of the National Accord raise this question. It is clear, however, that the PCT leaders should not be so cavalier about this problem.

Progressive Turn swears that within the National Accord the PCT will guard its independence and keep up the ideological struggle. But, as the saying goes, facts are stubborn things. And the fact is that the PCT has already abandoned a serious attitude towards criticism of the bourgeois reformist forces that it is appealing to.

Moreover, even if it were disposed to carry through on the criticism of the reformists, there are serious questions about whether it would have the strength to do so effectively under the pressures of a united front agreement. Just take the question of the severe weakness of the PCT's party press. If the scheme for a National Accord were realized, the PCT's failure to have a vigorous, communist press would be highlighted and the PCT would be at a sharp disadvantage in relation to the more powerful forces. How in those circumstances could one speak of having a strong independent voice?

Retreating to Populism

If not Leninism, if not the communist tradition, then what has inspired the PCT's politics of National Accord? In part, it is the opportunist tradition of the Comintern after its change in line and abandonment of Leninism at the 7th Congress in 1935. (That is the significance of the old CP of Spain being held up as a model of tactics in **Progressive Turn**.) As well, there is a tradition in Latin

American politics that keeps coming back to life in different forms and continues to have considerable weight in the revolutionary movement. This is the petty bourgeois tradition of populism—a tradition that does not see the class contradictions behind political events nor recognize the class struggle as the engine of social change.

The PCT is a product of the Dominican revolutionary

movement which had a strong populist tradition. At the time of its founding, the PCT criticized populist weaknesses and made a push to bring proletarian class politics into the movement. However, it failed to carry this through and soon began to back down from these stands. Its proposed National Accord is a further step backwards towards this populism. In this regard, **Progressive Turn** makes a strikingly one-sided criticism of the ideological weaknesses that have hampered the revolutionary movement.

It discusses how after the revisionist degeneration of the old communist parties in many countries groups came up that were "sectarianized by Maoism" and thus could not win the masses. (page 91) "In other cases, especially in Latin America," **Progressive Turn** explains, "there arose focoist movements that made a caricatured negation of the old revisionist parties and were guided, in their relation to the masses, by the slogan of 'constant distrust' of which Che Guevara spoke." (page 91) Only now, according to **Progressive Turn**, are the revolutionaries and their Marxist-Leninist parties casting aside sectarianism and addressing the problem of winning over the masses and seeking out allies.

This analysis is lop-sided to the point of absurdity. By reducing the criticism of Maoism or Guevarism or Castroism to the question of sectarianism **Progressive Turn** slurs over the fundamentally right opportunist, non-proletarian and populist features of these influences.

The Guevarist and Castroist and Maoist movements arose in response to the crass reformism and electoralism of the old revisionist parties. These movements, however, were built on a flawed ideological foundation. Their petty bourgeois democracy and nationalism kept them from transcending the traditional populist ideas that had a grip on the Latin American left. Their revolutionism tended to be separated from the class struggle of the workers and oppressed. Thus, without this proletarian anchor, there were plenty of cases of isolated and disastrous attempts at revolutionary adventures.

Moreover, with their non-class politics these movements tended to always look towards the reformist and bourgeois opposition parties. Even revolutionaries putting their lives on the line in mountain combat often had great expectations and hoped to appeal to the "patriotic" or "national" bourgeois. This was commonly done in the name of "uniting all who can be united" to win liberty and save the fatherland. These illusions in the bourgeoisie also proved disastrous for the revolutionary movement.

The Populist United Front of Camilo Torres

The case of Camilo Torres, the Colombian priest-become-revolutionary, is a good example of these politics. In 1965 Torres became the champion of a "United Front" traversing all class and political boundaries, "uniting all Colombians without distinction of religious beliefs, political group or personal ties." Torres advertised this

front as a new alternative that would leave behind the narrow confines of the "old parties." Supposedly it would win the adhesion of the majority of Colombians who were not affiliated to any party of the right or the left. The masses were to be finally united, not by their class or political interests, but by the glue of a moral appeal for freedom, well-being and national liberation.

This attempt at creating unity outside of the class struggle and outside of the conflict between existing political trends quickly went bust. At first Torres gained at least verbal support across the political spectrum from the bourgeois Christian Democrats to the reformist (pro-Soviet) Communist Party and even a number of the more radical left groups. But within months the political contradictions exerted themselves; one party or group after the next withdrew; and Torres' "United Front" project collapsed.

Torres went to the countryside, joined a guerrilla foco and was killed by the army in February 1966. His example as a brave revolutionary encouraged the fighting masses throughout the region. But as well, his populist politics of moral indignation, both in its focoist and "united front" form, crystallized much of the Castroist and Maoist politics in the region in the 1960's and 1970's.

The Dominican Movement—Now and Then

The PCT leaders know this history well—because the PCT comes out of a movement which suffered a great deal from Maoist and Castroist influences. In the Dominican Republic, putschist schemes were often combined with schemes for unity with the bourgeois opposition. This even went to the point of seeking alliances with some right-wing figures and reactionary military officers. Time and again the result was fiasco.

Apparently the PCT is taking a step back from class politics into that populist framework. In its rejection of "immediatism," it is reviving right opportunist ideas connected to that side of Castroism and Maoism which **Progressive Turn** is so silent about. Its appeal for a National Accord even uses the same unmistakable language that Camilo Torres used for his united front appeal. (With two notable exceptions. Unlike the PCT, Torres was opposed to giving his united front an electoral perspective. And, also unlike the PCT, Torres posed that the united front must be aimed at creating socialism, albeit a "non-ideological," that is, a non-proletarian and social-democratic type of socialism.) There is no reason to believe that PCT will be any more successful in "uniting the majority of Dominicans"—workers and bourgeois, poor and rich, revolutionary and reformist—all "honest men" in a great patriotic "National Accord for independence, democracy and well-being."

But it would be a mistake to say that the PCT is merely going back to the old movement from whence it came. No, because the previous movement, despite all its weaknesses, had a revolutionary and fighting spirit. Today,

the PCT leaders are trying to purge that spirit with reformist day dreams about a progressive turn "in the direction of the state" without revolution, without revolutionary struggle. It does not reject "immediatism", but only "immediate revolutionism". It does not reject petty-bourgeois politics, but only petty-bourgeois revolutionism--in favor of petty-bourgeois liquidationism. We believe, however, that revolutionary activists inside and outside the PCT will uphold the path of communist revolution. They will reject petty-bourgeois revolutionism in favor of proletarian, communist revolutionism, and not petty-bourgeois reformism. We hope the PCT leadership will reconsider its strategy and tactics of the last period and take part in this struggle to build up a genuinely commu-

nist party in the Democratic Republic. But in any case we are sure that the Dominican toilers, with their revolutionary and rebellious history, will give rise to many rank-and-file communists, inside or outside the PCT, who will stand up for the Marxist-Leninist cause of the Dominican proletariat. ■

Note to Spanish-speaking readers: In the coming year **El Estandarte Obrero** will carry Spanish translations of the **Workers' Advocate** series on the Spanish Civil War (only the introduction has been carried in Spanish so far) and also on the united front tactics of the Communist International, centering on the CI's Third World Congress. ■

