

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

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The new world is peeking out from the contradictions of the old

Below are the introductory remarks (edited for publication) for the MLP May Day meeting in Chicago this year. Earlier in the day there was a May Day march followed by a rally in a park, where a skit denouncing the war attracted much attention.

Comrades,

On this May Day we are confronted with a situation where it seems that everything is pregnant with its contrary.

Our ability to clothe, and feed, and transport humanity has grown to enormous proportions, yet factories and offices are being closed, production is being destroyed, and want and misery are parading through the fields of plenty.

Our new-fangled technology — the computers and optical character readers and factory robots — have the ability to shorten work and make it more productive. Yet they are destroying the very workers who use them with unprecedented injuries, and with overwork, and with layoffs.

Our medical science has developed amazing ways to cure illness and to extend life. Yet competition over the new techniques is bankrupting and closing hospitals, while epidemics spread of even old diseases — like measles and cholera — that we thought had long been defeated.

Our mastery of nature and the potential to bring production in tune with the environment have also never been so great. Yet what we seem to produce, most of all, is more garbage and the wholesale pollution of the planet.

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Still, comrades, if what we witness today is hunger in the midst of abundance; if what we suffer is the revival of all that is backward and repugnant amidst the haunting promise of progress; then this only a sign that a new world is trying to break free of the old. It is a sign that the old world is not compatible with the new possibilities of progress, and it has turned to taking revenge on the forces for change.

What we are seeing, comrades, is the painful contractions of communism searching for its birth. The powerful new forces of production are now held confined within the old capitalist system, within the old relations of dog-eat-dog competition and private ownership. Yet the very

economic crisis now upon us, the very excesses of production and frantic search for markets, shows that if we but put aside the old system, if we but replace capitalist private ownership with the communist collective, then production can be released and grow virtually unlimited to supply the needs for all.

Communism offers the solution to hunger and want. But it is not simply a matter of making more things for us to consume. Rather, by putting an end to the profit system,

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we will unleash gigantic forces to tackle the problems that are now consuming us.

We will free the energy to end the destructive war between humankind and nature, and build up a new harmony that preserves our environment while enhancing the lives of men and women.

We will put aside greed-inspired medicine — that cures disease only when the price is right — and free healthcare to realize its desire to aid humanity.

We will release the initiative of the masses to transform the workplace from a torture chamber for wage-slaves into a place where once again we can find the joy of work and the pleasure of purpose. And we will shorten the working day and release the masses to join in the collective running of society, to add their individual inspiration to the improvement of the life of all.

Such is the communism that is looking to be born. But you don't change systems like you change your shirt. To move from capitalism to communism requires nothing short of a revolution — a revolution that only starts with the overthrow of the capitalist rulers but takes form in a whole period of difficult transition from the old to the new. A period to overcome the capitalist market through economic reconstruction, an expanded satisfaction of human needs, and the development of new forms of organization. A period of beating down the repeated attempts of the old and greedy world to make a come back in new forms. A period of change in all traditional ideas as the masses learn

to organize their own work and society consciously instead of employing the whip of hunger and bosses, and transform themselves even as they transform the system.

* * * * *

Yes, it is a hard struggle. Yet we know, comrades, that the new-fangled forces of society can and will prevail. They only need to be mastered by new-fangled men and women.

Where will we find these new people? We have but to look to the working class. They are as much a product of our modern era as the machines they work. They are the unique product of capitalism. Already large bodies of workers are united in large-scale production by the bosses, they have but to complete this unity, take it to a conscious plane, and find their common voice, and then they will rise in a monumental struggle that will throw down the exploiters and open up the path to the new world.

Comrades, on May Day one hundred and five years ago when the workers in the United States felt some of their common class interests; they united across craft and industry lines, and rose up in strikes and demonstrations all across the country to demand the eight-hour day.

It has been a long, hard road from that day to this. A road with victories and the development of solidarity. And a road that has also seen the workers' movement repeatedly thrown back by the forces of the old; shackled by class collaboration; tortured by firings and layoffs and jails; scattered by craft distinctions; split up by language and national differences; deceived about events beyond their control. A road when the working class movement was repeatedly ground down only to rise again just when the ruling class thought it was banished forever.

Today, the economic crisis and budget cuts, the police abuse and union-busting and warmongering, are once again grinding down the workers, and once again forcing separate workers to start thinking about their common interests. The more the crisis and the repression destroys, the more it is creating conditions for a class-wide struggle. This will not be a simple repeat of the movement in 1886, nor of the 1930s, nor of the 1960s. There is too much water under the bridge for that. Rather, what must emerge is a new movement, a movement which — in its conscious part — must take account of the last hundred years of experience since the first May Day, of the last hundred and fifty years since the emergence of conscious attempts at working class organization.

Comrades, it seems to me that we live in a time when everything has never been clearer, yet when everything needs to be explained; a time when the *basis* for old deceptions are dying, yet when the truths which they concealed must be brought to the light of day.

The old union bureaucracy, the "respectable" leaders of the minorities, the Democratic Party itself, have all played their part to hold the workers' movement subservient to the capitalists. Today, as U.S. imperialism goes into crisis, and as the bribes from the capitalist table get smaller, they are becoming more hard-pressed about promises to lay before the working masses, and this is why they are reviving all

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the most discredited and anti-people prejudices of the past. Yet, how are the masses to build up their own independent movement? This must yet be discovered — and it can only be discovered by going deep into the real movements of the masses, and by merging the new strivings and necessities of the present with the experience of the last hundred and fifty years of struggle for proletarian organization.

Or take the damage done by revisionism. For decades revisionism paraded itself as the so-called communists in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and China. Today the revisionist system of state-capitalism is collapsing in an orgy of free-market slave-driving, nationalist hatreds, and bureaucratic backwardness. The revisionists are losing their political power and their ideological pretensions. Yet, what then of the goal of the workers' movement? For now, it too seems lost on a mass scale, and discredited by those who prostituted its name. It must be restudied in theory, and found anew in the conditions of modern life in practice. It must be restated in the light of history, and shown in the light of the present as the only realistic road

out of the catastrophes afflicting the world today. It will become again the inspiration for a new generation of fighters.

Comrades, this is the task that May Day — international working class day — sets before us. To help gather together the scattered workers; to help them learn their own experience and realize their own strength; to help release their energy to build up a class movement that not only resists the cutbacks and misery from this system but, also, fights to change it.

The rest of tonight's meeting is dedicated to discussing some of these tasks. The main speech will discuss one aspect — the experience of the recent anti-war movement; what lessons we can draw from it; what material it provided for building up a new revolutionary movement. Today our forces are yet small. But a new generation is beginning to grumble, is beginning to feel its way forward to struggle. We must help it, and with it the whole class of wage-slaves, to become the midwives for the new world that is peeking out from the rubble of the old. □

Racists on the bench: Ryskamp rules that fear of black people is a medical condition

When on occasion a Reaganite judge is turned down for promotion, it does not mean that the people are free of him or her.

On April 26 federal judge Kenneth Ryskamp ruled in a case involving a woman who wanted workers' compensation. The woman said she had developed a phobia about black people after being attacked by a black man in the course of her work. Ryskamp decided in favor of compensation, stating that "This [anti-black phobia] isn't a personal feeling; it's a medical condition."

Who is this racist in flowing robes?

Ryskamp had been nominated by Bush for a federal appeals court position. But his statements against blacks and Cubans had given him a certain notoriety. For example, it was pointed out during the confirmation process that Ryskamp had in 1987 opposed a damage suit filed by four black youth who had been mauled by police dogs. The West Palm Beach police department in Florida had made routine use of vicious dogs to terrorize suspects. Two of the youth who were bitten had been singled out by the police completely by mistake, and the two others were accused of

minor theft. Ryskamp thought it a mistake to give them compensation, lecturing the youth that "I think of countries where, if you are guilty of a robbery, they cut off your hand as a vivid reminder that this is forbidden. It might not be inappropriate to carry around a few scars to remind you of your wrongdoing in the past."

Ryskamp had overturned compensation for the youth, and his ruling had been overruled in turn by a higher court. During his confirmation hearing, Ryskamp defended his ruling in this case. Despite repeated reminders of the actual situation, he continually referred to them as criminals.

He also made statements against Cuban-Americans, and against the use of the Spanish language.

Ryskamp was turned down for the appeals court, mainly because he didn't know enough to shut up during the confirmation hearing. But Ryskamp is still a federal judge, if not an appeals court judge. He speaks openly what much of the federal bench believes in its heart. And this is another reason why believing in social justice from the courts is like believing in the Easter bunny. □

Lessons from the anti-war movement

Speech at the MLP Chicago May Day meeting, May 4, 1991. It has been edited for publication.

May First is International Working Class Day. A day for class struggle and working class action. This year May Day follows closely the brutal war Bush waged against Iraq, a war which slaughtered over 100,000 Iraqis, soldiers and civilians alike, a war which destroyed their economy and left the population to face famine and disease. May Day comes on the heels of a mass anti-war movement; a movement which brought hundreds of thousands of people into the streets. This May Day, then, is an appropriate time to sum up the experience of the anti-war movement.

Within a few days after the outbreak of the ground war the movement had spread widely. Thousands of college and high school students came out to protest for the first time. Activists who had experience in other struggles against U.S. aggression got back into the movement. A number of young workers came out to the protests. Despite tired-out leaders and reformist groups swarming over coalitions and appointing themselves leaders, a fresh spirit repeatedly showed itself. There were slogans demanding that the U.S. get out of the Persian Gulf and get out completely. Some targeted the government and the war corporations. And there were protests at the Israeli consulates, denouncing zionism, and supporting the Palestinian struggle.

In many places the press was denounced as stenographers for the White House. Bush declared that the struggle against the war didn't exist, so the press followed suit. Mass protests were ignored or grossly underreported. In Chicago, only the radio traffic reports for commuters gave an accurate picture of the size of local demonstrations, but then they had to!

Many activists saw that they could in no way rely on the press, and they sought ways to get the word, such as bannered over the expressways, postering, street theater, and trying to develop an alternative press.

Many protesters were in a fighting mood. In San Francisco activists blockaded the Federal Building for days on end and stopped traffic on the bridges. In New York City, students marched out of the high schools and swarmed with others into the streets. In Chicago, marchers repeatedly took over the streets despite police bullying. In a number of places protesters defied the police or school authorities. They confronted the flag-waving counterdemonstrators, and thousands braved arrest as well.

With the end of the shooting war, the movement has rapidly declined in size and intensity. But an important feature is that many new activists want to continue to oppose U.S. imperialism's intervention in the Middle East. They also want to take up the fight against other aspects of imperialism. They are interested in building such struggles as those against racism and homelessness, or for women's rights. They are trying to sum up the experience

of the struggle against the Gulf War, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of that movement, and apply these lessons in order to move the struggle forward.

The first point is that the war was not an accident.

It was not a mere mistake of policy. No, it couldn't be stopped by calling on the war makers to take up some other way to achieve their aims.

This was a war dictated by imperialist interests. This was a war for the profits of the oil monopolies. It was a war to ensure U.S. domination in the Middle East, and to establish permanent U.S. military bases in the Gulf. It was a war to make the world safe for monarchy and shore up the medieval kingdoms of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. It was a war to establish that U.S. imperialism is still the policeman of the world, marauding and dictating wherever it wishes.

The Persian Gulf war showed how imperialism, how the fight for profits and empire, leads to war.

This was a war supported by the bourgeoisie as a whole and both its parties, the Republicans and the Democrats. The Republicans and Democrats had some differences over how best to uphold American interests. Before the outbreak of the war a section of the Democratic Party was calling for sanctions to go on a little longer. "We can go to war later if necessary," they said, "but first, let's try starving Iraq into submission." But lo and behold, when Bush gave the call for war, Congress backed him. Republican and Democrat alike fell into line. This was because the war was not a mere mistake, but the deliberate result of pursuing the interests of U.S. imperialism.

Yet a section of the movement fell in behind the liberal Democrats. They declared that they were against war because it would not be in the best interests of the U.S., and they fell in behind sanctions. They held out hope that Congressional resolutions might prevent the war and called on the movement to support these resolutions.

But the most militant section of the movement opposed both war and sanctions. They didn't wait for Congressional resolutions but demanded that the U.S. get out of the Persian Gulf altogether.

The second point is that this war was supported by the international bourgeoisie.

France, Britain, and a number of other countries sent their troops. Japan sent money. Queen Elizabeth personally declared her support for the ground war. The major powers showed that they too wanted to maintain the status quo in the control of oil, such a vital commodity for their economies, and of the Middle East.

The U.N. passed resolution after resolution rubber-

stamping U.S. plans. The war showed that the U.N. is a body of the international bourgeoisie. Its debates are nothing but disagreements between different national groups of exploiters.

Yet the same leaders who called for sanctions but not war, argued that the movement should line up behind the U.N. But the militant activists wouldn't go for this.

Several debates broke out in the movement which throw light on these differences.

For example, a debate broke out over what to do about the appeals of the bourgeoisie and the rabid flag-wavers to "support our troops" and put up yellow ribbons. These campaigns were intended to attract working people who were worried about the fate of their coworkers or children or friends who had been sent off to fight in the Gulf. They were a maneuver by the pro-war camp.

Unfortunately, in the anti-war movement there were also those who took up the slogan "support the troops." Here in Chicago, the movement was flooded for awhile with "support our troops" buttons. Some peace groups even put yellow ribbons on their literature tables.

But more militant activists wouldn't stomach this. They pointed out that it was the U.S. government that sent the troops to the Persian Gulf in the first place and was responsible for all the death and destruction, including what little there was on the U.S. side. Quite rightly, the militants pointed out that we are opposed to the killing of Iraqi soldiers and civilians and opposed to any campaigns which ignore what the U.S. did to Iraq.

And there is the question of what is the U.S. military. After all, the military is what maintains U.S. imperialism's domination abroad. And it is used to suppress struggles at home. The rich capitalists want an army of cannon fodder to keep other countries in line, to put down dissent and strikes at home, all to defend their rule and profits.

There can be no unity between the Pentagon and anti-war activists, between the organizers of the war and opponents of the war. Furthermore, the only way to help those caught up in the army is to support GI resistance. Isn't it funny how the imperialists' "Support the Troops" campaign doesn't include the troops opposed to the war?

The controversy over "support the troops" has led into another debate which still continues: how to fight the current outpouring of chauvinism by the bourgeoisie.

The U.S. imperialists are congratulating themselves on killing tens of thousands of Iraqis at such a small price to themselves. Victory parades are being held. General Schwarzkopf is the hero of the day. U.S. imperialism is painting its slaughter of Iraqi soldiers and civilians in heroic colors.

How should this chauvinist campaign be combated?

Next week there will be a protest here against the

Victory Parade. It to be held under the banner of "No Heroes welcome—Time for mourning, not celebration." And debate has come up over this and other slogans and over what activity to have.

Some forces want to hold a funeral procession, a silent-type activity, with people dressed in black to mourn the war dead and the destruction. They opposed the slogan "No Heroes welcome."

Others want to make it clear that we don't think that what the U.S. did was in any way heroic. And we ourselves want to have a militant activity with slogans, banners etc.

Unfortunately some of the arguments against the slogan "No heroes welcome" came up under the guise of being "sensitive" to the working class. It was argued that since the sons and daughters of the working class are in the military, we have to be careful not to offend the workers. What they are really thinking is that the working class is basically chauvinist, and we have to be careful not to offend chauvinist sentiments.

Now some of activists on the other side, the militant side, also held to the view that the working class is basically chauvinist. Thus, these activists see no necessity to find ways to organize the working class or to bring workers to the protests, but they did correctly point out that we shouldn't kowtow to anybody's chauvinism.

Our view is that chauvinism can not be fought by bowing down to it. For the movement to take up the slogan "Support our troops" or to get involved in the yellow ribbon campaigns is death for the anti-war struggle. Nor can we abandon the critique of the U.S. military.

We also hold that, in order to fight chauvinism, we have to have a serious judgement of where chauvinism comes from.

The present flag-waving victory parades as well as the earlier Support our troops campaign and yellow ribbon hysteria are not some accident.

Let's be clear, this promotion of chauvinism comes from the bourgeoisie. It is a well-orchestrated campaign.

There is definitely infection by chauvinism in the working class. But lots of people in this room can tell you that the agitation against the war went much better at the factories and in the working class communities than on Michigan Ave. It is notable that when there were protests in working class and minority areas, they were well received. Unfortunately, they weren't held there very much.

When we stood in front of Bodine Electric Co. and ridiculed the company for giving out yellow ribbons, and denounced the Bodine capitalists for supporting the war, this went much better than in front of well-dressed crowds downtown.

It's true that large numbers of workers did not participate in the anti-war movement, nor was there a close connection between this movement and the working class movement. Part of this undoubtedly was the influence of the yellow ribbon campaigns. But beyond this and probably more important is the fact that the main trade union leaders, as they did in Vietnam, came out in full support of

the war. And these leaders unfortunately hold back the workers from participating in any struggle, this one included.

At the same time the Black bourgeoisie, for example the likes of the leaders of the Urban League, also supported the war. The stranglehold of these so-called leaders of the working class and minorities was a heavy weight holding back the working class from anti-war struggle against the war and promoting chauvinism.

The same forces in the movement which took up the slogan "support our troops" and backed UN sanctions and Congressional resolutions, also frequently told the activists that they can not go to the working class. They say that the only way to organize the workers is through the trade union leaders. This is a dead end.

Our view is that the activists must go directly to the working masses to build a movement against U.S. imperialism. We must take the anti-war agitation to the working class and minority neighborhoods, into the factories and the schools. We must seek to build a movement among the workers, the minorities and the poor. They are the ones who reap no benefits from this war but who suffer most from its effects. It is the working people who have the most at stake in the fight against imperialism. There are no shortcuts to this organizing.

We have to identify the issues which are on the minds of the workers and poor and find the ways to expose the government, and the capitalist system behind it. The trade union leaders are not going to do it, the liberal politicians are not going to do it, the pro-establishment black leaders won't do it. It is up to the activists. We have to build up a press which does this. We have to find the way to build organization among the working class and poor.

Another lesson of the war is that our anti-imperialism has to support the struggles of the oppressed masses of the Middle East.

The MLP declared from the start that the only true anti-imperialism was to support the toiling masses in Iraq as well as the United States. We stressed opposition to U.S. imperialism which is both "our own" exploiter and the leading world imperialist policeman. At the same time, we held that Saddam Hussein was a tyrant, and his invasion of Kuwait had nothing to do with anti-imperialism or the interests of the Iraqi people. There was nothing to choose in the squabble between the world bully Bush and the regional bully Hussein. Anti-imperialism required opposing the war machines and the oppressive systems of both sides. It means supporting the struggle of the masses in the Middle East. This stand was controversial and a matter of debate.

There was quite a bit of debate in the movement around this issue. Those forces who had demanded that the movement support sanctions, who pushed for the movement to line up behind Congressional resolutions, and who wanted the movement to take up the "support our troops

slogan," generally pushed that the movement had to take a stand against Iraq. Generally speaking, the liberals wanted this to imply support for imperialist sanctions and in an attempt to avoid offending the warmongers. Unfortunately this also gave the impression to some activists that opposing Saddam Hussein made one weak on opposing imperialism.

Meanwhile most Trotskyist groups had their own version of anti-imperialism. They claimed it meant giving such slogans as "Defend Iraq" or "Victory to Iraq", by which they meant "military support" for Saddam Hussein's savage tyranny over the Iraqi masses.

Another way this issue came up was over the question of whether to support the Palestinian struggle. This is a vital struggle to support. Several anti-war demonstrations here protested at the Israeli consulate. Slogans were raised like "Intifada yes, Zionism no." This upset the liberals in the movement. Each time a small number walked out of the demonstration in order to declare their support of Israel. In some cities Palestinian speakers were kept from the speakers platforms, again reflecting the stand of those who did not want to offend the warmongers too much. This did not happen here, but the issue was raised.

This debate carries over to how the movement should approach opposing the current U.S. intervention in Kurdistan. A demonstration was held here last week in support of the Kurdish people's struggle for self-determination, against suppression of the Kurds by the Iraqi regime, against U.S. imperialism's manipulation of the Kurdish question, and calling for the U.S. to get out. This is the stand that needs to be taken. But activists involved in organizing this demonstration ran into various obstacles.

For instance, there is quite a bit of unclarity in the movement about how to oppose the Iraqi regime and support the Kurds without supporting U.S. imperialism. And there are those who are intent on opposing the Kurdish movement for self determination because they prefer to support the Iraqi regime. There also seem to be those who are hesitant to come out against the current U.S. activities because the U.S. is using its more humanitarian guise.

A serious appraisal of the situation leads us to this conclusion. The Kurdish cause is just, arising from the horrible social conditions and national oppression facing the Kurdish people. It is not the creation of the CIA. U.S. imperialism is afraid of the Kurdish revolt, and preferred to see Saddam Hussein crush it. Administration policy towards the Kurdish struggle is to use it to put pressure on the Iraqi regime to do its bidding, and it has this same aim with the setting up of the camps. The Kurdish movement deserves support, which requires the activists having their own independent views on the struggle, including the recognition of its weaknesses towards both U.S. imperialism and the Iraqi regime. We should oppose the suppression of the movement by the Iraqi regime and the more sneaky suppression of it by U.S. imperialism. The movement must not get by U.S. imperialism's painting itself in a

humanitarian guise.

Another lesson was the importance of having a militant and oppositional movement.

In Chicago marchers repeatedly took to the streets despite police bullying. Some forces opposed this and other militancy, and started up a debate about so-called civil disobedience vs. building the mass movement.

And this debate had real consequences. I think many of us in this meeting are aware of the events at the Feb. 25th march here — the demonstration that was held immediately after the ground war began. The immediate issue was whether to hold the planned march or whether to restrict the activity to a tame rally. The leaders of the Emergency Coalition, under the guise that they couldn't control a march, called it off, and in an underhanded way. A whole section of the activists quite justifiably felt that the situation called something more serious than a tame rally, and they marched anyway.

When activists took off for a demonstration that night, many recognized that it was not just a question of a march or a rally. Many recognized what the leaders of the Emergency Coalition were doing with their support for the Democratic Party and particularly for the mayoral campaign of Danny Davis. The real question was not whether militancy turns off the masses. The real question is what type of movement are we trying to build, and who are we trying to attract? To attract the masses and confront the imperialists, we need a militant movement. But to take part in bourgeois politicking and seek the support of establishment figures, to attract the "middle class" and search for a niche in the media, the movement has to be kept tame and restrained.

Forces around the Emergency Coalition are still viciously attacking the activists for marching that night. They recently issued a flyer on police harassment of the movement. It referred to several incidents of FBI harassment, arrests, etc. But along with this it also insinuated that

those who marched on Feb. 25 were influenced to do so by police activities.

So who is going to continue the fight against U.S. intervention in the Middle East? Who will continue the fight against U.S. imperialism elsewhere? Who will help build a militant movement against racism, for women's rights, etc.? Not the leaders of the Emergency Coalition. For one, the Emergency Coalition liquidated itself last weekend. Even before this, some leaders of Emergency Coalition were asked about doing something in regards to the 10,000 U.S. troops in northern Iraq. They stated that they had learned that demonstrations do not work and that electoral methods are the only way to fight.

In Chicago, it's those forces who want a militant movement who are working to build up the various struggles. It's those forces who participated in the march on Feb. 25, not those who opposed it.

And who will bring the anti-war agitation to the working class communities? It won't be done by the opponents of militancy. It won't be done by those who try to adapt to the chauvinist campaigns of the bourgeoisie. It won't be done by those who think we can win over the bourgeois press. It won't be done by those who identify the workers with the pro-capitalist trade union officialdom, and the oppressed minorities with the respectable pro-establishment leaders. It won't be done by those who think we have to adapt our agitation to the prejudices of the liberals.

These are lessons to be learned from the anti-war movement.

The crisis provoked by the war will not end. The U.S. has entered the abyss of long-term military intervention in the Middle East. The war has deepened the economic crisis. The Wall Street stock market may be going up but the masses are being hit with unemployment.

There is no other way to end this situation but revolutionary change. Let us work to end the capitalist system and build socialism! Let us work to build a movement among the working class and poor which can accomplish that!

□

Drug busts at Bodine Electric Co.: Unjust firings and a climate of fear

Excerpted from the May 29 issue of Chicago Workers' Voice, paper of the MLP-Chicago:

What happened?

On Monday, May 6, several Bodine employees were confronted by the company and accused of using drugs and alcohol on company property. Bodine had hired private detectives (reputed to be moonlighting Chicago cops) to spy on employees for over a month. Workers were videotaped inside the plant and out in the parking lot. Most of the accused were never shown any evidence, and one of the accused saw a videotape of himself which showed no wrongdoing.

The first group of workers confronted were ordered to take drug tests or be fired. They were also pressured by the company to give the names of other workers who used drugs. Some were asked to confirm the company's suspicions about particular individuals.

In response to this, some workers stood up to the company, refused to submit to drug testing or to inform on other workers. Most did submit to tests and, unfortunately, some collapsed under the pressure and handed over the names of fellow workers.

In all the company confronted over 20 workers. The final casualty report is three were fired and one quit, although one of the fired workers has filed a grievance.

Why did it happen?

Work was very slow from March to early May, and the company laid off a lot of workers. Over 100 from the Machine Shop alone. What better way to further reduce the workforce without increasing Bodine's unemployment insurance costs than a big drug bust? Or, if they didn't want to eliminate any more jobs, they could just fire a lot of people and call back laid-off workers to replace them, again reducing Bodine's payments for unemployment. Brilliant, no? Diabolical too!

Bodine never carried out drug testing when the workload was heavy. Job elimination is why the busts took place and Bodine isn't the only company that pulled this crap during the present recession. The Main Post Office downtown had its own drug bust. And around the country many corporations have used drug testing to pare down their workforce with firings instead of layoffs.

The company initially fired more than three workers but took several back. This gives the impression that the company is arbitrary in its decisions. Not so, says Bodine. The company's explanation is that they only fired those who lied, that tested positive for drugs that they hadn't already confessed to using.

But this is the company's big lie. More work started coming in at the time the drug busts were made. Bodine starts thinking the recession is over. So the company suddenly needed the people it wanted to fire. Consequently, Bodine backed off, and some who were fired came back.

Down with Bodine's drug-testing terror campaign

Drug-testing creates an atmosphere of fear and suspicion. To the company, the terror and insecurity caused by these drug busts is invaluable. The union contract comes up this fall and the company wants the workers divided and fearful. Bodine wants an atmosphere where snitching is fashionable and each employee is left to fend for themselves.

After the drug busts, Bodine passed out to each employee an anti-drug pamphlet. The pamphlet was nothing but propaganda for drug-testing and snitching. It tries to make its case in the name of safety. It has a lot to say about accidents and drug abuse. It implies that most accidents are caused by drunks and junkies in the workplace and that everyone should be on the lookout for them. It is more propaganda to make workers suspicious of each other, to blame themselves for accidents, and to gain approval for drug testing.

Is Bodine concerned about safety? Then why don't they pass out a booklet on the connection between piecework and accidents. How about one titled "Speeding up jobs causes accidents." But no, you never see the company hand out a book that points to the real cause of accidents, that is, the capitalists, their constant pressure for production, and their refusal to spend enough money for safety equipment. This truth is only brought out by the working class movement. From Karl Marx's *Capital* to the modern-day exposures of murder, maiming and poisoning in the workplace, the facts show that the drive for profit creates dangerous conditions, and when the inevitable accident happens, the rich scream, "it's the victim's own fault."

Note that OSHA nailed Bodine (again!) with 3 citations on May 1. It's so good to see that Bodine cares about health and safety on the shop floor!

The "war on drugs" is a war on the poor

There is a real serious drug problem but the government's war on drugs is not the solution.

Funding drug treatment, education, job training, jobs, housing medicine? The rich want none of that. Their program is: Evict tenants from public housing without a trial or hearing so the projects can be converted into condos for

yuppies. Eliminate jobs by firings instead of "costly" layoffs. Fill the jails with the poor. The government is even looking into turning the prisons into privately-owned factories.

The "war on drugs" is a war against the poor. Drug use is bad: it destroys lives and weakens the working class. But persecuting the drug user does not solve the drug crisis, it

only makes life worse for the impoverished masses caught up in the drug epidemic. What rehabilitation can take place if addicts have no housing or no job?

Down with drug-testing in the workplace! Rehabilitation, not persecution! No to the unjust firings at Bodine! □

Another police reign of terror

From the April 22 issue of Bay Area Workers' Voice, paper of the MLP-SFBA:

Oakland Housing Authority cops convicted

Last week, four Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) police were convicted on charges of brutality and corruption. This gang in blue had carried out a reign of intimidation, terror and law-breaking. They brutally beat people, stole from them, planted drugs and arrested innocent people. All this in the name of the "war on drugs".

The U.S. Attorney has called the brutality of these police an "aberration". They are being called "renegade" cops. This is a cover-up. In reality, police forces in black and poor communities across the country have been smash-

ing heads, illegally breaking down doors and brutalizing people. The beating of Rodney King by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) was out of the ordinary only because it was filmed in videotape.

This is what Bush's "war on drugs" is all about. Unleashing the police club has not and will not stop drugs. But it has made the brutality of the OHA cops and the LAPD standard operating procedure against black, Latino and other communities.

Oakland Mayor Elihu Harris has asked the chief of the Oakland Police Department to develop a plan for taking over as housing police. No one will mourn the end of the OHA goon squads. But no one should forget the Oakland Police Department's own record of cold-blooded killings and racist beatings. □

Anti-racist and anti-cutback news briefs

Black students fight racism in Vermont

Two dozen students at the University of Vermont occupied the office of the school's president at the end of April. The takeover began over the university's failure to fulfill an agreement made in 1988 to significantly increase the number of minority students and faculty.

Students declared they were 'sick and tired of the administration's lies.' One spokesperson said, "We felt that if we didn't get it done now, many of the people who took part in the '88 occupation would be graduating with nothing to show for all they had done. We felt it wouldn't be right for them to leave under those conditions."

Pressed by a similar occupation in 1988, then-president Lattie Coor signed an agreement to double the enrollment of minorities. At that time, non-whites accounted for only 4.6% of the undergraduates. By 1990, the figure had risen to only 5.8%. As well, Coor promised to implement an ethnic studies program. The University reneged on this, instituting only a one-credit course on race relations.

Coor left the university soon after this. And the new president, George Davis, has refused to endorse the pact. A student committee set up to monitor the pact met with Davis through the winter and spring—but he missed a number of meetings and was largely unresponsive. And so the students took action. A group of about 30 students conducted an eight-hour hunger strike in support of the protesters. And hundreds more have attended rallies outside the administration building. □

INS and police dept. work hand-in-hand

The *Chicago Sun Times* reported in April that Chicago suburban police departments have called in the Immigration and Naturalization Service to deport undocumented immigrants who are "suspected" of gang activity.

The police and INS claim that this is a great idea for "fighting crime." But the built-in discrimination against Latinos and other immigrants is obvious. After all, what is "suspected gang activity" to most policemen? Three Mexican men standing on a corner? Or maybe any gathering of Latinos in a park? What's actually going on is that the police can detain anyone for any reason and ask the INS to come and verify immigration status.

Anti-racist activists have organized for years to demand that local police activities and INS activities be separated. In the city of Chicago there is still a mayoral order in

effect since 1986 forbidding city police or other agencies from calling in the INS. But if this experiment in the suburbs is "successful," it is possible that the rules will be changed in Chicago. And we'll have police again calling in the INS when someone "foreign looking," or who speaks with an accent, is "suspected" of traffic violations.

(From the May 29 issue of the *Chicago Workers' Voice*, paper of the MLP-Chicago.) □

Puerto Rican students strike vs. tuition hikes

Students at the Rio Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) struck April 27 in a one-day protest against tuition increases.

Hundreds of students picketed the main gates of the campus, shutting it down. The non-teaching campus workers and professors supported the protest. Eventually the school administration was forced to cancel classes on all campuses of the UPR. □

States shift tax burden onto the workers

The same sort of tax swindle going on at the federal level is also plaguing the state and local governments.

The corporations have been holding the state treasuries ransom, threatening to pull up stakes and leave unless they are given enormous tax breaks and other handouts. Meanwhile, the tax burden is being shifted onto the working class and the poor.

According to the report by the Citizens for Tax Justice (CTJ), most states and local government are increasingly using sales and excise taxes, which hit those with lower incomes the hardest, instead of the more progressive corporate and income taxes. As a result, an increasing portion of the income of poor and working people is being eaten up by state taxes.

For example, in 1985 the poorest one-fifth of U.S. families paid an average of 12.6% of their annual income in state taxes. This year the average will be pushed up to 13.8%.

But while these families—whose income average only \$12,700 a year—pay 13.8% in state taxes, the richest 1% of the families are allowed to pay only 7.6% of their income in state taxes. □

How the Turkish government "helps" the Kurds

The Turkish government of President Ozal is being lauded by Bush and the media. Ozal was a loyal ally of Western imperialism during the war against Iraq and now, we are told, Turkey is doing oh-so much to help the Kurdish refugees fleeing Saddam Hussein's terror.

What a lie! The Turkish government refuses to let most of the refugees come down from the mountainside into the lowland. It is this which has led to the atrocious conditions of hunger, thirst, cold and misery which has taken the lives of a number of Kurdish refugees. It is this which has led the U.S., Britain and other Western powers to hurriedly rig up their scheme of "safe havens" inside Iraq.

Why is the Turkish government doing this? Because it is fearful of allowing Iraqi Kurds to mingle with the Kurds inside Turkey. Iraqi Kurds have been involved in rebellion and are politicized; the Turkish government wants to keep them away from the local Kurds whose national rights it ruthlessly suppresses.

This is clear from how Turkey treated the previous wave of Iraqi Kurdish refugees.

In 1988, 50,000 Iraqi Kurds fled to Turkey to escape poison-gas attacks and other atrocities by the Iraqi military. Many of these refugees are still in Turkey. They are in two refugee camps, virtual prisoners of the Turkish military. Near Diyarbakir, the largest Kurdish city in Turkey, some 15,000 live in concrete buildings, nine or ten to a room, surrounded by barbed wire and machine-gun-toting Turkish soldiers. They are allowed out only in small numbers and for no more than five hours. They cannot work. To the southeast, 16,000 more languish in tents in a desolate area.

The Turkish ruling class puts on a facade of parliamentary democracy, but it has entrusted real power to its barbarous generals. Its treatment of the Kurds shows how cruel is the Turkish government, the great ally of the White House. It is an oppressor of the Kurds, just like Saddam's regime. □

Correspondence:

May 17, 1991

Dear Friends,

I'm earning a little more money these days, so I wanted to pass on a little contribution to you for the paper and the *Supplement*.

My first response to the Second Gulf War was that it was an inter-imperialist war. As far as I could see, you were the only group on the left who advanced that interpretation. I just can't accept the argument that Iraq is a dependent country. Just because Saddam and the Ba'athist bourgeoisie invested their money in war instead of industry doesn't make them victims of imperialism.

I also liked your polemic with the Spartacists. When I first read their arguments for supporting the Iraqi reactionaries, I couldn't believe that they didn't recognize the difference between an uprising against a colonial oppressor state and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. But you exposed this fallacious reasoning with much greater historical and theoretical detail than I command.

Finally, I enjoyed the article on the Soviet Union by the Portuguese comrades that you translated in the *Supplement* [see *Replying to American communists* in the March 15 issue]. I feel it had perhaps more substance than your reply allowed it, but you certainly had some well-taken objections. I do find it troubling, however, that in your discussion materials you admit how tentative and difficult the analysis of the class struggles in the Soviet Union and the class nature of Soviet society is, while in the paper you simply assert that state capitalism prevails. A little humility in your public presentations of crucial questions wouldn't shake people's confidence in you at all.

Yours truly,
[A reader from Austin, Texas] □

The *Supplement*:

Thanks for your letter. We appreciate receiving the reactions of thoughtful readers, and seeing both what they like and what bothers them.

With respect to state capitalism, it is true that it seems to us that the issue isn't whether the Soviet Union became a state-capitalist society, but how this came about, getting a better picture of the features of revisionist state-capitalism, and above all, learning to distinguish between

the revolutionary measures and the path of degeneration to state capitalist rule. The fact that one cannot simply say "avoid state capitalism," but has to distinguish between the revolutionary utilization of state capitalism and the road to state capitalist society, is the source of much of the complexity of the problem.

The OCPO puts forward both that the Soviet Union became state-capitalist, and also that it essentially was only capitalist in embryo. This doesn't seem consistent to us. We see that the Portuguese comrades are posing many of the vital issues of the day, and they put forward many definitive views on issues where it will take us much longer to get worked-out answers. But their method of approach seems to cut against further work to resolve these issues, and sometimes presents such work as historical idealism. □

S.H.A.R.P.

Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice
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For Immediate Release: 4/25/91

Contact: Stephanie Bower (503) 232-9626

Statement To Press: Concerning The Frame Up Conviction Of Mark Newman President of SHARP.

On April 24, 1991 Mark Newman, President and Founder of the Portland Chapter of Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice, was sentenced to 16 months in prison on a frame up charge of assault in this latest cop attack on anti-racist activists.

Mark Newman was denied probation on the grounds that he is a threat to society. When in actuality he has done massive work within the community to stop racial violence and has organized many anti-racist events in the Portland area. The organization he is president of has acted as peace marshalls at many anti-Nazi events and marches.

The prosecution of Mark Newman is a blatant political frameup. The cops who have protected the fascists want to disarm the militant anti-racists. If this succeeds, everyone will be more vulnerable to cop and fascist attacks. □

More on the views of the Portuguese comrades: Were we wrong to denounce the Soviet Union as imperialist?

The OCPO's article "Replying to the American communists" appeared in the March 15 issue of the Supplement, pp. 15-31. The article "On the views of the Portuguese comrades on the tasks during the collapse of revisionism: Communism develops with the class struggle" appeared in the April 20 Supplement, pp. 3-7. Below we continue to discuss the OCPO's views.

Were the opponents of Soviet revisionism wrong to characterize and condemn the Soviet Union as a social-imperialist power? This is one of the main ideas put forward by the Portuguese comrades of the OCPO (Communist Organization—Workers' Policy) in their article *Replying to the American communists*.

The phrase "social-imperialism" was used by most anti-revisionists to denounce the Soviet Union as a power which was "socialist in word, but imperialist in deeds." OCPO's objection isn't so much to this particular phrase as to the whole analysis of the contemporary Soviet Union being an imperialist power.

This is a theme the Portuguese comrades have been developing for several years now. As they point out in their article, in December 1987 they raised some objections to the "social-imperialism" theory. But they now believe that they only touched the problem then. At that time they had come to realize that "Eastern capitalism was not as mighty as we thought". (Referred to in their article *Replying to the American communists*, see the Supplement, March 15, page 17, col. 1). They are now questioning whether the Soviet Union was imperialist at all. They do not seem to think so; they can only see some "elements" of imperialism, but no more.

This assessment is part of the tendency in OCPO's current thinking to see the Soviet Union from the late 1920's until recently as some type of intermediate society between socialism and capitalism. Unfortunately OCPO's views on this issue have not been put forward in the clearest manner. On one hand OCPO accepts that the Soviet Union has been state-capitalist, and it polemicizes against the idea of something intermediate between socialism and capitalism. But the Portuguese comrades are dissatisfied with characterizing the Soviet Union as state-capitalist. In *Replying to the American communists* OCPO stresses that the Soviet Union has been capitalist only in embryo. Thus they also see imperialism in the Soviet Union only in an embryonic form.

We think the Portuguese comrades are wrong to deny imperialism in the Soviet Union. In this article, we will briefly take up the key arguments OCPO makes on this

subject.

We do want to point out that the issue at stake here isn't that the Portuguese comrades are throwing overboard their historic opposition to Soviet revisionism. No, they reaffirm their agreement with the sentiment of the anti-revisionist movement which saw that "under the fake socialism of the USSR, an anti-proletarian, exploiting and oppressive regime was at work" (Cited in the Supplement, page 16, bottom half of col 2) However, the logic of their present thinking boils down to a tendency to see the pre-Gorbachev Soviet Union as a progressive force of some kind. In today's world when Soviet revisionism is collapsing, this view leads to an attitude of mourning the collapse of revisionism and shock at living and fighting in a world without a power like the Soviet Union of recent decades.

An understandable dissatisfaction with past analysis

OCPO's criticism of the theory of Soviet social-imperialism began with dissatisfaction with the Chinese and Albanian critique of the USSR. We share this dissatisfaction with the Portuguese comrades.

For example, in the early 1970's it was the CP of China who distorted the criticism of Soviet social-imperialism into the view that since Soviet imperialism was a young and rising imperialist power, the Soviet Union was therefore the most dangerous superpower in the world. This was what their class-collaborationist "theory of three worlds", which originally presented itself as the way to fight both superpowers, ended up as—a call to ally with U.S. imperialism, Western European imperialism, and reactionary third world powers in a common front against the Soviet Union. Groups under the influence of the "theory of three worlds" became supporters of reactionary, pro-U.S. forces under the pretext of fighting the "main danger", the Soviet Union.

The Albanian Party of Labor eventually denounced the

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Chinese revisionist "theory of three worlds". They denounced U.S. and Soviet imperialism as the two chief global enemies of oppressed humanity. But later the Albanians, and various pro-Albanian organizations, went through a period of backing away from various struggles and popular movements if they saw any pro-Soviet influence.

The view that both the superpowers were imperialist was distorted to the view that various world events could be reduced to simply the influence of one or the other superpower. The concept of two superpowers was interpreted as meaning that the U.S. and the Soviet Union were exactly equal in all respects, and not just that both were dominant imperialist powers. United front tactics as well as the struggle against revisionism were reduced to denouncing movements that didn't recognize the U.S. and Soviet Union as both enemies; the struggle against the stand of merging with the big social-democratic and revisionist forces was reduced to a stand of boycotting various struggles. Some organizations stood aloof from solidarity with liberation struggles in Central America (later collapsing into support of the opportunist and even bourgeois forces). And some organizations took a boycottist approach to much of the struggle against NATO and its war drive in Western Europe during the early 1980's under the pretext that the Warsaw Pact wasn't being equally denounced.

That the OCPO is upset with these political stands is not only understandable, but the reason why we recognize them as comrades. Naturally, they have sought to find the concepts which underlie such disgraceful actions. But we think they have oversimplified the problem and reduced it to simply whether one views the Soviet Union as imperialist or a superpower. For example, they don't seem to recognize that the conception of united front tactics and anti-revisionist struggle played a big role in the errors of the pro-Albanian groups, nor do they deal with the "three worlds theory" of the pro-Chinese except in its most extreme form.

We believe that the Chinese and Albanian betrayal of the struggle were striking manifestations of the errors in their particular views about world politics and imperialism. But this does not prove that the Soviet Union wasn't imperialist or a superpower. The pro-Chinese and pro-Albanian treacheries didn't stem from holding that the Soviet Union was imperialist or that it was a superpower, but from the particular views of these trends on how to act towards imperialism, revisionism, and the mass struggle. The views of the pro-Chinese and pro-Albanian organizations on imperialism, world politics, the concept of what a superpower was, united front tactics, and how to struggle against revisionism were flawed, inadequate, wrong, and liquidationist.

OCPO's main arguments

What are OCPO's main arguments denying the existence of Soviet imperialism?

* They hold that the defining feature of capitalist imperialism is export of capital, and they regard Soviet export of capital to be non-existent.

* They hold that since the Soviet economy was internally so much weaker than the U.S. and other big Western imperialist powers, it is ludicrous to have considered the Soviet Union as an imperialist superpower.

* They hold that the Soviet Union played a role in the Third World as a shield for national liberation movements, and this is incompatible with the image of an imperialist power fighting for its share of the world.

A schematic view of Lenin's analysis

What is imperialism? It is the domination by one power of territories beyond its natural boundaries. Empires can include territories under the direct control of an imperialist power as well as dependencies and spheres of influence.

Imperialism is not new. Imperialism long predates capitalism. But the imperialism that evolved in the latter part of the 19th century did have new features. It was an imperialism born of capitalist development. Specifically, it was an imperialism growing out of the increasing concentration and monopolization of capital in countries like the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan.

Anyone who looks at the world of recent years can see that the Soviet Union controlled an empire of its own. The Soviet Union was much more powerful militarily than economically, with a large but mostly backward economy, but it managed to project its power. The Russian-dominated empire included direct control of non-Russian peoples within the Soviet Union. It included countries Moscow dominated throughout most of Eastern Europe. The Soviet state-capitalists also tried to extend their sphere of influence in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean, etc. That these relations were largely those of Soviet domination, there can hardly be much doubt of. Thus the issue isn't really whether Soviet imperialism has existed or not, but what's the character of Soviet imperialism. Is it essentially capitalist imperialism, or is it some new kind of imperialism?

Lenin's theoretical work on imperialism has been quite important. In this work, Lenin's role was not that he showed imperialism's existence. No, his Marxist analysis showed instead the connection of modern imperialism with capitalist exploitation inside the metropolis, the aggressive drive and intensified national oppression brought about by the world development of private, competitive capitalism into monopoly capitalism, and the forces and tendencies that worked to undermine imperialism. He defended and extended the Marxist view of imperialism.

In Lenin's day, there were various reformists and liberals willing to recognize imperialism and condemn some of its atrocities, but it was Lenin who showed that modern imperialism was not a mere accident or unfortunate policy. He showed its link to the most important economic trends of the capitalism of his time. From this Lenin concluded

that imperialist oppression would not be done away with tinkering with the system, or by the spontaneous evolution of capitalism. There would be bitter class struggle and liberation wars against various examples of imperialist oppression, and only the socialist revolution, by overthrowing monopoly capitalism, could end imperialism as a system.

Lenin's work *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism* is a complex and multi-faceted theoretical work on imperialism. He goes into many of the basic features of modern imperialism, its evolution, and the implications for the revolutionary movement. At a certain point in this work, Lenin summarizes the economic basis of modern imperialism, and pointed to what he regarded as five of its basic features as a world system:

"... (1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital", of a financial oligarchy; (3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; (4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and (5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed." (*Imperialism, Ch. VII "Imperialism, as a special stage of capitalism"*)

However it would most one-sided and rigid to see these basic features as some pattern to which a country has to fully conform in order for its actions and its ruling class to be considered imperialist. Rather they are the basic features of a *world system* of modern, capitalist imperialism. In this system, a particular imperialist power may well have some of its own individual characteristics.

If there is any essential feature of capitalist imperialism, it would have to be the dominant role of monopoly within capitalism. As Lenin put it,

"Economically, the main thing in this process is the displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly." (*Ibid.*, first paragraph)

And on this there can hardly be any doubt about the Soviet Union — capitalism in the Soviet Union is largely in the form of state monopoly. The OCPO itself acknowledges this, and if anything goes overboard in denying any competition in the Soviet economy. But it sees this only as an element favoring a future imperialism. OCPO seems to hold that the Soviet Union exports no capital, and this being the case, the Soviet Union falls short of Lenin's definition.

There are two problems with this.

The export of capital

First, it is wrong to deny that the Soviet Union has been exporting capital. True, the amount has not been large compared to the West. But the fact remains that the

sending of investment capital into such countries as India, Nasser's Egypt, Eastern Europe, Iraq, etc. is exported capital all the same. It was given under the guise of aid for state industry and "socialist assistance" and what not, but everywhere, the function it has performed — not unlike capital from the West — has been to bolster capitalist relations in the periphery while providing economic advantages to the Soviet Union at home. This remains true even if the terms of this "aid", for certain groups of countries at least, were not as onerous as that demanded by the U.S. or the IMF.

Second, and even more important, the export of capital cannot be taken as the defining feature of whether the Soviet Union has been imperialist. Let us recall Russia under the Tsar. There is no doubt that Lenin considered Russia to have been an imperialist power at that time. He describes Tsarist Russia as a country,

"which is economically most backward..., where modern capitalist imperialism is enmeshed, so to speak, in a particularly close network of precapitalist relations." (*Ibid.*, end of a paragraph midway in Ch. VI)

Russia did not export much capital; rather it was a recipient of foreign capital — so much so that, economically speaking, it was something of a semi-colony of France. But this did not stop Russia from being a capitalist-imperialist power or Lenin from recognizing it as such.

Alongside the question of export of capital, OCPO points to their unease over the relations of the Soviet Union with Eastern Europe and other Soviet spheres of influence not fitting what they regard as the general pattern of imperialist exploitation. Actually the picture of Soviet economic relations with its dominated countries is complex. It deserves closer analysis, but we don't think that wipes out their essentially imperialist character.

Of course, there were some countries like Cuba which the Soviet Union subsidized. But Western imperialism too has some countries it subsidizes. Look at Israel. Such relations are maintained for geo-political reasons — for the maintenance of the empire as a whole and not so much for profits from the particular country.

As for Soviet economic relations with Eastern Europe, they have historically evolved and have varied from country to country. In the early period, after World War II, there was some direct looting of factories in the name of war reparations. This proved untenable and, after a period of time, other relations were set up. Despite differences from one country to another, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that, as Eastern Europe entered economic crisis in the 70's, the Soviet Union made sure to use its economic domination to its own advantage. And of course, there were also the payments to the Soviet Union for the cost of stationing Soviet troops in Eastern Europe.

The Soviet Union had worked hard to create a trading bloc and various economic, political and military mechanisms to ensure their control. As for Russian control of these mechanisms there can be little doubt.

Soviet role in the Third World

The other argument OCPO makes denying Soviet imperialism is really a political one. This is the argument about the Soviet Union playing the role of a shield for national liberation movements, and that this is incompatible with the Soviet Union being an imperialist country.

First, let's take up the question of the Soviet Union playing the role of a shield. By this, OCPO is referring to the Soviet Union's relations with such countries as Viet Nam, Cuba, the ex-Portuguese colonies in Africa, etc.

OCPO seems to stress the Soviet Union's relations with liberation movements in the Third World. This is terribly one-sided. It ignores that the Soviet Union allied itself with and bolstered quite a few bloodstained bourgeois regimes which had little to do with any liberation movement.

In the Middle East, for example, the Soviet Union allied itself with the Ba'athist regimes of Syria and Iraq. A long time ago, these political forces may have represented some type of petty bourgeois nationalists, but despite their "anti-imperialist" and "socialist" rhetoric, there can be little doubt about their oppressive and dictatorial character.

Then there was Mengistu's Ethiopia, which was no less a ferocious hangman regime. His regime has finally fallen after long, dreary years of war, where he fought for no higher aims than suppression of the Eritrean people's right to self-determination and establishing a rigid bureaucratic rule over the Ethiopian masses.

And for decades, India was cultivated as a prize country to woo into the Soviet sphere. Congress-ruled India is also a far cry from a liberation movement.

Of course, the U.S.-dominated empire of Third World hangman regimes was much larger, we don't doubt that. But we think it is a futile exercise to compare body counts, prison populations, torture levels, etc. between the U.S. and Soviet Union as a method by which to judge the international role of the Soviet Union.

And even where the Soviet Union played the role of a shield for progressive movements, this role was double-edged. Yes, Soviet aid allowed a number of forces to win their liberation struggles. But at what price? Along with this came the imposition of the Soviet model of state-capitalist society as socialist or at least non-capitalist development. Along with this came Soviet "advisors" not all that different than the "development mafia" of the West. Along with this came trainers for the secret police, the bureaucracy and the military. All these things set back the cause of proletarian independence and genuine socialism in these lands, as socialism became identified with bureaucratic state-capitalism.

Other Imperialist powers as shields

And does the role of a shield for the liberation movements fundamentally disprove Soviet imperialism? We do not think so. True, among the forces the Soviet Union tried

to play to in the Third World were a number of popular movements. Many were the descendants of communist parties which had emerged in the wake of the Russian revolution, although they too had taken the route of revisionist degeneration. The Soviet Union, when it emerged as an imperialist power, was in a unique position to take advantage of these movements to further its great-power interests. And it did so. That, after all, was one of the specific features of Soviet social-imperialism.

Such maneuvering was not, however, unique to the Soviet Union. Throughout history, one imperialism has not hesitated to act as a shield for the liberation movements aimed against its rivals when it has seen an opportunity to further its interests. For example, during World War I and afterwards, German imperialism was well-known to cultivate contacts with nationalist and revolutionary elements in the British colonies. Japanese imperialism did likewise in Asia in World War II; it even brought anti-Dutch nationalists into the regime they set up in Indonesia (although Japanese imperialism accomplished the bloody feat of being even more cruel and crude than the Dutch, quickly alienating whatever influence they might have otherwise had). And even U.S. imperialism tried this, developing ties with anti-British colonial movements after World War II in order to penetrate British spheres of influence.

Ultimately, Soviet economic weakness undermined its empire-building. At one point, Soviet aid and the Soviet model of state-capitalist development appeared to the Third World bourgeoisie as an attractive alternative which would give quicker development than what Western-style capitalism offered. But this did not pan out. The Soviet economy was too weak to provide much investment capital, and state-capitalism itself proved to be no capitalist heaven.

In conclusion

We do not think that the OCPO comrades have proved their case denying the imperialist character of Soviet revisionism. Many of the questions they raise, however, show the need for a better, and more scientific analysis of Soviet imperialism than that from the pro-Chinese and pro-Albanians.

The facts however show that the Soviet Union has been a superpower, although an economically weak one. Its superpower status came largely from the size of the Soviet Union and its economy, and above all from its military strength. Ultimately, however, the disproportion between superpower status and economic backwardness took its toll. In its rivalry with the U.S. bloc, the Soviet Union lost out. Today, with the long years of economic stagnation and depression in the Soviet Union, bureaucratic state-capitalism in the Soviet Union has gone into its death throes, its external empire has by and large collapsed, and its internal empire is consumed by national strife. But one capitalist imperialism losing out to another is not a new and unknown phenomenon either. □

The hypocrisy of "military, but not political, support" for tyranny

Building an anti-imperialist movement, or putting hopes in Hussein's military?

Part Three

Day after day, new events show the criminal nature of both armies in the Persian Gulf war. Only one side deserved support in this war, and that was the struggling masses, oppressed by murderous U.S. imperialism and its favorite monarchies, and also by the savage tyranny of Saddam Hussein. The White House and Hussein have even tacitly collaborated in suppressing the revolt of the Iraqi masses.

The Trotskyists and related groups, however, advocated "military support" for Hussein's tyranny under such slogans as "defend Iraq" or "victory to Iraq". They pretended that there was something anti-imperialist in Hussein's driving of the Iraqi people into yet another war.

We have denounced this sham militancy as a betrayal of the working masses and of the real tasks of anti-imperialism. In this particular series of articles, we are dealing with the views of the Trotskyist Spartacist League (SL), which has directly polemicized against our party. Along with Parts One and Two of this article, we reprinted in full statements from the SL opposing the stand of our Party (see the *Workers' Advocate Supplement* for February 20 and April 20).

In defending their reliance on Hussein's bayonets, the SL has repeatedly brought forward an extract from Lenin's 1915 pamphlet *Socialism and War*. Lenin wrote that if Morocco (a protectorate) were to be at war with its oppressor France, or India (a colony) with its occupier Britain, or Persia or China (semi-colonies) with Russia, then these would be liberation wars on the part of oppressed Morocco, India, Persia or China--no matter which side attacked first. The SL made the astonishing discovery that this meant that Lenin was giving military support for local tyrants. As SL put it,

"When Lenin wrote this, Morocco was ruled by the sultan Mulai Yusuf, Persia by the military dictator Ephraim Khan and China by the warlord Yuan Shih-kai--rulers such as bloody and reactionary as Iraq's Saddam Hussein." (For example, see the January 18 *Workers' Vanguard* cited in the *Supplement*, Feb. 20, p. 25, or the March 15 *WV*, cited in the *Supplement* of April 20.)

In Part One of this article we showed that Lenin in fact opposed the local reactionary dregs. He was talking of liberation movements, and they were not only going up against the European imperialists, but the local tyrants as well. In Morocco, the war Lenin was talking about actually

broke out, and it was led by Abd el-Krim while the imperialists had been making use of the sultan. In China, Lenin talked about the possibility of European capitalism sending troops to back up Yuan Shih-kai against the Chinese people. In Persia, Lenin backed the revolutionary movement being suppressed by the military dictator.

What was the response of the SL theoreticians?

Why, they said, this history was all "thoroughly scholastic". (Cited in the *Supplement*, April 20, page 10, col. 1) They were the ones who put forward the activities of sultan Mulai Yusuf, warlord Yuan Shih-kai, and military dictator Ephraim Khan as proof of the revolutionary nature of their "military support" for Saddam Hussein. They were the ones who drew an analogy between Morocco, China, and Persia in those days and Iraq today. But when we pointed out that they were lying about history and prettifying these notorious tyrants from history, they suddenly turned silent. They pretend to be communists. But the distinction between the movement of the oppressed on the one hand, and the warlords and military dictators on the other, is just empty "scholasticism" in their eyes.

Furthermore, they wrote that we were supposedly trying "to prove that Lenin's 1915 position on China, India, Morocco 'and so on' was not a *general* position on wars between imperialist countries and countries oppressed by imperialism." (*Ibid.*, emphasis in the original)

What slippery liars the SL leaders are! How bitterly they attempt to obscure the real issues in a controversy! What we proved was that Lenin's position on Morocco, China, India, and Persia was *diametrically opposed* to SL's licking

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of the asses of tyrants and warlords. We did not claim that this was a difference restricted to one or two minor historical episodes. On the contrary, what we showed that Lenin's general position is utterly opposed to SL's.

The SL theoreticians continued with two more theses that further underlined the dramatic difference in their general stand and that of Lenin. The first concerns the mass movements, and the second concerns Turkey.

SL against the mass struggle

First of all, they wrote:

"MLP wants to claim that ... Lenin was not speaking of a war against imperialism by the bourgeois rulers but rather a 'revival of the revolutionary movement.' Not so." (*Ibid.*, col. 2)

Just as the SL hates the current anti-war movement, and curses it, so do they write off the history of the movements of the oppressed. Oh, they are full of talk about how it would be good to have the "dictatorship of the proletariat, resting on an alliance with the poor peasants" and "an extension of the revolution to the imperialist metropolises." Anything you like. But when it comes to practical politics, they denounce the very thought the anti-imperialist struggle has anything to do with "the revival of the revolutionary movement." Instead they look towards the powers-that-be, and don't hesitate before "third worldist" dreaming about the supposed anti-imperialist feats of reactionary sultans like Mulai Yusuf, the warlords like Yuan Shih-kai, military dictators like Ephraim Khan, and tyrants like Saddam Hussein.

The SL ignored all the statements of Lenin we cited about the concrete situation in the oppressed countries of this time. They refuse to discuss Lenin's analysis of the democratic revolution spreading in Asia, of the situation facing the revolution in Persia, etc. All this is irrelevant to them. All they can see in China, which Lenin said had become "a land of seething political activity, the scene of a virile social movement and of a democratic upsurge", was the warlord Yuan Shih-kai. All they could see in Morocco, where the ruling sultans felt the ground shaking under them and turned to French bayonets for help, was these same blood-stained sultans. And SL attributes its own blindness to Lenin, and insists that Lenin was not making a concrete statement in support of the movement of the oppressed, but simply expressing a geographical platitude about any country with any degree of dependence on imperialism.

The SL theoreticians insist that they "can cite any number of other quotes from Lenin" (*Ibid.*, col. 10) to back up their divorce of anti-imperialism from the revolutionary movements. But we showed in Part Two that every single statement from Lenin given by SL came from a work which was discussing the movements of the oppressed, the mass national movements, or the revolutionary movements.

Turkey: SL as Empire-Socialists

But the SL leaders also unleashed another historical analogy. They gave up right away about comparing colonial India to Iraq. And they feel shaky with Morocco, China, and Persia. So they moved over to Turkey. They present it triumphantly. It is supposed to prove their case beyond a shadow of a doubt. As long as there is another third world tyrant in history to fall back on, SL will continue chasing over the globe to find another analogy to justify their support for Saddam Hussein.

We had pointed to the difference between movements of the oppressed against imperialism and Saddam Hussein's bloody efforts to make Iraq into a regional bully. The SL ridiculed this distinction. They pointed to Lenin calling the Turkey of 1920 a "semi-colony". Ah, they imply, now we have the MLP:

"Under Hussein, they [MLP] says, Iraq seeks 'to become a regional bully.' Would the MLP like to claim that Turkey was not then acting as a bully toward the subject peoples of the collapsed Ottoman Empire?" (*Ibid.*, col. 20)

So it doesn't matter to SL that presently Iraq's Hussein has been recklessly spilling Iraqi and other peoples' blood to become a regional bully. After all, the upper classes in Turkey (the dominant nationality in the Ottoman Empire) were also bullies in the early twentieth century. And why not be more concrete? The Turkish upper classes, including the upper class reformers, had dragged Turkey into one war after another in order to preserve the Ottoman Empire and their dominant position. And they had staged infamous massacres, such as the genocidal slaughter of the Armenians.

By comparing Turkey and Iraq, the SL are declaring "military support" for these wars and massacres which was the way the government of the Ottoman Empire tried to maintain itself against the threat of partition. The SL are declaring themselves empire-socialists.

It is true that, back in the early twentieth century, Turkey was both the ruler of an empire, and a target of the European imperialist powers. But only for SL does this mean that one can issue a blank check for the military efforts of the Turkish government.

Consider the statement from Lenin in *Socialism and War* about wars which Morocco, India, China, and Persia might wage. Lenin does *not* include Turkey in this list. And still less does Lenin call for "military support" for the rulers of the Ottoman Empire.

This was not an accident or an oversight.

Indeed, Lenin refers elsewhere in this pamphlet to Turkey. And the question of Turkey and Turkish wars, and imperialist attempts to partition Turkey, were a major issue in the analysis of World War I. Furthermore, Turkey was waging war against England and Russia at the time Lenin was writing, since Turkey was a German ally in World War I.

No, the situation in the Ottoman Empire was complex,

and the wars it fought were of varying character. Isn't it clear that this had something to do with the fact that, in SL's words, "Turkey was ... acting as a bully toward the subject peoples of the collapsed Ottoman Empire?" Isn't it clear that, if Iraq is really analogous to Turkey and the Ottoman empire, then only empire-socialists could render "military support" to Hussein's attempts to be a regional bully?

Lenin approached Turkey from the point of view of supporting the movements of the oppressed in Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, movements which were part of the revolutionary upsurges throughout Asia. He did not brush aside the Turkish bullying of subject peoples, but regarded the resolution of the national question as one of the basic issues confronting the Ottoman Empire. He did not divorce this from the analysis of the wars Turkey was involved with. Still less did he lecture the subject nationalities to render "military support" to the Ottoman Empire, as SL lectures the Kurds to back Hussein's war to make Iraq a regional power.

Argentina

In polemics with other Trotskyists, the Spartacist League has referred back to the 1982 war between Britain and Argentina over Malvinas (Falklands) Islands. (*Workers Vanguard*, July 27, 1990, pp.7-8) The SL denounced both sides in the war. It denounces the "military support" of the Morenoite Trotskyists for Argentina and declares

"We said 'Sink Thatcher! Sink Galtieri!'" while Moreno and his followers placed themselves, explicitly, 'in the military camp of the Argentine dictatorship'."

We ourselves ardently denounced both sides in the 1982 war between British imperialism and the Argentina fascist generals and instead supported the working masses. We also denounced the various "three worldists", pro-Soviet revisionist, and Trotskyist rationales for supporting the military adventure of the Argentine generals. (See "Opportunists sacrifice the Argentine workers to the generals" in the July 20, 1982 issue of the *Workers' Advocate*.) There is, however, a difference between our denunciation of both sides and that of the Spartacist League. Our stand on the war in 1982 followed from a consistent stand on the class struggle in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. But the Spartacist League has had to eat its own words.

Look at the arguments the SL used in 1982, and you see that they were slapping themselves in the face in advance for their present stand in the Persian Gulf war. Apparently the Morenoites argued that Argentina was a semi-colony, and hence that any war it waged against imperialism automatically deserved support. How did the SL reply?

For one thing, they said that:

"But even if Argentina were a semi-colonial country, the Malvinas adventure would still be a diversion. The PST reports that many workers are asking: 'Are we going to eat the Malvinas?'" "On the

30th [of March] they beat us with sticks; two days later they call us to the Plaza de Mayo! What do they think we are?" Obviously, the dictatorship needs some cover of its left flank and that is what the Morenoites seek to provide. According to the IWL statement, the Falklands/Malvinas clash is a 'clear anti-imperialist struggle' that has only been 'besmirched by the character of the Argentina government.' " (*WV*, June 11, 1982, page 11, col. 3, emphasis as in the original)

Could not the same thing be said about Iraq? Were the masses, suffering from the aftermath of the bloody Iran-Iraq war, supposed to eat Scud missiles? Were the Kurds, slaughtered by poison gas attacks by Saddam Hussein, supposed to turn around and loyally serve as Hussein's shock troops? What does the SL think the Iraqi people are?

The SL went on to state:

"What's anti-imperialist about the 'recovery' of this tiny archipelago hundreds of miles from the Argentine coasts?" (*Ibid.*)

Today too the SL holds that there is nothing anti-imperialist in Hussein's takeover of Kuwait. But they give "military support" to the war over Kuwait anyway. Apparently they no longer think that the object of a war is relevant to whether the workers and peasants and oppressed nationalities should suffer and die for it.

The SL went on to display indignation over what Morenoite military support for Argentina meant:

"... does Moreno want to go to the Malvinas to exhort the troops to lay down their lives for Argentina's claim to the boggy islands? ... Their support to the Falklands/Malvinas adventure is the Morenoites' worst betrayal of the Argentine revolution by far. They recognize that Galtieri 'aims to divert them [the workers] away from the struggle against their exploiters and the dictatorship...and then support this diversion on the grounds that 'recovery' of the archipelago is necessarily an anti-imperialist act'. (*Ibid.*, col 4)

Of course, back then various other Trotskyists, and reformist trends derived from Trotskyism, argued that the best way to overthrow the Argentine generals was to support them in the war. The SWP argued that the victory of the Argentine junta would put the "working people...in a better position to carry forward the fight against the military dictatorship and imperialism." (*The Militant*, April 30, 1982, p. 4). Presumably SL didn't think much of this argument back then, but regarded it as an example of giving left cover to the Argentine generals. But today they themselves repeat similar arguments with respect to the oppressive Ba'ath regime in Iraq.

And back then Sam Marcy, chairman of the Workers World party, tried to combine calling on the masses to overthrow the junta with all-out support for the war. In the course of this, he admitted the "utter insignificance" of the Malvinas "when measured against the historically urgent and imperative needs of the masses to overthrow the fascist regime." (*Workers World*, April 9, 1982, p.7) and declared

"let those who are willing to abandon the struggle against the fascist junta jump on the camarilla's bandwagon in the name of defense of the homeland. In reality they will merely be defending the usurping junta's continuation of domination and suppression of the masses." (*Workers World*, April 16, 1982, p.9) But he ended up lauding the junta's war as something that "enormously strengthened genuine anti-imperialist resistance not only in Argentina but in Latin America as a whole." (*Workers World*, May 7, 1982) Doesn't this sound awfully familiar after reading SL's declarations "against" Saddam Hussein and their protests about how indifferent they are to who rules Kuwait, which they combine with cheerleading for every military or political blow struck by Hussein's regime?

"Military, not political, support"

Today the SL still ridicules the Morenoite Trotskyists for being in the "military camp" of the Argentine generals in 1982. But at the same time SL boasts that it renders "military support", but supposedly not political support, to Saddam Hussein's regime.

From the practical point of view, the SL use this slogan to justify utter hypocrisy. In their article of March 15 replying to us, they declare that, while supporting the Iraqi military efforts, they were "denouncing the tyrant Saddam Hussein and calling for the working people of Iraq to work for the overthrow of the bloody Ba'ath regime". (Cited in the *Supplement*, April 20, 1991, p.8 col. 1) Yet they said in the same article that any Iraqi organization that sought to overthrow Hussein at this time "could only play a quisling role as U.S. puppets in the face of imperialist attack." (*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10)

And what was their attitude when the Iraqi people rose up in an attempt to overthrow Saddam Hussein? They were embarrassed. In the same March 15 issue they refer briefly and without feeling to "anti-government fighting". They ignore it in their March 29 issue. And in their April 12 issue, when the rebellions have been crushed, they carry a lengthy article arguing that the Kurds should have supported the war instead.

So much for SL "calling on the working people of Iraq to work for the overthrow of the bloody Ba'ath regime". So much for SL's alleged lack of "political support" for the regime. Their calls to overthrow the regime while supporting the war were just as fraudulent and cynical as Sam Marcy's similar appeals during the Malvinas/Falklands war of 1982. Their lectures to the Kurds and the activists that everything would have been better if only the Iraqi regime had won the war are just a repeat of SWP's view that the way to overthrow the Argentine junta was to support its criminal military adventure.

But let us look a bit further into the theoretical basis of the "military, but not political support" slogan, as it is one of the fundamental slogans common to most Trotskyists.

Does it mean critical support?

In practice, politics and war are inseparably connected. Its aggressive wars are among the most concentrated political expressions of imperialism. The liberation wars of oppressed peoples are a political response to exploitation and denial of rights. The scientific attitude to war lays stress on the politics behind the war, the attitude of different classes to the war, and the movements that have created the conditions for the war over years and decades preceding them.

The SL doesn't even attempt to deal with this theoretical issue. It doesn't deal with the profound class analysis of war by Marx and Lenin. It tries to stop the reader from thinking about why the materialists hold that "war is the continuation of politics by other, violent, means." It simply raises a practical issue. What would it mean, says SL, to deny the separation of politics and war? Why, the SL theoreticians sputter in indignation,

"So to defend Nicaragua against Yankee imperialism you have to politically support the Sandinistas? ... To defend the Teamsters against government union-busters you have to politically support the corrupt sellout bureaucracy?" (*WW*, Jan. 18, cited in the *Supplement* of February 20, page 25, col. 1)

The example of Nicaragua

The SL is trying to present the separation of politics and military affairs as some sort of critical support. It is supposed to be an answer to the question of how to oppose the CIA-organized contras without endorsing everything the Sandinistas did. So how could this be done, say the SL, without separating military and political support?

But separating military and political support is an utterly mindless stand that doesn't answer any of the questions of anti-imperialist work in favor of the Nicaraguan people. It is necessary to provide all-round support to the Nicaraguan workers and peasants. It is necessary to criticize the wrong political stands of the Sandinistas not in order to withdraw political support from the Nicaraguan workers and peasants, but precisely in order to give political support to the toilers. It is necessary to oppose the CIA-organized contra war against Nicaragua not because this was "military support" to the Sandinista leadership, but because the Nicaraguan people's struggle against counter-revolution was entirely just and legitimate.

SL's formula evades and obscures the need for all-round support for the revolutionary movement of the Nicaraguan toilers, and makes everything depend on the Sandinistas. If the formula was supposed to apply to the Nicaraguan workers and peasants, then why deny political support? The formula instead centers everything on the Sandinista leadership. It makes the revolution depend solely on them. No wonder the SL organized a money-raising campaign for the Sandinistas rather than providing political support for the Nicaraguan toilers developing their own, independent

revolutionary motion.

Of course, as the Sandinistas were in power in the 1980's and maintained support from the majority of the population, opposition to the contras was, in some sense of the word, a type of support for the Sandinistas. But in what sense? What type of "support" should be given?

A bit of serious thought about the matter shows that the formula about "military, but not political" support is totally useless to define this.

1) It doesn't deal at all with the fact that support goes first and foremost to the toilers and their struggle and their mobilization.

Yet this is a central point of any communist criticism of the Sandinistas. This criticism had to be in support of the class initiative and mobilization of the toilers.

2) The formula could mean support for the military actions of the Sandinistas, while giving no support for their political actions.

But the military way the Sandinistas conducted the war deserved criticism. For example, they gradually demobilized the masses, they eliminated the popular militias and relied exclusively on the regular army, and they suffered fiasco with the draft.

At the same time, when the Sandinistas opposed the contras, this was definitely one of their political stands. Any support for them in this struggle was a support for a political stand of the Sandinistas.

3) The formula could mean that the solidarity movement should engage in military actions to support the Sandinistas, but not in political actions.

But the task in the U.S. was not to begin a military struggle against imperialism, but to build up a political movement of the masses. To be effective, the solidarity movement had to strain every effort to building up an independent movement, against imperialism and its parties of war and exploitation. The task was not to organize squads and battalions, or select the best guns and cannons, but to develop a class struggle.

4) The formula could mean that imperialism's military suppression of the revolution was separate from the issue of the politics of the revolution.

But such a conception would undermine the struggle against the liberal politicians who claim to oppose the CIA murder squads in favor of political pressure on the Nicaraguan revolution. The liberal politicians themselves separate politics and war. This is how they pretend to be heroes of peace while supporting imperialist interests in Central America. This was how they promoted the suppression of the revolution through the Arias plan as allegedly a progressive alternative to war. Thus any slogan that weakens the consciousness of the activists about the connection between politics and war ultimately reinforces the standpoint of the liberal and reformist forces.

The formula of "military but not political support" turns out to be a useless, stereotyped dogma that says nothing about the real stand that had to be taken towards the Nicaraguan revolution. It does not answer any practical

question of how to give fervent support to the Nicaraguan toilers and their revolutionary movement while staying critical of the Sandinistas. It is especially harmful because, by providing a grand-sounding phrase that means nothing, it prevents real thought about the tasks of the solidarity movement.

"Military support" for Teamster hacks?

Nevertheless the SL is so pleased with this formula that it uses it over and over. It is a single, pat answer to every situation under the sun. It is one of their little set of dogmas, which replaces real thought by mindless chattering.

This goes to the extent that they actually use this formula to apply to the case of the Teamster bureaucrats. They are going to render "military support" to the Teamster bureaucrats who, if anything, are all too infamous for their thugs and for their violent suppression of the rank-and-file workers. Only someone drunk on Trotskyist dogma could want to render the Teamster hacks more "military support".

Of course, the Teamster bureaucrats are not involved in military operations against the Pentagon. If anything, they are chauvinists and imperialists like the other pro-capitalist top union hacks. So the formula "military, but not political support" reveals itself as simply a far-fetched analogy to hide SL's slavish expectations in the bureaucrats. But all it takes is another government anti-corruption probe or court order, and SL runs to render "military support" to the Teamster bureaucrats.

The SL, of course, will denounce pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats, just as they denounce Saddam Hussein. But they still count on the "military" action of these same bureaucrats, just as they counted on the bayonets and tanks and Scuds of the Ba'ath regime. All it took was an empty statement from some national union leaders (prior to the ground war, of course) in favor of starving Iraq, rather than bombing it, and SL went daydreaming about what the pro-capitalist union apparatus could do. They admit the "Teamster tops" were waving the flag and didn't take part in the empty anti-war statement, but that didn't matter. The SL was too busy daydreaming about what wonders would be accomplished by actions called by the Teamsters union, the longshore union, etc.

The real working class opposition to imperialism, just as the real opposition to government and capitalist union-busting, will come from building up the independent movement of the working class. Such a movement will not be in a "military bloc" with the pro-capitalist Teamster hacks.

Is it Lenin's formula?

The slogan of "military not political support" thus proves useless in practice. As well, despite SL's whistling in the wind, it was not Marxist and was never used by Lenin.

Lenin never gave this formula in any circumstance

whatsoever. Period.

Furthermore, and more importantly, Lenin repeatedly opposed the basic idea behind this slogan. He emphasized the falseness of separating war from politics. In the pamphlet, *Socialism and War*, which SL likes to extract a single sentence from, Lenin endorses the statement of the German militarist Clausewitz that "War is the continuation of politics by other" (i.e.: violent) "means". He makes this statement into a title of a subsection, and writes:

"This famous dictum was uttered by Clausewitz, one of the profoundest writers on the problems of war. Marxists have always rightly regarded this thesis as the theoretical basis of views on the significance of any war. It was from this viewpoint that Marx and Engels always regarded the various wars." (*Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 304)

Marx, Engels, and Lenin emphasized the insoluble connection of war and politics. But SL divides war and politics. SL and other Trotskyists believe that they can carry out any treachery in practice, and call this "military support", and separate it from the realm of big promises and sweet-sounding declarations, which they call "political" opposition.

How does one judge any war, even liberation wars of oppressed countries against colonizers? Lenin stressed that one applies the standpoint of regarding this war as the continuation of the politics that preceded it. Explaining and amplifying his earlier statement in the pamphlet about wars of dependent countries, he writes:

"...In China, Persia, India and other dependent countries, on the contrary, we have seen during the past decades a policy of rousing tens and hundreds of millions of people to a national life, of their liberation from the reactionary 'Great' Powers' oppression. A war waged on such a historical basis can even today be a bourgeois-progressive war of national liberation." (*Ibid.*)

For Lenin, the movement of the oppressed is what creates the possibility of a progressive war of national liberation. But SL, as we have seen, denounces the idea that a "revival of the revolutionary movement" has anything to do with the character of an anti-imperialist struggle.

The Kornilov revolt

SL makes one desperate attempt to give a communist color to its bogus dogma of "military, not political support". It claims that Lenin "himself insisted on the distinction between military defense and political support". (Cited in the *Supplement*, p. 11, col. 1) And it cites Lenin's letter on the Kornilov revolt of 1917 in Russia.

Isn't it strange, if "military, not political support" was the basis of Lenin's attitude towards reactionaries in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, like sultan Mulai Yusuf in Morocco, warlord Yuan Shih-kai of China, and military dictator Ephraim Khan of Persia, that SL can't find

a single passage about it in this context? Isn't it strange that Lenin said nothing about it in the pamphlet *Socialism and War* and instead talked about the rousing of millions of people in the oppressed countries? Isn't it strange that SL has to run to an example of an imperialist country (Russia before the October revolution)?

And stranger still is that the letter from Lenin about the Kornilov revolt says the exact opposite of SL's "military, not political support".

First of all, in this letter Lenin never uses SL's formula at all.

Secondly, Lenin denounces support for Kerensky's government, even though he calls for fighting the Kornilov revolt, which sought to replace Kerensky's government with an iron-fisted military dictatorship.

Russia at that time was in the midst of a profound revolutionary movement. The February revolution had overthrown the tsar, and millions upon millions of workers and peasants were rising in new life. That's why the Kerensky government, afraid of the masses, had actually flirted with the Kornilovites and its own overthrow.

Lenin called for mobilizing the masses, including the rank-and-file soldiers in the armies of the Provisional Government, against Kornilov. Since the Kerensky government had finally vacillated against Kornilov, this required changing the form of the struggle against Kerensky. SL says this means that Lenin "blocked militarily with Kerensky's Provisional Government". But that's not Lenin's view of what he was doing. He wrote, in the very letter cited by SL:

"It is my conviction that those who become unprincipled are people who ... slide into defencism or ... into a *bloc* with the S.R.s, into supporting the Provisional Government [headed by Kerensky-ed.]. Their attitude is absolutely wrong and unprincipled.

...

"Even now we must not support Kerensky's government. ... We may be asked: aren't we going to fight against Kornilov? Of course we must! But this is not the same thing; there is a dividing line here, ...'" (*Collected Works*, "To the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P." vol. 25, pp. 285-6, emphasis as in the original)

The actual nature of the tactics Lenin called for depended very much on the concrete situation of the times.

And developing these tactics required dealing with some subtle distinctions. The point is that SL's "military but not political support" covers over all the important points of tactics. SL demagogically presents the issue as if the only question is whether to oppose Kornilov. This is because SL is bankrupt on how to oppose Kornilov, and it is trying to hide the yawning chasm between its stand and that of Lenin's.

Lenin's attitude to such broad phrases as a military block with Kerensky could be further seen in his following statement:

"...We must relentlessly fight against phrases about

the defence of the country, about a united front of revolutionary democrats, about supporting the Provisional Government, etc., since they are just empty phrases. We must say: now is the time for action; you S.R. and Menshevik gentlemen have long since worn those phrases threadbare." (*Ibid.*, p. 298)

"Military support" for the tyrants, but sectarianism towards "anti-war movements"

While the SL backs the tyrants like Hussein, they are sectarian and cynical about the anti-war activists and other progressive people.

The anti-war movement against the Persian Gulf war was a breath of fresh air. It spread widely across the country, and brought a new generation of activists into the struggle. It irritated the imperialists no end. They slandered it, denounced it, arrested thousands, declared it didn't exist, organized yellow-ribbon campaigns to swamp it, and chauvinist goons to oppose it. But the anti-war movement had deep roots, and it left its stamp on the popular consciousness.

SL claimed to be oh so militant against imperialism. But all it does is find one pretext after another to denounce the movement. It is irritated at the memory of the movement of the 60's, and lectures against it. It denounces "anti-war movements" in general.

The SL is indignant that the liberals and reformists (including Trotskyist groups) seized the speakers' platforms. Why, the SL whines, how can anyone but a "pop-frontist" take part in such a movement?

So the SL shouts about anti-imperialism, but is incapable of seeing how mass anti-imperialist sentiment expresses itself. Why, there were liberals and reformists in the movement. Oh, horrors!!! Oh, fooyey!!!

Has the SL ever seriously pondered how a revolution takes place? Has it even thought about the October revolution of 1917 that it phrasemongers about? Weren't reformists and liberals crawling all over the place after the February revolution? Didn't the reformists dominate the Soviets for quite a while, persecute the revolutionaries, hand power over to the Provisional Government, and engage in orgies of Russian chauvinism? How can one praise the proletarian revolution of 1917, which was prepared by a movement which also had to suffer torments from reformists and liberals, while looking on the mass actions of today the same way as a prissy society matron looks on someone from the wrong side of the tracks?

What hasn't the SL accused the movement of? Pop-frontism, chauvinism, fascism, etc.

In replying to us, the SL gets up on its high horse and says the movement was so chauvinist and patriotic, so concerned only with "American casualties", that

"It also disappeared the minute it was clear that Bush could get the oil without spilling hardly any *American* blood, while making the Tigris and Euphrates run red with *Iraqi* blood." (Cited in the *Supplement*, April 20,

page 8, col. 2, emphasis as in the original)

Translated, this means that the movement ended when the ground war ended.

In fact, there was mass revulsion at the Iraqi casualties. Anyone really doing anti-war work in the factories or on the streets knew how the various atrocities dampened the public image of the war.

It is of course true that defeats and casualties help turn wars into major crises, and help fuel mass anti-war movements. Or does the SL really believe that it wasn't heavy *Russian* casualties and *Russian* setbacks that helped pave the way for the revolutions of February 1917 and October 1917? The SL complaint comes down to the old bourgeois denunciation of the selfish labor movement--it goes on strike in order to feed its own stomach. Or the stock bourgeois denunciation of the anti-war protesters of the 1960's--they just didn't want to be drafted.

The SL's practical activities matched its contempt in theory for the movement. Their only concern with the movement was to get their slogans adopted, and to have official rights in the coalitions. And since the coalitions didn't accept their demands, and they couldn't get the official status they wanted, they denounced the movement as a whole. They were just as disruptive and bullying towards other views as the liberal, reformist, and Trotskyist chiefs of the coalitions were. They didn't have the spirit of patient anti-imperialist work with the activists and the rank-and-file at the base of the movement, but only cared about immediate endorsements of their stands and otherwise kept their eyes focused on the supposed prizes on the top of the movement.

"Labor political strikes against the war"

The SL believes their activities were especially worthy because they called for "labor political strikes against the war". Mind you, not just strikes against the war, but political strikes. The SL apparently thought it necessary to stay vigilant against the possibility of non-political anti-war strikes.

But there weren't any conditions for anti-war strikes in the U.S. during the war. The result was SL's talk about strikes was just that "verbal condemnation of imperialism while no real revolutionary struggle is waged" that Lenin was so contemptuous of. The fancy talk of "anti-war strikes" was just a cover to hide the fact that SL was impotent in real anti-war work among the workers. They used the slogan of "labor political strikes" to make the actual work of agitation among the working class, and of demonstrating in the streets, seem small and insignificant.

But, SL says, to consider the actual conditions in the factories and working class neighborhoods, is opportunism. Why, who cares about tailoring tactics to the objective situation? That's just opportunism, the SL preached:

"In line with the opportunist view that only those struggles are desirable that are possible, and those that are possible are the ones going on at the given

moment, the MLP sneeringly dismisses the SL's call for labor strikes against the war as pie in the sky."

(Cited in the *Supplement*, April 20, page 11, col. 2)

Yes, SL sectarians, it is a long tradition in the movement to sneer at pie in the sky.

Can pie-in-the-sky daydreams develop something new in the movement?

On the contrary, it was the MLP that worked to develop new forms of the movement. We didn't accept what the liberal and reformist leaders of the coalitions decreed, but took anti-war agitation to factories, took anti-imperialist leaflets to demonstrations, agitated for demonstrations to go to working class and minority communities, raised militant slogans, etc.

It is the SL which sat on its hands, paralyzed because the labor bureaucrats weren't calling strikes and hoping that Iraqi army would do something. It is the SL which is so tied to present-day possibilities, that even its pie-in-the-sky slogans bank on the labor bureaucrats. And indeed, the SL insisted not on *workers'* strikes against the war, but *labor* strikes. This was not just an accident of phrasing. The Trotskyists are fond of using the term "labor" as a euphemism for calling on the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucrats to act.

Mindless dogmas

SL has replaced revolutionary theory with a set of simple Trotskyist dogmas to be repeatedly mindlessly. This prevents them from analyzing the actual situation facing the masses.

SL refuses to judge the Persian Gulf war on the basis of its concrete circumstances. Their dogmas about war and the oppressed country make them cast aside as irrelevant the class basis of the war, the political issues at stake, the question of oil, the situation in Kuwait, and so on. All that

matters is that the government of an oppressed country may kill a few Western soldiers.

SL's slogan of "military but not political support" is supposed to apply to everything from war to trade union work. It is supposed to whitewash SL's hopes in the powers that be. After all, SL only has "military" hopes in them, not "political" ones. So it can grant "military support" to tyrants like Saddam Hussein or corrupt union hacks involved in organized crime, like the Teamster bureaucrats, but it all's right. It doesn't involve "political support".

SL also holds the mass movements are suspect and probably liberal and reformist. From the anti-war movement to the liberation movements of the oppressed nationalities, the SL finds one way after another to denigrate their significance.

The SL identifies the action of the working class with the present trade union apparatuses. When it appeals for "labor" to act, it is hoping that the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats will mobilize the present-day union apparatuses. When it called for "labor political strikes" against the war, it was hoping for action by the present bureaucrats, and *Workers Vanguard* was encouraged by the weak, pro-sanctions statement of these hacks.

We have only mentioned it in passing in this series of articles, but the SL believes there is something socialist about the revisionist, state-capitalist economies and about the pro-Soviet parties. It demands all-out support for revisionist state-capitalism. And it constantly speculates about how this or that revisionist grouping, in East Germany, or Italy, or Russia, is composed at its base of the real proletarian fighters.

But SL believes it is free of opportunism as long as it banishes the word "popular front". Mind you, it can advocate alliances with all the worst butchers and capitalists. But so long as it's not called the popular front, it is all proper Trotskyist tactics. □

On Debates:

The Spartacist League made the following letter public in the April 12 issue of their paper Workers Vanguard under the title "Challenge to Debate". More recently, in Chicago, they have sought to have the issue of whether to have a special meeting for a debate replace the actual exchange of views over their "military support" for tyrants like Saddam Hussein of Iraq, and their idea that anti-imperialism would have required the support back in 1915 of tyrants like sultan Mulai Yusuf of Morocco, warlord Yuan Shih-kai of China, and military dictator Ephraim Khan of Persia.

In reply to their views about debating, we are therefore publishing their letter as well as our reply. We would suggest to the leaders of the Spartacist League that, if they really value the issues at stake and believe that they are worthy of serious study, then they should circulate the full written materials or publish them. We have reprinted the relevant sections of their articles about us in the Supplement, so that all our comrades and friends, even readers in other continents, could see them for themselves. The SL, however, doesn't see a point to wide circulation of the documents. Given the cheap emotionalism and shallow disregard for facts in their relevant articles, we can understand why the Spartacist League would prefer anything but having the differing views subject to calm analysis and careful thought.

Letter from SL:

Chicago, IL
March 7, 1991

To the MLP:

Your article "More on the 'Defend Iraq' slogan:..." printed in the February 20 *Workers' Advocate Supplement* along with an excerpt from our article "Break with the Imperialist 'Doves'..." (*Workers Vanguard*, No. 518) addresses our differences head on. You point correctly to crucial differences in our appreciation of the U.S./Iraq conflict, as regards the nature of the Eastern European states (and, of course, the USSR) and, therefore, the tasks revolutionaries face in mobilizing the working class with specific reference to the "antiwar" movement.

A correct orientation on these questions is made even more urgent for communists, especially in this country, in light of the vicious smashing of Hussein's army by the now-exultant U.S. imperialists. We propose a debate on these questions between representatives of our respective organizations. Given that the war has now ended, it might be best to approach our differences under the general heading "The Struggle Against Imperialism: From the Gulf War to the Russian Question" which would address the specifics raised in the respective articles as well as the more general

programmatic thrusts of our organizations.

Should this proposal be acceptable to you we will need to meet to come to agreement on democratic norms for discussion as well as on chairing the debate and on such specifics as time, place, advertising, etc. It might also be helpful to exchange other relevant literature by our organizations on these questions to assist preparation.

Needless to say, we will want sufficient time to mobilize a large turnout for the event, however, we would hope to be able to schedule this within a month or so to attempt to attract interest generated by the U.S./Iraq war. In any event, we hope to hear from you soon concerning this proposal.

Ed Clarkson
for the SL □

Reply from MLP:

April 10, 1991

Spartacist League/U.S.
P.O. Box 6441
Main P.O.
Chicago, IL 60680

Thank you for Ed Clarkson's letter of March 7 proposing a debate between our two organizations.

In your letter you referred to the importance of the articles in our respective newspapers that deal with each other's positions on the Persian Gulf war and related questions. We agree that these are important issues. And we believe that the continuation of such articles will be valuable. You are still writing articles with respect to us, and we are planning to reply to the points you have raised.

We think that at present this written exchange will be of more use to activists and others around the country than a formal debate, and that such written material could circulate among a far wider number of activists.

Actually small-scale debates on these questions are going on all the time among the activists, and we take full part in them. These debates, plus written material in the press, have a valuable role. The experience of the anti-war movement, the sight of one capitalist institution after another rallying around the imperialist war, the brutal outcome of the Persian Gulf war, the mass rebellion against Hussein, and other events are being considered by activists. The anti-war struggle brought forth many new people, as well as those already active. They are considering the differences that came up in the movement on the issues of militancy, opposition to U.S. imperialism as a system, how to take the movement deep among the working masses and minorities in the U.S., support or

opposition for tyranny in Iraq, the correct method of handling differences in the movement, etc. In terms of our differences with you, this includes the issues of whether there is a progressive movement (you berate us for being a left-wing of the movement), of whether to do patient anti-imperialist work among the activists or instead to denounce the movement as a creature of the reformists, whether to have respect for the mass of activists or a strident, sectarian attitude toward them, of whether to do actual anti-imperialist work among the workers or simply dream about labor political strikes and trade union resolutions, whether to give all-round support to the toiling masses or instead "military support" to Hussein's tyranny, etc.

Thus, as far as organizing a special debate in Chicago, this in our view is simply a practical matter of the best method of continuing the ongoing discussion among the activists. We are not only in favor of, but we have been encouraging to the full extent of our ability, the discussion of controversial issues among activists. Thinking over the discussions going on around the country, it seems to us that it would be better — at this time — to put the effort into the written clarification of the political differences between our two organizations than a debate. We hope that you, as

well as our comrades, will help spread these materials, and discussion of these materials, in all the circles in and around our two organizations. Let everyone consider the valuable lessons of the recent struggle against the Persian Gulf war. This will ensure a more conscious and determined struggle against the exploiters and oppressors.

You also refer to the "Russian question". More generally, the issue is revisionism and the ongoing collapse of the revisionist regimes. This is being pondered on a mass scale by workers, activists, and other around the world. We agree with you that this is an important issue, and we shall continue to deal with your identification of the revisionist state-capitalist economy as a mismanaged socialist economy, your praise of Soviet revisionist crimes in Afghanistan and elsewhere (where you denounce the revisionists for not being more resolute in committing these crimes), your rationale for denying self-determination in the Soviet Union, etc. Here too we think that the circulation of the written materials will help the ongoing discussion.

Sincerely,

A member of the staff,
of the Workers' Advocate □

On some questions with regard to women's liberation

The following article is based on a speech presented at the Fourth National Conference of the MLP, Fall 1990. It presented some points for discussion, rather than final conclusions:

The party organized a national study that looked into the Marxist-Leninist classics to get a deeper theoretical grasp of the question of women's liberation.

The material studied included relevant sections of *Capital*, *Conditions of the Working Class in England*, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *The Origin of the Family*, *Private Property and the State* by Marx and Engels, and just about the whole volume *The Emancipation of Women*, a collection of articles or sections of works by Lenin that deal with this issue.

In the course of this study, several questions came up. Four of these questions we will address in this report. This is not a comprehensive list, but the questions are pretty basic and worth looking into.

- 1) What is the basis of the oppression of women?
- 2) Is full equality for women at least theoretically possible under the capitalist system?
- 3) How have the advances in anthropology affected the findings of Morgan and Engels?
- 4) Questions about the Third Congress of the CP's resolution *Methods and forms of work among Communist women*?

In addition to this presentation, we have prepared a selection of quotes from Marx, Engels and Lenin. [See pp. 33-39] They are valuable and comrades should check them out. We will refer to only a few of these quotes in this speech.

I. What is the basis of the oppression of women?

Marx, Engels, and Lenin held that the basis of the special oppression of women is the development of private property and the subsequent division of society into classes.

The first point is that women have *not* been oppressed for all time. For thousands of years before the first civilizations arose, human society was communistic. People lived in small groups and were connected by forms of kinship that changed with the development of the tribe. In this first form of the family, descent may well have been figured from the mother, not the father. It is now well accepted that such matrilineal societies did exist and that they were precursors of civilization. But it is still controversial among anthropologists whether matrilineal societies were universally the first family form.

All early societies were egalitarian. There were no classes and no wealthy elite. Either all flourished or all

starved together. Land ownership as we know it did not exist.

There was a division of labor between the sexes. Women were in charge of the communistically organized household: They kept the fires, maintained the shelters — whether tents, caves, or huts. They made clothing and some tools. Men hunted and went to war against neighboring groups. Men and women held roughly equal status.

The distinction did not exist between a public world of men's work and a private world of women's household service. The large collective household was the community and, within it, both sexes worked to produce the goods necessary for livelihood. The nuclear family of parents and children was embedded in the clan and village structures through a network of reciprocal relations.

In the ancient tribal societies, women held a position of some respect and influence. In the North American native societies studied by Morgan, women promoted and demoted the chiefs, arranged the marriages of their children, and acted as mediators in marital disputes. Generally men and women were free to engage in sexual relations. What could be called divorce was relatively easy. It seems that in many early societies women had a major role in the religious ceremonies and passing down the traditions of the clan and tribe. They participated fully in the public affairs of their gens. These were societies without a state or organs of repression. Relations between people were governed by custom and a variety of taboos which were immersed in mystery and religious ritual.

Engels considered the most profound change to have been fashioned by the domestication of animals and the development of agriculture. Compared with earlier times where, as he put it, "Food had to be won afresh day by day." And, where little permanent property accumulated, the pastoral peoples had a new found source of wealth.

Current anthropological theory holds that the transition to agriculture and herding was a painful one. Some

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anthropologists argue that the life of the settled farmer is harder work than hunting and gathering. The hunter-gatherer groups that survived to modern times would only abandon their lifestyle for the settled agricultural village when forced by dire necessity. But Engels was right about the importance of this transition, the switch to herding and agriculture was the key. Back to Engels,

“But to whom did this new wealth belong? Originally to the gens, without a doubt. However, private property in herds must have already started at an early period. And it is certain...that at the threshold of authenticated history we already find the herds everywhere separately owned by heads of families, as are the artistic products of barbarism (metal implements, luxury items) and, finally, the human cattle — the slaves. (1)

“Once it had passed into the private possession of families and there rapidly began to augment, this wealth dealt a severe blow to the society founded on pairing marriage and the matrilineal gens.” (2)

Engels points out that, as private property becomes established, patriarchy replaces the egalitarian tribal society.

Engels argues that the traditional division of labor put the new wealth, already in family possession, in the hands of men. This is controversial. It appears that the division of labor between the sexes was more complicated than 19th century anthropologists thought. They believed that men were in charge of getting food while women were in charge of the household. Actually both sexes worked to get food with men doing most of the hunting and women most of the gathering. In any case, in the course of the development of agricultural society, wealth became controlled by men. It is just not clear how.

According to Engels, the tradition of matrilineal descent prevented men from passing the wealth on to their children. For this reason matrilineal descent was overthrown. Furthermore the rise of private property sets the conditions for the deteriorating status of women.

At the dawn of civilization, greater wealth was concentrated in the hands of men, inheritance favored the man's male heirs with the overthrow of matrilineal descent, slaves were added to men's possessions, men dominated the household affairs, and women's position took on an inferior status.

Engels had a lot to say about the patriarchal family as a transitional form from the pairing family to the monogamous family. With the rise of class society the monogamous family gained a decisive victory, which he said is “one of the signs that civilization is beginning.” Class society and the development of monogamy further deteriorated the status of women.

The conclusion of Engels is still valid: It is the development of private property and the rise of class society which bring about the special oppression of women.

II. How have the advances in anthropology affected the findings of Morgan and Engels?

This Marxist analysis of the oppression of women has been and remains a very controversial issue. In fact a lot of anthropology has been devoted to attempts to refute Engels.

Engels wrote his book 110 years ago. He wrote the book well before most of the available material on primitive and early urban society had been amassed. Yet studying Morgan's work, he was able to discern in it evidence which showed there are indeed fundamental stages to human history. He showed that class society and the state did not always exist, but arose with the development of production. He demonstrated that forms of the family, property, rank and descent systems are related to the level of the productive forces of a society. He also showed that the oppression of women did not exist for all time, but is a product of the development of private property and class society. And he began to illuminate the features necessary for the emancipation of women.

After all this time, it is amazing, but Engels and Morgan still hold up. Their broad outline is still valid. Yet, many of the details of Engels' exposition, based on the old anthropological material, have been superseded.

In discussing some of the anthropological controversies the main source we used was the introduction to *Origins* by Eleanor Burke Leacock. She is an anthropologist, and a revisionist politically. Her conclusions are interesting and deserve discussion.

She points out that many of the various schools of anthropology which developed after Morgan have attempted to refute or ignore his work.

One of the attacks on Engels arises from the rank and status differentiations found in societies considered to be “primitive.” Some anthropologists claim this shows that class society always existed. Leacock points out two things about this. One is that rank per se does not mean there is class stratification. It does not give a privileged claim to resources, food or authority. Secondly, she argues that many societies considered to be primitive are not. Some are quite a bit more advanced than hunting-gathering societies and early agricultural societies.

Leacock refutes one of the standard proofs that Morgan, and by extension Engels, was wrong — that is, the investigations of Frank G. Speck on the Montagnais Indians of the Labrador Peninsula. Speck asserted that private ownership of hunting grounds existed among these people before European colonization. He thus asserts that private property is a universal feature of society. Leacock's own work among the same Indians showed that the hunting ground system developed as a result of fur trade with the Europeans. Further, it did not involve true land ownership.

Among feminists and feminist anthropologists the view is given that women were always oppressed. They claim that since sex differentiation existed in early societies, oppression of women therefore always existed. Some argue

that sex oppression comes from biological differences or that male ego is the source of the oppression of women. Juliet Mitchell, Kate Millett and Shulamith Firestone, among others in the women's movement, hold and propagate this view.

Leacock refutes some of the examples which assume a lower status for women. She refers to work by Kaberry on the original inhabitants of Northwest Australia. It is commonly stated that women's status is low among these people. The evidence is their exclusion from important ceremonies of the men and from participation in political affairs. Kaberry points out that the men in turn are kept out of the secret rituals held by the women. Warfare and the holding of formal meetings are the sole responsibility of the men. But intra-group problems are handled by older women along with older men. Women are restricted as to whom they may marry, but so are men. And young people are free to have premarital affairs which either sex may initiate.

She also discusses the mystique that surrounds the hunt and, in comparison, that surrounding childbirth. A common formulation on the status among hunter-gatherers overlooks childbirth and stresses the importance and excitement of the hunt. Leacock argues, however, that childbirth has been a focus for awe and even fear in early societies. She explains that this point is easy to overlook — for the ability to bear children has led, in our society, not to respect but to women's oppressed status. The significant point for women's status in early societies is that the household was communal and the division of labor between the sexes reciprocal.

Leacock thinks there is a longer and more complicated process of transition to the oppression of women than what Engels talked about. For example, current anthropological theories hold that women were very involved with the early domestication of herd animals and the development of crop plants. As production developed and hunting dwindled, the herds gradually became the province of men and, alongside with this, women lost their equal status.

She also states that it is unfortunate that the debate over women's status in primitive society has largely ignored the actual role of women in primitive society in favor of an almost exclusive focus on descent systems.

Leacock also holds that women's status in early society came from more than just matrilineality. Women had authority over very important spheres of life of early societies. She points out a number of indicators of women's status such as women's role in decision-making and the administration of tribal affairs; their importance as inventors of techniques for food production and the manufacture of baskets, leather goods, woven materials, etc.; and their part in ritual and religious life.

I should note that some feminists argue that the existence of any division of labor proves that women were always oppressed. I just want to note that these divisions in early society did not imply unequal status.

These are just a few of the anthropological points which

we hope will be useful for discussion.

III. Is the equality of women and men possible under capitalism?

There is no definitive answer in the classics, and after much discussion and debate we can present no simple answer. In our Branch some comrades thought it was theoretically possible to achieve equality of exploitation under capitalism. Other comrades thought it was not possible within any capitalist framework.

The most definitive statement on this comes from Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

"...the peculiar character of man's domination over woman in the modern family, and the necessity...of establishing real social equality between the two, will be brought out into full relief only when both are completely equal before the law. It will then become evident that the first premise for the emancipation of women is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into public industry; and that this again demands that the quality possessed by the individual family of being the economic unit of society be abolished." (3)

"The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree. And this has become possible only as a result of modern large-scale industry, which not only permits of the participation of women in production in large numbers, but actually calls for it and, moreover, strives to convert private domestic work also into a public industry." (4)

He also says:

"Thus, full freedom in marriage can become generally operative only when the abolition of capitalist production, and of the property relations created by it, has removed all those secondary economic considerations which still exert so powerful an influence on the choice of a partner." (5)

So here Engels lists two criteria: A) the entire female sex must participate in industry, and B) the family must cease to be the economic unit of society.

Note that we are not discussing formal, legal equality. These criteria go beyond that. It seems that Engels didn't consider the equality of women to be possible under capitalism.

So is it possible? These are some of the issues we discussed.

Drawing women into public industry

Today 45% of workforce in U.S. is female, and the majority of women of child-bearing age have jobs. So it seems that Engels' first criterion can be fulfilled under capitalism.

There have been several periods where women were recruited in large numbers into the workforce. And, it is true, that these periods have been followed by a big drop in female employment. It is possible that the employment of women could drop. But we don't think that women can be driven out of the workforce easily. The number of women in industry depends not only on the strength of the workers in demanding equal employment but on the needs of the capitalists.

It should also be noted that this latest peak in the employment of women comes at a time of general attack on the wages and other conditions of work and life of the working class. The multiple-income households of today are reminiscent of those in Marx's day when the introduction of machinery made the labor of women and children desirable. Regarding wages, in these circumstances, Marx said:

"The value of labor power was determined, not only by the labor time necessary to maintain the individual adult laborer, but also by that necessary to maintain his family. Machinery, by throwing every member of that family on to the labor market, spreads the value of the man's labor power over his whole family. It thus depreciates his labor power. To purchase the labor power of a family of four workers may, perhaps, cost more than it formerly did to purchase the labor power of the head of the family, but, in return, four days' labor takes the place of one, and their price falls in proportion to the excess of the surplus labor of four over the surplus labor of one." (6)

The possibility and necessity for women to work is, at the same time, the possibility for cutting the wages and benefits of the working class as a whole. And the pressure that has driven many women to find work has also acted as a lever to hold down their wages.

From 1979 to 1987, hourly wages dropped 7% when adjusted for inflation.

In 1989 women's wages in relation to men's went up slightly from 67% to 68%. But quite a bit of this was due to the fact that the earnings of men dropped 1.8%.

In conclusion, we think that it may be possible for capitalism to bring the female sex into public industry to the degree that it brings men into public industry. This in no way means equality of exploitation between men and women.

Changes in the family

We are not sure if equality of exploitation would be possible, however, without major changes in the family. It seems that women's family burdens actually make it hard to achieve equality on the job. As well, even if equality was won at work, women still face the oppression from the added load of taking care of the family.

It has to be pointed out that while the large-scale employment of women may create the basis for equality, capitalist society also brings tremendous burdens to women. Marx talks about how, under capitalism, constant turmoil and insecurity of life is engendered by the unceasing revolutionizing of the means and processes of production. Under capitalism, there is an antagonism between the technical necessities of production, and the character of the social organization of production. Marx said:

"...this antagonism vents its rage...in the devastation caused by a social anarchy which turns every economic progress into a social calamity." (7)

It is most certainly economic progress that so many women are working; it is just as certainly a social calamity that the burden of domestic drudgery weighs even heavier on them than before.

Therefore, we focused on the second point: The elimination of the family as the economic unit of society. Is this possible under capitalism?

In the study group in our city the question immediately came up: What does it mean "the family is the economic unit of society." And what does it mean — ending the family as this economic unit. It seemed to us that this is more than just ending domestic drudgery. Another question follows, must the family be the economic unit of capitalist society? That is, can capitalism have a different economic unit?

What is the family as the economic unit? We defined it as the unit that maintains and reproduces the workers for the capitalists. Its various individuals pool their resources together and they also function as a unit of consumption. Note that changes in the form of traditional families (e.g. single moms, lesbian couples with kids, gay male couples, whatever) doesn't necessarily change the "family" as an economic unit.

How can the family as the economic unit be abolished?

There is the destruction of the so-called traditional family which is clearly going on before our eyes today. The increase in single mother families, in child labor, in domestic violence, etc. Marx refers to this destruction of the family as "a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery." Marx and Engels said:

"On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things

finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution....The bourgeois claptrap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labor." (8)

It seems to us inevitable that this form of the destruction of the family weighs more heavily on women. For example, the largest increase in the number of workers who must work two jobs is among women — partly due to the increase in single mother families. And this is just among the employed.

From another angle, what if there is the development of things that carry out family functions, things that could be real advances under working class rule, but which are always mutilated and deformed by capitalism?

The classics are quite clear on the necessity for the socialization of housework in order for women to be emancipated. Lenin even goes so far as to proclaim this as a means to:

"...really emancipate women, really lessen and abolish their inequality with men as regards their role in social production and public life. These means are not new, they (like all the material prerequisites for socialism) were created by large-scale capitalism. But under capitalism they remained, first, a rarity, and secondly—which is particularly important—either *profit-making* enterprises, with all the worst features of speculation, profiteering, cheating and fraud, or 'acrobatics of bourgeois charity', which all the best workers rightly hated and despised." (9)

Suppose day-care and child-rearing are taken up more by the state or the capitalist corporations. Would this give women equality, or does it just prepare the material conditions (at great social cost) for the proletariat to institute genuine reforms? Or could this be yet another means to oppress women and children à la Bennett's proposals to form orphanages for the children of drug addicts?

Let's further suppose that the bourgeoisie gets involved with the housework. This is not out of the question. Today, some hospitals will provide so many hours labor of a home care worker in order to keep nurses on the job. If it can be provided to nurses, it could conceivably be provided to a broader section.

Big laundry and catering services now exist, could all this be used to eliminate household drudgery?

Laundry, catering, cleaning services may or may not expand greatly under capitalism. But they will be run for profit. They will not change the character of family as economic unit. Those who can afford these services will get

relief from household drudgery. But what about the rest?

What if there is a more equitable distribution of labor within the family, then there would be a more equal exploitation of labor of men and women. But will it get rid of the special oppression of women if you change the consciousness of men to get an equal division of labor in the home? Of course not if the larger oppression of women in society is not solved.

Despite all these severe impediments to achieving the equality of women, some comrades thought that in a slow and tortuous way, capitalism may bring it about. This is not liberation, but a leveling, and a leveling that would make the class oppression even more obvious.

Capitalism has already provided significant amelioration of household drudgery: mass production of food, especially ready to eat food like bread, canned goods, frozen dinners, etc. In Engels time, many families still had to bake their own bread!

Modern technology in the home (such as vacuum, washing machines, microwave ovens and modern stoves) eases drudgery, reduces the necessary labor time to do chores.

Restaurants, especially fast food chains, are cheap. Why, even people on welfare use them. And this may somewhat reduce the need to cook meals.

There is a tendency in capitalism to make private domestic work a public industry run for profit. And in some cases these services are available to the poor.

It's also true that with the large number of women in the workforce, the question of child care has become a public issue which the Congress had to deal with.

The question of, you could say, equality of household drudgery has also become an issue for public discussion. And, while I don't have the statistics, current studies show some leveling of household responsibilities.

So what were our conclusions?

- 1) Formal equality is possible.
- 2) It seemed to us possible that, with sharp struggle, there could be a great deal of amelioration of the problems of the capitalist family. And there is also the tendency of capitalism to draw women into production and to make household work and child care a public industry. But the capitalist family is still there. Without getting rid of the family as the economic unit can you get rid of the unequal exploitation of women under capitalism? Some comrades thought not.

- 3) Others thought that equality between men and women, that is equality of exploitation, is possible under capitalism. Slow tortuous changes have taken place. It would not be possible for the large number of women to work in public industry if not for mass produced processed food, modern technology in the home, and various socialized things like restaurants. Women working also tends to bring about more equal relations between men and women. Nevertheless, the family may still exist as economic unit. But is this an absolute impediment to ending special oppression of women?

Comrades were in agreement, however, that women's equality is extremely unlikely to be achieved, even if theoretically possible. The type of changes needed will probably only come about as the result of revolutionary struggle. We note the current anti-abortion offensive, and the continued propaganda that women should go back to the home. We didn't think this means that capitalism really wants women to go back to the home, but, rather, wants to increase the exploitation of women and men. This shows that ending the special oppression of women will be a sharp fight. We thought it requires a revolutionary struggle and a revolutionary regime to take those kinds of measures, i.e. socialism!

IV. The resolutions of the Third CI

Various issues came out about this.

I should make the point that these resolutions were written at a time when the Comintern was taking up for the first time, in a concentrated way, the question of going to the masses and united front tactics. And it appears that the women's commission had not yet assimilated those new ideas. So I should point out we don't hold to any of the particular formulations in this resolution.

It does seem, however, that it was one of the advances of the Comintern that it took up the question seriously of how to go about the emancipation of women. The resolutions themselves refer to this in distinction to the Second International.

In our reading we have come across references about the Second International. Apparently it was a matter of debate at the first socialist women's conference in 1907 whether to support suffrage for women or not. The Belgians and French argued for limiting the fight to universal male suffrage. Lilly Braun supported this position. Clara Zetkin took the other side, arguing for a fight for women's suffrage. And Zetkin's position was eventually adopted. As late as 1906, European socialist conferences adopted resolutions calling for women to return home after their husbands got higher wages. It also seems that little or no attention was given to demands for women under capitalism. In an article in *The Shadow of the Comintern*, which is mainly an article voicing bourgeois feminist suspicions about communism, the author does say that the Third International was an advance over the Second in that it raised demands to eliminate domestic drudgery for women under capitalism and in pre-capitalist societies,

whereas the Second International refused to do this.

Comrades had many questions about the particular formulations in the resolutions. For instance there are a lot of extreme formulations against unity with social democrats and bourgeois feminists which seem to preclude the appropriate united front tactics. As well, questions came up on the prescriptions for particular forms of organization which are given in the resolutions. How adequate were they for the struggle against the oppression of women at the time? There were also questions about the general prescriptions about the type of work among women given in the resolutions. And comrades questioned the statement that there is no separate women's question. *

I should point out that these were questions we had. We don't know that much about the actual practice of the CI on this front. We are conducting a study of the question in the Soviet Union and in the U.S. movement of the time and may come to more conclusions as that work is being completed. □

Footnotes

(1) *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Frederick Engels, Chapter II, section 3 "The pairing family".

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Op. cit.*, Chapter II, section 4 "The monogamian family".

(4) *Op. cit.*, Chapter 9, first section.

(5) *Op. cit.*, Chapter II, concluding section.

(6) *Capital*, Karl Marx, Vol. I, Part IV, Chapter 15, Section 3a, "Appropriation of supplementary labor-power by capital. The employment of women and children."

(7) *Capital*, Karl Marx, Vol. I, Part IV, Chapter 15, Section 9, "The factory acts. Sanitary and educational clauses of the same. Their general extension in England". The paragraph in question begins "Modern Industry never looks upon and treats the existing form of a process as final. The technical basis of that industry is therefore revolutionary, while all earlier modes of production were essentially conservative."

(8) *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Chapter II, "Proletarians and Communists"

(9) "A Great Beginning," V.I. Lenin, in *The Emancipation of Women*, p. 64, or *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 429, June 28, 1919. □

Marx, Engels, and Lenin on the emancipation of women

The following collection was prepared with reference to the discussion of questions of the liberation of women. The added comments in square brackets are those of the comrade who prepared this collection.

Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, 1867

...It was not, however, the misuse of parental authority that created the capitalistic exploitation, whether direct or indirect, of children's labor; but, on the contrary, it was the capitalistic mode of exploitation which, by sweeping away the economical basis of parental authority, made its exercise degenerate into a mischievous misuse of power. However terrible and disgusting the dissolution, under the capitalist system, of the old family ties may appear, nevertheless, modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together form a series in historical development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of humane development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalistic form, where the laborer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the laborer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery.

(Part IV, Chapter 15, "Machinery and Modern Industry", Section 9. "The Factory Acts. Sanitary and Education Clauses of the same. Their general Extension in England" from the paragraph that begins "So long as Factory legislation is confined to regulating the labor in factories, manufactories, etc., it is regarded as a mere interference with the exploiting rights of capital. But when it comes to regulating the so-called 'home-labor,' it is immediately viewed as a direct attack on the patria potestas, on parental authority.")

The cheapening of labor-power, by sheer abuse of the labor of women and children, by sheer robbery of every normal condition requisite for working and living, and by the sheer brutality of overwork and nightwork, meets at last with natural obstacles that cannot be overstepped. So also, when based on these methods, do the cheapening of commodities and capitalist exploitation in general. So soon

as this point is at last reached—and it takes many years—the hour has struck for the introduction of machinery, and for the thenceforth rapid conversion of the scattered industries and also of manufactures into factory industries.

(First paragraph of Part IV, Chapter 15 "Machinery and Modern Industry", Section 8 "Revolution effected in Manufacture, etc." Point e "Passage of Modern Manufacture and Domestic Industry into Modern Mechanical Industry. The Hastening of this Revolution by the Application of the Factory Acts to those Industries.")

...The basis of the old method, sheer brutality in the exploitation of the workpeople, accompanied more or less by a systematic division of labor, no longer sufficed for the extending markets and for the still more rapidly extending competition of the capitalists. The hour struck for the advent of machinery. The decisively revolutionary machine, the machine which attacks in an equal degree the whole of numberless branches of this sphere of production, dress-making, tailoring, shoemaking, sewing, hat-making, and many others is the sewing machine.

Its immediate effect on the workpeople is like that of all machinery, which, since the rise of modern industry, has seized upon new branches of trade. Children of too tender an age are sent adrift. The wage of the machine hands rises compared to that of the houseworkers, many of whom belong to the poorest of the poor. That of the better situated handicraftsmen, with whom the machine competes, sinks. The new machine hands are exclusively girls and young women. With the help of mechanical force, they destroy the monopoly that male labor had of the heavier work, and they drive off from the lighter work numbers of old women and very young children. The overpowering competition crushes the weakest of the manual laborers. The fearful increase in death from starvation during the last 10 years in London runs parallel with the extension of machine sewing. The new workwomen turn the machines by hand and foot, or by hand alone, sometimes sitting, sometimes standing, according to the weight, size and special make of the machine, and expend a great deal of labor-power. Their occupation is unwholesome, owing to the long hours, although in most cases they are not so long as under the old system.

(Ibid., from the fourth and fifth paragraphs)

"...this antagonism vents its rage...in the devastation caused by a social anarchy which turns every economic progress into a social calamity."(7)

(Part IV, Chapter 15, Section 9, "The factory acts. ..." The paragraph in question begins "Modern Industry never looks upon and treats the existing form of a process as final. The

technical basis of that industry is therefore revolutionary, while all earlier modes of production were essentially conservative.”)

Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 1844-March 1845

...Let us examine a little more closely the process whereby machinery continually supersedes hand-labor. When spinning or weaving machinery is installed practically all that is left to be done by hand is the piecing together of broken threads, and the machine does the rest. This task calls for nimble fingers rather than muscular strength. The labor of grown men is not merely unnecessary but actually unsuitable, because the bones and muscles of their hands are more developed than those of women and children. The greater the degree to which physical labor is displaced by the introduction of machines worked by water or steam power, the fewer grown men need be employed. In any case, women and children will work for lower wages than men, and as has already been observed, they are more skillful at piecing than grown men. Consequently, it is women and children who are employed to do this work.

[After refuting claims that men have not been displaced, Engels continues a couple of pages later:]

All this has led to a complete reversal of normal social relationships. The working classes have had no choice but to submit to this change, which has the most evil effects. When women work in factories, the most important result is the dissolution of family ties. If a woman works for twelve or thirteen hours a day in a factory and her husband is employed either in the same establishment or in some other works, what is the fate of the children? They lack parental care and control. They are looked after by foster parents, who charge 1 s. or 1 s. 6 d. per week for this service. It is not difficult to imagine that they are left to run wild. This can be seen by the increase in the number of accidents to little children which occur in the factory districts.

[After citing evidence and testimony regarding child neglect, he says:]

Children who grow up under such conditions have no idea of what a proper family life should be. When they grow up and have families of their own they feel out of place because their own early experience has been that of a lonely life. Such parents foster the universal decadence of family life among the workers. Similar evil consequences for the family follow from child labor. When children earn more than the cost of their keep they begin to make a contribution to the family budget and to keep the rest as pocket money. This often occurs when they are no more than fourteen or fifteen. In brief, the children become emancipated and regard their parents' house as merely

lodgings, and quite often, if they feel like it, they leave home and take lodgings elsewhere.

Very often the fact that a married woman is working does not lead to the complete disruption of the home but to a reversal of the normal division of labor within the family. The wife is the breadwinner while her husband stays home to look after the children and to do the cleaning and cooking. This happens very frequently indeed. In Manchester alone there are many hundreds of men who are condemned to perform household duties. One may well imagine the righteous indignation of the workers at being virtually turned into eunuchs.

[He follows this by quoting at length from a very maudlin letter from a factory worker about a friend whose wife worked while he stayed home doing domestic stuff. The man was sad that he couldn't provide for his family, embarrassed at doing 'women's work', but did not give vent to Engels' imagined 'righteous indignation' at role reversal. Engels continues with the combination of male prejudice and anger at the brutalizing overwork of women and underwork of men, but with surprising conclusions.]

Can one imagine a more senseless and foolish state of affairs than that described in this letter? It deprives the husband of his manhood and the wife of all womanly qualities. Yet it cannot thereby turn a man into a woman or a woman into a man. It is a state of affairs shameful and degrading to the human attributes of the sexes. It is the final result of all the efforts of hundreds of generations to improve the lot of humanity both now and in the future. If all that can be achieved by our work and effort is this sort of mockery, then we must truly despair of humanity and its aspirations. If not, then we must admit that human society has followed the wrong road in its search for happiness. We shall have to accept the fact that so complete a reversal of the role of the two sexes can be due only to some radical error in the original relationship between men and women. If the rule of the wife over her husband—a natural consequence of the factory system—is unnatural, then the former rule of the husband over the wife must also have been unnatural. Today, the wife—as in former times the husband—justifies her sway because she is the major or even the sole breadwinner of the family. In either case one partner is able to boast that he or she make the greatest contribution to the upkeep of the family. Such a state of affairs shows clearly that there is no rational or sensible principle at the root of our ideas concerning family income and property. If the family as it exists in our present-day society comes to an end then its disappearance will prove that the real bond holding the family together was not affection but merely self-interest engendered by the false concept of family property.

(From Chapter 7, (a) "Factory workers in the main textile industries", pp. 158-165, Stanford University Press edition, retranslated from the original German and updated in 1958.)

[It was obviously a more mature Engels who wrote *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. He says in the preface to the English edition of 1982 that, since *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* was written, the situation in England had changed and also his views had changed and developed.]

Marx and Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1848*

The selfish misconception that induces you to transform into an eternal law of nature and of reason, the social forms springing from your present mode of production and form of property—historical relations that rise and disappear in the progress of production—this misconception you share with every ruling class that has preceded you. What you see clearly in the case of ancient property, what you admit in the case of feudal property, you are of course forbidden to admit in the case of your own bourgeois form of property.

Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the communists.

On what foundations is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form, this family exists only among the bourgeois. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.

(Chapter II, "Proletarians and Communists")

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

But, you will say, we destroy the most hallowed of relations when we replace home education by social.

And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, of society, by means of schools, etc.? The communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class.

(*Ibid.*)

The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the most disgusting, the more, by the action of modern industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labor.

But you communists would introduce community of women, screams the whole bourgeoisie in chorus.

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production

are to be exploited in common and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will naturally fall to the women.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.

For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women which they pretend is to be openly and officially established by the communists. The communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost from time immemorial.

Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives.

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalized community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e., of prostitution both public and private.

(*Ibid.*)

Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, March-May, 1884*

...For Morgan rediscovered in America, in his own way, the materialist conception of history that had been discovered by Marx forty years ago, and in his comparison of barbarism and civilization was led by this conception to the same conclusions, in the main points, as Marx had arrived at.

(From the Preface to the first edition, 1884)

The rediscovery of the original mother-right gens as the stage preliminary to the father-right gens of the civilized peoples has the same significance for the history of primitive society as Darwin's theory of evolution has for biology, and Marx's theory of surplus value for political economy. It enabled Morgan to outline for the first time a history of the family, wherein at least the classical stages of development are, on the whole, provisionally established, as far as the material at present available permits.

(Two pages or so from the end of the Preface to the fourth German edition, 1891)

...During the fourteen years that have elapsed since the publication of his chief work, our material relating to the history of primitive human societies has been greatly augmented. In addition to anthropologists, travelers and professional prehistorians, students of comparative law have taken the field and have contributed new material and new points of view. As a consequence, some of Morgan's

hypotheses pertaining to particular points have been shaken, or even become untenable. But nowhere have the newly collected data led to the supplanting of his principal conceptions by others. In its main features, the order he introduced into the study of the history of primitive society holds good to this day.

(From the last paragraph of the Preface to the fourth German edition, 1891)

According to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the last resort, the production and reproduction of immediate life. But this is of a twofold character. On the one hand, the production of the means of subsistence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools requisite therefore; on the other, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social institutions under which men of a definite historical epoch and of a definite country live are conditioned by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labor, on one hand, and of the family, on the other. The less the development of labor, and the more limited its volume of production and, therefore, the wealth of society, the more preponderatingly does the social order appear to be dominated by ties of sex. However, within this structure of society based on ties of sex, the productivity of labor develops more and more; with it, private property and exchange, differences in wealth, the possibility of utilizing the labor power of others, and thereby the basis of class antagonisms: new social elements, which strive in the course of generations to adapt the old structures of society to the new conditions, until, finally, the incompatibility of the two leads to a complete revolution. The old society based on sex groups burst asunder in the collision of the newly-developed social classes; in its place a new society appears, constituted in a state, the lower units of which are no longer sex groups but territorial groups, a society in which the family system is entirely dominated by the property system, and in which the class antagonisms and class struggles, which make up the content of all hitherto written history now freely develop.

(From the preface to the first edition, 1884)

Sex love in the relation of husband and wife is and can become the rule only among the oppressed classes, that is, at the present day, among the proletariat, no matter whether this relationship is officially sanctioned or not. But here all the foundations of classical monogamy are removed. Here, there is a complete absence of all property, for the safeguarding and inheritance of which monogamy and male domination were established. Therefore, there is no stimulus whatever here to assert male domination. What is more, the means too, are absent; bourgeois law, which protects this domination, exists only for the propertied classes and their dealings with the proletarians. It costs money, and therefore, owing to the worker's poverty, has no validity in his attitude towards his wife. Personal and social relations of quite a different sort are the decisive

factors here. Moreover, since large-scale industry has transferred the woman from the house to the labor market and the factory, and makes her, often enough, the breadwinner of the family, the last remnants of male domination in the proletarian home have lost all foundation—except, perhaps, for some of that brutality towards women which became firmly rooted with the establishment of monogamy. Thus, the proletarian family is no longer monogamous in the strict sense, even in cases of the most passionate love and strictest faithfulness of the two parties, and despite all spiritual and worldly benedictions which may have been received. The two eternal adjuncts of monogamy—hetaerism and adultery—therefore, play an almost negligible role here; the woman has regained, in fact, the right of separation, and when the man and woman can not get along they prefer to part. In short, proletarian marriage is monogamous in the etymological sense of the word, but by no means in the historical sense.

(Chapter 2, "The Family"; Section 4, "The Monogamian Family")

[After exposing some of the hypocrisy which bourgeois society conceals underneath its claim that marriage is now freely and voluntarily contracted, Engels goes on to say:]

The position is no better with regard to the juridical equality of man and woman in marriage. The inequality of the two before the law, which is a legacy of previous social conditions, is not the cause but the effect of the economic oppression of women. In the old communistic household, which embraced numerous couples and their children, the administration of the household, entrusted to the women, was just as much a public, a socially necessary industry as the providing of food by the men. This situation changed with the patriarchal family, and even more with the monogamous individual family. The administration of the household lost its public character. It was no longer the concern of society. It became a *private service*. The wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production. Only modern large-scale industry again threw open to her—and only to the proletarian woman at that—the avenue to social production; but in such a way that, when she fulfills her duties in the private service, she remains excluded from public production and cannot earn anything; and when she wishes to take part in public industry and earn her living independently, she is not in a position to fulfill her family duties. What applies to the woman in the factory applies to her in all professions, right up to medicine and law. The modern individual family is based on the open or disguised domestic enslavement of the woman; and modern society is a mass composed solely of individual families as its molecules. Today, in the great majority of cases, the man has to be the earner, the breadwinner of the family, at least among the propertied classes, and this gives him a dominating position which requires no special legal privileges. In the family, he is the bourgeois; the wife represents the proletariat. In the

industrial world, however, the specific character of the economic oppression that weighs down the proletariat stands out in all its sharpness only after all the special legal privileges of the capitalist class have been set aside and the complete juridical equality of both classes is established. The democratic republic does not abolish the antagonism between the two classes; on the contrary, it provides the field on which it is fought out. And, similarly, the peculiar character of man's domination over woman in the modern family, and the necessity, as well as the manner, of establishing real social equality between the two, will be brought out into full relief only when both are completely equal before the law. It will then become evident that the first premise for the emancipation of women is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into public industry; and that this again demands that the quality possessed by the individual family of being the economic unit of society be abolished.

(Ibid., a page or so later)

We are now approaching a social revolution in which the hitherto existing economic foundations of monogamy will disappear just as certainly as will those of its supplement—prostitution. Monogamy arose out of the concentration of considerable wealth in the hands of one person—and that a man—and out of the desire to bequeath this wealth to this man's children and to no one else's. For this purpose monogamy was essential on the woman's part, but not on the man's; so that this monogamy of the woman in no way hindered the overt or covert polygamy of the man. The impending social revolution, however, by transforming at least the far greater part of the permanent inheritable wealth—the means of production—into social property, will reduce all this anxiety about inheritance to a minimum. Since monogamy arose from economic causes, will it disappear when these causes disappear?

One might not unjustly answer: far from disappearing, it will only begin to be completely realized. ... Prostitution disappears; monogamy, instead of declining, finally becomes a reality—for the men as well.

At all events, the position of the men thus undergoes considerable change. But that of the women, of *all* women, also undergoes important alteration. With the passage of the means of production into common property, the individual family ceases to be the economic unit of society. Private housekeeping is transformed into social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public matter. Society takes care of all children equally, irrespective of whether they are born in wedlock or not. Thus, the anxiety about the 'consequences,' which is today the most important social factor—both moral and economic—that hinders a girl from giving herself freely to the man she loves, disappears. Will this not be cause enough for a gradual rise of more unrestrained sexual intercourse, and along with it, a more lenient public opinion regarding virginal honor and feminine shame? And finally, have we not seen that monogamy and prostitution in the modern

world, although opposites, are nevertheless inseparable opposites, poles of the same social conditions? Can prostitution disappear without dragging monogamy with it into the abyss?

Here a new factor comes into operation, a factor that, at most, existed in embryo at the time when monogamy developed, namely, individual sex love.

(Ibid., a page or so later)

What will definitely disappear from monogamy, however, is all the characteristics stamped on it in consequence of its having arisen out of property relationships. These are, first, the dominance of the man, and secondly, the indissolubility of marriage. The predominance of the man in marriage is simply a consequence of his economic predominance and will vanish with it automatically. The indissolubility of marriage is partly the result of the economic conditions under which monogamy arose, and partly a tradition from the time when the connection between these economic conditions and monogamy was not yet correctly understood and was exaggerated by religion. Today it has been breached a thousandfold. If only marriages that are based on love are moral, then, also, only those are moral in which love continues. The duration of the urge of individual sex love differs very much according to the individual, particularly among men; and a definite cessation of affection, or its displacement by a new passionate love, makes separation a blessing for both parties as well as for society. People will only be spared the experience of wading through the useless mire of divorce proceedings.

Thus, what we can conjecture at present about the regulation of sex relationships after the impending effacement of capitalist production is, in the main, of a negative character, limited mostly to what will vanish. But what will be added? That will be settled after a new generation has grown up: a generation of men who never in all their lives have had occasion to purchase a woman's surrender either with money or with any other means of social power, and of women who have never been obliged to surrender to any man out of any consideration other than that of real love, or to refrain from giving themselves to their beloved for fear of the economic consequences. Once such people appear, they will not care a rap about what we today think they should do. They will establish their own practice and their own public opinion, conformable therewith, on the practice of each individual—and that's the end of it.

(From the end of Chapter 2)

...Here we see already that the emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so as long as women are excluded from socially productive work and restricted to housework, which is private. The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree. And this has become possible only as a result of modern large-scale industry,

which not only permits of the participation of women in production in large numbers, but actually calls for it and, moreover, strives to convert private domestic work also into a public industry.

(Chapter 9, "Barbarism and Civilization", in the paragraph that begins "How and when the herds and flocks were converted from the common property of the tribe or gens into the property of the individual heads of families we do not know to this day; but it must have occurred, in the main, at this stage.")

Lenin, A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism, August-October 1916

P. Kievsky does not understand the difference between 'negative' slogans that stigmatize *political* evils and *economic* evils. The difference lies in the fact that certain economic evils are part of capitalism as such, whatever the political superstructure, and that it is *impossible* to eliminate them economically without eliminating capitalism itself. Not a single instance can be cited to disprove this. On the other hand, political evils represents a departure from democracy which, economically, is fully possible 'on the basis of the existing system', i.e., capitalism, and by way of exception is being implemented under capitalism—certain aspects in one country, other aspects in another. Again, what the author fails to understand is precisely the fundamental conditions necessary for the implementation of democracy in general!

(From the latter part of Section 6. "The other political issues raised and distorted by P. Kievsky", see *Collected Works*, vol. 22, pp. 71-72)

That objection reveals complete failure to understand the relation between democracy *in general* and capitalism. The conditions that make it impossible for the oppressed classes to 'exercise' their democratic rights are not the exception under capitalism; they are typical of the system. In most cases the right of divorce will remain unrealizable under capitalism, for the oppressed sex is subjugated economically. No matter how much democracy there is under capitalism, the woman remains a 'domestic slave', a slave locked up in the bedroom, nursery, kitchen. The right to elect their 'own' people's judges, officials, school-teachers, jurymen, etc., is likewise in most cases unrealizable under capitalism precisely because of the economic subjection of the workers and peasants. The same applies to the democratic republic: our program defines it as 'government by the people', though all Social-Democrats know perfectly well that under capitalism, even in the most democratic republic, there is bound to be bribery of officials by the bourgeoisie and an alliance of stock exchange and the government.

Only those who cannot think straight or have no knowledge of Marxism will conclude: so there is no point in having a republic, no point in freedom of divorce, no

point in democracy, no point in self-determination of nations! But Marxists know that democracy does *not* abolish class oppression. It only makes the class struggle more direct, wider, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need. The fuller the freedom of divorce, the clearer will women see that the source of their 'domestic slavery' is capitalism, not lack of rights. The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights....

(Section 6, pp. 72-73)

...under capitalism the right of divorce, as *all* other democratic rights without exception, is conditional, restricted, formal, narrow and extremely difficult of realization. Yet no self-respecting Social-Democrat will consider anyone opposing the right of divorce a democrat, let alone a socialist. That is the crux of the matter. *All* 'democracy' consists in the proclamation and realization of 'rights' which under capitalism are realizable only to a very small degree and only relatively. But without the proclamation of these rights, without a struggle to introduce them now, immediately, without training the masses in the spirit of this struggle, socialism is *impossible*.

(From the latter part of Section 6. "The other political issues raised and distorted by P. Kievsky", see *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 74)

... For socialism is impossible without democracy because: (1) the proletariat cannot perform the socialist revolution unless it prepares for it by the struggle for democracy; (2) victorious socialism cannot consolidate its victory and bring humanity to the withering away of the state without implementing full democracy.

(Section 6, p. 74)

... *All* democratic demands are 'unachievable' under imperialism in the sense that politically they are hard to achieve or totally unachievable without a series of revolutions.

It is fundamentally wrong, however, to maintain that self-determination is unachievable in the economic sense.

(Section 3. "What is economic analysis?", see *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 40)

... Both in foreign and home policy imperialism strives towards violations of democracy, towards reaction. In this sense imperialism is indisputably the 'negation' of *democracy in general*, and not just of *one* of its demands, national self-determination

... There can be no talk of democracy being 'economically' unachievable.

(Section 3, p. 43)

...imperialism contradicts, 'logically' contradicts, all political democracy *in general*.

(Section 3, p. 46)

[Here Lenin says that no matter how much democracy there is under capitalism, woman remains a slave, subjugated economically and locked up in the bedroom, nursery, kitchen. This indicates how unrealizable the equality of women is, although note that women are not simply locked up nowadays, they work outside as well, and so forth.

Lenin's basic thesis is that democracy is economically fully possible under capitalism/imperialism, but very hard to realize due to economic subjugation. The specific examples of democracy addressed are mainly national self-determination, and divorce as a side issue. He does not address the general question of women's oppression. However, considering equality as a democratic issue would lead one to say that it is economically fully possible but very hard to realize.

Lenin also raises a familiar point with respect to the attainment of political rights (divorce, national equality): the fuller these rights are, then the more likely that women (nationalities) will understand that capitalism is the cause of their oppression; fuller democracy makes the class struggle more direct.]

Lenin, A Great Beginning, June 28, 1919

Take the position of women. In this field, not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic, has done in decades so much as a hundredth part of what we did in our very first year in power. We actually razed to the ground the infamous laws placing women in a position of inequality, restricting divorce and surrounding it with disgusting formalities, denying recognition to children born out of wedlock, enforcing a search for their fathers, etc., laws numerous survivals of which, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, are to be found in all civilized countries. We have a thousand times the right to be proud of what we have done in this field. But the more thoroughly we clear the ground of the lumber of the old, bourgeois laws and institutions, the more we realize that we have only cleared the ground to build on, but are not yet building.

Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman, she continues to be a domestic slave, because petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and nursery, and she wastes her labor on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real emancipation of women, real communism, will begin only where and when an all-out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the state power) against the petty housekeeping, or rather when its wholesale transformation into a large-scale socialist economy begins.

Do we in practice pay sufficient attention to this question, which in theory every Communist considers indisputable? Of course not. Do we take proper care of

the shoots of communism which already exist in this sphere? Again, the answer is no. Public catering establishments, nurseries, kindergartens—here we have examples of these shoots, here we have the simple, everyday means, involving nothing pompous, grandiloquent or ceremonial, which can really emancipate women, really lessen and abolish their inequality with men as regards their role in social production and public life. These means are not new; they (like all the material prerequisites for socialism) were created by large-scale capitalism. But under capitalism, they remained, first, a rarity, and secondly—either profit-making enterprises, with all the worst features of speculation, profiteering, cheating and fraud, or 'acrobatics of bourgeois charity', which the workers rightly hated and despised.

(Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 429)

Lenin, Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women, November 19, 1918

[In this earlier article on the occasion of the first anniversary of the October Revolution, Lenin made the same point as in A Great Beginning about the Soviet state smashing the legal foundation of women's inequality and oppression, but he also pointed out a problem they were having with even this much.]

For the first time in history, our law has removed everything that has denied women rights. But the important thing is not the law. In the cities and industrial areas this law on complete freedom of marriage is doing all right, but in the countryside it all too frequently remains a dead letter. ... This is due to the influence of the priests, an evil that is harder to combat than the old legislation.

We must be extremely careful in fighting religious prejudices; some people cause a lot of harm in this struggle by offending religious feelings. ... By lending too sharp an edge to the struggle we may only arouse popular resentment; such methods of struggle tend to perpetuate the division of the people along religious lines, whereas our strength lies in unity. The deepest source of religious prejudice is poverty and ignorance; and that is the evil we have to combat.

The status of women up to now has been compared to that of a slave; women have been tied to the home, and only socialism can save them from this. They can only be completely emancipated when we change from small-scale individual farming to collective farming and collective working of the land. This is a difficult task. ...

... The experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of a revolution depends on how much the women take part in it. The Soviet government is doing everything in its power to enable women to carry on independent proletarian socialist work. □

