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The Collapse of Revisionism and the Prospects for Working Class Struggle

The MLP May Day meeting in Seattle took place this year on May 5. The following article is taken from one of the speeches at this meeting.

Last year we discussed the anti-socialist campaign of the western bourgeoisie, which at that time centered on the economic crisis of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's program for "glasnost and perestroika". This is a program that basically admits the superiority of competition and the capitalist market to the bureaucratic mess that Gorbachev calls "socialism".

Last year we said that the incessant yelling about the bankruptcy of socialism indicates that the bourgeoisie was perhaps not so convinced by their own words.

In these times, why would the bourgeoisie be experiencing nervous anxiety about the threat of socialism? For one thing, just consider the enormous instability of western capitalism, which is threatened by financial crises from every direction. The U.S. economy, and with it that of the whole world, is a "crisis waiting to happen".

In the preceding year, with the Eastern European events and the mounting crises in the Soviet Union, the scribblers of the "free press" have notched up their anti-socialist ruckus. History has allegedly ended, and the superiority of western capitalism proven once and for all.

Something has ended, but we can confidently state that it is not "history". Revisionist state capitalism, in the main, looks finished.

Beginning especially clearly in the Soviet Union of the mid-1930's, revolutionary Marxism-Leninism was increasingly discarded and replaced with ideas that undermined the socialist goal of the working class. In the countries of victorious revolutions, these ideas were an important factor behind the evolution toward state capitalism. Elsewhere the ideas and practices going by the name of "communism" were used for the quite un-communist purpose of accommodating the toilers to the rule of the exploiting classes.

The end result of revisionism should now be clear to all: disorderly retreat and collapse all down the line. Today in the state capitalist countries, the maximum program tends toward privatization of state-owned enterprises

complete with stock markets, millionaires--and soup kitchens for the unemployed, if that. For the revisionist parties in or out of power, the worst case scenario is complete disintegration; the most that can be hoped for is to beg forgiveness for their past sins, fraudulently attribute these sins to "Leninism", and seek absolution as born-again social-democrats. The socialist and revolutionary pretensions of all the revisionist trends that have had state power are basically used up and exposed.

The revolutionary movements of the last fifty plus years have been heavily stamped by the influence of Soviet, Chinese and other trends of revisionist ideology and politics. This is fast receding. We are now entering a new period, whose outlines are but hazy.

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Earth Day actions

Huge numbers of people turned out for Earth Day events, held in 3,600 U.S. cities. The big turnout showed that millions of people are concerned about the protection of the environment and safeguarding their health and safety from the rampant pollution in present-day society.

However there were two contrasting approaches for the observation of Earth Day.

Official Earth Day

The official sponsors of Earth Day—including capitalist politicians, union bigwigs and wealthy personalities—promoted the message that “we are all equally to blame” for pollution and it is our equal responsibility to clean up the environment. This let off the hook the real sources of pollution—the profit-making corporations. Indeed, many corporations even funded and sponsored Earth Day activities themselves.

Corporations revved up their public relations departments to hypocritically proclaim devotion towards environmental protection. Industrial polluters have consistently opposed governmental regulations because they may cut into their profits. They use some of the worse polluting technologies. And many of their products will pollute the earth for centuries to come. Then they have the gall to

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turn around and proclaim themselves friends of the environment.

Today, with the widespread mass concern over the environment, big business fears that the outcry in defense of the environment may turn into a thunderous condemnation of the corporations.

The other Earth Day-- against the profit-makers

While most of the Earth Day activities were mild-mannered, a section of environmental activists would not let the corporate charade go unchallenged. On April 23 at 6:00 a.m. activists simultaneously converged on the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street and the Pacific Stock Exchange in San Francisco to denounce corporate greed as the main source of pollution.

On Wall Street the protesters formed units called “mobile clusters” whose job it was to build barricades in the street. Half of the group stood in the intersection to block traffic and the others dragged in construction material and garbage dumpsters for the barricade.

Other protesters blocked building entrances. A march was held around the exchange with the slogan “Capitalism is killing the planet, people before profits!” In all about 1,000 participated in the action. By the end of the protest at 4:00 p.m. over 700 riot police had arrested 204 activists.

The demonstration in San Francisco grew to about 500. At first protesters tried to block the entrances to the exchange, but police declared the assembly illegal. Traffic was halted temporarily by protesters as they dragged trees and newsstands out into the street. Then they marched through the financial district.

The Bank of America building ended up with windows broken as did McDonald's and Burger King. In total 49 activists were arrested, and there was an attempt at rescuing a demonstrator from the police.

Other actions against the polluters

A number of Earth Day actions protested trash incinerators which are being set up in many cities, usually in working class and poor communities.

The incinerator in Minneapolis was the target of a protest on April 23. Three hundred protesters tied up traffic and blocked the entrance to the incinerator. Police arrested 26 while using mace and clubs on the activists.

Earlier there had been protests against trash incinerators in Detroit and Los Angeles. ■

Activist clergy puts blockading clinics ahead of denouncing militarism

The Catholic church has a pacifist wing which carries out demonstrations against militarism. They are carried out on a moralistic basis, rather than targeting imperialism and the capitalist establishment. That's why they don't have much effect. But such priests are part of the church left-wing.

But even this left-wing is full of Church prejudices. In Iowa and Nebraska, the church has tried to force the anti-militarist movement to denounce women's rights. Bishop William Bullock of Iowa has reportedly demanded that anti-abortion demonstrations be grafted on to the pacifist actions organized by some clergy.

This was tried in Nebraska on December 28 last year. A number of activists staged a sit-in and protest at the Strategic Air Command base near Omaha. It was mainly organized by the "Catholic Worker" movement, which seeks to tie the discontented to religious ideas. Just prior to the demonstration, Father Frank Cordero, an activist priest, announced that the demonstrators were also to go over and blockade the Women's Clinic of Nebraska, which

is one of two health clinics in Omaha which perform abortions:

However, half the people who heard him were outraged. They rushed to the clinic in order to defend it, getting there first. As the confrontation took place, the police treated the anti-abortion priests and blockaders with deference, but the activists defended the clinic with spirit.

One of the priests involved, Father Jack Caslan, had sought to make contact with Operation Rescue. But OR, racist and war-loving as it is, didn't want to be associated with people who even talked about peace or social activism. No matter. "Omaha Worker", the local branch of the Catholic Worker movement, nevertheless purged itself of people who favored women's rights. Some staff members were expelled for escorting women past OR blockades. If these events lead the local anti-militarist activists to see the need to take up anti-imperialist positions, it will have strengthened the movement far more than any of the sermons of "Catholic Worker". ■

Supreme Court won't tax the church

The tax-free status of the church is one of the biggest loopholes in the supposed separation of church and state. It is based on the legal fiction that the church is nonprofit and nonpolitical and altogether unworldly. Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code specifically prohibits tax-exempt groups from endorsing political candidates or intervening in their campaigns, including "the publishing or distributing of statements".

However, the Catholic hierarchy is engaged in an all-out political campaign to deny abortion rights to everyone in the country. Only the Vatican is to have the right to choose, and it will chose for everyone. The Church has threatened to excommunicate politicians who vote the wrong way, published statements on their campaigns, issued innumerable sermons, etc. The archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas even published, in its newspaper *Today's Catholic*, a list of candidates to vote for, and openly declared that it was defying the IRS regulations.

Nevertheless, the IRS still refuses to tax religious establishments, with only a few exceptions. A decade ago, the Abortion Rights Mobilization Inc. filed a lawsuit against the IRS, the United States Catholic Bishops, and

the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. It pointed out the anti-abortion campaign of the church violated IRS regulations concerning tax-exempt organizations, and the IRS was violating its own regulations in not taxing the Church.

An appellate court used a technicality to throw the suit out. It sought to protect the church from having to answer for its activities by, essentially, preventing anyone from challenging IRS rulings about the Church except the Church itself. On April 30, the Supreme Court let this ruling stand without comment. The established church is a big bastion of the capitalist order, and the Supreme Court doesn't want to touch a hair on its head. Nor does the Bush government, which intervened on behalf of the Church. "Law and order" is designed to serve the interests of the strong and powerful, not to cut the rich and their apologists down to size.

The court ruling was also a fiasco for the pro-establishment women's groups who had brought the lawsuit. The ARM Inc. announced that this campaign was now a "dead letter." It apparently relies completely on the courts and the government, and so had no further interest in pursuing

the matter. It had simply hoped to use the case to reform the church, rather than as part of a campaign to enlighten the masses about the church and the nature of religious dogma.

The Church should have the same rights as any one else to express its political views, campaign for them, or even

run candidates for office. But the Church should not have a privileged status with respect to taxes or anything else. The more open the Church's political activities, the faster it will discredit itself among the working class. The more public relations firms it hires for its anti-abortion campaign, the more holes will appear in its "divine" pretensions. ■

Spring actions in Philadelphia

Well over 700 activists arrived at 7 a.m. on April 13 (Good Friday) to confront the OR attack on the Elizabeth Women's Center in Philadelphia. The supporters and comrades of the Philadelphia Committee in Support of the MLP (PCSMLP) took an active role among them, leading a number of chants and slogans and supporting a strong defense on the barricades when the OR fanatics tried to push through. The PCSMLP was the only organized force opposing NOW's reliance on the cops (who of course stood by for two hours before arresting 300 reactionaries).

The comrades also distributed twenty *Workers' Advocates* and over 300 reprints of articles on the national clinic defense conference in Detroit and child care legislation. They had an excellent reception from the masses, and some women remembered them from past active support of Good Friday confrontations with OR. There was also support for the slogan "Back alleys, no more, abortion rights for workers and poor" in contrast to NOW singing the National Anthem and chanting "Back alleys, no more, abortion rights for rich and poor".

Meanwhile the OR fanatics were carrying the flag of the Vatican. The chant "Not the Church, not the state, women will decide their fate" had appropriate significance.

This activity followed a demonstration the month before on March 10 when ACT-UP and NOW and other groups protested an award's banquet at the Franklin Plaza Hotel in dishonor of a state legislator from Delaware County who was the infamous anti-abortion legislature in Pennsylvania. There too the comrades were active giving slogans, and supporting the militant mass action where over 1,000 activists blocked the hotel entrance for three hours and resisted police efforts to drive them away from the hotel entrance and away from the quests arriving to hear

speeches against the rights of working and poor women. The demonstration was loud, creative, lively, and most of all militant.

And, in mid-April, the 4th Annual Paul Robeson festival was held at the Community College of Philadelphia. Over 500 African-Americans and other progressive people gathered. The PCSMLP used the May Day *Worker Advocate* for distribution and was well received. They were also the only activists on the left who criticized the conference decision to permit Mayor Wilson Goode, the bomber of MOVE, exploiter of the workers, and liberal Democratic oppressor of the masses, to present the Robeson Award, which he did on this year's theme of "The Artist, The Worker, and the Struggle For Freedom". Many people were interested in our analysis of Goode's role in MOVE and attacks on the union workers, the working class, and the poor. He was the furthest you could get from the life of Robeson.

Earlier the same day, April 14, the PCSMLP had marched on a picket line at the Philadelphia International Airport in support of striking Eastern workers, Greyhound workers, and Teamsters on a local strike. Many of the workers were interested in the May Day interest of the *Workers Advocate* and talked to us about the need for workers' communism. Some of the union hacks tried to discourage the workers from talking to the comrades or taking the *WAs*, but their attempts were defeated. We were clearly on the side of the striking, militant workers, and especially received good support from Greyhound workers, whose picket lines we had walked before. Our politics were on the side of class struggle: and the workers saw this and ignored the hacks. ■

“Innocent until proven black”: Executions by racist police in Chicago!

The following articles are from the May 19 issue of *Chicago Workers Voice*, paper of the MLP-Chicago:

This year, as every year, the Chicago police have gunned down black men for no good reason. Outrages such as these are all too common. These killings deserve public exposure and denunciation by the masses.

Here are three examples of American racist justice in action.

** On March 1, Marshall Levy, aged 31, died in police custody. The police said Marshall was trying to cash a stolen money order, and when discovered he ran into an alley and was caught. When he was brought in to Cook County hospital the nurses kept asking the police what happened to him. Levy's head had been bashed in! After a while the two officers from District 12 said only that Levy had resisted arrest. But on March 4, Area 4 violent crimes investigators said that Levy had tried to take the police officer's revolver in the alley and then was placed under arrest. Later, the investigators claim, he died from a heart attack.

To make things even more suspicious, Levy's body was released by the Medical Examiner to Police Sgt. Marshall Andrews of the 1st district, who reportedly has an interest in a funeral home at 108th and Michigan!

Eventually the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office ruled that Levy's death was a homicide and was caused by "blunt trauma to the head". In other words the police department lied to cover up their murder of a black man, a father of five children who was on disability from a construction job.

** Alan Shubert, a hold-up suspect, was shot in the mouth and killed by police on Jan. 28. Allegedly, he "struggled for the officer's weapon," and it discharged. But allegedly Shubert was hiding under a counter at the time. His uncle was quoted in the *Chicago Defender*, "we are trying to figure out how this happened. Police have told us nothing."

Well, not exactly nothing. They did say Alan Shubert tried to grab the cop's gun, just like Marshall Levy did. So now the number one excuse for police killings is not "he had a shiny object in his hand" but "he tried to take my gun."

** April 1, Marcus Williams is shot by a detective who was looking for someone else. Williams survived but with serious injuries.

These police killings are not "accidents", they are not

"unavoidable problems" of law enforcement. They stem from the racist and anti-poor prejudices of the police and the capitalist class that they "serve and protect." The capitalists scream hysterically about crime and drugs but they have no interest in solving these grave social problems. In fact they can't solve them, because they helped create them!

The racist attitudes of the ruling class are instilled in their police apparatus and every part of their government. Every black or Latino to them becomes a dangerous criminal. Along with the hysteria about crime and drugs comes an increase in the police killings. In this era of Reaganite racism, shooting suspects and bystanders in the black community has become almost standard police procedure. With its neighborhood sweeps, arbitrary searches and public housing project lockdowns, the "war against drugs" is really a war against the poor.

We need to build a mass movement to fight these police murders and the racism that spring from capitalism and the ruling class.

In Benton Harbor, Michigan, the police killing of 19-year-old Norris Maben was met with a protest and picket of the Berrin County Court House in February.

In Chicago 200 people marched against police torture and brutality on May 13. Such actions are needed to build a movement that can put a stop to these killings. ■

Third world infant mortality in the second city

Infant mortality in the U.S. is a national scandal. It is now 10.1 per 1,000 births. This ranks 29th among developed countries. In Chicago 16.6 babies die for every 1,000 born.

Things are so bad that the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has announced a nationwide review of infant mortality. The *Sun-Times* of May 9, 1990 quoted a member of this organization as giving a "hypothetical" example of what this review may uncover. It just might find that many of the deaths were due to poor access to medical care. Good guess, Kreskin! But we don't think that poor access to medical care by the working class and poor is a hypothetical cause. No, it is a very real cause.

So the infant mortality rate in the U.S. is high? Well, just look at the increasing poverty of working people, especially young workers with children. The April 9 issue of the *Sun-Times* reports that families with young children and headed by people under 30 saw a 36% drop in real earnings between 1973 and 1987. For young Black families the decline in real earnings was 48%. By comparison the drop in real income for Americans in the early years of the

Depression was 27%.

More than half of the children with parents under 30 are officially poor. (These are figures based on the government's amazingly low estimation that a poverty-level income is under \$12,675 a year for a family of four.) On top of this more and more families are without any health insurance whatsoever. Health care is more and more becoming the right of the privileged few. Is it any wonder that infant mortality in the U.S. is so high.

The government is sponsoring this study. But the government is not in the dark on these issues. After all, the government has been cutting social benefit programs such as child care, health care, housing and welfare for over a decade. It shouldn't be shocked at some of the results. Maybe we need fewer studies to confirm what is already obvious and more action. We need a fight for better health care.

Medical care under capitalism is run for profit. Those without money are not worth treating, say the rich doctors and drug companies. Medical insurance is too expensive, say the capitalist employers.

To get health care, we have to fight capitalism. Only working class action to defend and improve our conditions can help this situation. We have to fight to make the rich pay for health care for the working and poor. And we have to fight to improve our wages, and our working and living conditions.

Such a fight can only win a permanent improvement if we get rid of the capitalists and their government altogether. The capitalist owners are driving us down and they will always try to enrich themselves at our expense. Socialism is the answer to capitalism. Not the bureaucratic state capitalism of Russia and China that calls itself socialism, but the workers taking over, confiscating the property of the rich and running things themselves. Only by eliminating the profit motive from medicine can we radically improve the health of the working and poor. ■

More Police Brutality: Chicago police beat up students!

This spring we've had the opportunity to see yet another example of the Chicago Police Department "serving and protecting"—this time by pushing, shoving and beating up school children!

On April 10 police attacked students at Morrill Elementary School. The students were outside protesting the Local School Council's dismissal of the principal when the police attacked. Fourteen children between the ages of 11 and 14 were treated at local hospitals for bruises and sprains from the attack.

The following day about 100 angry parents gathered at the school to demand disciplinary action against the police. Despite many witnesses, the police have denied any wrongdoing. Police District Commander James Hollands-

worth was quoted in the *Sun-Times* as saying "no excessive force was used" and that anyway some students had "thrown ball point pens at the police." (That's a new twist on the usual excuse "I thought he had a gun"!) It seems that the Chicago Police don't see anything "excessive" about hurting schoolchildren.

On March 2 police attacked students at Morgan Park High School who were protesting their Local School Council's actions. The police pushed and shoved and hit students trying to force them back inside the school, although the school doors were locked so no one could get back in. On March 5 more than 150 students, parents and teachers protested the attack by marching to the 22nd District Police headquarters.

There were other incidents of police roughing up and arresting students at Burns Middle School and Sullivan High School.

A lot of the Local School Council's actions have provoked controversy, protests and counterprotests. But one thing that all the students, parents and teachers should agree on is the demand for No More Police Brutality!

Racist attacks abound in Bridgeport!

In one week in February there were at least three attacks carried out against black people by white racist thugs. Where? In Bridgeport of course, the neighborhood of mayors in this "city of neighborhoods," or is that "city of segregation"?

** Feb. 21, 626 W. 45th Place, a black man is beaten and seriously injured by 6 white men armed with sticks, bricks and bottles.

** Feb. 25, 525 W. 47th St., a white male tries to run down two 19 year-old black men with a stolen car. The racist shouts "I will kill any nigger I see." The men run into a field and the racist gets out of the car and beats one of the young men across the head with a weapon and flees.

** Feb. 28, 4436 S. Union, three white men get out of their car and chase 7 black youth, threatening to kill them. The boys, aged 11 to 14, escaped. One suspect is arrested, Hilbert Williams of 514 W. 44th St., and charged with aggravated battery.

Of course, racist attacks are not restricted to Bridgeport. On April 29, a black woman was slashed by 2 men at 6300 S. California. And in March two black college students were attacked by 20 whites in Beverly (103rd St. and Seeley).

Everyone knows that racism and racist attacks are a fact of life in Chicago. But it doesn't have to be this way. We can build a mass movement against racism that will give these thugs what for! Working men and women of all races and nationalities, unite to fight racism! ■

Down with South Boston's racist politicians!

From the April 27 issue of *Boston Worker*, voice of the MLP-Boston:

Beware: Racist Pols Trying to Split the Working Class

Last Tuesday the Bulger wing of the Democratic Party political machine organized a major meeting at Saint Monica's Church in South Boston. This meeting was given extensive press coverage by the *Globe* and the *Patriot Ledger*. The purpose of this meeting was to whip up a racist hysteria against black people and to encourage and organize violent racist attacks on black working people and in particular on the small number of black families that have moved into the projects in South Boston.

Last fall a similar meeting was organized by Jim Kelly and the South Boston Information Center. The next night shots were fired into the door of a black family's apartment in the Old Colony projects, nearly killing a 10-year-old boy. At the latest meeting the political hacks were so open with their hostile intent that they announced the formation of a legal defense fund to help those who get arrested doing their dirty work.

In whipping up the racist hysteria the politicians told lies so outrageous that you would have to laugh if you didn't know that somebody was going to get hurt. They claimed that black on white crime was a serious problem in South Boston. Amazing! Here on the platform of the meeting you have Billy Bulger, whose brother Whitey is an organized crime boss in South Boston, and Jim Kelly, who in his younger days was arrested for such things as strong-armed robbery, and they are talking about blacks bringing crime and drugs into South Boston.

Then Kelly and company complained that South Boston residents are in dire need of housing while "outsiders" move into the projects. This of course is the same Jim Kelly who campaigned for Ronald Reagan for President while Reagan cut funding for low-income housing by 75 per cent. The same Jim Kelly who is the darling of the real estate speculators who have priced the average working family out of South Boston and almost any other part of the city. But now its the handful of black families that moved into the projects that are responsible for the misery of white South Boston residents. Kelly wants to reserve South Boston projects for South Boston residents only. 23 per cent of all public housing in Boston is in South Boston which has only 7 per cent of the population. What Kelly wants is blatant discrimination against not only blacks but whites from other parts of town as well.

It is no accident that the politicians are cranking up the old race hatred machine again. The Reagan recovery is turning into the Bush bust and the Massachusetts Miracle is becoming Mike's Mess. We paid for the Reagan recovery and now the rich want to force the workers to pay for the Bush Bust with concessions and union busting, layoffs and cutbacks. To weaken the working class they are promoting racism to split the workers along race lines. They are trying to divert the workers anger by scapegoating blacks and minorities for problems caused by the rich and their system. They are trying to push the black masses down even more than the rest of the working class so that white workers should live in fear that they will get the same fate.

Workers, the people promoting this race hatred are arch enemies of the workers of all colors. They are rotten agents of the rich. We must stand up to them and defend the basic democratic rights of the black people so that we can build up unity and trust among all working people. ■

Politicians demand taxes and cutbacks on Massachusetts workers

From the May 27 issue of Boston Worker, voice of the MLP-Boston:

No more taxes or cutbacks for the workers and poor—it's time for the rich to pay for the crisis they made

Under the banner of being "fair", the Beacon Hill politicians are working out another round of tax increases and service cutbacks. They say we must all sacrifice to bring the state economy out of its nosedive. But the rich who have caused the crisis are hardly being touched while the workers and the poor who are already near the edge from a decade of Reagan/Dukakis "prosperity" will be pushed even further. Many will be pushed right over the edge into the abyss of homelessness, drug addiction, sickness, and complete poverty.

The next tax-and-cut plan includes over two billion dollars in income, sales, and gasoline tax increases, cutting hundreds of dollars a year out of each worker's income. And it includes major cutbacks mainly in medical care and education, which come after years of federal, state, and local cutbacks in these areas. Mothers and children on AFDC will see a third year without a cost-of-living increase. The poor will be pushed out of hospitals and nursing homes by the Medicaid cuts. 2,000 teachers are slated to be laid off statewide, after 1,500 last year. Public college tuition will be increased by up to \$846 a year, throwing out the poorest students. And the "Universal Health Care Plan" is next on the chopping block, which will condemn the growing number of uninsured to years of untreated illness.

And what about the rich, who are supposed to be fairly taxed by the new plan? They will pay a little more for lawyers, accountants, and electricity, but their huge profits and salaries will be well-protected by their friends in the State House. In fact, the new budget increases the debt service payments to the bankers by a quarter of a billion dollars, bringing the yearly State interest payments to the Wall Street sharks to over a billion dollars. New police and prisons will be provided for the government's racist "war on drugs", which is a code name for their occupation of the black neighborhoods and their suppression of the black youth. The tax cuts and the loopholes for the millionaires will remain. And of course, the thousands of government

officials making over \$50,000 a year will be congratulating themselves for their fiscal responsibility.

The new budget is a bonanza for the rich and more belt-tightening for the workers and poor. This point has been driven home by the many demonstrations against the tax-and-cut plan over the past months. 5,000 state college students marched on the State House, many chanting "Tax the Rich, Not the People, No More Cuts". High school students, in Taunton, Pittsfield, Somerville, and Melrose demonstrated and marched against cutbacks, suffering arrests and suspensions. 2,000 elderly demonstrated against Medicaid cuts for nursing homes. State workers have protested layoffs. Several hundred have marched for cocaine treatment facilities. Women have demonstrated against cutbacks aimed at women and children. And everywhere there is deep hatred for the coming tax increases.

In response to the growing anger, most Democratic Party politicians are saying we should unite behind even higher taxes, while the Republicans are calling for an even more brutal round of cutbacks under the banner of opposing more taxes. Both parties are leaving the rich alone. Both are saying we should pay for their crisis. But demonstrations are the right direction, not falling in behind the politicians of the rich. We have to turn the growing anger into active mass struggle in the streets, the workplaces, and the schools against the rich and their loyal politicians. We must fight against the cutbacks and force the rich to pay higher taxes.

Capitalism has caused the crisis

The politicians say this financial crisis is just some temporary phenomenon that can be corrected by good fiscal management. But Massachusetts has simply joined the growing list of states that have fallen into the deepening crisis of capitalism. A few "good" years of big profits for the rich and just-begging-by for the workers has turned into a recession. This is not a temporary phenomenon, it is the constantly recurring reality of capitalism. And when each crisis hits, the rich try to dump it all onto the working class, hoping [to] weather the storm until the next "miracle" comes along. But there is an alternative to this madness. That is workers' socialism, where the working class controls the government and the economy for the benefit of all those who labor, not for the idle rich. In the fight of today we must aim for just such a new society, free from the constant crises of capitalism. ■

Fighting for truly independent unions in the Philippines

The following article comes from the first issue of the journal *MALAYA (Independence)*, voice of the independent workers' union movement (*Bukluran ng mga Malayang Samahin ng mga Manggagawa ng Pilipinas*), which is associated with the KPRP (Union of Proletarian Revolutionaries of the Philippines). It describes the struggles against the company unionism and Christian-unions of the FFW and AIUPHILS unions. It has been translated by the Workers' Advocate staff.

The article in the January 1 issue of the *Workers' Advocate*, "The rise of independent workers' organization", part of the report from the MLP, USA delegation to the Philippines, describes *BUKLURAN* and the general line up of union federations in the Philippines.

AIUPHILS and the struggle of workers at Jonas for a true union

Good-looking declarations of AIUPHILS

Based on the declarations of a leaflet of this federation, the Association of Independent Unions of the Philippines, (AIUPHILS):

(1) is a true democratic labor organization. It has a nationalist objective; it is for the interests and good of the working class, for the blood and sweat of Filipino workers. It was built by the blood and sweat of workers who believe in true freedom and humane convictions.

(2) stands for the following principles:

a) democratic and free unionism: the workers themselves should take charge of their organization; the organization should have power; and the administration has no right to intervene and dictate to them.

b) humane treatment of workers: the dignity of labor must be upheld and workers' interests take precedence over capitalistic considerations for profit.

c) nationalist and pro-Christian unionism: improvement of the lives of workers. It should be stressed that people are creators and should be allowed participation in decision-making in production for the good of all.

The relationships of AIUPHILS and the union is [supposedly] based on the close unity of the oppressed sectors of society. And this unity is the foundation of the struggle against all forms of inhuman habits and behavior in the sphere of labor.

They even have a comic book that attempts to illustrate a worker asking advice from another worker or intellectual. The first asks which union or federation they should join, the latter replies they should join AIUPHILS.

Finally, they criticize the May First Federation [KMU, the Kilusang Mayo Union, which is associated with the Maoist-oriented Communist Party of the Philippines—ed.], particularly their "true, militant and nationalist" unionism.

A brief history of FFW-AIUPHILS at Jonas

Jonas International is a factory of food export products like banana chips and other related products in San Agustin, Novaliches in Quezon City. It is owned by an arrogant and brutal Chinese capitalist, while production is run by 200-300 workers, the majority of whom are women.

In 1986, after many years of complete control by the Chinese capitalist of the mind and behavior of the workers by means of his "company union", and repression of all legitimate attempts of the workers to have their own independent union, the cruel owner and the whole management suddenly did not know what to do. This was because they saw a shadow of a free organization of the militant workers. Due to this shadow, the owner immediately joined the yellow, pro-Christian federation, the Federation of Free Workers (FFW), in order to build its own union as a local union of this yellow federation. By means of some sell-out workers, threats, and intimidation of the workers, vote-buying and voting by 40 management personnel, his union won. His union, belonging to FFW, became a collective bargaining unit and was run by the sell-out workers-leaders.

And so the next three years were three years of proof that this local FFW union is a union not of the workers, but of the owner and bribed bureaucrats of the yellow federation and sell-out worker-leaders. Three more years of consciousness-raising among the workers on the need for a true union. For the past three years, the FFW union did nothing for its membership. It merely watched, sometimes applauded, while the owner used different means to put some militant workers in prison for things they did not do, fired a number of workers, transferred some to more difficult jobs, imposed rotation, "pakyawan" system, etc., in order to increase his profits from the exploitation of the helpless workers.

The result is the continued corruption of the FFW and its local union at Jonas. So, in the present "era of freedom", the FFW and the owner of the local union passed the local union to one of its yellow affiliates, the Association of Independent Unions of the Philippines (AIUPHILS). Now there is close unity among the owner, AIUPHILS, and the sell-out worker-leaders against the re-emerging shadow and they are using all means to oppose the possibility of the transformation of the shadow into a successful true union of the workers in the factory. Led by the owner, they are launching a campaign of threats and

intimidation (the factory will close should the Malayang Samahan ng mga Manggagawa of Jonas [the MSMJ, a Bukluran-associated union] succeed in the coming certification elections). They are also planning to cheat the workers in the elections through having 40 people from management vote. And to ensure their victory, the owner imposed mandatory overtime so that militant workers would not have time for their campaign or other preparations for the elections. And they give workers time off to attend the meetings of AIUPHILS, their wages are paid, and they are given free snacks.

AIUPHILS based on its practice at Jonas

It is clear that everything mentioned in [AIUPHILS'] leaflets is a lie, pretension and deception only. It is not true that AIUPHILS is for the interest, welfare, and good of the workers. It is not true that it believes in democratic and free unionism, humane treatment of workers, and nationalist and pro-Christian unionism.

What is true is the following:

(1) AIUPHILS, or the local union affiliated with AIUPHILS, is an organization not of the workers but of the alliance of the brutal capitalist owner, bureaucrats of the federation, and the sell-out leader-workers. It is for the interest, welfare, and good of the owner and the bribed bureaucrats of the federation and the sell-out leader workers. It was built not on the blood and sweat of the workers, but with the money of the owner.

(2) It stands for the following:

a) a union controlled or influenced by the owner, a union serving as a weapon of the owner against the workers, especially the militant workers, serving as an added chain for the workers;

b) a union blind, deaf, and dumb in the face of the exploitation, oppression, repression, threats, and intimidation (and violence) of the owner and his connection with violent forces, especially outside the factory;

c) leadership of the sell-out workers, traitors to the working class, their hearts replaced by the owner with hearts of bananas.

By means of its little comic book, AIUPHILS declares its views to the workers: a worker in long sleeves, an organizer wearing eyeglasses, the two of them facing each other, each holding a beer mug. This is an ordinary illustration not of workers, but of the bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie.

In its view, the MSMJ is a member of or like the KMU.

This is a mistake, because the MSMJ is not a member of or like the KMU. It is independent from the KMU and promotes thoughts, leadership and mobilization different from those of KMU. Nevertheless, AIUPHILS' criticism of the KMU expresses its anti-worker, anti-strike and anti-change nature.

The organization needed by the workers at Jonas

(1) A true union of the workers for the workers: led by true worker-leaders, not by the sell-outs; not bought by money or position, not selfish or focused only on the interest of their own families, but with class consciousness and working for the interest of the majority; an active defender of victims of oppression, repression, violence, etc.

(2) A union independent from the capitalists, exploiting or opportunist federations, sell-outs or treacherous worker-leaders, and promoting honesty in serving [both] the immediate and more important interests of the working class.

(3) A union fighting for the legitimate demands of its members, for union recognition, for its proper place in bargaining with the capitalists, and for responding to the immediate interest of the members in the bargaining process. The interest of the majority comes first in the organization; it balances the maintenance of the jobs of its members while fighting for the continuous improvement of their lives in the midst of the deepening crisis and poverty.

(4) An organization in solidarity with fraternal and friendly organizations of workers in the industry, in the country, and in other countries. It participates actively in the spread, strengthening, and advancement of the organization of the workers like the Bukluran ng mga Malayang Samahan ng mga Manggagawa ng Pilipinas (BMCMP) and other organizations of toilers in the whole country and the world. It also enjoys the solidarity and support of those organizations in its local struggle. It is focused not only on the improvement of the conditions of its members but also on changing society and the complete salvation of the working class and all of humanity.

In short, the organization needed by the workers at Jonas and other workers is: CLASS-CONSCIOUS, INDEPENDENT, MILITANT AND INTERNATIONALIST.

At present, at Jonas, this is none other than the MALAYANG SAMAHAN NG MGA MANGGAGAWA NG JONAS [Independent Workers Union at Jonas].

So build, promote, strengthen and lead MSMJ to victory! Long live MSMJ! Long live the Filipino workers! Long live the international working class! ■

Reference material on the crisis in Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia

The Soviet Union has become one huge cauldron of national discord. One of the focal points is the independence movement in the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The local elites want to separate off, and the Soviet government is seeking to stop them. It has gone as far as an economic blockade of Lithuania. The debate in the Russian government is over forcible suppression of the independence movements or less extreme ways of applying pressure. The Gorbachev government is willing to have the USSR turn into a looser federation, but it is not for the right to self-determination. If its suppression of the Baltic republics becomes fiercer, the Moscow government will rally more and more of the population against it.

We oppose the suppression of the right to self-determination. This is why the June issue of the *Workers' Advocate* carried an article declaring "Down with Gorbachev's attacks on Lithuania!" But at the same time, we also oppose the bourgeois path of the local elites as another source of grief for the working people of the Baltic republics.

The Baltic independence movements will not bring liberation for the toilers. Instead they will maintain the domination of local elites. They do not aim at proletarian liberation, but instead glorify the bourgeois system and idealize the old regimes between the two World Wars. Yet the independent Baltic regimes of the 1920s and 30s saw the Baltic bourgeoisie rule with an iron hand over the toilers. And today the measures proposed by the Baltic bourgeoisie include denying national rights to the minorities in the Baltic republics. These minorities are a large part of the population, and they have a disproportionately large share of the Baltic working class. The oppression of these minorities is not only undemocratic but would also come down especially hard on the working masses.

Behind the present crisis

The three Baltic republics are small, together adding up to 15 million people. They have become heavily industrialized over the last several decades, creating a standard of living which is among the highest in the USSR. The industrial growth and the high standard of living have served as a magnet drawing people from other parts of the Soviet Union, especially the rural areas of northwest Russia and the Ukraine.

There have been long-standing grievances in the Baltics, including how the three republics were incorporated within the USSR during the Second World War and also other grievances against the bureaucratic system, grievances which in one form or another are common all over the Soviet Union. The present movement doesn't grow out of the

grievances of 1940 so much as out of the present crisis in the Soviet Union, out of the grievances against the state-capitalist system, and out of the interests of the local elite that grew up during the period of being part of the USSR. After all, the independence movement isn't just being organized by nationalist elements who've been on the sidelines all these years, but by the local Communist Party elites themselves.

The current agitation stems from the fact that there is an acute economic crisis in the Soviet Union, marked by scarcity and shortages. The local Baltic elites want to preserve their share.

They have been encouraged by the Western-style capitalist reforms promoted by Gorbachev. Indeed, Gorbachev encouraged the formation of new political organizations outside of the local revisionist parties with the idea that they would spearhead his ideas of Western-style reforms. And already these organizations have become the key political forces in these regions. These are the People's Fronts of Estonia and Latvia and the Sajudis movement in Lithuania. These groups, while broader than the revisionist "Communist" Parties, include the leaders of these parties.

But once the ball was set rolling, allowing the local elites greater leeway, the ground was cleared for a mushrooming of nationalist sentiment. Old grievances against Moscow were brought to the fore. Resentment against immigrants flowered. More extreme nationalist forces also came out of the woodwork. And ideas of separation began to grow.

There have been legitimate national grievances. While there hasn't been outright suppression of their language rights, apparently preference for Russian has created feelings of discrimination. As well, the resentments against revisionist bureaucracy and suppression of democracy have been expressed in a national form.

The situation of the minorities

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Meanwhile, as laws were passed restricting the rights of the non-ethnic Baltic peoples in the Baltic republics, some resistance to the independence movements emerged from those quarters. In all these states, there are sizable national minorities, such as Russian workers and others. In Estonia, 32% people of the population is not ethnically Estonian. In Lithuania, 20% is not ethnically Lithuanian, and in Latvia some 43% are non-Latvians. The minorities have protested the declaration of an official language in Estonia and the restriction of electoral rights in Estonia.

The minority populations are however being manipulated by elements close to the central bureaucracy in Moscow. While putting forward demands that are democratic—such as no language privileges—the movement seeks to use Moscow's club against the local nationalist sentiment. This only helps to split the working people further apart.

Submerging the workers' interests

The end result is that the toilers are being rent asunder into two camps. One section has fallen under the umbrella of the local elites who want to use the crisis to expand their share. Another section is under the influence of the central bureaucracy.

It is not clear which way things will go. Both Moscow and the local elites want more perestrojka. They are not out for workers' control of the centralized economy, but for moving from bureaucratic forms of state capitalism to more Western-style capitalism. This will not bring liberation for the workers, and will in fact impose further sacrifices on them.

Meanwhile the masses are being lined up behind this or that side of the conflict among the elites.

The right of self-determination and national rights—both for the Baltic republics with respect to Moscow and for the national minorities inside the Baltic republics—is in the interest of the working class. No force should be used to keep the Baltic republics inside the Soviet Union. Force not only means pain and suffering, but also that distrust between the toilers will fester. The central government does not have the right to step in and suppress the movement forcibly under the pretext of protecting minority rights. But at the same time, the suppression of the local minorities cannot be justified in the name of the right to self-determination of the Baltic republics. The Baltic republics have become multinational regions and everyone should be assured of equal rights.

The only real alternative for the workers is the internationalist trend. Much scorn is heaped on it. And it will take the development of clarity about both revisionism and Western-capitalism for it to develop. It will require the working class to have a revolutionary perspective of workers' socialism. This is not present among the Baltic toilers at present. But its promise remains.

Suppression of minorities and workers is not new for the Baltic elite

The anti-democratic steps taken by the independence movement is not a new development for the Baltic elite. It shows that the new local elite is following in the footsteps of the old Baltic bourgeoisie. As a matter of fact, the Baltic nationalist movements in the Soviet Union have picked up the banner of the bourgeois states which existed in the years between the two world wars. And the U.S. media has eagerly joined this crusade, lamenting the supposed democracies which existed in the Baltics before the Soviet annexation during World War II.

One can well disagree with the un-democratic way in which the annexation of the Baltic states was carried out by the USSR in 1940. But this does not mean falling into raptures over the governments which ruled in these areas during 1920-1940. The truth of the matter is these were reactionary governments. They developed from oppressive, conservative governments to fascist tyrannies by the late 30's.

It is useful to take a brief trip back into history to see what the history of these governments really were, how they came into being, and whether their banner can emancipate the masses. We will begin by examining the tsarist oppression of the people which preceded these governments.

Under the Tsarist Heel

What are today the Baltic nations of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia were grabbed up by the Tsarist Russian Empire in the 1700's. They were supposed to be Russia's "window" to the west.

Under the Tsars, the native Baltic peoples were doubly oppressed. For the most part, the Baltic toilers were peasants. On the one hand, they had to bear the yoke of Russian domination. And in addition, they sweated away their lives on large landed estates owned by the local nobility, which was predominantly Baltic Germans. The nobility formed the local administration in these provinces on behalf of the Tsar. Why, they even helped impose Russification and to force conversion to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Most of the upper-class political forces stood aside from any separatist movement. At the turn of the century, communist workers' movements emerged. They championed self-determination for these nations, but also built close links with the communist workers' movement across the Russian empire. They foresaw their national liberation coming as part of the democratic revolutionary upheaval across the Russian empire.

Thus, when the 1905 revolution broke out against the Tsar, the toilers in the Baltics took part side by side with the workers and peasants of Russia proper, Poland, Finland, etc. There were strikes and peasant revolts. But this revolution ended in defeat, and the tsar stayed on the throne.

Then during World War I, Lithuania was occupied by the German army. A local regime was set up based on the

Baltic German nobility. The Kaiser hoped for eventual annexation.

Tollers join the revolutions of 1917

But something else intervened. This was the revolutions of 1917.

The workers and poor of the Baltic enthusiastically took part in the February revolution of 1917 against the Tsar. Workers and soldiers' soviets or councils were set up in Estonia and Latvia. In Lithuania, however, the German occupiers prevented revolutionary agitation.

The workers' revolution of October 1917 horrified the Baltic exploiters, who turned to the idea of independence. They wanted Baltic independence to keep the area outside of the struggle for socialism.

But the workers and poor had a different idea. The workers of Estonia and Latvia took part in the revolution and set up working class power. They did not seek independence, but instead sought union with the Soviet power that had emerged in Russia. They held that union with other workers fighting for socialism and communism was the strongest guarantee both for their class emancipation and for acquiring their equal national rights.

The local exploiters against the revolution

The local Baltic bourgeoisie looked to the imperialist powers for help in the struggle against the Bolshevik revolution. They took help from one and all, even from powers that themselves were aiming to annex the Baltic countries (for example, Germany). Some of the Western imperialist powers were willing to recognize independent Baltic states and strive for their own imperialist influence inside these countries. Others actually sought outright annexation. But the Baltic bourgeoisie sought help from them all, and took support from the Swedish government, the German Kaiser, Finnish reactionaries, and the British Navy.

The local workers weren't able to stand up to the united imperialist onslaught. Nor could the Soviet government, wracked by civil war and foreign intervention, offer much help. The local bourgeoisie maintained its domination of these areas, and the central Soviet government conceded their independence. There were peace treaties in 1920, and bourgeois regimes were set up in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Right-wing governments

The governments which were set up were weak. To gain some favor with the masses, they carried out a certain amount of land reform. This consisted mainly of distributing land from the Baltic Germans to the peasantry of the local nationality. It was done on a nationalist basis, accompanied with a lot of anti-German propaganda.

At the same time, these governments restricted the

workers' and communist movements. And they also discriminated against the local national minorities.

The governments were quite unstable. For example, between 1919 and 1934, Estonian governments averaged about 9 months in power.

Fascism develops

Meanwhile by the late 1920s Mussolini-style fascist movements began to grow in these countries. The local bourgeois governments were dominated by right-wing parties that however had maintained the form of conservative republics. But they became worried that the situation was so volatile that at some point the capitalists would turn directly to the fascist movements and remove them from power. So they decided to carry out much of the fascist program by themselves in the mid-30's. In all three Baltic states, conservative regimes suspended the usual government forms and instead ruled by decree.

One-party regimes were set up. Political rights were banned, as were strikes and trade union freedoms. By the end of the 30's, fascism of a local variety was dominating the Baltic peoples. This was similar to the situation at that time in Poland and other East European countries.

The annexation by the Soviet Union

After the 1939 Soviet-German non-aggression pact, the Soviet Union established military bases in these states. And it was at this time that the Soviet Union arranged for Vilnius to become part of Lithuania. In 1940 the USSR then annexed all the Baltic countries.

The Soviet Union faced a real threat from the world offensive of fascism, as did workers all around the world. The Nazis were planning to attack, based on rolling back the specter of communism. The Soviet Union thought it could resist by carrying out cynical maneuvers, descending to the level of an ordinary bourgeois state. It put everything on securing its borders and had lost faith in the workers' and revolutionary movements. Certain steps, if carried out properly, might have been justified by the harsh realities of the impending war. But none of the steps were carried out openly for this reason or on a temporary basis, but instead with the pretense that the people were basically unanimously enthusiastic about them.

By this time, the Soviet leadership had already turned away from communist principles. The state-capitalist system was in the process of consolidating, wiping out the proletarian and revolutionary features of the USSR. In its foreign policy, the Soviet government wasn't guided by revolutionary ideas but by a bourgeois style of power politics.

In carrying out its policy, the Soviet government ran roughshod over the local peoples. This was one of the factors that helped undermine the support of a section of the people for social reform, and for anti-fascist solidarity with the USSR.

However, the annexations of 1940 were short-lived. The

Nazis rolled into these areas, and they carried out their murderous campaigns against Jews and communists. Some local bourgeois and nationalist forces assisted the Nazis, and were especially eager, for example, to hunt down Jews. Even now, some nationalists in Estonia are trying to excuse the Nazi collaborators.

With the defeat of Germany, the Nazi occupation of

these countries was ended. But after the war, the Soviet Union didn't give these states the right to self-determination. This went hand in hand with the consolidation of the state capitalist system in the USSR. The denial of national rights and the crisis of revisionist state-capitalism thus set the stage for the present situation. ■

Childcare: An ounce of assistance for a ton of need

From the May 18 issue of Boston Worker, voice of the MLP-Boston:

This month MBTA [Boston's transit authority] General Manager Thomas Glynn has announced the T's new child care lottery. Glynn tells us that the T is attentive to the childcare needs of its employees. And so he has announced a lottery to fill 40 slightly subsidized slots for day-care that the T has reserved with area day-care centers.

Glynn's approach is typical of the capitalist politicians and bureaucrats. Lots of talk and token action. There are thousands of T workers who face a major headache and financial drain getting day-care for their kids. This problem is especially difficult because of the weekend work and the long days and crazy schedules the T imposes on the workers. And in face of this massive need Glynn pats himself on the back for offering forty slots at day care

centers, which will be difficult to afford even with his subsidy. What a hypocrite! The only thing that keeps him from looking the total fool is that our union, which ought to be fighting for decent day care for the workers' kids, shows even less interest in the problem than Glynn.

Over the last two decades real wages (after inflation) of the American workers have declined by 30 to 40 per cent. As a result most families now require two or more incomes to survive. In addition, these same conditions have fueled a high divorce rate and the addition of millions of single parents to the work force. For working people a national, affordable, and decent system of child care is a desperate need. But until the working people build up mass actions and mass movements to force the government and the employers to pay for a day-care system for our kids, we will get nothing more than Glynn's tokenism. ■

From the Portuguese Marxist-Leninists: Trotsky before 1917

The article "Trotsky before 1917" appeared in the Supplement to *Política Operária*, No. 22, November/December 1989. *Política Operária* is the journal of the OCPO, or Communist Organization—Workers' Policy, and the article is by Francisco Martins Rodrigues, editor of *Política Operária*.

The translation is by the Workers' Advocate staff. Some of the quotations are translated from the Portuguese translations in the article, and are thus only approximate, being translations of translations.

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Digging up the question of Trotsky, when there are so many new things to be analyzed by the Marxist camp, might seem like something for the enjoyment of archaeologists, but that is not the case. The noisy overthrow of the so-called *socialist system* right before our eyes at present, and the debate about the contribution of Trotskyism to the analysis of the degeneration of the Russian revolution, for those of us who originate from the tendency which used many aspects of the attack against trotskyism as an alibi for the falsification of Leninism, obligates us to re-open a discussion of this theme. In this article, first of a series, we try to give the trajectory of Trotsky before 1917, and the genesis of his theory of permanent revolution.

* * * *

"If it is beyond doubt that Stalin was the betrayer of the Russian revolution, perhaps it is necessary to give justice for Trotsky, exiled, slandered, assassinated, by Stalin precisely because he represented the essential interests of the revolution, whatever his errors were."

The tendency to politically rehabilitate Trotsky has arisen in the communist ranks more than once over the past ten years, as the criticism of Stalin has grown. It arose when the KPD [the Communist Party of Germany], the German Marxist-Leninist party, disintegrated and a faction temporarily went to Trotskyism. It has manifested itself in some positions taken recently by a Swedish communist group (NKF) [NKF—the Communist League of Norrköping, now the Marxist-Leninist League of Sweden] through its bulletin *Röd Gryning* [Red Dawn], and it has been expressed from time to time by readers of our magazine, such as in the letter published in this issue of *Política Operária*, "In defense of Trotsky".

With this article we begin an evaluation of Trotsky, a theme which has been proposed by various readers and which we hope to pursue in future issues of *Política Operária*. As is the norm in this magazine, we are not selling dogmas but rather presenting *provisional truths* that serve as steps to reach other, more solid truths.

The theme is open to debate, with the editors, naturally reserving the right to decide, according to interest and opportunity, which of the contributions we eventually receive to publish.

A stranger among the Bolsheviks

During the period of Lenin's illness and death, when power became concentrated in Stalin's hands, Trotsky seemed to suffer from a strange irresoluteness which led to his eclipse, to his playing no role at the critical moment, and even to his voting favorably on the resolutions of the Party leadership which he then opposed right away. In this way, as we have pointed out, the decisive period of the change of leadership of the party was lost, and when he tried to dispute Stalin it was too late.

To attribute this vacillation to a psychological breakdown, or to a poorly explained illness from Stalin's machinations, is a method for putting aside the political origin: despite immense popular prestige won through his role in the insurrection and the civil war, Trotsky had a reduced ability for intervention in party matters. This was not due to a lack of ability to organize or maneuver, but was due to his marginal situation inside the Bolshevik party.

The episode apparently fortuitous of Trotsky's vacillations in 1922-25 might be a good introduction so that we understand his later trajectory. Trotsky vacillated because he was a stranger in the party, a stranger, because he joined the Bolshevik trend in August 1917, after having tirelessly fought the preparation for the revolution and the building of the party for years.

When this question is touched upon, Trotsky's followers are accustomed to protest against the "gossip" of continuing to always enumerate the errors from before 1917, when Trotsky was [supposedly] the first to recognize and correct them, meriting Lenin's appreciation for this. It is necessary, also, to evaluate the nature of these "errors" seeing that Trotsky systematically tried to minimize them.

This is not any kind of "gossip". If Trotsky is considered

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a "disciple" of Lenin and in 1904 already had a revolutionary perspective "completely opposed to Menshevism"; if even before 1917, the periods of polemic about "frictions" between the two [Trotsky and Lenin] alternate with periods of "solidarity"; if Trotsky's error was just interpreting Lenin badly regarding the necessity of a centralized party and having, to a certain extent, illusions with the hope of uniting all the tendencies in a single proletarian party—this gives us one political picture of Trotsky.

But the truth is different if Trotsky was operating all the time against the construction of the party that was to lead the revolution and if he was trying by all means to dissolve it into the reformist trend. This gives us a different image of Trotsky.

It seems to us that it is perfectly possible and necessary to establish which of these versions corresponds to the truth. We do not adhere to the method currently fashionable of abandoning all the criteria for evaluation under the pretext of avoiding *being simplistic, reductionist or ... Stalinist!*

The facts may be obscured or manipulated under mountains of *literature* but they don't lend themselves to many interpretations: between 1903 and 1917, Trotsky struggled to impede the definition of the Bolshevik trend, and after the Bolshevik trend was constituted into an autonomous party, he struggled to neutralize it.

15 years of anti-Bolshevism

The genuine indignation and defiant anger with which Trotsky flailed, in his chief works, the campaign of falsifications regarding him mounted by Stalin; the caustic humor with which he denounced the "theoretical margarine" that served as the basis of the anti-trotsky campaign; the exacting criteria with which he revealed the *centrism* of his accusers, gained him the following of not a few militants. Many discover in his works a palpable portrait of the Russian Revolution, of which the official Soviet school only knew how to give a conventional drab image.

This leaves some to forget that more than once, in criticizing Stalin's centrism, Trotsky criticized indirectly [by ricochet] his own past centrism, and in repelling the slanders of which he was victim, he frequently turned the facts upside down. This was what happened very particularly regarding the period prior to 1917.

Trotsky wrote that, in this period, "*my differences with Lenin had a secondary character, the essential line was revolutionary, and it consistently brought me close to Bolshevism*"; the attempt to discredit his ideas as "Trotskyism" could only have arisen after the disappearance of Lenin. (1); during the first revolution he "*worked with the Bolsheviks*"; he defended this common action against "*the renegade Mensheviks*"; "*despite three episodes of trying, I never got to work with the Mensheviks*"; "*I had in certain moments a tendency to form a grouping*" (!!); the attacks that Lenin had directed at him had been "*episodic*" and at times based on deficient information; "*Lenin and I represented two*

shades of the revolutionary tendency"(2) etc., etc.

It would be convenient, therefore, to remember, for those who don't know, the principal topics of the real trajectory of Trotsky during these years:

— in 1903, aligned with Martov against Lenin, opposing the need to clearly define the organizational borders of the party, its discipline, and democratic centralism; becoming for a time an active Menshevik;

— in 1904-1905, when the big debate begins which put the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks—must the proletariat ally with the peasantry or with the liberal bourgeoisie?—Trotsky distanced himself from both tendencies, counterposing them to his own theory of the "permanent revolution" to which we will refer further on;

— during the revolution of 1905 Trotsky tended to approximate the position of the Bolsheviks, even though he continued to be linked to the Mensheviks; the St. Petersburg Soviet, which he led in collaboration with other Mensheviks, maintained a hesitant position, while the Moscow Soviet led by the Bolsheviks, led a political strike and armed insurrection;

— in 1906-1907 attempted unification of the party after the defeat of the revolution; Trotsky formed a small centrist group that oscillated between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks;

— in 1909 Trotsky looked to reconcile the two factions in struggle in the party;

— 1910, a very difficult situation led the Bolsheviks to collaborate in the "unifying" journal of Trotsky in emigration. Lenin put an end to this collaboration, accusing Trotsky of playing the role of arbitrator in favor of the opportunists;

— 1911-1912, Trotsky passed to collaborating closely with the liquidators and "otzovists" against the Bolsheviks. When the Bolsheviks finally constituted as an independent party, Trotsky turned to being a cheerleader for an anti-Bolshevik block dominated by the most opportunistic of the Mensheviks (the "liquidators");

— in 1913, Trotsky separated from the Menshevik journal, continuing to wage war against the growing implantation of the Bolsheviks among the workers;

— in 1914, Trotsky founded a magazine in emigration in which he attacked, above all, the Bolsheviks;

— in 1915-1916, Trotsky went with the formation of the internationalist trend against imperialist war, but tried more than once not to burn the bridges with the Kautskyists, for which he was criticized by Lenin.

The least that can be said is that this goes against the version later defended by Trotsky, that nothing essential separated him from Lenin, and that the insults exchanged between them are explained by the ardor of the polemic.

It is alleged that the main thing was agreement and a close collaboration between the two during and after the October Revolution. But how then to try to deal with that Lenin and Trotsky were for 15 years in opposite camps? Wouldn't it be decisive to know the cause of this antago-

nism in order to understand what happened later?

Trotsky against Lenin?

Feeling obligated, during the beginnings of the polemic with Stalin, to present himself as a disciple of Lenin and to generously admit that Lenin was "correct the majority of times", Trotsky later clarified his real thinking during the period of preparation for the revolution.

There were [according to Trotsky] in reality two partial perspectives that were going one against another and which were mutually completed in 1917. Trotsky recognized that Lenin was correct regarding democratic centralism, and that he [Trotsky] was a conciliator for underestimating the opportunism of the Mensheviks, but Lenin, for his part, also implicitly recognized with the adoption of the April Thesis that Trotsky was right regarding "permanent revolution".

In this way, if Trotsky, in the words of Lenin, after 1917 became the best of the Bolsheviks, it could be deduced that Lenin also, for his part, became the best of the Trotskyists...

Nevertheless, this version of events (afterwards taken up and *perfected* by the Trotskyists) has a series of incongruities on which it is not redundant to insist, if we want to perceive the Russian revolution and Trotsky himself.

First, with respect to Menshevism.

If Trotsky presented in 1904 the necessity to advance toward the dictatorship of the proletariat more clearly than Lenin, thanks to his theory of the "permanent revolution", how could this not lead to understanding the necessity of a centralized party to fight as the only method to delineate the proletariat from the petty bourgeoisie, and in light of this the necessity to fight to differentiate the revolutionary trend in order to build this party?

If the 1905 Revolution made clear that the opportunism of the Mensheviks was incurable because it fed off the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie distrustful of the revolution, how was it possible that Trotsky in 1907 still said, "I have hopes that the Mensheviks will evolve towards the left", and in 1912 he tried to reunite all the opportunist groupings into a block against the Bolsheviks? (3)

Can it be taken that it was due to this same "mistake in evaluation" that this perceptive political leader didn't notice, for 15 years (!) that "in reality ... there were being grouped inflexible revolutionaries on the one side and, on the other, elements which were becoming more and more opportunist and accommodating" (4) and that he [Trotsky] tried to build a party for his worker's revolution *more advanced* than the Bolsheviks, with a trend which was precisely the most moderate and opportunist in Russia.

These questions don't intend to *locate* Trotsky but just to arrive at the conclusion which appears obvious: From 1903 to 1917 Trotsky did not represent "a shade of the revolutionary tendency", did not "consistently come close

to Bolshevism"; he was at times a Menshevik and at times a conciliator but at no time was he a Bolshevik or a sympathizer of Bolshevism.

Trotsky ahead of Lenin

Trotsky should [by his account] have nevertheless indicated the path of the dictatorship of the proletariat in his theory of "permanent revolution", when Lenin was still held by the notion of stages that had to be exhausted before it would be possible to arrive at new ones.

We leave for another article the question of whether the April Theses and the Bolshevik tactics in the October Revolution were an application of Trotsky's ideas, as he claimed later. What is currently happening in the Soviet Union makes the issue very current and does not favor Trotsky in any way.

For now, we are interested to examine if, in 1905, the theory of the permanent revolution led Trotsky to show the path of the dictatorship of the proletariat to Lenin, or just served as a justification for maintaining Trotsky's vacillating posture in relation to Bolshevism.

Years later, expounding on what his idea consisted of, Trotsky wrote:

"...the revolution, having begun as a bourgeois revolution regarding its first tasks, will soon call forth powerful class conflicts and will gain final victory only by transferring power to the only class capable of standing at the head of the oppressed masses, the proletariat. Once in power, the proletariat not only will not want, but will not be able to limit itself to a bourgeois democratic program. It will be able to carry through the Revolution to the end only in the event of the Russian Revolution being converted into a Revolution of the European proletariat." (5)

The merit of the theory of permanent revolution [supposedly] lies in that, some time before the dictatorship of the proletariat became a consummated fact, it let Trotsky arrive at the conclusion that the Russian Revolution can and should designate as a task the conquest of power by the working class. (6)

If we take this literally, the polemic [between Lenin and Trotsky] becomes incomprehensible. What is new? Didn't Lenin and the Bolsheviks defend the Marxist idea of uninterrupted passage from the Bourgeois revolution to the socialist revolution?

The permanent revolution according to Lenin

It is not necessary to give long quotations on Lenin's views on this in 1905, they are well known. Let us recall:

"...from the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organized prole-

ariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop half-way." [emphasis added] (7)

"But the sooner this victory is achieved, and the fuller it is, the faster and the more profoundly will fresh contradictions and a fresh class struggle develop within the fully democratized bourgeois system. The more completely we achieve the democratic revolution, the closer shall we approach the tasks of the socialist revolution..." [emphasis added] (8)
Etc., etc.

Trotsky, nevertheless was not satisfied. He considered that the formula of Lenin for the revolutionary installation of a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants" had the defect of "leaving in suspense" the key question—to which of these classes would the real dictatorship belong? (9) The risk could exist for a situation in which *"the proletariat remains hostage to the petty-bourgeois majority"*. (10) It would be preferable to speak of a "dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry".

Trotsky was, then, in 1905 [in his own view] a bit more advanced than Lenin—who was preoccupied with the necessity of winning an alliance of the peasantry at any price; Trotsky went further already and was looking to guarantee the hegemony of the proletariat over the peasantry!

Peasant danger or bourgeois danger

But in "Lenin's formula" nothing is left in suspense—in no way was it trying to divide the leadership. Trotsky didn't have any reason to suppose so. Lenin went to war against the Mensheviks precisely to assure the proletariat *"the leadership of the popular revolution"*. In *Two Tactics* (1905) Lenin himself defined the task of the proletariat. "The proletariat must carry the democratic revolution to completion, allying to itself the mass of the peasantry..." [emphasis added] (11) "At first we support the peasants *en masse* against the owners...and then (it would be better to say, at the same time) we support the proletariat against the peasants *en masse*." (12) These quotations can be multiplied by the dozens—but it would be more elucidating to refer to *Two Tactics*.

The issue, beneath Trotsky's reservations, was not omissions by Lenin on the necessity to prepare the change from the bourgeois stage to the socialist stage of the revolution; not an insufficient guarantee for the hegemony of the proletariat. It was Trotsky's resistance to the materialization of the alliance with the peasantry. He himself admitted it later on diverse occasions, "I accused Lenin of overestimating the independent role of the peasantry. Lenin accused me of underestimating the revolutionary role of the peasantry." (13)

In 1927 he recognized *"that the weak side of the permanent revolution consisted in the insufficient, clear and concise determination of the stages of evolution and especially of the*

regroupment of classes when the bourgeois revolution passed to the socialist revolution (...) the exposition of Lenin was much more correct." (14)

In 1929, however, going on the offensive again, he wrote that *"the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants never existed"*, "it was a strategic hypothesis of Lenin that was never verified", "it had an algebraic character because it was based on unknown political relations between the proletariat and the peasants." (15) and because of this created the danger of opportunism in Russia in February 1917, "and [later] in China leading to catastrophe". (16)

Workers' government

Regarding the permanent oscillation of Trotsky, with respect to his own position, what was clear with the passage of time was that his agenda in 1905, of a struggle for a "workers' government" (17), in place of the "provisional revolutionary government" that Lenin defended, simply obstructed any hypothesis to win the peasants to the workers' side, and because of this fact, it impedes the victory of the proletariat and increases the possibilities for the revolution to be channeled to the liberal alternative.

How could Trotsky come up with this invention which he baptized as a new theory? He never could accept the Menshevik perspective that gave over the leadership of the revolution to the liberal bourgeois. But he also was repelled by the path of the Bolsheviks who preached the founding of an alliance of the workers with the lower peasantry and who appeared to European Marxism like preachers of a kind of *Jacobinism*; something retarded and inappropriate for the stage of socialist revolution.

From this standpoint he found a subtle form to negate the revolutionary role of the peasant—which equals negating the revolution itself, as it appeared in Russia—but by invoking *advanced* reasons that superceded simultaneously Mensheviks and Bolsheviks...

What existed nevertheless, beyond the *fictitious* debate created by Trotsky, was a real debate tied to the march of the revolution that left the working class with two hypotheses *and only two*: to march behind the liberal bourgeoisie to get some democratic reforms, or to launch themselves into the insurrection, supported by the peasants.

The *original* theory of Trotsky does not have a place in life. And once it is cleared of the obscure phraseology that adorns it, there is expressed its evasive alignment in the class conflicts that were taking place—through a variant of *ultra-left* appearance, Trotsky tried to evade the forceful choices that the march of the revolution brought with it: the path of insurrection supported by a peasant revolt, or the path of *democratic and socialist* conquests in the wake of the liberals? And whether he wanted it or not, his reservations about the role of the peasantry in the revolution, appearing as if he was moving *to the left* of the Bolsheviks, de facto moved him closer to the Mensheviks, transforming him into a reserve of Menshevism. As is seen in the next few years.

When theory blinds

The theory of the "permanent revolution" did not provide any kind of Marxist clairvoyance for Trotsky during the period of 1903-1917. On the contrary it impeded him from identifying the Bolsheviks as the leading force of the revolution and the Mensheviks as the brake. For many, this is a secondary question, relative to the "normal struggle of factions in the workers' movement". For us it is the main question because it determines Trotsky's real place in the class struggle.

We ask: if Trotsky's attempt to unite a single block of all the anti-Bolshevik tendencies in August of 1912 had been successful; if, as a consequence of this, the Bolsheviks had failed to be implanted in the working class and had arrived at 1917 reduced to a group without political expression—what could have been the destiny of the Russian Revolution and the role of Trotsky in it?

In the same way, did Trotsky find the theory of the permanent revolution *despite* his incomprehension regarding the Mensheviks, or *as a result of* this incomprehension with the aim of giving theoretical support to his zigzagging orbit on the border between Bolshevism and Menshevism?

Debating the difficult choices that the Russian militants of this epoch faced, Trotsky found, in the ingenious mechanism of the "permanent revolution", the *theoretical* support to justify his incapacity to link organizationally with one or the other. The political drama of Trotsky in this period of his activity was to be a militant situated in the field of attraction of two powerful trends of divergent classes and trying to give coherence to his permanent oscillation.

Trotsky, without a party

Seeing himself as a theoretician who lacked the experimental terrain of a party, Trotsky could not go further than the primitive logic in organizational material (that in reality always characterized him): that it was necessary that the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, each of them with their limitations, be willing to collaborate. The task of Trotsky was to convince them to join together. He adopted, in this way, the ungrateful role of "matchmaker" as Lenin said sarcastically; and this role consumed the big part of his focus before 1917.

This was ignoring the *a, b, c* of Marxism. The Party of the revolution can never be constituted by the merger of the revolutionary tendency with the reformist, but rather by their demarcation and by the struggle between them.

Looking for the easiest path of unification, Trotsky revealed that he suffered from the illness that he himself characterized bluntly when referring to others: "*Opportunism looks invariably to support itself on a force that is already constituted.*" (18)

In the senseless project to unify "all the Marxist tendencies", Trotsky found, as was natural, much more receptivity

from the side of the Mensheviks than from the Bolsheviks. His conclusion from this, in a new rupture with reality, was that the Mensheviks, although opportunists, were positive collaborators, while the Bolsheviks, hardened "sectarians" and "split-ists", were a bigger obstacle to unification.

In this way, by the logic of his ideology and of his trajectory, Trotsky arrived at the February Revolution without having resolved the key question—which was his party? With his joining the Bolshevik party later, after his brilliant role in the October insurrection, it seemed to close a long period of vacillation. But shortly he was to return again to his trajectory.

Francisco Rodrigues

[Some of the quotations from Trotsky and all of the quotations from Lenin have been taken from English sources, and the corresponding footnotes in the Portuguese article replaced by our own. We have translated other Trotsky quotations from the Portuguese; they are thus translations of translations and only approximate. The footnotes for these quotations have been translated directly from the list in *Política Operária*, with the page numbers referring to the Portuguese and French editions used by the article in *Política Operária*.—W.A. Supplement]

(1) Trotsky, *A Revolução Desfigurada*, Lisbon, Antidoto, pp. 77 and 85.

(2) Trotsky, *La Révolution Permanente*, Paris, Gallimard, 1963, pp. 84-86, 93, 108.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 78.

(4) Trotsky's March 12, 1919 Preface to his book written in 1905, *Results and Prospects*, in *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects*, Merit Publishers, 1969, pp. 31-2.

(5) *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 32.

(7) V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, "Social-Democracy's Attitude Towards the Peasant Movement", Vol. 9, pp. 236-7, Sept. 1905.

(8) *Ibid.*, "Socialism and the Peasantry", Vol. 9, p. 308, Sept. 1905.

(9) Trotsky, *Results and Prospects*

(10) Trotsky, *La Révolution Permanente*

(11) Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, near the end of Section 12, or see *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 100.

(12) Lenin, *Collected Works*, "Social-democracy's Attitude Towards the Peasant Movement", p. 237, Sept. 1905.

(13) Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*, Sec. 3, p. 201, the words "independent" and "revolutionary" are italicized in the original.

(14) Trotsky, *A Revolução Desfigurada*, p.86.

(15) Trotsky, *La Révolution Permanente*, p.35.

(16) Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*, Sec. 3, p. 192.

(17) Trotsky, *Results and Prospects*, Ch. X, pp. 121-2.

(18) Trotsky, *A Revolução Desfigurada*, p.178. ■

Correspondence:

On methodology for the study of Soviet history

4/25/90

USSR Study

Rise of state capitalism

Critique of the Marxist-Leninist League/Sweden's critique
of the analysis of the Marxist-Leninist Party/USA
(*Röd Gryning* #9 & 10/89)

L.A. supporters [of the MLP,USA] have discussed and recently carried out some research especially concerning the dialectical materialist method of comprehending the development of nature, society and human thought, and we found that the Swedish comrades of the MLLS are not employing the dialectical methods of Marx, Engels, or Lenin but seem mired down with the mechanical, wooden, and subjective idealist views of not only the British Trotskyist Cliff-ite [International Socialists] Tendency, but also various "workers' councilist" semi-anarchist groups in Europe. We are not trying to be pedantic, but the points made herein can perhaps assist us in arriving at a firm grasp of the scientific Marxist-Leninist methodology which can strengthen our work.

I) Methodology

A) Lenin has much to say on this in his *Notes on Hegel's Logic*. Here he lays down 16 points of dialectics as a method. [We have reprinted these points at the end of this letter—ed.] We will discuss here the points which contradict the MLLS as concerns method.

1) Isolating social phenomena is the first part of dialectical thinking. Things have to be viewed as they actually are in separation—first.

a) Lenin says "Objectivity of observation (not examples, not unrepresentative forms, but the thing [Russia—NC] itself)."

H. Levy says in *Aspects of Dialectical Materialism* that "The first step in the study of the dialectic is to chip out its isolates, to study them and then to remake the dialectic by seeing them again in their environment (emphasis mine—NC).

Lenin puts it this way, that we must consider "the totality of the manifold relations of each thing to others."

The MLLS reasons otherwise, it distorts the problems in Russia (and other places) by placing the bulk of its analysis on the hegemony of external factors. It fails to comprehend that every society has its own dynamics, motion and life (See Lenin, *Notes*

on *Hegel's Logic*, point 3. ["the development of this thing, (phenomenon, respectively), its own movement, its own life."])

In Point 4, Lenin states we must search for the "inner contradictory tendencies (and sides) in the thing," [emphasis added] and must see, point (5) "the thing (appearance, etc.) as the sum and unity of opposites"; and in point (6) "the struggle or unfolding of these opposites, that which conflicts with these strivings, etc."

2) The "thing" (Russia—NC) is very complicated, made up of different aspects which have relations to other things. It is only comprehended "by the combined process of splitting up these parts (analysis)" and then "seeing them in their inter-relations (synthesis)". Lenin deals with this in points 7-12. We can see the Cliff-ite method for dealing with Russia—the Cliff-ites deal in sterile wooden formulas which have nothing to do with the internal contradictions being grasped, so that it is improbable using the Cliff-ite formulas to really deepen our knowledge of the USSR—except as to see the appearance, but never really getting to the essence of the economic, political and cultural contradictions.

3) The revolutionary break—change from quantity into quality.

In points 13-16, Lenin deals with development from a lower to a higher stage and how some of the lower stage is repeated in the higher. If the MLLS were to take this up they might get a clearer perspective of Lenin's views on state capitalist tendencies and how they can be fought during the transition period from capitalism to socialism. The MLLS comrades might also find interesting what comrade Lenin has to say on the struggle between content and form and vice versa (point 15) and the passing of quantity into quality and vice versa (point 16).

We had read part of T. Cliff's *State Capitalism in Russia* a few years ago and admittedly we too were influenced a bit by it. But later through the research of the MLP/USA, we realized a lot of weaknesses in Cliff's work, especially the way he kind of played fast and loose with a lot of political and economic facts and also the illusions he displays in the nature of state power in the Western imperialist countries.

We think it would help all of us if we were more familiar with the great works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, including their works on philosophy as well as economics and politics. Then, as we get greater experience, participating in the class and social struggles in our respective lands, we will more appreciate their priceless value to the working

class. We will in addition see how they tower over the revisionism of Stalin, Mao Zedong and Leon Trotsky.

We criticize here in friendship, and in doing so honestly to help strengthen the bonds of friendship of the MLLS and the MLP, USA.

Fraternally,

[NC]—L.A. Supporter ■

Comment by the Supplement:

The letter refers to Lenin listing 16 points of dialectics in his *Notes on Hegel's Logic*. To find these, see Vol. 38 of Lenin's *Collected Works*, pp. 221-2, *Conspectus of Hegel's book "The Science of Logic"*, Book Three: Subjective Logic or the Doctrine of the Notion, Section Three: the Idea. For the reference of the reader, we reproduce the 16 points below. (The letter uses a different source for these points with its own translation.)

Such, apparently, are the elements of dialectics.

One could perhaps present these elements in greater detail as follows:

- 1) the objectivity of consideration (not examples, not divergences, but the Thing-in-itself).
- 2) the entire totality of the manifold *relations* of this thing to others.
- 3) the *development* of this thing, (phenomenon, respectively), its own movement, its own life.
- 4) the internally contradictory *tendencies* (and sides) in this thing.

5) the thing (phenomenon, etc.) as the sum *and unity of opposites*.

6) the *struggle*, respectively unfolding, of these opposites, contradictory strivings, etc.

7) the union of analysis and synthesis—the break-down of the separate parts and the totality, the summation of these parts.

8) the relations of each thing (phenomenon, etc.) are not only manifold, but general, universal. Each thing (phenomenon, process, etc.) is connected with every other.

9) not only the unity of opposites, but the *transitions* of *every* determination, quality, feature, side, property into *every* other (into its opposite?) .

10) the endless process of the discovery of *new* sides, relations, etc.

11) the endless process of the deepening of man's knowledge of the thing, of phenomena, processes, etc., from appearance to essence and from less profound to more profound essence.

12) from co-existence to causality and from one form of connection and reciprocal dependence to another, deeper, more general form.

13) the repetition at a higher stage of certain features, properties, etc., of the lower and

14) the apparent return to the old (negation of the negation).

15) the struggle of content with form and conversely. The throwing off of the form, the transformation of the content.

16) the transition of quantity into quality and *vice versa*. ((15 and 16 are *examples* of 9)) ■

Our views on the Swedish article on the method for studying Soviet history (conclusion)

The last issue of the *Supplement* (May 15) contained the article of *Red Dawn* (the Marxist-Leninist League of Sweden) entitled "What is state capitalism and why has it arisen?" and the first part of our reply. Below is the concluding section of our reply.

IV. On phrases and philosophy

Instead of analysis of the internal situation, *Red Dawn* resorts to general phrases about the world market and the accumulation of capital. And they also seek to refute our views through the use of general philosophical arguments about the objective and the subjective, the superstructure and the base, quantitative change and qualitative change, etc.

But neither phrases about the world market nor general philosophical conceptions can replace a careful study of history and of theory. Without such study, phrases and philosophical concepts become empty.

The accumulation of capital

For example, we have just examined *Red Dawn's* discussion of slavery. They say that the internal class relations are irrelevant to the analysis of the Southern slave economy of the first half of the 19th century. They concluded that all that matters is the presence of cotton on the world market and alleged competition with other suppliers of cotton. And they apply this lesson to the study of the Soviet economy. They conclude that all that matters is that "everything is subordinated to the needs of capital accumulation." They hold that one doesn't determine the capitalist character of revisionist society from the features of its economics and politics, but from the fact of the accumulation of capital for its own sake.

But how does one know that the means of production are capital, and that the country is expanding the means of production simply for the sake of capitalist accumulation, without studying the internal situation? If one already knew the Soviet Union were capitalist, then one could be sure of these things. If the country is capitalist, then the expansion of the means of production is done solely for capitalist reasons. But if the economy is not capitalist, then the expansion of the means of production is being done for other reasons.

Red Dawn sometimes gets around this by simply identifying the means of production with capital. From this point of view, if there is production of more means of production (factories, tools, etc.), this is automatically described as the

accumulation of capital for its own sake.

Thus *Red Dawn* writes that "...the goal of production in the Soviet Union from 1928 on was accumulation, not consumption. The most characteristic feature of capitalism — that the society is dominated by capital accumulation — became an iron-hard, forcing necessity, and even worse than in most other places since the task was to catch up with the tremendous lead of the imperialist countries in a considerably shorter time."

In this passage *Red Dawn* simply identifies the growth in the productive forces with the growth of capital. Building more factories, for example, is supposed to be identical with accumulating more capital for its own sake.

Yet any economy that is dynamic, that is growing, has to put resources into the production of means of production (such as factories, tools, etc.) This is true of communism as well as capitalism. And — everything else being equal — the more that resources are devoted to the development of the means of production, the faster the economy can grow.

The amount of resources to be devoted to heavy industry and other production of means of production is a real issue in Soviet history. For example, the strain of the tremendous investments during the first five-year plan lay heavily on the country. It had tremendous ramifications on the political situation in the country, and evaluating what was done in the first five-year plan is indeed a serious issue. But it is absurd to answer this question on the basis of declaring that the development of heavy industry, for example, is automatically "the accumulation of capital".

If *Red Dawn's* theory were to be taken to its logical conclusion, the implication would be that consumption is socialist, and production is not. The implication would be that the economy can only be developed by capitalism, and socialism simply means consuming the production of an

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already developed economy. The reality is different. For the working class to be able to take over the direction of the economy, it has to be willing to consciously devote large resources to production of the means of production without being compelled to do so by the lash of capitalist exploiters.

Red Dawn however simply compares some figures from an unnamed source on the percentage of resources devoted to the means of production in the Soviet Union and in capitalist countries. Even if one were simply studying rates of economic development, it is by no means clear how meaningful such figures would be. But these figures certainly say little about whether a country is socialist or not. The implication behind *Red Dawn's* use of these figures is that the more resources devoted to means of production, the less a country is socialist. But this is absurd. A vibrant socialist economy that unleashed economic forces that were cramped by capitalism might also display high rates of development. And it can be noted that only improvement of the means of production can provide for sustained, major increases in consumption.

Red Dawn goes on to cite a speech of Stalin in February 1931. There are certainly critical things that could be said about this speech. But all *Red Dawn* brings up is that Stalin talks about a high tempo of growth. They believe that this clinches the case for capitalist restoration. But taken by itself, a high tempo proves nothing about the social system of those years.

What is the overall context?

Nevertheless, *Red Dawn* is convinced that this type of figure provides the general context that is far more important than the internal class relations of the Soviet Union. They state that "Capitalism is a continuous movement, not a static, unchanging thing. We identify it not by its form or by abstracting each country for itself without its coherence, scrutinizing it with a magnifying class. No, we identify it by connecting it to the totality, looking for its dynamic. That is why we look to the Soviet Union's accumulation for accumulation's sake, based upon competition with western capitalism, as the point of departure from which we define the character of the Soviet system." (emphasis added)

We have seen that *Red Dawn* insists that we have taken measures out of context. Here we see their idea of context. It is not the overall form of the country's economics and politics. Instead it is supposed to be wrong to scrutinize the class relations "with a magnifying class". Instead the "totality" is the "accumulation for accumulation's sake". And we have just seen that *Red Dawn* holds that the existence of Soviet capitalism can be shown simply by how much resources are devoted to the production of means of production.

This type of "totality" is actually a lack of any concreteness whatever.

Subjective versus objective factors, superstructure versus base

Another theme of *Red Dawn's* theorizing is the distinction between subjective and objective factors, and between the superstructure and the base. They claim to defend the objective factor and to oppose basing everything on superficial attention to the subjective factor.

For example, in one passage *Red Dawn* discusses the question of whether it makes any sense to believe that some state-capitalist measures may be used by the dictatorship of the proletariat. *Red Dawn* raises the following question: "where is, according to their definitions, the border of when 'state capitalism under the dictatorship of the proletariat' turns into state capitalism without the dictatorship of the proletariat? Is that decided completely by the subjective factor—the general line of the Party? Does the class character of state capitalism change solely by a simple turn in the political course of the Party leadership?"

In our view, one has to examine the economic and political situation to see whether the dictatorship of the proletariat still exists. This is not just a question of some high-flown political debates over slogans, but of what is going on throughout the economics and politics of the country. The nature of the party—whether it really reflects and organizes the mass initiative of the toilers and is based on them, and what role it actually plays in society—is part of this.

The full answer to *Red Dawn's* question about the borderline between the dictatorship of the proletariat and capitalist restoration is, of course, one of the main objects of the investigation of Soviet history. We have a general view, but we aim through this investigation to learn a good deal more. To demand the full answer in advance is to believe that all the questions have already been answered.

But the irony of their philosophical view is that it is *Red Dawn* which had earlier reduced the idea of working class government to a matter of the policies of the party leadership. They had written earlier that the Soviet government, from 1920, was a working class government without a class basis. We discussed this briefly in our article *How to approach the study of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union*. They had put forward the view that the Soviet government had lost its class basis by 1920, but was "still by definition a workers' state" because its policies represented the interests of the working class.

Who administers the state and the economy

Red Dawn also refers to the difference between subjective and objective as the difference between the superstructure and the base. They write "Or does 'state capitalism under the dictatorship of the proletariat' mean that there are no fundamental changes, and that the decisive thing is who is administering the state capitalism and for what purpose? Is it the superstructure that is the decisive thing?"

One problem with this is *Red Dawn's* narrow view of the questions of administration. They seem to regard the question of who is "administering" the state and economy as simply evaluating the views of some top leaders. In fact, which class administers the country is a fundamental question of working class rule. The dictatorship of the proletariat has to replace the former bourgeois apparatus with a proletarian apparatus. Who administers and how—in the factories, in the courts, in the day-to-day functions of the state, etc.—is a major issue of socialism and of Soviet power.

The ironic thing is that while deprecating "who administers" as a mere question of superstructure, *Red Dawn* lays great stress on such issues as the slogan of "socialism in a single country". Aren't the controversies over such slogans clearly a matter of the subjective factor and the superstructure?

More on subjective and objective, superstructure and base

However, while these concepts of subjective and objective, superstructure and base, play an important role in *Red Dawn's* philosophical views on Soviet history, they don't elaborate on them. What do they regard as the subjective and objective factors, and what role do they play? It would have been better if they had gone into this concretely. This would have led to considering what are the deeper and serious factors that have to be taken account of in the study of Soviet history. It would have led not just to the contrast between objective and subjective, but to contrasts between what is serious in politics and economics and what isn't. The Marxist view of politics and parties, for example, is quite different from the views of ordinary politicking that permeates bourgeois countries.

But instead *Red Dawn* seems to believe that the mere reference to philosophical concepts can bypass this process, and knock down all obstacles, just as the walls of Jericho fell at mere trumpet blasts.

Nor is it clear that they have looked deeply into the general Marxist theory of superstructure and base. For example, the forces of production and the relations of production form an economic base, upon which all political matters are a superstructure. Yet the proletariat cannot eliminate the capitalist economic base without making use of social revolution, which requires a political revolution. The preparations for this social revolution requires getting organized, building a proletarian political party, and a number of other "superstructural" and "subjective" acts. After seizing power, the proletariat is faced with building up its own administration, etc. There are serious issues in revolution and minor matters, serious issues in politics and minor issues, but to simply denigrate the subjective factor runs the risk of denigrating revolution altogether.

There are definite conditions for revolution, which are independent of anyone's will. Without these conditions, it will be impossible to carry out a profound social revolution.

No matter how heroic, "subjective" efforts will not suffice. But when the conditions are ripening for revolution, it amounts to turning one's back on them to denigrate mere "subjective" and "superstructural" efforts, such as the organization of the proletariat, the ideology guiding it, etc.

Materialism holds that politics reflects the economic base, and the subjective reflects the objective. But dialectical materialism also points out the conditions under which the "subjective" and "superstructural" can react back on the base. And in periods of revolutionary change, this dialectical relation come right to the surface of events in front of everyone's eyes. To cast aside the "subjective" at such times, is to cast aside the consideration of revolutionary tasks. And it is to cast aside the real question about the "subjective", which is not to belittle it but to ensure that it acts in accordance with the objective conditions facing it.

More on the objective factor for socialist revolution

Indeed, for all their philosophical emphasis on the objective and the base, *Red Dawn's* theories can lead them to evade the consideration of the objective preconditions for revolution.

Consider their view of socialist revolution. They believe that it is opportunist to talk of any other stage of revolution but socialism. This is supposed to be true in every country of the world today regardless of its particular conditions.

But what happens then to the question of base and superstructure? Aren't there definite conditions for revolution? Doesn't the class-conscious proletariat have to consider this when it considers what is the stage of the struggle to overthrow the old and build a new society, and whether the revolution may have to go through various stages?

This question inadvertently comes to the fore when *Red Dawn* discusses the issue of Lenin's idea of transitional measures for the building of socialism. They suggest that Lenin's ideas are dated and not relevant because "there are strong reasons to believe that much of what might have been correct in Russia then does not necessarily have to be the right way for highly developed countries today." (emphasis added)

Earlier in the article, we pointed out that this throws cold water on the study of Leninist theory and of Soviet history itself. But here we want to raise another issue. What about the less developed countries? *Red Dawn*, to its credit, has always been eager to render support to the struggle of the masses of the oppressed countries. With their current theories, they have decided to call on these masses, in all countries, to take up socialist revolution directly and to avoid, on principle, any stages in the revolution. How then can they restrict themselves to the consideration of "highly developed countries" when considering the question of the transition to socialism?

Instead of analyzing the different conditions facing these

countries, and how this affects their revolutionary struggle, *Red Dawn* just points to the more developed countries. It appears that *Red Dawn* has a passive view of the objective factors, and hopes that in the developed countries the objective factor will remove the need to consider the problems of transition to socialism.

It turns out that, in separating the objective and subjective, *Red Dawn* has not got any closer to an analysis of the objective factors.

How does one establish which measures helped and which hurt?

This also comes up in the consideration of transitional measures. Any time the proletariat or its party is faced with the actual process of socialist revolution, it will have to consider what transitional measures to use. But *Red Dawn* believes that our emphasis on transitional measures as a faulty approach that "leads nowhere". To nail this down, they ask "How shall one, by using the method of the American comrades, be able to establish exactly which transitional measures promoted the development of proletarian power and which obstructed it and pushed it backwards?"

Indeed, what is the way that various measures should be judged. This is a fundamental question. What measuring rods should we use?

Red Dawn holds that the study of the results of the measures "gives little, since one and the same result can mean different things in different situations, and since they, moreover, can be observed only for a rather limited period of time, considering that the historical period in question, as a whole, is fairly short and shows fast changes." As well, *Red Dawn* regards that even correct transitional measures would have failed without a world revolution.

This doesn't leave much basis to judge these measures.

Red Dawn contrasts concern with transition measures to talk about the world balance of forces, the world market, and "accumulation for accumulation's sake," and the slogan of "socialism in one country."

But how can one use these "points of departure" to determine "exactly which transitional measures promoted the development of proletarian power and which obstructed it"? How, for example, do these views give a basis to determine whether, for example, one-person management should be used in certain situations? After all, we are all familiar with controversies between comrades who share the same revolutionary goal. It seems that detailed analysis of the particular situations, and not just revolutionary desires, is necessary to determine the correct path forward.

It seems to us that *Red Dawn* doesn't provide any answer to their own question about how to judge the transitional measures. In fact, they appear to ask this question to show the alleged futility of paying much attention to the transitional issues.

Quantitative versus qualitative changes

Red Dawn also deals with its differences with us over when capitalist restoration took place in the Soviet Union by raising the general issue of the difference between quantitative and qualitative changes. They suggest that we have difficulty distinguishing between "the quantitative process of degeneration and the qualitative counter-revolutionary leap".

To illustrate their point, *Red Dawn* compares our views to those of the trotskyist Ernest Mandel. But Mandel holds that the capitalist restoration was never finished in the Soviet Union. He wrote, for example, that "an ultimate historical defeat of the Soviet working class at the social and economic level" had "not yet taken place." (*Proletarian Revolution*, #25, Winter 1985-6, p.5, excerpting from Mandel's article "Marx and Engels on Commodity Production and Bureaucracy" in *Rethinking Marxism*, edited by Resnick and Wolff, 1985, pp 241-2.)

Our Party, on the contrary, has always held that a counterrevolution took place in the Soviet Union, restoring capitalism economically and politically. And we oppose the formula, held by most trotskyists, that there need only be a "political" revolution, not a "social revolution", in the Soviet Union. Thus, on the question of whether a "qualitative" counterrevolution took place, there is nothing in common between these views and those of Mandel.

What bothers *Red Dawn* is therefore something else. It turns out that they are not happy with the idea of a period of corrosion leading up to a counterrevolution. True, their own description of Soviet history apparently also has a period of difficulties and problems prior to the final counterrevolution. But when it comes to considering our views, *Red Dawn* casts doubt on the very idea of periods of corrosion.

They write that "a counterrevolution can not—if it really is a counterrevolution, carried out after the victory of a revolution—take place in such a way as to, so to say, 'run backwards the film of reformism.'" It is not at all clear what "running backwards the film of reformism" means, other than being a general expression that a gradual degeneration can't occur. If *Red Dawn* had some more particular meaning, it would have been better if they had elaborated it.

They also denounce the idea that "the workers' state degenerates, then is a 'degenerated workers' state' for a longer period of time, [and] finally turns into 'pure' state capitalism." Here we are not concerned with *Red Dawn*'s special terminology in this sentence, but with the overall view. They describe the concept that a process of decline takes place prior to a final capitalist counterrevolution, and denounce this view. Yet even *Red Dawn*'s own description, as we have pointed out, is in accord with this pattern. It is hard to see what philosophical objective there can be to such a pattern.

Red Dawn gives another example of the danger that supposedly comes from the view that a period of decline

may precede certain counterrevolutions. They refer to the errors of the Swedish organization, the KPML(r). A note of theirs to the English translation of their article clarifies to the English language reader that "the theory of KPML(r) ... that the revisionists took power in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin, but without being able to restore capitalism; instead the society remained with a socialist base but a bourgeois-revisionist superstructure, while now 'perestroika' has fulfilled the counterrevolution, ... liquidating the base as socialist." It is indeed wrong to believe that revisionism only came to the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin, or that the economic base was fine up till then. The description of their theory also seems to indicate that KPML(r) may have a mechanical and wrong view of how degeneration takes place. However, there is nothing wrong with the concept that a period of revisionist degeneration can precede the final capitalist restoration. This concept is hardly responsible for KPML(r)'s factual and theoretical errors.

Red Dawn also denounces the view that there can be "a spectrum with different shading, glidings between different conditions." Here too *Red Dawn* doesn't go into much detail about what they mean, so they simply seem uncomfortable with the study of transitional periods.

However, we believe that there is a point to the view that there is no intermediate economic system between capitalism and socialism. But the conclusion from this is that, prior to the complete achievement of socialism, there are still elements of the economy that are within the bounds of capitalism. As we have seen, *Red Dawn* is uneasy with the idea that there are capitalist or state-capitalist features to the economy under the dictatorship of the proletariat. But there can be no other conclusion, unless one invents a new, intermediate economic system. And if capitalist elements remain, the question of state-capitalist elements becomes more complex, unless one maintains that private capitalism is better than state-capitalism and is the proper form for transition to socialism.

Dialectics and evolution

In contrast to *Red Dawn's* denial that a period of decline may proceed certain counterrevolutionary cataclysms, Marxist dialectics has always comprehended this as a possibility.

Consider the well-known example of the collapse of the Second International into social-chauvinism at the outbreak of World War I. This was indeed one of tragic and shocking cataclysms in the working class movement. But in order to analyze this collapse, in order to learn how to strengthen the working class movement against such a collapse, one had to deal with the years of degeneration inside the social-democratic movement that led up to this collapse. In his articles on the collapse of the Second International, Lenin stressed how opportunism had matured into social-chauvinism.

In general, materialist dialectics shows the connection between period of evolution and those of catastrophes and

qualitative changes. Such ideas as the "transformation of quantity into quality" are among the best-known maxims of dialectics.

Thus, in dealing with Soviet history, there is no violation of dialectics in the concept that a period of decline preceded the final capitalist restoration. Of course, whether this is really the way events took place can only be determined by the facts of the matter. But, to rule out the very possibility of periods of decline on general philosophical grounds, seems to require general principles that are neither dialectical nor Marxist.

Dialectics and revolution

The Swedish comrades don't seem to have realized that their general views, which appear to emphasize the profound objective base of events, actually cut against the consideration of revolution. Let us review several points of their general views.

—We have seen that they cast doubt on examining the experience of relatively rapid events, including the use of transition events in Soviet history. But revolutions are times of rapid change. Marxism-Leninism stresses that revolutions are the locomotive of history. And during revolutionary periods, more can be revealed than appears in decades of painfully slow ordinary times.

—We have seen that they cast doubt on too close a consideration of "subjective" and "superstructural" factors. They don't explain their conception in detail. But, taken consistently, this would remove consideration of the tasks of revolution. These tasks are not carried out automatically and spontaneously.

—They have doubts about the value of too close a consideration of transitional periods. Of course, looked out from the point of view of hundreds of years after the world obtains the classless society, the period of transition between capitalism and socialism, and the experience of revolution, may appear simply as a brief period of qualitative change. But while we are in the midst of this period, while we are concerned with how to bring about a revolution, and how to continue it successfully once it begins, the details of this process are of burning concern.

The Swedish comrades want revolution and socialism, but they seem to recoil before the complexities of transition periods, the varying objective conditions facing the revolution in different countries, etc. The philosophical principles they have put forward retard a clear picture of the twists and turns of revolutionary work. These views do not provide an adequate framework for it, and do not help the Swedish comrades to deal either with the complexities of the present moment or those of Soviet history. Instead they substitute generalities for concrete analysis, and generalities for a close study of Leninist theory. These generalities provide the illusion of substance, not real substance.

It is our hope that the Swedish comrades will eventually see that the illusion of substance will not suffice for

revolutionary work. Then they will see that Trotskyism is but the shadow of Marxism-Leninism in the light of a

particular opportunist trend, whereas the class-conscious workers need not shadows, but actual communist analysis.

The collapse of revisionism and the prospects for working class struggle

Continued from the front page

A new assault on capitalism?

Last year we asked: Is it likely that there will be a long transition period before another giant assault on world capitalism gets off the ground?

Of course, we could not give a direct answer to this question. But we did list five factors that seem to indicate that the conditions for another great round of world socialist revolution are being prepared.

These five were

- 1) the major shakeup and realignment of imperialist powers;
- 2) collapse of the revolutionary pretensions of Soviet-style revisionism;
- 3) world industrialization and growth of the proletariat;
- 4) impending economic crisis in western capitalism; and
- 5) the ongoing capitalist offensive which is making life more miserable for the toilers. Let's review them.

Realignment of the Imperialist powers

Imperialist realignment is obviously one of the major fronts of change in the past year. Last year we said: There is the break-up of the post World War II political and economic alignments. Although two military superpowers remain, the U.S. and Soviet Union, a five power world is emerging, with the former junior partners of the US--Japan and Western Europe (in the form of the European Economic Community, EEC, and headed by West Germany)--added to the list of world powers in their own right, while China is tossed into the stew for good measure, as a wild card in the maneuverings between these world powers for hegemony. Let's start our review of recent developments with a look at what has been called the "Soviet Bloc".

Collapse of pro-Soviet regimes

The most obvious thing is the collapse of the pro-Soviet regimes in Eastern Europe, the process of rigging up pro-western capitalist governments there, and their orientation

toward western capitalism in all spheres. The process has gone so far, so fast, that the Western European bourgeoisie in the EEC has already planned out the future status of the Eastern European countries as Associate Members of the EEC. Some bourgeois are even waxing enthusiastic about the alleged "return" to the glory years of a united Europe, leading the world in the economic, educational and cultural spheres.

(And what year was mentioned as the acme of their nostalgic memory? 1914! The very year that Europe erupted in the carnage of World War I, where each "nation" joined a bloc to slaughter the others for the spoils of empire! Such culture! Such enlightenment! As one can see, our own US bourgeoisie holds no world monopoly on idiocy. But this is a digression.)

The centerpiece of the collapse of East European state capitalism is the impending reunification of East and West Germany. This is now on a fast schedule of "monetary, economic and social union" by July Second. The key thing

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here is the plan to make the West German Deutschmark the common currency, with the old East Mark to be converted to Deutschmarks at a 1:1 ratio, up to accounts of 4,000 East Marks. Beyond this amount, a 2:1 ratio will be used. This is a favorable exchange rate designed to stem the exodus of East Germans to the West, and for the Christian Democrats to win the local East German elections in June. The downside is their worry that the plan is inflationary. This monetary union is to be followed by political integration as soon as it can be arranged.

There is also the deep crisis in Poland in the wake of the program to rig up a western style free market. More on this in a moment.

What are some of the implications of the East European events?

German reunification, and the pro-western orientation in Eastern Europe, are a big defeat for the Soviet Union and contribute to its increasing weakness as a world power. (The Chairman of Philips Electronics Groups says flat out: "There is no longer an Eastern Bloc.")

These events also mean a weakening of US influence in Europe. And without the "cold war", U.S. justifications for its vast military presence there are even less plausible than before.

The main thing about the East European events is the future strengthening of West European imperialism, most notably, West Germany. This seems to be a consensus of six or seven West European bankers and Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) quoted in the April 3rd *New York Times*. They see a two-stage process where, first, massive investments in infrastructure are needed (railroads, roads, telecommunications, industrial plant in general). Then, with mechanisms in place to exploit this larger market, Germany will become one tough competitor indeed.

These bourgeois also mention various downsides:

(1) "Now that we have said that 'socialism' has failed, we have to meet the East European public's high expectations in terms of consumer goods, democracy and economic freedom.' This will be difficult, considering that part of the reason the EEC is smacking its lips is its desire to exploit "cheap labor" in the East. "Cheap labor" does not experience consumer nirvana nor the euphoria of "democracy and freedom". And for the same reason it is not completely obvious that Eastern Europe will become a big new market that will fuel continued capitalist expansion. These countries are relatively poor and are saddled with a lot of foreign debt payments to be made to western banks.

(2) The massive capital investments for superstructure in the East may fuel some growth, but it will reduce growth in other areas of the world, e.g. the third world, that might have seen these investments.

(3) With so much capital required to "go East", a world shortage could develop. The resulting higher interest rates could be very damaging to the world economy.

For the East European workers the introduction of the

glories of western market competition will include large-scale bankruptcies and plant shutdowns, i.e. unemployment. In the workplace there will be increased exploitation à la the western methods of motivation: work hard or be fired. From the currency reforms follow huge price rises, an end to price subsidies, and the cutting back of social protections (medical, pension, jobs, education). Poverty, not VCR consumerism, is the more likely prospect.

And there is something the West European CEOs and bankers do not discuss: along with this increased exploitation (and along with the political rights connected with the new parliamentarism), the emergence of working class struggle is expected all along the line.

In turn, this will most likely be a significant stimulus to the working class movement elsewhere.

Crisis in Soviet Union and Poland

In the Soviet Union itself, the economic crisis goes from bad to worse. When the Solidarity government in Poland announced its sweeping program of privatization of state-owned enterprises, raising prices to the skies, and allowing bankruptcies on a vast scale with skyrocketing unemployment in its wake, well, Gorbachev and company got excited. They enthusiastically hailed it and accelerated their timetable for implementing similar measures, to begin this July. But then the results of the Polish policy started to show up: 270,000 new jobless, and unemployment is expected to rise quickly to millions; the standard of living down 40%; and industrial production down 30% in a just a few months.

So Gorbachev reconsidered and thought better of it. Not because of the misery of the masses. On the contrary. On the grounds that while the masses in Poland are giving the Solidarity government the benefit of the doubt and are not immediately rising up in complete revolt, the Soviet leaders admit that they do not have this much "credit" from the Soviet masses and might face a civil war if they tried the "Polish solution". So Gorbachev's planned "regulated market economy" of widescale privatization of state-run enterprises, complete with Soviet stock markets and so forth, is slated for more gradual introduction.

But the Soviet economy has deteriorated: Industrial production in the first quarter was down 1.2% from a year ago. Food and consumer goods are in even shorter supply. This has stirred up anger in the working class. Oil field workers in Western Siberia have threatened to strike over the housing shortage and low pay. Coal miners are angry that Gorbachev has not delivered on the promises he made to end their strike of 1/2 million miners last July.

Since the coal strike less than one year ago, the Soviet strike movement has become a large factor in politics. Together with the similar developments in Eastern Europe, this is a big change in the former situation, where in roughly "one-half" the "two superpower" equation, the working class movement was severely muzzled and dormant.

In addition, the last year has seen the strident demands

for independence coming from the bourgeoisies of many Soviet republics: the Baltics (especially Lithuania), Georgia, and so forth. Gorbachev wants to offer a looser federation of Republics, but he may not be able to prevent the outright secession of many of these nations. In either case, we will probably witness a further decline in the world significance of the USSR as a great power. (Most of this has gained steam since last May Day.) In connection with this, there are the nationalist hatreds, and even pogroms being whipped up, such as Azerbaijanis vs. Armenians. (And similar phenomena in Eastern Europe.) In this way, the toilers are being used to further the capitalist nation-state ambitions of local bourgeoisie. But there are counter-vailing factors. For example, the coal miners movement in the Soviet Union spans many different nationalities. And fanning nationalism can sometimes backfire, with the toilers instead seeking out internationalist unity.

Western Europe

Last year we mentioned the drive by the 12-member European Economic Community for a more unified western European market by late 1992 as being at the core of the consolidation of another world power, out from under the shadow of U.S. tutelage. With the East European collapse and the West German drive to reunite with East Germany, there was some uncertainty as to whether the West Germans might drag their feet on consolidating the EEC in favor of the alternative path of concentrating on German unification and "going it alone" in extending their investments and influence into Eastern Europe. But in recent weeks it appears that West Germany and the other EEC countries have agreed to speed up, if anything, their integration. They are in the process of coming to an agreement for a common European currency and a central bank. France and Germany are pushing for a conference, simultaneous with the one on monetary issues in December, for finding a path toward forms of political integration. This would entail some type of common approach to foreign policy and "security" issues, i.e., military issues.

The only dissenter, as usual, is Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, who strongly objects on both counts. But the momentum is such that the rest are saying that, if she doesn't want to go along, she can just get off the boat. In other words, they won't delay to accommodate British interests.

Other developments include the move toward associate member status of the group of six in the European Free Trade Area (the EFTA consisting of Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Switzerland and Austria); and the EEC countries' current plan to deal with East European countries in the future through forms of associate membership.

Which means

West European monopoly capital realizes that to be competitive players on the world market vis a vis the US

and Japan, their economic organization must be large enough to realize economies and efficiencies of scale that are possible only with a "home market" that is West European, or even "Pan-European" in scope. The former advantages of having safe, protected domestic markets based on the borders of each small state, e.g. Belgium, no longer suffice to ensure profitability. This probably will mean, at least, rationalization of production and the survival of only the strongest enterprises; i.e. larger enterprises for the larger market. It also implies the reduction of competition and antagonism between member countries, for the sake of increasing their competitiveness with other imperialist powers for position in the world market.

So, for the present, talk of brotherly love and an end to "nationalism" that shed rivers of blood in Europe--for the longer term goals of a stronger fight of this more cosmopolitan Europe against the "heathens" of Japan and the US.

For the workers, rationalization of production, the trend toward larger enterprises, and the drive for international competitiveness means a factory regime of the most "advanced" levels of productivity, i.e., including modern levels of sweating and exploiting the workers.

Some areas are to be treated as branch plant economies to exploit a low-paid workforce (e.g. Ireland, Portugal, Greece and, to some extent, Spain--not to mention Eastern Europe). And, for example, with agricultural tariffs removed, there will be the further ruin of the remaining small agricultural producers, who will be forced into the cities to add to the pool of cheap labor.

The main conclusion regarding all of this--a broader, wider field of class struggle. The potential grows for numerically huge, trans-national struggles of workers. In addition, this struggle would be less disrupted by old national animosities. (Even so, the wily European bourgeoisie is trying to stoke divisions through pushing anti-immigrant hysteria, that is, something like the American approach to tearing apart the working class.)

Japan

U.S. trade friction continues with Japan, another capitalist star. The recent trade agreement is one small round in continuing hostilities.

The Japanese stock market recently collapsed by 30%. Whatever the economic implications, this has some political significance. Various commentators have noted that it has punctured the aura of invincibility that Japanese monopoly capital has cultivated.

U.S.A.

The invasion of Panama is possibly a preview of increased U.S. military aggressiveness for safeguarding its spheres of influence, especially with the decline of the Soviet Union's world role.

The weakening of U.S. positions in Europe has already been referred to. With the virtual end of the cold war, there is even less of a rationale for huge defense spending. Yet the economy is an arms junkie that cannot kick the habit without a crisis; it isn't possible for there to be significant "conversion" of military plant to non-military markets; the illusion that cutbacks in defense spending can be diverted toward social needs is just that, an illusion.

The economy is also a debt junkie. And financial debacles, such as the Federal budget deficits, and the savings and loan crisis, are mounting rapidly.

Also deserving of mention are numerous social crises, from drug-trade related violence to the terrible state of the public schools; from environmental disasters to unaffordable housing and medical care. And so on. U.S. imperialism shows signs of decay and decline from every direction.

And what will the results be? The mass movements of the 80's showed that the Vietnam syndrome lives on. International adventurism will be resisted. The fight for social service spending is just and important. But any "peace dividend" illusions will be dashed. The anti-racist struggle has vast potential, as does that of working women.

Working people in 1980's took it on the chin from numerous angles. And not very deep under the surface, there is widescale anger out there. For example locally, even at Boeing, which is booming, the lower-paid and the overworked sections proved to have a large reservoir of discontent built up that came out during the seven week strike. If this is the case now, it doesn't take a crystal ball to see that when the economic crisis hits, workers will show a fighting spirit.

Lastly, with the rise in the trade war, we can expect stepped up chauvinist campaigns such as Japan-bashing. This will be used to divert workers' anger.

China

Last year, at the time of the Tienanmen protests, Gorbachev visited Beijing. Last month, Li Peng went to the USSR and a broad Soviet-Chinese trade agreement was signed. China seems to be an unwieldy card in the maneuverings of the stronger powers. Currently, there are mounting economic difficulties.

Apparently there is deep political dissatisfaction under the surface in China. It is hard to say when the workers' movement will emerge in a big way, but this will probably take place in conjunction with or after the toppling of the revisionists' monopoly of state power.

Overall, with respect to big power alignments

(i) Clearly there is heightened international rivalry for control of the world market. And this rivalry is much different from that of the last forty years. The collapse of the revisionist regimes and breakdown of the Soviet bloc means that inter-imperialist contention will be framed in

a straight-up profiteering light, not one of "democracy" versus "communism". The "trade war" replaces the "cold war".

This rivalry presents dangers to the workers, but it also preoccupies and weakens the world bourgeoisie. It provides openings for the anti-capitalist struggle. World War I and the Bolshevik revolution are textbook examples of each tendency respectively.

(ii) It also seems clear that increased opportunities are opening up for the working class movement in vast areas where it formerly was stagnant: Eastern Europe, Soviet Union, possibly China. And a new, perhaps exciting, situation will emerge in Western Europe with EEC integration.

(iii) "New" nationalist antagonisms are being cultivated to put obstacles in way of the toiler's struggle. But, this can backfire.

(iv) Expectations of peace, of a reduction in militarism, of a peace dividend, are not going to be met. And this while huge arms expenditures are seen as more irrational than ever.

Of course, this is a long way from an exhaustive discussion of the implications of recent changes in world politics. But this is all we have time for. The other four points will be dealt with more briefly.

World collapse of revisionism

Last year we said there had been a collapse of the revolutionary pretensions of revisionism. Now we must amend this. The revisionist parties themselves are falling apart and the remnants are trying to survive by transforming themselves into a variety of western social democracy.

Obviously this means the immense weakening of Soviet and related revisionist trends. What they had lauded as socialism and workers' rule has fallen apart. Either it was socialism, in which case, the bourgeoisie is right, socialism is dead, and they are fools. Or it wasn't socialism, in which case they have been pushing an utter fraud for decades, passing off bureaucratic state capitalism for the real coin, and they are also fools. (Actually, many are taking the tried and true third road of hemming and hawing, trying to evade this contradiction. So Angela Davis says on Ted Koppel's Nightline: "what's going on is the democratization of socialism, which is good." This evasion is typical of the unprincipled nature of revisionism.)

And Trotskyism?

Less obvious is the simultaneous weakening of Trotskyist trends as a result of the recent events.

Theoretically, they viewed state capitalism as a distorted version of socialism--that state-owned property is by definition socialist. And they have shared this view with much of social democracy.

Now they are in a funk. The bourgeoisie screams that socialism has failed, and the Trotskyists reply: "No, only

distorted socialism has failed." A somewhat weak rebuttal, it seems.

And there can be no mistaking their actual affinity with the basic features of this "distorted socialism". For example, the Spartacists are talking bitterly about "counter-revolution in Eastern Europe" and "the restoration of capitalism". They try to hide their despair by feigning relief that "Stalinist" political rule has fallen. But this is small consolation to those who have, until this day, regarded the mere existence of state ownership of the means of production as proof that socialist property forms existed. This they regarded as the fundamental gain of the October revolution that the workers have retained to this day. Now this state capitalism is being broken up, and the Trotskyists are dejected. To each his own...

These developments have matured only in the last year. The extreme weakening of revisionism (and to a lesser extent, Trotskyism) provides a favorable factor for the struggle to reconstruct the international Marxist-Leninist trend, the trend of workers' communism.

Growth of the world proletariat

We listed the "increased spread of industrialization and growth of the International proletariat" as a factor boding well for another world offensive against capital. Recently there have been some donnybrook strike struggles in South Korea, for example. It is possible that a mass revolutionary working class movement will first emerge in the middle-level industrialized countries, such as Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. But we must move on to the next point.

Impending capitalist crisis

Fourth, there is the pending economic crisis in the wondrous "free market" countries of the west. I will list some of the financial timebombs ticking away in a minute. But first let's glance at two significant developments that have taken place since last May.

Brazil

Last month Brazil plunged into a deep recession in a scant three weeks. Upon the election of President Collor de Mello, an economic program was instituted to try to halt inflation, which had reached the astounding level of 4,500% (in contrast, Nicaragua was "only" 1,200%). Collor froze 80% of bank deposits in an attempt to halt buying itself. The masses were hit hard. Then, 300,000 of the 900,000 workers in the Sao Paulo industrial belt were laid off in a few weeks.

Brazil is the world's ten largest economy (just after China). Although a major industrial producer, today it is a basket case. (By the way, Argentina is also in the throes of severe recession.) This in itself says something both about the alleged wonders of capitalism, and also about the fragility of today's world economic stability.

But in addition, it should be noted that Brazil has not paid any interest on its \$120 billion foreign debt for nine months. This bodes poorly for the financial health of commercial banks in the U.S. And with the Brazilian economy in a tailspin, its capacity to renew debt payments is much reduced. Negotiations are underway for yet another refinancing of its debt, at reduced rates of payment.

For years, commentators have been saying that the western financial system is something akin to a string of tottering dominoes, and that third world debt threatened to be the domino that could set them off. And yet, when Brazil has been in de facto default for nine months, the bourgeois press is virtually silent. This is not inadvertent. The bourgeoisie is afraid of what is going on and wants to keep taut lips.

The savings and loan crisis

Contributing to their anxiety is the massive hemorrhaging of the savings and loan crisis in the U.S. When we published an article last June on this, the Bush government had been continually raising their estimate of the worst case cost of the bailout from fifty billion dollars to a hundred billion to one hundred fifty billion. Our article said that in reality it may run to four hundred billion or more. Now, ten months later, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) has again raised the estimated maximum figure, this time to five hundred billion. This is about two thousand dollars for every man, woman and child in the country!

And the crisis continues with no end in sight. In 1989 saving and loan institutions racked up their biggest losses yet, even though the bailout program to resolve the crisis began at the beginning of that year. As columnist Richard Reeves stated, "Taxpayers' money...is still going down a black hole of declining real-estate values, desperate speculation, outright fraud, and government secrecy and deception."

The chairman of *U.S. News and World Report*, Mortimer Zuckerman, the type of person not inclined toward overstating the fiascos of the free enterprise system, states: "This is the biggest financial scandal in American history". A *Wall Street Journal* editorial adds, it is a "financial Vietnam, threatening to the general economy."

Funny thing though, that no bourgeois commentators want to elaborate what they mean by these dire predictions. Let's try: the bailout becomes a vast drain of the purchasing power of the masses into the black hole of making good the losses, which in many cases amounts to the theft by rich bankers and real estate developers. This in turn would restrict consumer markets and threaten a crisis of overproduction.

And because other severe financial crises are lined up waiting their turn to break out, this would probably be no minor recession. We only have time to provide a list, not discuss them or look at them in relationship to each other. But bourgeois commentators have expressed alarm about each one individually (while rarely discussing more than

two or three of them in connection with each other). This in itself indicates that, indeed, U.S. capitalism is a "crisis waiting to happen". And as goes the U.S. economy, so too goes the world.

Swords of Damocles, hanging over the economy

--truly mammoth federal budget deficits and accumulated indebtedness. The total federal debt is about \$3 trillion. This year's deficit is said to be \$155 billion, but they are using the Social Security surplus of about \$95 billion to hide the actual deficit of \$250 billion. Out of one side of their mouth they say they won't use Social Security funds to offset the deficit--out of the other side, they in fact use it to hide the real deficit. (And the savings and loan bailout will add \$57 billion to this year's deficit alone);

--huge, mounting trade deficits (about \$150 billion this year) and the impetus toward trade wars;

--third world debt crisis (with a total debt of about \$1.2 trillion);

--a climbing rate of commercial bank failures (in addition to the collapse of savings and loans and the mammoth bailout crisis);

--leveraged buyouts and the related huge corporate debt (about \$4.4 billion), and so the threat of mass bankruptcies; also, there is the collapse of the junk bond market;

--soaring personal (household) debt (about \$3 trillion);

--the oil patch crisis and regional recessions; and the real estate market collapse in major areas;

--the extreme instability of financial markets: two severe Wall Street crashes, in '87 and '89;

--environmental crises that demand huge federal expenditures of hundreds of billions to clean them up: toxic waste sites and nuclear waste. And similarly, there is the crumbling of the infrastructure;

--inflation and interest rates are creeping up, the economy sluggish, and there are big layoffs in major industries.

Leading to

As a result of all these financial and other economic diseases, when the long-expected recession hits, it may quickly deepen into a major crisis. Articles in bourgeois financial columns about such a recession include aspects of the following scenario: A recession leads to mass bankruptcies: (a) corporate; (b) household (and mortgages); and (c) banks; and the latter is especially connected to (d) expected defaults by underdeveloped countries on their foreign debt payments. In addition, in a deep recession, government revenues would fall drastically, while the need for social spending for relief shoots up. This means a huge, federal (and state) fiscal crisis.

If there is a deep crisis, the mass misery that currently afflicts sizable sections of workers (migrant farmworkers, immigrants, many blacks, the low-paid service sector, the

youth and elderly, many women workers) will be generalized to virtually all workers. This will lead to big class battles sooner or later.

And there are political ramifications of such a situation, such as (a) the shattering of the last illusions in the American dream, of upward mobility and so forth; (b) more exposure of Reaganism and the Republicans, and along with them, of the Democrats too, as parties of big business, hostile to the working people; (c) a fist to the teeth of the bourgeoisie - politically, who have been heralding the superiority of capitalism to "socialism". The fact that capitalism of both east and west is bankrupt would become a household idea. And this would pose the question of a true socialist alternative to tens of millions. (And this coincidentally, when we will have much more to say about this alternative.)

The growing capitalist offensive

Today's capitalist offensive is making the workers pay for the "profit recovery" of the rich. For example, internationally, austerity measures have been imposed in country after country in order for third world governments to make interest payments on their loans. And this has given rise to periodic revolts. The impoverishment continues, and more revolts are inevitable.

And domestically, wage cuts and two-tier contracts, along with the shift toward relatively lower-paid service sector jobs, has hit the workers' living standards hard. So have the cuts in all social programs, such as unemployment compensation and welfare. The real income of workers in the 1980's has fallen 6.7%. And the coming cost of the savings and loan bailout has not even been factored in yet.

The bourgeoisie, while in world economic expansion, has not been sharing much of anything with the toilers, but bleeding them dry. When the crisis hits, the workers will have precious little economic cushion to fall back on.

There has been a wide range of struggle in 80's against the offensive. While generally not of the earth-shaking variety, this struggle has been, and is, a field for revolutionary activity; activity which is an indispensable preparation for the turbulence to come.

A glimpse into the future

Our brief review of world events shows several processes indicating a future rise of the world working class movement. It is impossible to predict the speed of development and interaction of vastly complex things. There will probably be a number of years of transition before events build towards an upswing swelling a mass and overtly revolutionary and socialist movement. But during this transition period revolutionary activists should be aware that the waters of the 20th Century have not been calm and the logjams of recent decades are starting to break apart. ■