

other than proletarians. Biological females can receive gender privileges at the expense of others and become men in social terms. Ordinarily it takes a father to have full patriarchal privilege in the patriarchal system, but the system has refined itself to allow for a wider variety of disbursement of privileges. Now even young childless men from the imperialist countries can engage in sex tourism in Thailand where they have access to the bodies of young children. Such privilege exerts a conservative influence on those who would not ordinarily be thought of as "patriarchs."

The same is true with imperialism. Ordinarily imperialists receive the benefits and workers are exploited, but superprofits allow a minority to arise out of exploitation and to appropriate small amounts of proletarian labor. These complications of gender and class have proved too much for PLP. When they are used to reinforce nationality, PLP misses the picture completely: Are there any fighters for reaction more passionate than those that just stole land — Israeli settlers, South African settlers, Pilgrims killing First Nation members, etc.?

At this time, some proletarians are fooled by the PLP line. However, if we go back and study some theory, we will see how PLP let its "Marxism-

Leninism" be corrupted by the labor aristocracy. Look at what is happening in North America — with the attacks on welfare, "crime," immigration, etc. Things like "English only" are happening because whites are acting as white nationalists. It is not just racism, because the racism and white nationalism are reinforced with superprofits distributed to white Euro-Americans.

Historical Revisionists, Too:

ON THE RCP's "CHARTING THE UNCHARTED COURSE: PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION IN THE U.S.!"

This review, written December 10, 1994, has not yet been published. -ed.

The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP)'s 17-page pamphlet "Charting the Uncharted Course: Proletarian Revolution in the U.S.!" (CUC) is a reprinted section of the report from the RCP's 1980 Central Committee meeting which first appeared in the RCP's Revolutionary Worker #99 on April 3, 1981. CUC is interesting to

MIM because it discusses the revolutionary nature of the North American white working-class, a key point of disagreement between MIM and the RCP.

Interestingly, CUC finds the RCP arguing with forces more deeply entrenched in right-opportunism than is the RCP. The RCP has some correct things to say to these forces, but ultimately shows its disagreement with MIM's assertion that the North American white working-class is not a revolutionary vehicle. To this day, people influenced by the RCP still point to CUC to say that the RCP has more agreement with MIM than MIM realizes. These people need to read the RCP program, which says that a majority of white workers are objectively revolutionary. And there is no excuse for ignoring the RCP's only official assessment of MIM, which states that MIM's line on the white working-class is "a wrong and counterrevolutionary idea." (1, 15)

REVISIONISM

Before dissecting CUC's statements on the white working-class, we should point out that the RCP makes several veiled and slippery attacks on Stalin and Mao in this pamphlet. This is typical of the RCP, particularly the RCP of the

Notas Rojas

Periódico Oficial del Movimiento Internacionalista Maoísta (MIM)

Suscríbase a Notas Rojas

- Una edición de Notas Rojas, \$1
- Una suscripción anual de ediciones trimestriales, \$4
- Dos años de ocho ediciones trimestriales, \$7
- Recibir un paquete de Notas Rojas con 100 ejemplares para distribuir en su región, \$20
- Las Suscripciones para los prisioneros son gratis

Mande efectivo o cheque a la orden do
"MIM Distributors" a:

Nombre: _____

Dirección: _____

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

early 1980s. These attacks are cloaked by the RCP's claim in CUC that they uphold Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought.(2) They are further cloaked by being presented as parenthetical, throw-away remarks (just as the RCP's only official assessment of MIM is hidden in a footnote). Take a look:

Against Stalin: "While we have to criticize what's clearly wrong in the past, more will be required of us than simply trashing a few things from some old Comintern documents, important though that is."(2)

Against Stalin: "Stalin's (surprisingly!) dialectical analysis here is relevant."(3)

Against Stalin and Mao: "A general point should be made parenthetically here. It seems that historically the biggest political retreats have been sounded by communists right when the opportunity for advance is the greatest - i.e., the Second International, the 7th World Congress of the Comintern, etc."(4)

The Trotskyist substance of these cryptic comments can be found in the RCP's "Conquer the World? The International Proletariat Can and Will."(5)

THE BETTER STUFF

As CUC finds the RCP arguing with forces to their right, it isn't all bad. In CUC, the RCP says that there was economism at their 1975 Founding Congress, part and parcel of which was to "relegate [the questions of bourgeoisification and the labor aristocracy] simply to a question of 'rolling over the top labor hacks.'" Adds CUC, "we have broken with this static and economist view." Since 1976, "we have taken a harder look and a much more correct line on the (related) questions of bourgeoisification and the labor aristocracy."(6) Like MIM, the RCP distinguishes between proletariat and labor aristocracy.(7) Unlike MIM, the RCP refers to "the better off sections of the industrial proletariat" as different from and qualitatively better than "the labor aristocracy."(8)

While MIM holds that the North

American white working-class as a whole is part of the labor aristocracy, the RCP does not indicate that it has much disagreement with the Trotskyist view that the labor aristocracy is solely composed of union bosses. The RCP comes close to breaking with other Trotskyists on this point when it poses the correct question of "what is the proletariat, or the 'real proletariat,' as opposed to the labor aristocracy." Here, however, the RCP fails to find the correct answer to its correct question, due to its First World-chauvinist assumptions.(7)

CUC correctly quotes Mao: "the more backward the economy, the easier ... the transition from capitalism to socialism. The poorer they are, the more people want revolution."(7)

Some other correct statements from CUC:

"In this country, bourgeoisification has deeply and with some permanence penetrated into the industrial proletariat, including into its most socialized sectors. This is especially true in some of the most basic or 'key' industries such as steel or auto."(7)

"'dead-end' jobs ... have been filled disproportionately by minorities, women, youth and, more recently, by 'illegals' and immigrant workers. What stands out about these jobs is that they are low-paying and offer little security..."(9)

"[I]f a backward steel worker wants to carry on about how welfare recipients are 'sponges on working people,' then a welfare mother could certainly turn around and call him out as a parasite on the world proletariat. (Of course here we are talking about analysis to serve revolution, not to serve mutual recrimination.)"(10) True enough. So why does the RCP now turn around and say that MIM's idea "that white workers as an economic-social grouping in the United States are not exploited [and] are part of the process of exploitation of the workers of the Third World ... is a wrong and counterrevolutionary idea."?(1)

Some more good stuff:

"[I]t would be silly to believe that all this bourgeoisification (and certainly the

ideological effects of long years of it) will break down completely and uniformly."(10)

"[T]he proletariat or 'real' proletariat that will form the most reliable social base for a revolutionary line does not completely correspond to the classical 'working class in highly socialized, basic industry.'"(10)

"[B]etween the characteristics of working in large-scale socialized industry, and having 'nothing to lose but their chains' the latter characteristic is a more decisive, revolutionary characteristic of the proletariat."(10)

"Chairman Avakian [said], 'I think a lot of what the advanced section of the proletariat is now are people who for reasons other than simply being members of the proletariat are somewhat politically advanced.' And he goes on to speak in particular of the people who were heavily influenced by the '60s - of vets, oppressed nationalities, women, as well as many immigrants, etc.'" (11)

THE WORSE STUFF

Unfortunately, despite all their talk about the bourgeoisification of the white working-class, and even of its parasitic nature, the RCP manages to avoid discussing the basis of this parasitism: the fact that the imperialists buy off the imperialist-country working-classes with a share of the superprofits generated by the Third World workers and peasants. Instead, they harp on "economism," as if it was only a lack of correct communist leadership which led to the bourgeoisification of the First World workers. This is why they say of the U.S., "The majority in this society, let alone worldwide, have no interest in this decadent, moribund imperialist system. This certainly applies to the overwhelming numbers of workers in this country."(12)

By ignoring superprofits, the RCP feels comfortable saying that bourgeoisification "is breaking down." (6) In fact, they say "there is a broad erosion of bourgeoisification..." (10) Fifteen years later (and many decades after First World-chauvinist "leftists" first started raising this argument), the RCP still says

this, and it still hasn't happened. The RCP advances this "just wait; they'll come around" line in detail in Raymond Lotta's book, *America in Decline*. MIM trashes this line elsewhere. (14)

Then there is the standard RCP right-opportunism: "Of course giving up on the better off sections of the industrial proletariat would be silly at best.... *It would be difficult* to successfully complete an insurrection and civil war without a majority of these workers coming over at some point, and some whole sections of them may even play a kind of vanguard political role" (emphasis MIM's). (8) MIM says the oppressed will overthrow imperialism with or without the help of the First World workers.

"It would be difficult..." is what people in RCP circles told MIM's predecessors when they announced their decision to form a new Party, MIM. Such pragmatists need to be reminded that political and ideological line, not tactics, is decisive: "The correctness or otherwise of the ideological and political line decides everything. When the Party's line is correct, then everything will come its way. If it has no followers, then it can have followers; if it has no guns, then it can have guns; if it has no political power, then it can have political power." (16)

Finally, in an attempt to bring reality in line with the RCP's Trotskyite idealism, the RCP revises history:

"[W]e should look at what went down here in the '60s in light of what is coming up. At the height of the struggle in that decade, the ruling class was on the defensive politically. The division of opinion on the cardinal questions of the day was not at all favorable to them — even including in the working class. Now look at the possibilities ahead. What if the alignment and situation were to start off similar to the '60s alignment,' with the critical addition of a section of the proletariat in the fray from the beginning (the [lower paid, 'real proletarian'] section we have been referring to above)? Why wouldn't that be a favorable situation from which to begin an attempt for the seizure of power? A

situation with all the ferment among all the classes of the '60s with a minority section of the workers in at the beginning, and playing a role in 'swinging in' a wider section of the workers further down the line — precisely those who today find their situation tolerable, not fine." (13)

Here, the RCP ignores the fact that the "real proletariat" was in the fray from the beginning: the Black masses' 1965 shift from civil rights to Black Power was instrumental in prompting white student activists to go beyond tailing the civil rights movement. By March 1969, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) acknowledged that the Black Panther Party was the vanguard revolutionary force inside U.S. borders. This prompts the question: if the "real proletariat" was in the fray from the beginning, why didn't the 60's provide a revolutionary opportunity? Why didn't the existence of a minority section of the workers in at the beginning play the role of "swinging in" a wider section of the workers further down the line (wider, that is, than was actually swung in)?

The answer is superprofits. The North American white working-class, among others, has been bought and paid for by the imperialists. They correctly see the survival of imperialism as being in their own parasitic interest. No matter how hard the RCP tries to revise history to bring it in line with their idealist worldview, they cannot conceal this truth.

— a comrade

Notes:

1. Revolutionary Worker: Voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. 1/16/94, p. 5.
2. CUC, p. 1.
3. CUC, p. 11
4. CUC, p. 12
5. Revolution #50.
6. CUC, p. 2
7. CUC, p. 4
8. CUC, p. 9
9. CUC, p. 5
10. CUC, p. 6
11. CUC, p. 8
12. CUC, p. 10
13. CUC, pp. 10-11
14. See MIM Theory 4: "Unraveling the Political Economy of the Revolutionary

Communist Party, USA: Book review of *America In Decline*," pp. 94-103, and "MA71 Lets it Rip," pp. 12-14. Available from MIM for \$6. Also see H.W. Edwards' *Labor Aristocracy: Mass Base for Social Democracy*, available from MIM for \$10.

15. For a fuller response to the line that the RCP does not disagree with MIM on the question of the white working-class, see "Opportunism is the sister of revisionism," MIM Theory 5, pp. 99-100. Available from MIM for \$6.

16. Mao Zedong in Stuart Schram, ed., *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, p. 290.

Bizarre left group Responds to Spartacist League

The Trotskyist Spartacist League's youth arm recently wrote about MIM in an article about a pro-affirmative action demonstration and sit-in at UCLA. (1)

Young Spartacus wrote:

"For minority youth under attack at UCLA and in the ghettos, the way to fight racist oppression lies in siding with the multiracial working class, which alone has the power to get rid of capitalism. It will take a revolutionary workers party that serves as a tribune of the oppressed to lead this fight.

"One bizarre left group at the UCLA sit-in, the Maoist International [sic] Movement (MIM), misses this reality entirely. While they defend affirmative action as 'progressive, but severely limited,' they raise no demands to open up the universities to the majority of blacks and minorities. Echoing odd pseudo-nationalist dogma, MIM says that blacks are a 'colonial nation' and writes off the working class, dismissing the U.S. proletariat as a reactionary part of an 'oppressor nation.' But black people constitute an oppressed minority whose main impetus for struggle since the time of slavery has been to fight toward full integration — not some 'colonial libera-

Struggle & Review

Yellow-Bellied Avakian Reveals His Colors Again

by MC5

Addressing issues more clearly and directly than usual, Bob Avakian of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP-USA) wrote an article in *Revolutionary Worker*, January 19, 1997, about how to maintain an internationalist orientation while working in a society of parasites.

We will credit Avakian for recognizing that the whole imperialist society is parasitic and increasingly so. Doing so, Avakian cuts off his support from sectors too wishful in their thinking to confront the realities of the class structure — except that the beer-bellied sector is too lazy to read what he wrote anyway, and will side with Avakian for another statement he made that we will get to in a minute.

Pretty much acknowledging MIM's scientific analysis of the labor aristocracy (see MIM Theory 1 and 10), Avakian then gets to the bottom line of how to avoid its implications: "If we don't maintain the strategic orientation of seeking to unite the 90% — even while it may be true at a given time that we're far from having 90% of the people with us — we will lose."

To translate what Avakian is saying against MIM: We can't tell our best friends their breath stinks. Actually it's worse than that, because we have to be friendly with people who are parasites. Avakian even says, because the only way to unite 90% of a nation of parasites is by putting forward parasitic demands.

We aren't even allowed to enumerate the parasites' existence precisely in our analysis of class structure, because that might alienate them, according to Avakian, the opportunist sugar-coated

bullet manufacturer. Yet where do we ever see Lenin or Mao take this approach? Lenin did a careful statistical analysis of every class structure he wanted to talk about. So did Mao. Mao could unite the 90% because that was the class structure of his country, and even so, Mao warned against the influence of Mencius in taking percentages metaphorically.

As Mao explained, those without strategic confidence will make ultraleft and right opportunist errors, and eventually end in paralysis. This does not mean we have to capitulate to the 90% in the imperialist countries like Avakian does.

Avakian is correct. Lenin said we cannot know what portion of the labor aristocracy will go over to the revolution, as Sakai also points out in *Settlers*. Let's not stop there, because Marx and Engels believed a section of the bourgeoisie would go over at the last minute too. Using the scientific method, by denying the demands of the bourgeoisie, the communist movement would nonetheless win a section of the bourgeoisie over. The same is true of other bourgeoisified classes and we cannot know exactly how many. The actual appearance of the revolution such as its social composition and what line led to its successful conclusion are two different things, which is why Lenin said a lot more than Avakian intimates when he selects one quote and makes it the centerpiece of his own agnostic reading of Lenin: "we can't know what will happen." ("But (and this is extremely important), we cannot know for sure, in advance, where all the different social strata and forces will line up when the showdown comes — that will be deter-

mined in the actual event."

Lenin said:

"The conduct of the leaders of the German Social Democratic party, the strongest and most influential party belonging to the Second International (1889-1914), which voted for the military appropriations and which repeated the bourgeois chauvinist phrases of the Prussian Junkers and the bourgeoisie, is a direct betrayal of socialism. Under no circumstances, even assuming the absolute weakness of the party and the necessity of its submitting to the will of the bourgeois majority of the nation, can the conduct of the German Social Democratic party be justified. This party has in fact adopted a national-liberal policy."(1)

In other words, even though the communists were going to be censored and thrown in jail with the approval of the majority of the German masses — who were bourgeois — there is no reason to be so yellow-bellied as to give up internationalism. Sure, try to avoid the censors and the prisons, but do not give up internationalism by catering to the essence of these bourgeoisified class demands.

Lenin had strategic confidence, even though most of Germany was bourgeois. How is that possible? As we have shown in numerous publications, Lenin thought the imperialists would destroy their own bourgeoisified classes, and they in fact did so at a rapid pace during World War I. Lenin predicted if that did not happen, the parasitic trend would gain hold in the economy and work its way inevitably into the labor movement. That is in fact what has happened, and only dolts can deny it now.

There is nothing to be agnostic about any more. With the aid of the modern weapons of militarism, the imperialists have made whole countries consolidated parasites, and there will have to be a whole strategic stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat of the oppressed nations over the imperialist bourgeoisie and its allied bourgeois classes that takes account of this. Anything less as strategy will result in neo-colonialism and a restoration of imperialism. The consolidation of the labor aristocracy has made the national question the way to go in the imperialist countries. In contrast, Avakian's position on having to work with the enemy classes in a spirit of love and unity is not much different than Martin Luther King's – a nice idea that doesn't work. The oppressor nations are not ready for integration and that is a result of generations of the consolidation of the labor aristocracy.

Mr. Avakian, you "can't know what will happen," so we suggest you step aside and let those of us who do know something have a clear field without your vile distortions of Leninism. One of the things we know is that there has been consolidated generations of parasitism now, and its chokehold influence will not immediately disappear the day "the Revolution" a.k.a. "the showdown" happens.

It will in fact take a relatively long period of time to cleanse the bourgeoisified workers of their parasitism and prepare them for the day when they actually could be members of an integrated society, and not members of the Rodney King or Vincent Chin juries. During that phase of the dictatorship of the proletariat adapted to our present conditions, oppressor nation people will not be able to run oppressed nation people's lives, not in court and not in police patrols. Instead of saying "we can't know," we should prepare for this now to speed up the success of the dictatorship of the proletariat adapted to conditions in an advanced imperialist country. Only a party that does this deserves the support

of the oppressed nation masses now and only a party that does this will receive the support of the oppressed nation masses.

The white man threw away his chance at peaceful integration long before the assassination of MLK. He has now raised generations of people in his parasitic ways, so that now it is no longer a conscious choice to live the parasitic life at the expense of the oppressed. Doing less than telling the bitter truth of parasitism and preparing a strategic stage of internationalist dictatorship is falsely flattering the parasitic classes. Even sectors of the internal semi-colonies will have to be cleansed of parasitism before they can enter full brotherhood and sisterhood with oppressed nations.

When Avakian says we will lose if we don't unite with the 90% of the U.S., he has forgotten one thing – the world's vast majority of people oppressed by imperialism. They will not stand for imperialism even while the parasites do. Avakian constrained himself to an analysis of one country when in fact the likelihood is that North America will only go down after many other countries have gone for socialism first. These countries have no obligation to respect imperialist borders. They have the right to cut off war, starvation and environmental destruction right at the source.

Avakian's position is for the self-determination rights of oppressor nations and classes.

Playing word games, Avakian openly spits in the proletariat's face by using "proletarian" and "parasite" interchangeably in the same article. We are sorry Mr. Avakian. It is not possible to have it both ways: one is either a proletarian or a parasite, not both. One cannot have a "united front under the leadership of the proletariat" for the 90% within U.S. borders if there is no proletariat in the population we are talking about leading!

The 10% of the world will not defeat the 90%, even if 90% of the U.S. takes the wrong side. There is no excuse for capitulating to the parasitic oppressor nations like Avakian does and like the yellow-bellied Second International did before him. We say we will cater our demands to the imperialist society's 20% (oppressed nations, white youth, lumpenproletariat) most closely allied with the world's 80% of basic toiling masses, and if we bring 5% or 50% with us into battle, it will still be the toiling masses of the oppressed nations of the world who will have the last say.

Notes: 1. Excerpted in *International Communism in the Era of Lenin: A Documentary History* by Helmut Gruber. Fawcett World Library: New York, 1967. p. 59.

Review: Petty-bourgeois internationalism

ARJUN MAKHIJANI

From Global Capitalism to Economic Justice: An Inquiry into the Elimination of Systematic Poverty, Violence and Environmental Destruction in the World Economy
Apex Press: New York, 1992.

PAUL COCKSHOTT & ALLIN COTTRELL

Towards a New Socialism
Nottingham, England, 1993.

reviewed by MCS

We review these books together, because they complement each other nicely. They are important books to MIM, because their authors agree with MIM's third cardinal principle, the scientific truth that the majority of the oppressor nation workers are not exploited.

On the one hand we have Arjun Makhijani, who according to the book jacket is "President of the Institute for

The Revolutionary Community Party-USA and Trotsky: A Literal Comparison

February 1994

by MC5 & MC86

In the imperialist countries and, even in some Third World countries, there is a plethora of Trotskyist organizations bombarding young comrades with idealist nonsense. Sometimes Trotskyists succeed in secretly converting certain communist leaders who then sneak Trotskyism into their "Marxism-Leninism" or even their "Maoism." When the leaders of a political organization sneak Trotskyism into their politics without crediting its source, we refer to that organization as "crypto-Trotskyist." The premier crypto-Trotskyist organization in the United States is the Progressive Labor Party. A slightly more subtle imitation is the RCP-USA.

In this article, MIM brings out quotations from Trotsky that made his politics distinctive from those of Stalin and Mao. We also bring out quotations from the RCP-USA, which demonstrate how the RCP has imported Trotskyism into its "Maoism." To know what RCP Chairperson Bob Avakian was going to say in his special 50th issue of *Revolution* in 1981, it was only necessary to read the works of Trotsky himself and the Trotskyist Ernest Mandel's 1978 book *The Bitter Fruits of Socialism in One Country: From Stalinism to Eurocommunism*.(1)

It's been some years since the Communist Party of Peru entered into struggle with the RCP-USA. In that struggle, it has succeeded in getting the RCP-USA to call itself "Maoist" and make a number of other quick line changes.

As the people up front and close to the RCP's practice, however, MIM argues that the RCP has done little to overhaul its general political line. For example, although the RCP calls the document "deliberately provocative" and unofficial today, the RCP still distributes *Revolution* No. 50, which openly denigrates the term "Maoist." *Revolution* No. 50, called "Conquer the World: The International Proletariat Must and Will," is the RCP document that most infuriated the new Maoist forces that formed MIM, and reading it gives one a sense of what it was like to be a Maoist around the RCP in the early 1980s. Another example is the RCP's Black Panther pamphlet, which refers to the "the working class" of North America with no mention of superprofits.

More recently, the RCP has been confronted with the facts of the labor aristocracy and has, if anything, regressed from some of its earlier positions. The Revolutionary Worker opposed the NAFTA in lockstep with the CPUSA and Ross Perot. Another article denounced the MIM line on the Euro-American working class as "counterrevolutionary." (That's just what MIM was thinking about the CPUSA and Ross Perot!)

Throughout all the changes in the RCP's line and its emphases and its local and regional variations, one thing remains the same — its Trotskyism. The RCP has, like Trotsky, consistently maintained that external conditions are the basis of contradiction. In this sense, MIM and the international communist movement was much better off when the RCP openly attacked "Maoism" and called itself "Marxist-Leninist." This was a much more honest position to take than the medley of views that came with taking the Peru franchise. Now the RCP uses the struggle in Peru to adopt a Maoist veneer without changing anything else in its line or practice.

I. THE BASIS OF CONTRADICTION

The basis of contradiction is the most general issue for Marxists, other than the materialist method itself. Unlike Stalin and Mao, Trotsky held that the decisive conditions for the creation of socialism existed *externally* to each society. This is not true for the world's oppressed nations, who do not need change forced on them by the pace of world events. Ironically, Trotsky's external formulation is true for the reactionary labor aristocracies Trotsky spoke for.

First, Trotsky quotes Stalin: "'The difference in views lies in the fact,' says Stalin, 'that the party considers that these [internal] contradictions and possible conflicts can be entirely overcome on the basis of the inner forces of our revolution, whereas comrade Trotsky and the Opposition think that these contradictions and conflicts can be overcome "only on an international scale, on the arena of the world-wide proletarian revolution."'"(2)

Trotsky then adds, "yes, this is precisely the difference. One could not express better and more correctly the difference between national reformism and revolutionary internationalism. If our internal difficulties, obstacles, and contradictions, which are fundamentally a reflection of world contradictions, can be settled merely by the 'inner forces of our revolution' without entering 'the arena of of the world-wide proletarian revolution' then the International is partly a subsidiary and partly a decorative institution."(3)

Trotsky:

"In our epoch, which is the epoch of imperialism, i.e., of world economy and world politics under the hegemony of finance capital, not a single communist party can establish its program by proceeding solely or mainly from conditions and tendencies of developments in its own country. ... On August 4, 1914, the death knell sounded for national programs [a reference to World War I—MC5] for all time. ... In the present epoch, to a much larger extent than in the past, the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not *vice versa*.

Herein lies the basic and primary difference between communist internationalism and all varieties of national socialism."(4)

"It is impermissible, impossible, and absurd to seek a criterion for the 'sufficient minimum' within national states ('Russian prior to 1917') when the whole question is settled by international dynamics. In this false, arbitrary, isolated national criterion rests the theoretical basis of national narrowness in politics, the precondition for inevitable national-reformist and social-patriotic blunders in the future."(5)

"Our internal contradictions, however, which depend directly on the trend of the European and world struggle, may be rationally regulated and abated by a correct internal policy based on Marxian foresight. But they can be finally overcome only when the class contradictions will be overcome, which is out of the question without a victorious revolution in Europe. Stalin is right. The difference lies precisely on this point and this is the fundamental difference between national reformism and revolutionary internationalism."(6)

Plagiarist Bob Avakian:

"Returning to the question of Mao: also linked to the general erroneous tendencies in Mao — too much of a country by country perspective, the tendency to see things too much in terms of nations and national struggle — something else that should be reviewed here briefly is confusion and some of Mao's errors on the question of internal and external, and in particular the internal basis of change and the external conditions of change and how this applies in the relationship between revolutions in particular countries, on the one hand, and the overall world struggle and the world situation, on the other. ...

"For example in 'On Contradiction' the way it's presented is that China is the internal and the rest of the world is the external. And what we've emphasized in opposition to this is viewing the process of the world historic advance from the bourgeois epoch to the communist epoch as something which in fact takes place in an overall sense on a world scale, is a world process and both arises out of and is ultimately determined by the fundamental contradiction of capitalism which, with the advent of imperialism, has become the fundamental contradiction of this process on a world scale. If we want to look to see what is the underlying and main driving force in terms of the development of revolutionary situations in particular countries at particular times, then too we have to look to the overall development of contradictions on a world scale, flowing out of and ultimately determined by this fundamental contradiction and not mainly to the development of the contradictions within a particular country, because that country and the process there is integrated in an overall way into this larger world process. It's not simply as it was in the feudal era or the beginning of the bourgeois era where you had separate countries more or less separately developing with interpenetration between them; now they've been integrated into this larger process."(7)

"[W]hat has happened in the Soviet Union and China represents, in its essence, defeats inflicted on the international proletariat by the international bourgeoisie, and that the mistakes of the revolutionaries were secondary ..." (8)

The theory of a potential resurgence of a new bourgeois within the communist party was a central contribution of Maoism to communist theory. The above quotation from Avakian places him outside of Maoism.

II. SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY

Trotsky: "The conception of the building of socialism in one country is a social-patriotic conception."(9)

"In the epoch of imperialism it is impossible to approach the fate of one country in any other way but by taking as a starting point the tendencies of world development as a whole in which the individual country, with all its national peculiarities, is included and to which it is subordinated."(10)

Bob Avakian: "Maoism without Leninism is national (and also, in certain contexts, social-chauvinism) and bourgeois democracy."(11)

Trotsky:

"Revolutionary patriotism can only have a class character. It begins as patriotism to the party organizations, to the trade union, and rises to state patriotism when the proletariat seizes power. Whenever the power is in the hands of the workers, patriotism is a revolutionary duty. ... And now it suddenly appears that the ideal of the socialist society may be achieved with the national forces alone. This is a mortal blow to the International."(12)

"We must tell them that we will enter on the path of *real* socialist construction only when the proletariat of the most advanced countries will have captured power; that it is necessary to work unrelentingly for this, using both levers — the short lever of our internal economic efforts and the long lever of the international proletarian struggle."(13)

Bob Avakian:

"There is the specific criticism to be made of Mao on the question of nations, national struggle and the world revolution: not only in the Anna Louise Strong interview and in 'On Policy,' but also in the General Line polemic, the tendency shows up to see things too much country-by-country separated from each other, too much in terms of nations and national struggle, and too much in terms of identifying one enemy and rallying everybody against it."(14)

"This crucial question of what happened to the revolutionary movement particularly from the mid-'70s on ... cannot be understood fully or resolved by looking at it country-by-country and trying to figure out what happened to the move-

ment in this country and why didn't we go further here, or why were we set back there and so on. Again, it's another example of how things have to be looked at first, foremost and fundamentally on an international basis."(15)

"Imagine, for example, what it would have been like if the revolutionary line in China had been more clearly and firmly an internationalist one and, on that basis, if the revolutionary leadership had been able to mobilize the proletariat to keep power in China —which such a line could not have guaranteed but would have made more possible — and then things erupted the way they did in Iran, think about where we would be on that basis now!" (16)

"Since a lot of emphasis has been put on deviations from Leninism, specifically towards nationalism, would Lenin too have made these deviations from Leninism if he'd been around longer to deal with a lot of the real necessity that arose in the Soviet Union? . . . It should be said, at the same time, that his methodological approach, his grasp and application of materialist dialectics, was head and shoulders (unfortunately) above his successors in the Soviet Union, and in particular head and shoulders above that of the main successor — Stalin."(17)

III. AN INTERNATIONAL PARTY?

Trotsky:

"That is why, for us, the policy of the Comintern dominates all other questions. Without a correct international policy, all the possible economic successes in the U.S.S.R. will not save the October Revolution and will not lead to socialism. To speak more exactly: without a correct international policy, there can be no correct policy in internal affairs either, for the line is one."(18)

Elsewhere, Trotsky does not explain at length what it means to have an "international revolutionary party," but simply proceeds from the obvious need for one. See for example, "The Program of the International Revolution or a Program of Socialism in One Country?" which is the first document in Trotsky's book titled *The Third International After Lenin*.

Trotsky: "World economy has become a might reality which holds sway over the economic life of individual countries and continents. This basic fact alone invests the idea of a world communist party with a supreme reality."(19)

Trotskyist leader Ernest Mandel:

"No such struggle is at all possible in the imperialist epoch unless it is international. No consistent international struggle is possible without an international organization. The idea of 'single centre' was profoundly discredited by Stalin when he converted it into a system of bureaucratic command by the CPSU. Yet its undistorted form remains the only alternative for communist militants who really want to rediscover class independence from the bourgeoisie and the Soviet bureaucracy.

"Any 'national communism' in a capitalist country is

condemned to become a 'communism' integrated into the bourgeois state."(20)

RCP-USA: "RIM [the international party led principally by the RCP-USA] is a decisive element and prerequisite for victory in the struggle to emancipate the world."(21)

IV. THE NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE

Trotsky is the grandfather of all supposedly "Marxist" reductionists that MIM refers to as "fundamentalists" for their simplistic and dogmatist stress on the fundamental contradiction between classes on the world scale. Trotsky and the reductionists refuse to acknowledge the class struggle embodied in some national struggles or gender struggles. For Trotsky, it is all quite simple: there are oppressed nation proletarians and there are proletarian women. They engage in class struggle against the bourgeoisie just like their oppressor nation and male proletarian comrades. The national bourgeoisie is no different than the imperialist bourgeoisie says Trotsky, except that it is even more backward.

Trotsky:

"Lenin did not at all place the wars for national liberation above bourgeois democratic revolutions as is now done by Bukharin, [when Bukharin and Stalin shared the same opinions— MC5] after his 180 degree turn. Lenin insisted on a distinction between an oppressed bourgeois nation and a bourgeois oppressor nation. But Lenin nowhere raised and never could raise the question as if the bourgeoisie of a colonial or a semi-colonial country in an epoch of struggle for national liberation must be more progressive and more revolutionary than the bourgeoisie of a non-colonial country in the epoch of the democratic revolution."(22)

"The new and absolutely false theory promulgated by Stalin- Bukharin about the 'imminent' revolutionary spirit of the colonial bourgeoisie is, in substance, a translation of Menshevism into the language of Chinese politics. It serves only to convert the oppressed position of China into an internal political premium for the Chinese bourgeoisie, and it throws an additional weight on the scale of the bourgeoisie against the scale of the trebly oppressed Chinese proletariat."(23)

"China is still confronted with a vast, bitter, bloody, and prolonged struggle for such elementary things as the liquidation of the most 'Asiatic' forms of slavery, national emancipation, and unification of the country. But as the course of events has shown, it is precisely this that makes impossible in the future any petty-bourgeois leadership or even semi-leadership in the revolution. The unification and emancipation of China today is an international task, no less so than the existence of the U.S.S.R. This task can be solved only by means of a desperate struggle on the part of the downtrodden, hungry, and persecuted masses under the direct leadership of the proletarian vanguard — a struggle not only against world imperialism, but also against its economic and political agency in China, against the bour-

geoisie, including the 'national' bourgeoisie and all its democratic flunkys."(24)

Mao Zedong:

"We are exponents of the theory of the transition of the revolution, and not the Trotskyite theory of 'permanent revolution.' We are for the attainment of socialism by going through all the necessary stages of the democratic republic. We are opposed to tailism, but we are also opposed to adventurism and impetuosity. To reject the participation of the bourgeoisie in the revolution on the ground that it can only be temporary and to describe the alliance with anti-Japanese sections of the bourgeoisie (in a semi-colonial country) as capitulation is a Trotskyite approach, with which we cannot agree. Today such an alliance is in fact a necessary bridge on the way to socialism."(25)

V. NO NEW DEMOCRATIC STAGE

The first break between new-born Maoist forces in the 1980s and the RCP-USA occurred over the question of the New Democratic stage of revolution in semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries. The issue was how to criticize the FMLN/FDR in the early 1980s for its corruption by revisionism. The new-born Maoist forces correctly saw that the RCP-USA showed how *not* to criticize the FLMN when the RCP-USA in close discussions with the predecessors to MIM denied the need for a new democratic stage.

The grandfather of the idea of opposing stages in revolution is none other than Trotsky. (To be fair to the RCP-USA, we should point out that there has been some development of the Third World since Trotsky's day, but the founders of MIM found it necessary to establish concretely that the situation in El Salvador remained semi-feudal and semi-colonial.)

Trotsky:

"These fundamental and, at the same time, incontrovertible social and political prerequisites of the third Chinese revolution [the next revolution to follow 1928 —MC5] demonstrate not only that the formula of the democratic dictatorship has *hopelessly outlived its usefulness*, but also that the third Chinese revolution, despite the great backwardness of China, or more correctly, because of this great backwardness as compared with Russia, will not have a 'democratic' period, not even such a six month period as the October Revolution had (November 1917 to July 1918); but it will be compelled from the very outset to effect the most decisive shake-up and abolition of bourgeois property in city and village."(26)

"To save a hopeless position, the resolution of the E.C.C.I. [Comintern —MC5] (without any connection whatever with the entire trend of its thought) rushes in post-haste to its last argument — taken from imperialism. It appears that the tendency to skip over the bourgeois-democratic stage [what follows is Trotsky's quote from the 'Stalinist' Comintern —MC5] '... is all the more [!] harmful because such a formu-

lation of the question eliminates [?] the most important national peculiarity of the Chinese revolution, which is a semi-colonial revolution.' The only meaning that these senseless words can have is that the imperialist yoke will be overthrown by some sort of non-proletarian dictatorship. But this means that the 'most important national peculiarity' has been dragged in at the last moment in order to paint the Chinese national bourgeoisie or the Chinese petty-bourgeois 'democracy' in bright colors."(27)

According to Trotsky, even what he considers the most backward countries are capitalist:

"All these bespeak the unconditional predominance, the direct domination of capitalist relations in China. The social relations of serfdom and semi-serfdom are undeniably very strong. They stem in part from the days of feudalism . . . However, it is capitalist relations that *dominate* and not 'feudal' (more correctly, serf and, generally, pre-capitalist) relations. Only thanks to this dominant role of capitalist relations can we speak seriously of the prospects of proletarian hegemony in the national revolution."(28)

Bob Avakian:

"There is a tendency toward a kind of absolute, mechanical, metaphysical view that there are two types of countries in the world and one of them has one-stage revolutions and the other has two-stage revolutions and the way you make revolution in a country that has a two-stage revolution is the way they did it in China, more or less, with *some* concrete application to conditions in your country. . . . I'm not saying that there's not a lot to that. . . . But as Lenin said, these boundary lines are conditional and relative, not absolute; and, despite the general distinction, whether the revolutions there proceed in one stage or two is also relative and conditional, not absolute, and overall it is more determined by what's happening in the world as a whole than it is by what's happening in one country."(29)

VI. THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY

Trotsky accused Stalin and the Comintern of having a line on the Euro-American working class that is not unlike MIM's (except that in 1994 the role of the farmer in North America is considerably reduced.)

Trotsky:

"Pepper's theory was that the super-profit of American capitalism converts the American proletariat into a world labor aristocracy while the agrarian crisis ruins the farmers and drives them onto the path of social revolution. According to Pepper's conception, a party of a few thousand members, consisting chiefly of immigrants, had to fuse with the farmers through the medium of a bourgeois party and by thus founding a 'two-class' [farmers and workers —MC5] party, insure the socialist revolution in the face of the passivity or neutrality of the proletariat corrupted by super-profits. This

insane idea found supporters and half-supporters among the upper leadership of the Comintern.”(30)

Trotskyist leader Ernest Mandel: “Far from being a minority, the proletariat as we have defined it is a social class that represents 70-90% of the active population of the Western imperialist countries.”(31)

As MIM described in the first section of this article, the RCP is on record opposing MIM’s line on the labor aristocracy in favor of the Trotskyist line.

VII. REVOLUTION IN THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

Trotsky addressing a U.S. audience:

“The American soviets would not need to resort to the drastic measures which circumstances have often imposed upon the Russians. In the United States, through the science of publicity and advertising, you have means for winning the support of your middle class, which were beyond the reach of the soviets of backward Russia with its vast majority of pauperized and illiterate peasants. This, in addition to your technical equipment and your wealth, is the greatest asset of your coming Communist Revolution. Your revolution will be smoother in character than ours; you will not waste your energies and resources in costly social conflicts after the main issues have been decided; and you will move ahead so much the more rapidly in consequence.”(32)

Bob Avakian:

“Lenin was not, however, being one-sided about this or adopting a ‘third worldist’ position, that is, writing off revolution in the West or seeing the only possible thrust of revolution coming from the East or suggesting that revolution in the West would only be possible after the flame of revolution had lit up the entire East (and then perhaps things would develop in the West to where a proletarian revolution could become possible. This was *not* Lenin’s view and when it is attributed to him represents a vulgarization of his actual view, although he did correctly recognize the developments which were really only beginning to assert themselves, that is, the shift of the revolutionary center more and more toward the East.”(33)

Flatterer of the middle-class, Bob Avakian:

“In the experience of the Soviet Union (and of socialism generally so far), it has not proved possible to fully implement the policies adopted by the Paris Commune. . . it has not been possible to abolish the standing army as an institution and to replace it with the armed masses themselves. This is largely owing to what has been spoken to before: the fact that revolutions leading to socialism have taken place not in industrially developed capitalist countries where the proletariat is the majority of the population (or at least is the largest class), as Marx and Engels had foreseen, but in technologically backward countries with large peasant popula-

tions where the proletariat is a small minority; these revolutions have occurred not in a number of countries all at once [unless you count Africa, Asia] but more or less in one country at a time (leaving aside the experience of the Eastern European countries in the aftermath of World War II), where there was some transformation in aspects of social relations but there was never a real socialist transformation of society; and socialist states have existed in a world still dominated by imperialism.”(34)

We’re glad Avakian noticed that revolutions have not occurred all at once; however, he is pointing this out to damn these revolutions compared with the ones that could happen in the West. When it comes down to it, Avakian still sees the labor aristocracy and other middle classes of the imperialist countries as a better social basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat than the peasantry and urban working classes of the Third World. The decades of corruption of the imperialist working class receive no weight in the RCP’s calculations (except when prompted by MIM) and Avakian continues to speak of the issue of the militia as if the bourgeoisie were amongst the masses in general and not specifically in the party. Ironically this is more true in the imperialist countries than in the historical experiences to which Avakian refers. (See MIM Theory 5 “Diet for a Small Red Planet,” for MIM’s review of the RCP on the “majority” of imperialist country workers.(47))

The issue here is not militia versus standing army, but what Avakian sees as the best basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Contradicting Stalin and Mao, Avakian continues to hold the Trotskyist line that the imperialist country working class is the best vehicle of revolution.

VIII. WORLD WAR II

Trotsky:

“Stalin and his clique, for the sake of an alliance with the imperialist governments, have completely renounced the revolutionary program for the emancipation of the colonies. This was openly avowed at the last Congress of Stalin’s party in Moscow, in March of the current year, by Manuilski one of the leaders of the Comintern, who declared:

“‘The Communists advance to the forefront the struggle for the realization of the right of self-determination of nationalities enslaved by *fascist* governments. They demand free self-determination for Austria. . . the Sudetan regions. . . Korea, Formosa, Abyssinia. . .’ And what about India, Indochina, Algeria, and other colonies of England and France? The Comintern representative answers this question as follows: ‘The Communists. . . demand of the governments of the so-called bourgeois democratic states the immediate [sic] drastic [!] improvement in the living standards of the toiling masses in the colonies and the granting of broad democratic rights and liberties to the colonies.’”(35)

Open Trotskyist Ernest Mandel: "By turning the Communist International away from its initial objectives and watering it down into a docile instrument of Soviet diplomatic manoeuvres and particularist privileges, the Stalinist bureaucracy dealt a death blow to proletarian internationalism in the ranks of the movement it controlled on a world scale."(36)

Crypto-Trotskyist Bob Avakian:

"All these policies were frankly a rationalization for and an attempt to make the communist movement's policy an extension of the international policy and line of the Soviet Union. . . . To put it in a nutshell, World War 2 on the part of the Soviet Union, was fought on a patriotic — that is bourgeois-democratic—basis. . . . For example, whatever the Soviet Union did that turned more revolutionary elements away from it when it was carrying out the collective security in the late '30s (or, for that matter, turned more bourgeois-democratic elements away from it when it made the pact with Germany) — all of it is justified on the most contradictory bases which can only be reduced to 'it was good for the Soviet Union.'"(37)

"For example, to move that from the abstract realm and make it very concrete, almost everybody who was around at the time knows the Soviet Union carried out a policy putting its national interests above everything else in and around World War 2, and only some communists are the ones who won't accept it, can't face up to it and will go for any sort of rationalization to try to justify not having to come to terms with a basic simple fact."(38)

Here MIM must comment on the absolutely vile amnesia regarding history that Trotskyists and Avakian are promoting on World War II. The Russian people and disproportionately its communists in particular gave up 20 million dead fighting to defeat the Nazis in the imperialist war — far more than any other nation — and Avakian doesn't even mention it.

Instead, he claims the Soviet Union was promoting its "national interests." Apparently sacrificing 20 million in a war is not enough internationalism for Avakian. Being just the only country that did not capitulate and join in with Hitler after being occupied, that's not internationalism says Avakian. Here we must make it clear that Stalin and the Comintern did make urgent calls for support of the Soviet Union and they deserved every bit of support they got. It was clear to everyone at the time and anyone who followed Lenin's theory of imperialism that the Soviet Union was going to be the object of imperialist attack in a world war. The only question was when. As such, communists internationally were correct to make support for the Soviet Union a cardinal question. Anyone who couldn't apply communist principles in practice and support the Soviet Union didn't deserve the name "communist" no matter how much rhetoric to the contrary.

Anarchists, Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists who have lived too long in a parasitic environment easily lose sight of

the basic facts and get lost in idealist mistrust of all national and state interests. Given the particular role of U.S. imperialism and its passive working class in not stopping Hitler and the other imperialists much earlier, Avakian in particular should be ashamed to make such statements even in passing, never mind in print in a magazine still distributed over a decade later. Like it or not, the Russian people as the first to make socialist revolution were going to pay a heavy international price in World War II, regardless of the policies of Stalin. Despite all the "maneuvers" that Trotsky and Avakian complain about, the Russians still gave their fair share in creating some space free from one of the major imperialist blocs.

IX. THE IDEALIST VIEW OF DEFEAT AND SOVIET AID

Time and again, Trotsky blamed Stalin for the defeat of revolutions. At the same time, Trotsky accepted no responsibility for the defeat of international revolution. In other words, Stalinists everywhere betrayed revolution when they failed, but the failures of Trotskyists to make revolution anywhere in the world were not even mentioned — a double standard possible to maintain only through perfect idealism. Very strangely overlooked by the Trotskyists, it was the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China that supplied troops and material supplies for revolutions abroad including in Spain, Korea (including Chinese troops) and Vietnam, but the Trotskyists have never provided any such support. Instead, what they provide is historical amnesia in thousands of pages at a time.

Somehow it is the Stalinists guilty of not supporting armed struggle abroad according to the Trotskyists — who never led a successful one themselves.

Likewise in the case of Bob Avakian, he criticizes Mao for supposedly raising not giving armed aid "to a principle." Nowhere in Revolution No. 50, where he makes this criticism repeatedly, and even on the final page in an effort to sound tougher than Mao, nowhere does he make historical references to the actual sacrifices in armed struggle the Chinese under Mao made. That includes sacrificing hundreds of thousands dead in the Korean War, something that the masses revere Mao for to this day, because his own son died in combat there and demonstrated that Mao wasn't the kind of ruler that brought his family special privileges. Instead of making the facts known and undoing the bourgeois superstructure's brainwashing, Avakian caters to this historical amnesia with tough Trotarchist rhetoric. When Mao said he would not attack countries outside his borders, he did not rule out being invited in by those countries to defeat imperialist aggression! There's nothing wrong with that principle, and more importantly, there was nothing wrong with China's practice, except for the historically ignorant.

Trotsky:

"We have today a 'theory' which teaches that it is possible to build socialism completely in one country and that the correlations of that country with the capitalist world can be established on the basis of 'neutralizing' the world bour-

geoisie (Stalin). . . . It will be most vitally necessary to spread the revolution to the neighboring countries and to support insurrections there with arms in hand, not out of any abstract considerations of international solidarity, which in themselves cannot set the classes in motion, but because of those vital considerations which Lenin formulated hundreds of times—namely, that without *timely* aid from the international revolution, we will be unable to hold out.”(39)

Likewise, Bob Avakian:

“The victory of the Spanish revolution could have opened up an era of revolutionary overturns throughout Europe and so forestalled the present war. But that heroic revolution, which contained within itself every possibility of victory, was smothered in the embrace of the Second and Third Internationals, with the active cooperation of the anarchists. The world proletariat became poorer in its loss of another great hope and richer in the lessons of another monstrous betrayal.”

Trotsky:

“The mighty movement of the French proletariat in June, 1936, revealed exceptionally favorable conditions for the revolutionary conquest of power. A French soviet republic would immediately have gained revolutionary hegemony of Europe, created revolutionary repercussions in every country, rocked the totalitarian regimes and in this way saved humanity from the present imperialist slaughter with its countless victims. But the thoroughly debased, cowardly and treacherous policies of Leon Blum and Leon Jouhaux with the active support of the French section of the Comintern, led to the collapse of one of the most promising movements of the last decade.”(40)

“Because of the lag of the world revolution, and the fatigue, and, to a large measure, the backwardness of the Russian workers and especially the Russian peasants, there raised itself over the Soviet Republic and against its peoples a new oppressive and parasitic caste whose leader is Stalin.”(41)

X. FORMULATING STRATEGY

Trotsky: “The Soviet proletariat has achieved grandiose successes, if we take into consideration the conditions under which they have been attained and the low cultural level inherited from the past. But these achievements constitute an extremely small magnitude on the scales of the socialist ideal.”(42)

Trotskyist leader Ernest Mandel: “The notion that all the living forces of society can gradually be assembled for a long, perhaps even permanent, siege of the ‘capitalist fortress’ is an idle dream. Capitalism commands innumerable machine-gun nests stationed around its ‘fortress’, within the very social body that is supposed to be besieging it. These defences permit no lasting assemblies or sieges of long duration.”(43)

Bob Avakian:

“And the political point that I want to draw in particular, besides correcting that point in *Mao Tsetung’s Immortal Contributions*, is refocusing attention on the question of what is there in the military strategy Mao fought for that might, spontaneously at least, lead him away from understanding that in the context of a world war it might be correct to in fact strike out in different directions, viewing the world as a whole; that is, to oppose the imperialists in general and to attempt to overthrow them wherever possible in *both* camps, of course taking into the account the particular situation in different countries.”(44)

“Making use of the contradictions among the enemy, defeating our enemies one by one, etc., was precisely a correct policy in those concrete conditions and it can be, under many different conditions, a correct policy. But it is wrong to elevate this to the level of a general principle.

“Just to give a simple example, if everybody in this room but me is a counter-revolutionary and you constitute the main pillars of reaction in the world and I’m capable of whipping up on everybody all at once, why should I defeat you one by one? There’s no principle that says I should defeat you one by one; if I’m capable of defeating you all at one time, I should just take you all on and wipe you out and so much the better for the international proletariat.”(45)

Even if Avakian discovers the Elliptontrotacious Bomb (RCP synthesized hot air?), everyone in the room is going to die at a different time. Dialectics is the nature of life. It’s not likely our imperialist enemies are going to die “all at once.”

Ernest Mandel: “The working class must fight for a *proletarian* international policy, which means an independent class policy opposed to any alliance with one faction of imperialism against another. Today this can be expressed in two formulas: Against armament (especially nuclear armament) and against the war preparations of any imperialist bourgeoisie! For the Socialist United States of Europe!”(46)

Order MIM Theory 6, “The Stalin Issue” and MIM Theory 7, “Proletarian Feminist Revolutionary Nationalism on the Communist Road” to read about why it is necessary to have unholy alliances — contrary to Avakian, Mandel and post-Lenin Trotsky.

Notes:

1. Ernest Mandel, “The Bitter Fruits of Socialism in One Country,” *From Stalinism to Eurocommunism* London: NLB, 1978.
2. Pravda, No. 262, Nov. 12, 1926
3. Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970, p. 62.
4. Ibid, pp. 3-4.
5. Ibid, p. 212.
6. Ibid, p. 65.
7. Revolution No. 50, pp. 34-5.
8. A World to Win, #17, p. 47.
9. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 70.
10. Ibid, p. 42.
11. Revolution No. 50, p. 38.

12. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 71.
13. Ibid, p. 66.
14. Revolution No. 50, p. 35.
15. Ibid, p. 41.
16. Ibid, p. 44.
17. Ibid, p. 34.
18. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 256.
19. Ibid, p. 5
20. Mandel, "The Bitter Fruits of Socialism in One Country," op cit. p. 39.
21. Revolutionary Worker, Jan. 16, 1994, p. 3.
22. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 171.
23. Ibid, pp. 175.
24. Ibid, p. 191.
25. Mao Zedong, *Selected Works, Vol. 1*, "Win the Masses in Their Millions..." pp. 290-1.
26. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, pp. 184-5.
27. Ibid, pp. 190.
28. Ibid, p. 209.
29. Revolution No. 50, p. 35.
30. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 219.
31. Mandel, op cit. p. 210.
32. Leon Trotsky, "If America Should Go Communist," *The Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology* Isaac Deutscher, ed. New York: Dell, 1964, p. 215.
33. Revolution No. 50, p. 11.
34. A World to Win, #17, p. 38.
35. Pravda, issue No. 70, March 12, 1939.)" (Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology* op cit. p. 250.)
36. Mandel, op cit. p. 37.
37. Revolution No. 50, p. 22.
38. Revolution No. 50, p. 23.
39. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 16.
40. Trotsky, "The Second World War," *The Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology* op cit, p. 250.
41. Ibid, p. 282.
42. Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 66.
43. Mandel, op cit. pp. 192-3.
44. Revolution No. 50, p. 34.
45. Ibid, p. 31.
46. Mandel, op cit. p. 32.
47. MIM Theory 5, "Diet for a Small Red Planet." p. 99.

Maoist Sojourner

*A monthly publication by and for
Third World Maoist exiles led by MIM.*

Maoist Sojourner publishes reports on the International Communist Movement, news from Peru, the Philippines, other Third World and European countries. Subscribe, send articles or art, distribute bulk copies — now.

Individual

1 yr. domestic \$12

2 yrs. domestic \$20

1 yr. overseas \$36

Institution

1 yr. domestic \$46

2 yrs. domestic \$90

1 yr. overseas \$60

Special offer! A one-year sub to Maoist Sojourner, with a one-year sub to MIM Theory — just \$25! (individual/domestic)

Cash or checks made out "MIM Distributors."
PO Box 3576, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576 or
PO Box 29670, Los Angeles, CA 90029-0670

NAFTA Stand Clarifies RCP's Differences With MIM

Revolutionary Worker
November 28, 1993

December 1993

by MC5

Many around the world believe that there is no difference between MIM and the RCP, USA on the question of the imperialist country working class. Elsewhere we have analyzed the major documents of the RCP, including its program, to demonstrate that this is not true.(1)

Recently, the bourgeois internationalists behind the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on the one hand, and the Amerika-first bourgeoisie led by Ross Perot on the other hand, forced the RCP into taking a fairly recognizable and concrete position on NAFTA.

This position is contradictory, but nonetheless it is something for which we can hold the RCP accountable.(2)

The article, "The North American Bloodsuckers Trade Agreement,"(2) starts by tailing after the social-chauvinist opposition to NAFTA, but ends up echoing MIM's line on the labor aristocracy — but only applied to certain "sections" of it rather than the class in its entirety.

THE CONTENDING LINES

When MIM first received J. Sakai's *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat* and H.W. Edwards' *Labor Aristocracy: Mass Base for Social Democracy*, MIM was in a better position to analyze the different lines out there on the labor aristocracy. MIM reviewed four of the major positions in an early issue of MIM Theory:

Position I was that the question did not matter, because line — derived from the proven desires of the international proletariat — was decisive, not social base in North America.

Position II was Sakai's position that there is no Euro-American proletariat.

Position III was H.W. Edwards' position that the majority of workers in the imperialist countries are labor aristocracy, leaving open the possibility of a small Euro-American proletariat.

Position IV was the RCP position. It held that the labor aristocracy was in decline and that hence there was a growing basis for a revolutionary movement in the labor aristocracy. Such a position can be found in some of the writings of Lenin and Zinoviev, while at other times they lambasted the notion that the labor aristocracy is always in decline.

MIM eventually adopted Sakai's position, while applying the truth of position I at certain times and sympathizing with Edwards to the extent of distributing his book. MIM came to conclude that it did not sympathize with position IV.

The RCP expressed its position very clearly by its only bold-faced quotation in the November 1993 article, a quotation from Neal Soss, chief economist of CS First Boston Inc.: "This in a nutshell explains why we can no longer afford to offer a bourgeois lifestyle to our white- and blue-collar proletariat." The RCP then went on to say that "the U.S. imperialists are telling the truth" in this regard.

The RCP then felt freed to take a line at the end of its article somewhat similar to MIM's but only with regard to "sec-

tions of U.S. workers." This is all that allowed the RCP to criticize the NAFTA opposition and Ross Perot, even while the beginning of the article tailed after the reformist NAFTA opposition.

The RCP article is in an open state of contradiction. It appears to want to have things both ways, while finally ending up on the side of the labor aristocracy's begging for reformation of its alliance with imperialism:

"For a decade, the U.S. capitalists have demanded 'take-backs' from industrial workers — freezing or lowering wages, shaving benefits, changing work rules ... And the

coming restructuring connected to NAFTA will be used to further 'depress wages' by placing U.S. and Mexican workers in much more direct competition."

So our hearts are supposed to bleed for those workers who have a "bourgeois lifestyle" even by the RCP's own backhanded admission!

Another contradiction is that the RCP has already supposedly set itself apart from the proponents of the "general crisis" approach to everything. Yet here it is echoing the general crisis theorists, who always take one-sided advantage of Lenin's formulation on imperialism to say that the revolution is just around the corner because the labor aristocracy is about to come to its senses, something predicted and proven wrong for most of the years of this century.

Related to this, the RCP seems able to live without the crisis theorists in the following formulation: "[NAFTA] will tremendously intensify the exploitation and suffering of the Mexican people." The general crisis theorists usually hold that

**So our hearts
are supposed to
bleed for those
workers who have a
'bourgeois lifestyle'
even by the RCP's
own backhanded
admission!**

imperialism cannot deepen its penetration of the world and has reached its end, so here is a hopeful sign from the RCP. It at least recognizes that the imperialists are expanding or deepening their penetration.

Yet how can this happen while the imperialists also decrease the bourgeois lifestyle of Euro-American workers? The RCP implies that somehow the U.S. imperialists will cut back on both the Euro-American workers and the Mexican workers, while it admits that the exploitation of the Mexican workers will increase and thereby make more surplus-value available for redistribution in the First World.

The RCP says, "But the U.S. government insists 'increased profitability and competitiveness' from this 'dislocation' will eventually mean more prosperity — at least for people in the United States. But the current global restructuring of capital is not about 'trickle down' prosperity."

Here the RCP has had to perform a somersault. On the one hand it said the imperialists are telling the truth about NAFTA. On the other hand, when it comes to telling the U.S. workers what will happen to the extra surplus extracted from the Mexican workers, the imperialists are supposedly telling a lie. This is a common union bargaining tactic — to point to increased profits by the employers, and then demand a share by claiming they haven't gotten any of the increased profits.

Yet even Lenin in his day believed that there is "trickle-down" prosperity. He believed the superprofits trickled into the workers' life in the imperialists countries through a "million" different forms of "bribery." He was quite explicit that the "Great Powers" all set aside some money for such bribery. Speaking of the typical Great Power, Lenin said, "its superprofits most likely amount to about a thousand million. And how this little sop is divided among the labour ministers, 'labour representatives,' (remember Engels's splendid analysis of the term), labour members of war industries committees, labour officials, workers belonging to the narrow craft unions, office employees, [which by themselves are over half of Euro-American workers since the 1980 census — MC5] etc. etc., is a secondary question." (3)

So here we get to the reactionary kernel of the RCP position. According to the RCP, exploitation of the Mexican workers will increase, but that will not mean greater bribery of the Euro-American workers. Unexplained in the article, there will be a greater surplus-value extracted, but not greater bribery. The reason it won't be explained is that it is not based in fact, but in the necessity for the RCP to adopt a bargaining position for the Euro-American labor aristocracy.

Indeed, the RCP's position goes farther as we have already shown. According to the RCP, the surplus-value from the Mexican workers will increase, but the wages of the American workers have already and will continue to decrease! This mythology has already been debunked in MIM Theory 1.

That bargaining position and political tailing of the labor aristocracy caused the RCP to side with one faction of the bourgeoisie against another: "Clearly, everything about

NAFTA is against the interests of oppressed people. Revolutionaries need to expose and oppose NAFTA." Yet NAFTA was a treaty between ruling classes. It was with regard to inter-bourgeois relations. It replaced one set of bourgeois relations with another. If the NAFTA did not pass, the existing set of bourgeois relations, tariffs, etc., would have prevailed. Why did the RCP feel obliged to oppose the NAFTA in particular? The reason is clear: tailing the labor aristocracy leads to reformism — social-democracy and social-chauvinism.

Contrast the RCP stand with the MIM analysis back in its August 1993 issue:

"MIM opposes the effort to 'save' American jobs. Those labor aristocracy jobs are what separates American workers from the cause of the proletariat everywhere. Rather than taking the piecemeal approach to fighting capitalism by opposing various trade agreements such as NAFTA, MIM calls on all anti-imperialists to build public opinion for revolution instead."

The RCP should look a little more seriously at what it said toward the end of its article, when it most sounded like MIM,

The RCP admits that the exploitation of the Mexican workers will increase and make more surplus-value for the First World.

if only for rhetorical purposes, for the purposes of fooling the most oppressed workers in order to use them for labor aristocracy purposes. If there are indeed even substantial "sections" of Euro-American workers using the NAFTA treaty, a treaty to change bourgeois relations, to make a point, then what was the principal responsibility of the RCP vis-a-vis the international proletariat?

What was the peculiar aspect of American workers' situation in comparison with say, the Mexican workers' situation? The RCP concluded that its responsibility was to side with those chauvinist workers by taking a stand on a strictly intra-bourgeois struggle in America.

Notes:

1. Order the "RCP Study Pack" from MIM by sending a \$15 check made out to "MIM Distributors" to P.O. Box 3576, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576.
2. "The North American Bloodsuckers Trade Agreement," *Revolutionary Worker* 11/28/93, p. 3.
3. V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," in John Riddell, ed., *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, Monad Press: New York, 1984, p. 500.

Marx, Lenin and Mao as an albatross that must be tossed aside.

Time and again we revolutionaries are told we isolate ourselves by taking definitive stands on the large historical questions of our time. Yet, while the *Guardian* was watering down its line and taking an eclectic stance—attempting to tail pseudo-feminism, reformism and anything that moved—*MIM Notes* was growing with a tiny fraction of the budget that the *Guardian* had. The more it watered down its line and confused its readers, the more the *Guardian* itself went down the drain. Despite the support of some key wealthy backers, the *Guardian's* eclecticism only encouraged the lack of political commitment and confusion that ended its existence.

It is not likely that racist and pro-white working class social-democracy will die. Nor will idealist-nihilism in the forms of Trotskyism and anarchism die. These ideologies have solid material bases. However, the niche of the far left claiming to be eclectic, anti-anti-communist, "radical" and "effective" is sustained only when the bourgeoisie seeks to undermine successful and genuine communist movements.

One factor in the *Guardian's* demise was a decline of the international communist movement, and the second factor was the *Guardian's* own political death—which preceded its actual death.

Where there is a vibrant communist movement and a petty-bourgeoisie vacillating in response, a paper like the *Guardian* can thrive for a time on eclecticism, opportunism and any politics just short of real commitment. Since the *Guardian* did not base itself in the revolutionary science of Mao Zedong Thought, it did not have a basis in the revolutionary class, the most desperate and determined fighters for anti-imperialism, anti-militarism, anti-patriarchy—the international proletariat.

Like the CP of the 1930s, and the Black nationalist movements, the *Guardian* found that the more it strayed from its revolutionary roots, the more able it was to attract occasionally large financial backers, but the less able it was to sustain large movements—a supreme irony considering that political opportunism is almost always advocated as a matter of attracting support.

With the collapse of the *Guardian* and a number of other radical organizations, our own commitment to building *MIM Notes* is underscored. The blatant slide of the ex-Soviet Union into pro-Western capitalism is winnowing the field of "radical" organizations. *MIM* welcomes aboard ex-*Guardian* peo-

ple and others who have analyzed the relative success of genuine communist movements compared with mushy, opportunist movements.

Notes: Jim O'Brien, "American Leninism," *Radical America*.

Unraveling the Political Economy of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

.....

Book review of *America In Decline*
by Raymond Lotta with Frank Shannon
Banner Press, 1984

by MC86

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

"Leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union have the famous theory that even a tiny spark can cause a world conflagration and that a world war must necessarily be a thermonuclear war which means the annihilation of mankind ... (In contradiction to this theory, it must be noted that) large scale and small scale revolutionary wars against the imperialists and their lackeys, which have never ceased, have hit hard at the imperialist forces of war, strengthened the forces defending world peace and effectively prevented the imperialists from realizing their plan of launching world war ... In short, according to the leaders of the CPSU, with the emergence of nuclear weapons, the contradiction between the socialist and imperialist camps, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries, and the contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialism have all disappeared. The world no longer has any class contradictions." (Communist Party of China, *Polemic*, 1963, p. 197, 244.)

"Revolution in the 80's: Go For It!" (RCP slogan)

THE SORCERERS AND THEIR SOURCES

The heart of Revolutionary Communist Party theoretician Raymond Lotta's *America In Decline* (AID) is summed up in the following quote from his book:

"(T)his (capitalist) mode of accumulation . . . is critically and inextricably bound up . . . with the extensive and intensive exploitation of the masses in the oppressed countries; on the other hand, it is anchored to a strategic national base in the home country . . . There exists a basic division in the imperialist-dominated world between the imperialist countries, where finance capital is rooted and controlled by the metropolitan bourgeoisies, and the oppressed nations, which are controlled by foreign finance capital. At the same time, capital, which roams the world in search of higher profits remains profoundly national - this represents an essential feature and contradiction of the imperialist epoch." (AID, p. 101)

The political economy of AID is based on two related theses. The first thesis is that "movement compelled by anarchy is the principal form of motion" conditioning the revolutionary resolution of the main contradiction of capitalism (between socialized mass production and the appropriation of surplus-value by a few owners). The second thesis is that imperialist capital is "profoundly national," and therefore the "inter-imperialist" contradiction is principal over all others. (AID, p. 125) Lotta's synthesis is that modern possibilities for revolution are dependent upon impending or actual nuclear war between competing blocs of imperialist countries.

Glossing over the Marxist law that capital concentrates in ever fewer hands, Lotta sums up the foundation for his first thesis by quoting Engels:

"(I)t is the compelling force of anarchy in the production of society at large that more and more completely turns the great majority of men into proletarians ..." (SUS, p. 61, AID, p. 50)

Lotta's cite from *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (SUS) neglects to credit the flip-side of Engel's analysis of the anarchy/organization contradiction in 1892:

"In the trusts, freedom of competition changes into it's very opposite - into monopoly; and the production without any definite plan of capitalistic society capitulates to the production upon a definite plan of the invading socialist society." (SUS, p. 66.)

Engels never lost sight of the class struggle. For Engels, anarchy in production was simply one aspect of a contradiction which includes its opposite

aspect: the organization of the capitalist workplace. This is the historic struggle between the owning classes and the producers of value. In AID Lotta never proves that anarchy is principal over organization. He simply assumes it and carries on from there. By focusing on intra-class conflicts between owners he loses sight of class struggle.

As "proof" of impending nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States Lotta's inter-imperialist thesis relies heavily on the 1963 Communist Part of China's (CPC) *The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement*, (*Polemic*), for authority.

.....

For Engels, anarchy in production was simply one aspect of a contradiction which includes its opposite aspect: the organization of the capitalist workplace.

.....

This is an error since the *Polemic* itself considers the inter-imperialist contradiction to be of less weight than the others — except as how it's development might condition the global process of war and revolution. The CPC bases it's overall argument concerning the dangers of nuclear war on the existence of a socialist camp. Neither the CPC, Lenin, Stalin, nor Mao ZeDong stress the inter-imperialist contradiction. Rather, they methodically stress the primacy of class struggle and the domination of the oppressed nations by monopoly capitalist groups. They stress that imperialism means continuous war punctuated by revolutions.

In the period leading up to 1963 the CPC's *Polemic* identified four basic contradictions in the global process of that time:

- between the socialist camp and the imperialist camp
- between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries
- between the oppressed nations and imperialism
- among imperialist countries and among monopoly capitalist groups.

The CPC also remarked that, "Nobody can obliterate any of these fundamental contradictions or subjectively substitute one for all the rest."

(Polemic, p. 7) They stated that, "While the U.S. imperialists are actually preparing such a (world) war (against the socialist camp), they also use this propaganda as a smokescreen for their oppression of the American people and for the extension of their aggression against the rest of the capitalist world." (Polemic, p. 12)

While MIM understands that the majority of Americans are not very oppressed at this time, MIM agrees with the *Polemic* that:

"It is impossible for the working class in the European and American capitalist countries to liberate itself unless it unites with the oppressed nations and unless these nations are liberated ... unite all the strata that can be united ... oppose monopoly capitalism, defend democratic rights, oppose the menace of fascism, improve living conditions, oppose imperialist arms expansion and war preparations, defend world peace and actively support the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nations." (Polemic, p. 14-18)

Obviously the CPC is in direct contradiction with RCP political economy. Following the counter-revolution in China the principle contradiction in the world has been between imperialism and the nationally delineated populations of surplus-value producers it exploits and oppresses.

By elevating the inter-imperialist contradiction to a principal and determining position Lotta attempts to obliterate the contradiction between imperialism and the Third World oppressed nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Along the way Lotta attempts to liquidate the theoretical basis for Maoist support of revolutionary nationalist struggles.

If one accepts Avakian's infamous statement from his "Conquer the World ..." that "Maoism without Leninism is nationalism ..." ("CTW," p. 38) than one must be prepared to demonstrate that "Leninism" is somehow separate from revolutionary nationalism. Since Lotta is fond of dogma — let's examine his use of dogma.

MONOPOLY-CAPITALISM & NATIONAL OPPRESSION

Finance capital concentrates global capital and strives to replace free competition with monopoly restrictions. Monopoly-capitalism has certain features which are best summed up in Lenin's *Imperialism: The Highest Stage Of Capitalism*.

"The capitalists ... divide the world ... in proportion to 'capital,' in proportion to 'strength,'

...(which) varies according with the degree of economic and political development. In order to understand what takes place, it is necessary to know what questions are settled by this change in forces. The question as to whether these changes are 'purely' economic or non-economic (e.g. military) is a secondary one, which does not in the least affect the fundamental view on the latest epoch of capitalism. To substitute for the content of the struggle and agreements between capitalist combines the question of the form of these struggles and agreements (today peaceful, tomorrow war-like, the next day war-like again) is to sink to the role of a sophist." (Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. 75)

The Third World is the primary source of surplus value for the monopoly groups today. The one hundred-fifty plus wars since the annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have simply punctuated the ongoing daily world war against the people in which, on a good day, only 40,000 children die of starvation. World war has never ceased since it began for the "political features of imperialism are reaction all along the line, and increased national oppression, resulting from the oppression of the financial oligarchy and the elimination of free competition." (Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. 110)

The international imperialists stand naked and exposed to the masses of the whole world as jackals. To obliterate their identity as a group is to abandon the revolutionary potential of national liberation struggles and Maoism's practice of the united front against imperialism. Abandoning national liberation struggles is to make impossible the two-stage new democratic revolution which is a principal form of struggle available to the masses trapped in the oppressed nations and internal colonies.

Lotta is not the first communist theoretician to do this.

"Having failed to understand that, Kievsky bypasses the central question ... namely, how will we Social-Democrats abolish national oppression? He shunts the question aside with phrases about the world being "drenched in blood," etc. (though this has no bearing on the matter under discussion). This leaves only one single argument: the socialist revolution will solve everything!" (Lenin, *The Nascent Trend of Imperialist Economism*, p. 65-66)

COMPETITION

Imperialist entities are united not only by their common struggle against the masses but also by competition: which must not be considered alone in

it's anarchic aspect, but must also be considered as a form of organization, i.e., capitalist competition is an objective motion by which surplus value is allocated and distributed to the class of capitalists. Monopolists compete, contend and collude with each other for command of the social wealth. This motion is at once anarchic and organizational.

Without competition between capitalists, capital movement would not exist at all and capital could not be centralized, concentrated - or short-circuited. Engel's anarchy/organization paradigm is two-sided and contains two opposite movements: repulsion, which is anarchic and is expressed in the anarchy of production based on profit, and attraction, which is organizational and expressed through the socialization of production and concentration of capital. It is not this contradiction, however, that creates surplus-value. *Surplus value only arises from the antagonism between the exploiters and the exploited.*

Historically, the internal contradictions and stresses leading to imperialist wars have perpetuated and organized imperialist capital; even as external conditions favorable to communist-led revolutions have been created inside oppressed national formations. Overall imperialist class collaboration before, during, and after their wars can easily be seen in the annals of their "armistices," treaties," and secret agreements. Recently the monopoly groups carved up sections of the Middle East before the first bomb was dropped on Iraq.

Objectively, war, like competition, organizes the imperialists and distributes surplus-value, capital, among them according to their strength; according to the size of the capital they already command. Imperialist war has been driven by the necessity of multi-national corporations and social-imperialist entities to super-exploit the Third World, and not only by the requirements of nationally-based capital units to remain intact, as the RCP would have us believe.

The competitive fission of the capitalist world market reveals the tendency of capitals to organize themselves into larger capitals even as they split and divide in order to do so. This movement appears as anarchic and reflects Marx's statement in *Wage, Labor and Capital* that:

"The anarchical movement, in which rise is compensated by fall and fall by rise, is regarded by them (the bourgeois economists - ed.) as chance. With just as much right one could regard the fluctuations as the law . . . The total movement of this dis-

order is it's order. In the course of this industrial anarchy, in this movement in a circle, competition compensates, so to speak, for one excess by means of another." (WLC, p. 26)

For the RCP anarchical movement is not compensated by competition and the warring monopoly-capitalists (and their capital) are "rooted" not at the sites of production in the Third World but at the sites of consumption inside imperialist fortresses. In reality, the opposite is true. The monopolists constantly flit from government to government and from one form of monetary exchange to another. The RCP forgets to consider the real object of the struggle between the monopoly-groups as it fetishizes "anarchy."

"International cartels show to what point capitalist monopolies have developed, and they reveal the object of the struggle between the various capitalist groups. This last circumstance is the most important; it alone shows us the historico-economic significance of events; for the forms of struggle may and do constantly change in accordance with varying, relatively particular, and temporary causes, but the essence of the struggle, its class content, cannot change while classes exist." (Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. 74-75)

As a group the imperialists, ably assisted by the populations of imperialist countries, tend to unite as an international class against the exploitable masses who are their sole source of income. Consider the record of armament sales to "friends" and "foes" alike by the multi-nationals in this century of war. Consider the inter-locked banking system.

MONOPOLY VERSUS FREE COMPETITION

" . . . (T)he most deep-rooted economic foundation of imperialism is monopoly . . . which has grown out of capitalism and exists in the general environment of capitalism, commodity production and competition, and remains in permanent and insoluble contradiction to this general environment." (Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. 99)

"But the division of the world between two powerful trusts does not remove the possibility of redivision, if the relation of forces changes as a result of uneven development, war, bankruptcy, etc." (Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. 70)

The contradiction between finance capital and free capitalist competition is the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed nations. Imperialism is not only external to the oppressed

nations; it also exists materially within them as it restricts the ability of national bourgeoisies to engage in capitalist competition.

By focussing on the contradictions between the political alliances of governments the RCP pictures a world revolution conditioned only by external forces and not by the internal laws of uneven capitalistic development.

Lenin's "trusts" are today's multinationals. Imperialism not only means outbreaks of war; it also means that war is an violent economic phenomena experienced hourly by the exploited and oppressed. But, for the RCP, war is not based in economics.

"War, however, is not an economic phenomenon . . ." (AID, p. 150)

Lenin recognized that finance capital exists in opposition to the industrial/merchant capital struggling to expand within the oppressed nations. Lenin saw that the world contradiction of imperialism is between the oppressors and the oppressed. Lotta attempts to reduce Lenin's analysis to a contradiction between isolated empires.

Says Lotta, "(Imperialist) rivalry, Lenin stressed, (sic) ultimately develops into the struggle for a new political division of the world, which subsumes the struggle over economic division." (AID, p. 116.)

AID addresses the political features of imperialism, reversing, as we can see, the relation between politics and economics. Politics springs from and is a continuation of the economic struggle, not the reverse. After trying to trash certain trends in political economy that emphasize the Third World and challenge AID's firstworldism, Lotta states that, despite uneven development, "a conceptual starting point of this work is that the world economy must be treated as an integral whole." (AID, p. 18) In this "whole," the several thousand million exploited masses are the "oppressed periphery."

Should the reader question Lotta's Leninism, Lotta reminds us, "However, as Lenin himself reminded his readers, (Imperialism) was only an outline." (AID, p. 18.)

Lotta obscures the very economic basis upon which imperialism thrives. He obscures the source of the loot over which imperialists fight each other and the masses. It is not the actual extraction of surplus value at the site of labor (and revolution) that concerns Lotta. He is interested only in what proportions super-profits are distributed among imperialist nations. For Lotta the imperialist class is irretrievably fragmented into national units cohering only in

political "blocs."

Lenin recognized that the international monopolists are diametrically opposed to the exploited workers and peasants, as well as to the lesser capitalists who function as the instruments of this exploitation and are restricted in their developmental capabilities by monopolized ownership of the world's means of production.

"Monopoly is exactly the opposite of free competition . . ." (Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. 88.)

Says Lotta, "The competition to which Lenin refers is not mainly within the non-monopoly sector or between monopoly and non-monopoly but among these enormous imperialized blocks of capital." (AID, p. 85)

Note that it is fundamental for Lotta that competition for ownership of surplus-value exist only between imperialists and not between the imperialists and the rest of the world.

REVISING LENIN

It is now necessary to examine Lotta's quotations from Lenin's political economy in the context from which they are lifted.

To substantiate his own arguments Lotta quotes selectively from Lenin's thesis concerning the oppositional relationship of imperialist capital to non-monopoly capital. AID's quotes appear in plain text. Lenin's context is added in bold text.

"Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a very definite and very high stage of it's development when certain of it's fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves all along the line. **Economically, the main thing in this process is the substitution of capitalist monopolies for capitalist free competition. Free competition is the fundamental attribute of capitalism, and of commodity production. Monopoly is exactly the opposite of free competition ... (it) does not abolish the latter, but exists over it and alongside of it, and thereby gives rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, friction and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.**" (AID, p. 25; *Imperialism*, p. 88)

From the get-go Lotta ignores and deletes the dialectical essence of Lenin's analysis. He does not

attempt to refute Lenin; he simply mutilates him. This is his standard procedure throughout AID. Whenever Lenin mentions concentration, monopoly, or ownership, in such a way that might dilute Lotta's "anarchy of competition = inter-imperialist rivalry = World War Three" theory, Lotta simply deletes, glosses over, or excludes the elements of Lenin's analysis that do, in actuality, contradict Lotta.

In the following Lenin quote, with Lotta's deletions restored, we see how Lotta tries to set up an authoritative ground for his denial of the real role of the financial oligarchy and his assertion of the "profoundly national" nature of international capital, which, if true, would preclude heavy collusion between, say, English-speaking and Russian-speaking monopoly groups.

"Capitalism in it's imperialist stage leads right up to the most comprehensive socialization of production; it, so to speak, drags the capitalists, against their will and consciousness, into some sort of a new social order, a transitional one from complete free competition to complete socialization.

Production becomes social, but appropriation remains private. The social means of production remain the private property of a few. The general framework of formally recognized free competition remains, but the yoke of a few monopolists on the rest of the population becomes a hundred times heavier, more burdensome and intolerable. The extent to which monopolist capital has intensified all the contradictions of capitalism is generally known. **It is sufficient to mention the high cost of living and the oppression of the cartels.** This intensification of contradictions constitutes the most powerful driving force of the transitional period of history, **which began from the time of the definite victory of world financial capital.**" (AID, p.26; *Imperialism*, p. 25)

Not only does the above demonstrate that Lenin recognized the existence of an international financial oligarchy that is rooted in global production and transcends national economic boundaries; it contains thoughts, deleted by Lotta, that are antithetical to the political economy of the RCP which typically rests on theories of the productive forces as determinate. These Trotskyite theories ignore the revolutionary roles played by masses composing the oppressed nations. For Lotta the possibilities for revolution are dependent upon "revolutionary communist/ proletarian internationalists" existing inside "declining" imperialist countries. No peasants need

apply.

Says Lotta, "This chapter ... is, of necessity, a defense and extension of Lenin's analysis of imperialism." (AID, p. 26)

MIM calls this revisionism.

Another obfuscatory technique employed by Lotta is the Incredible Reappearing Tautology. Here is an early example from a quantity limited only by the number of pages in the book.

"Independently organized labor processes are dominated by the pursuit of profit. . . The law of value unites these fragments into a social whole." (AID, p. 27)

The pursuit of profit is absolutely the result of the existence of the law of value; as are all labor processes existing within the capitalist mode of production. On the one hand, Lotta seems to be stating the obvious. On the other hand, he manages to artificially separate the "law of value" from "the pursuit of profit," and the "social whole" from "the independently organized labor process." These separations are vital to his theory of "anarchy as the driving force."

Including the ellipses, Lotta's statement actually says: *the workings of the law of value are to be discerned in the workings of the law of value.* Unlike Marx, Lotta does not consider capital to be a social relation that can only exist in relation to the whole of capital. He is compelled to fragment it in order to prove that the imperialists must fight amongst themselves to grab pieces of capital. For Lotta capital is not so much a universal social relation as it is a series of alienable things.

Lotta sets up a falsely weighted dichotomy between organization in the workplace and anarchy in social production by claiming the law of value, ultimately, as a law only applicable to one aspect of the production relations: anarchic competition.

". . . (W)hile the tendential laws of capital force their way through the process of accumulation, including, for instance, the tendential decline in profitability of international capitals, it is the anarchy of a single global reproductive process which drives imperialism into crisis, exactly because accumulation depends in a qualitatively new and greater way on the functioning of interdependent and financial links which are drawn more tightly by finance capital." (AID, p. 110.)

Beneath the verbiage this sentence actually says: *while the tendency of the rate of profit to fall exists, it is the tendency of the rate of profit to fall which drives imperialism into crisis, exactly because*

accumulation depends on a new system in which there is a tendency for the rate of profit to fall.

Along the way the masses disappear from the equation and the economies of the oppressed nations/colonies are doomed to extinction by a "global reproductive process" which is really only the development of productive forces somehow divorced from the producers. In this mess the actual organizing tendency of the rate of profit to fall is tautologically vaporized as a real consideration.

But the worse is yet to come:

"Building on Lenin's systematization of the political economy of the epoch, Bob Avakian has given a more precise meaning to this change in world relations and, in particular, to its significance for the international class struggle. . ." (AID, p. 81.)

"It is the anarchic relations among capitalist producers, and not the mere existence of propertyless proletarians or the class contradiction as such, which drives these producers to exploit the working class on an ever more intensive and extensive scale. Were not capitalist commodity producers separated from each other and yet linked by the operation of the law of value, they would not face the same compulsion to more widely and deeply exploit the proletariat internationally - the class contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat could thus be mitigated. Movement compelled by anarchy is the principal form of motion of the contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation." (AID, p. 51; quoted from Avakian's "Fundamental and Principal Contradictions On A World Scale," 1982.)

Aside from the fact that it is not capitalists, but proletarians, who produce capital and that both classes are defined by their mutual relation to commodity production; the paragraph above, in logical translation, reads:

It is competition between capitalists, and not the class struggle, which forces the capitalists to exploit the working class. Were not capitalists forced to compete, they would not be forced to exploit the working class and there would be no class struggle, i.e. class struggle exists, not because capital alienates labor-power but because the capitalists must fight among themselves over ownership of the stolen surplus value. These squabbles are more important to the world revolution than the class struggle which would go away if the imperialists didn't have to waste so much time exploiting the workers.

LENIN RISES FROM THE GRAVE

"A detailed examination of the errors the author of the 1915 theses commits . . . is impossible, for every line is wrong!" (Lenin, *Nascent Trend*, p. 8.)

"We have analyzed only a fraction of P. Kievsky's arguments. To analyze all of them would require an article five times the length of this one, for there is not a single correct view in the whole of what Kievsky has to say. What is correct - if there are no mistakes in the figures- is the footnote data on banks. All the rest is an impossible tangle of confusion peppered with phrases like "driving a stake into the quivering body", "we shall not only judge the conquering heroes, but condemn them to death and elimination," "the new world will be born in agonizing convulsions," . . . These phrases are, at one and the same time, the cover and expression of two things: first, their underlying "idea" is imperialist Economism, which is just as ugly a caricature of Marxism, and just as complete a misinterpretation of the relationship between socialism and democracy, as was the late and unlamented Economism of 1894-1902." (Lenin, *Nascent Trend*, p. 67.)

Nor is *Capital* sacred. The following passage, quoted in AID, is from *Capital* Volume One, the chapter entitled "Division Of Labor And Manufacture." What Lotta leaves out is in bold.

"The different spheres of production, it is true, constantly tend to an equilibrium: for, on the one hand, while each producer of a commodity is bound to produce a use-value, to satisfy a particular social want, and while the extent of these wants differ quantitatively, still there exists an inner relation which settles their proportions into a regular system, and that system one of spontaneous growth: and, on the other hand, the law of value of commodities ultimately determines how much of it's disposable working time society can expend on each particular class of commodities. But this constant tendency to equilibrium, of the various spheres of production, is exercised, only in the shape of a reaction against the constant upsetting of this equilibrium. The a priori system on which the division of labor, within the workshop, is regularly carried out, becomes in the division of labor within the society, an a posteriori, nature imposed necessity, controlling the lawless caprice of the producers, and perceptible in the barometrical fluctuations of the market prices." (AID, p. 29; *Capital*, Vol 1, p. 336)

Lotta is trying to prove that competition is "an internecine battle ... (and is not) comprehensible on

the basis of some immanent equilibrium." (AID, p. 29) So he singles out one aspect in the operation of the law of value in order to prove that there is no "immanent equilibrium" in the motion of capital and he tosses us a quote from a passage which, in it's totality, demonstrates that there does exist an immanent equilibrium in the motion of capital. (1)

To paraphrase Mao: there is no balance without imbalance.

But the RCP gives us a theory of imbalance without balance, anarchy without organization, monopoly without free competition, rival nation-bloc imperialists without binding international imperialist class interests, and, finally, since the basis for revolutionary nationalist class struggle is liquidated: revolution without the Third World. (2)

WHERE DID THE 80'S GO?

"The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it in practice fulfills its obligations towards its class and the toiling masses. Frankly admitting a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analyzing the circumstances which gave rise to it, and thoroughly discussing the means of correcting it - that is the earmark of a serious party; that is the way it should perform its duties, that is the way it should educate and train the class, and then the masses." (Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, p. 50-51)

In the "RW" and "Revolution," since 1989, Avakian & Co. have indicated that the principal contradiction, as they defined it in *America In Decline* may have "shifted," although they continue to "uphold" the political economy of AID. Such waffling is not surprising coming from the author of "Conquer The World ..." who casually dismissed Lenin's incredibly clear warnings regarding imperialist economism as "bourgeois logic" and "opportunism!" ("CTW," p. 11)

The authors of AID and the leadership of the RCP have constructed a superficial economist analysis of world political economy to conform to their *a priori* agenda for making revolution in an imperialist country. "Working from the revolution back" they forgot that the revolution is a Third World revolution that will surround and annihilate imperialism one country at a time if need be. Did they learn from this mistake?

"An important ideological question is involved here. The majority in this society, let alone world-

wide, have no interest in this decadent, moribund imperialist system. This certainly applies to the overwhelming number of workers in this country . . . We have no need for some 'lonely voice in the wilderness' mentality, or some ultimately pessimistic, Bundist (nationalist) lines." ("Charting the Uncharted Course," RCP, USA, April 3, 1981)

"When you have a period when things begin getting sharper, when there is more turmoil, when people's ears are beginning to tune themselves more toward the music that we sing, then there is more of a role for being out there on the streets and in sort of a spirit of prophets ... there's no other way to describe it." (Avakian, "Revolution," Fall/Winter, 1989)

The really weird thing about all of this is that if modern capital was "profoundly national," then it would still make sense to support revolutionary national liberation struggles.

WHERE ARE THE 90S GOING?

The following is a summary of an article appearing in *The Economist* (May 30, 1992, p. 63):

"In June Motorola [based in Chicago] will break ground for a new \$120m [semi-conductor] factory in Tianjin, a port city near Beijing. ... Trying to match global quality and productivity standards in China will not be easy. But Motorola is ... ever willing to take risks. The reason is simple: Asia is where markets for the company's products will grow fastest for years to come. ... Last year Motorola had sales of \$11.3 billion; of that, 49% was outside the United States ... The company now has one marketing headquarters, seven manufacturing plants and 11 sales offices scattered through ten Asian countries ... The turning point came in 1987 when Motorola formed an alliance with Toshiba ... The chip business is so capital-intensive—a new chip factory can easily cost \$1 billion—that almost nobody can afford to go it alone ... (F)inance and production are directed from the centre [Chicago]. Recruitment, marketing and operations are controlled locally. Mr. Tam runs the Hong Kong chip factory as he thinks best, but a third of its output is exported to America for sale by Motorola's sales force there, and 20% to Europe."

The above description of collusion and combination between monopoly-groups is the main motion of global finance capital at the moment. Bankruptcies and mergers are happening worldwide. Just look at IBM/Apple, the torrent of bank mergers in the summer of 1991, the rush into the

Third World by the Big Three automakers, the immolation of large units of fictitious (and real) capital controlled by Olympia & York, Robert Maxwell, the ex-Soviet monopoly entities as well as the unification of Germany and the EEC into a formidable imperialist dragon—to name but a few examples.

After decades of exporting capital into the Third World (and reaping unfathomable profits on interest alone) the multi-national industrial, marketing and financial corporations are seizing direct control of the newly-developed industrial infrastructures and the worker/consumer markets that increasingly offer vast urban sites for surplus-value production and realization. At the same time the contradiction between "town and country" is becoming even more acute as agricultural monopolists dispossess peasants from their land and allow these surplus-populations to enter into wage-labor only sporadically—if at all.

In other words, finance capital seems to have moved from concentrating its activities in the circuit of money (investment) capital (through which it owned but did not directly run developing industries) into the circuit of productive capital (where they try to cut out the comprador middle-men) and, as before, maintain tight control over the movement of the commodity capital circuit (sales).

Again—as Lenin saw, "... the division of the world between two powerful trusts does not remove the possibility of redivision, if the relation of forces changes as a result of uneven development, war, bankruptcy, etc." (Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. 70)

It would not surprise MIM if Motorola eventually moved its corporate headquarters from Chicago to Hong Kong or Singapore. Although the Chicago headquarters is still directing the global allocation of its exchangeable products into the still profitable imperialist consumer-societies, Motorola has obviously recognized that the increasing volume of production and sales and trade in the unevenly-developing "Pacific Rim" *can alleviate, for a time, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall and allow it to escape the non-productive and stagnant waters of a parasitical Amerika where it can no longer even technically exploit the majority of industrial (or "service") workers.*

This is a profoundly inter nationalist perspective no longer "rooted" in a national formation—but de-centralizing and expanding away from it to concentrate on higher levels. Nor is this evidence of anarchic movement as principal. In fact, *it is the anarchy of production* that compels the imperial-

ists to roam the planet in search of exploitable labor and value-heavy markets and this demonstrates just how profoundly international finance capital has become as it *re-organizes* to clamp down even more on the oppressed countries. This does not demonstrate that finance capital remains locked into national formations or that imperialist competition is always principally antagonistic: *but the unity of opposites.*

So even if we were to accept Lotta's "anarchy" premise—we see how the conclusions he derives do not accord with reality. However, MIM chooses not to elevate Engel's anarchy/organization contradiction to such fallaciously deterministic heights. MIM continues to look to the class struggle as key.

In coming to an understanding of patriarchal imperialism it is not enough to simply state, as the RCP does in much of its recent literature, that the imperialists found some "maneuvering room" and "temporarily avoided" nuclear holocaust. *Imperialism is war.*

Notes:

1. Serious students of the Marxist science are recommended to struggle with the chapter "Simple Reproduction" in Marx's *Capital*, Volume 2 in which social overproduction of commodities is shown to be inherent in reproduction of constant and fixed capital (as opposed only to the production of surplus value itself) and in which the "anarchy" of overproduction—which is also one aspect of "competition"—is described as a balancing mechanism to the normal depreciation of fixed capitals. As the aggregate means of production will normally increase and decrease in value over a period of time, "[T]his can be remedied only by a continuous relative overproduction. ... This sort of over-production is tantamount to control by society over the material means of its own reproduction. But within capitalist society it is an element of anarchy. ... Such surplus is not an evil in itself, but an advantage; however it is an evil under capitalist production." (Marx, *Capital*, Volume 2, pp. 472-473)

Lotta fails to ground his anarchy thesis in the economic spheres in which it actually does operate. He deals only with its outer political form without touching upon the real underlying economic contradictions within capitalist reproduction and production in which anarchy is also a socially organizing form of motion, i.e., Engel's "definite plan of an invading socialist society." (SUS, p. 66)

Communists recognize, however, that this "invasion" can only be developed by conscious socialist planning. Revisionists sit back and wait for the "invasion" to "develop the productive forces" and do organizational work in the base that can only be done after seizing power in the superstructure—when anarchy is consciously turned into its opposite.

2. The opportunist "three worlds" theory simply reduces the four fundamental contradictions of our time into just one: the one among the various imperialist states and monopoly groups. . . . By erasing the fundamental content of this contradiction - the opposition of the oppressed peoples and nations of the world to the imperialism which exploits them, and against internal reactionaries on whom it relies for its domination - . . . (the Chinese revisionists) reduce it to the contradiction between the two superpowers and their respective

A SPIRAL TRAJECTORY: THE FAILURE AND SUCCESS OF COMMUNIST DEVELOPMENT

military and economic blocs, subordinating the proletariat and the people to this inter-imperialist contradiction . . . (This) intentionally denies the role of the class struggle as the motive force of history. It divides the world in a mechanical and one-sided way and with an economist criterion . . . " (*Joint Declaration of Marxist-Leninist Parties of Latin America*), September, 1978, p. 21-22)

Sources Quoted:

Engels, F., *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, International Publishers, New York, 1935.

Marx, K., *Capital*, vols I, 2 & 3, International Publishers, New York, 1967.

Marx, K., *Wage Labour and Capital*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1978.

Communist Party Of China, *The Polemic On The General Line Of The International Communist Movement*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965.

Avakian, B., "Conquer The World ...", RCP Publications, Chicago, 1981.

Lotta, R., *America In Decline*, Banner Press, Chicago, 1984.

Lenin, V., "Left-Wing" Communism, *An Infantile Disorder*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1975.

Lenin, V., *The Nascent Trend Of Imperialist Economism*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969.

Lenin, V., *Imperialism, The Highest Stage Of Capitalism*, A Popular Outline, International Publishers, New York, 1985.

Communist Party of Columbia (Marxist-Leninist), Marxist-Leninist Communist Party Of Ecuador, Revolutionary Communist Party Of Chile, Red Flag Party Of Venezuela, *Joint Declaration Of Marxist-Leninist Parties Of Latin America*, RCP Publications, Chicago, 1979.

RCP, "Charting The Uncharted Course," April 3, 1981, USA

Avakian, "Revolution," Fall/Winter 1989.

The Economist 5/30/92.

13. Ibid, p. 154.
14. Ibid, p. 16.
15. Jervis Anderson, *A Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972. p. 149.
16. Philip Foner and Ronald Lewis, *Black Workers: A Documentary History from Colonial Times to the Present*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989. p. 32.

Democracy: Can't We Do Better Than That?

by Bob Avakian
Banner Press: Chicago, 1986

Reviewed by MC12
February, 1994

INTRODUCTION

"It is a law of Marxism that socialism can be attained only via the stage of democracy."

—Mao Zedong, "On Coalition Government." Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 233.

"This is the historic epoch in which world capitalism and imperialism are going down to their doom and world socialism and people's democracy are marching to victory."

—Mao Zedong, "The Present Situation and Our Tasks." Selected Works, Vol IV, p. 173.

There is nothing good that is original in this book by the head of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP), as far as a Marxist interpretation of democracy. Avakian correctly asserts that Democracy is always class-specific and contingent in class society. The idea of political equality without economic and social equality is an idealist dream, or, more frequently, a malicious lie. So much was already known by Marx and Engels, not to mention Lenin, Stalin, Mao and so on.

Thus we read that Plato thought it was fine to hold slaves, that John Stuart Mill argued for state repression of revolutionaries, that property rights were considered central to the founders of democracy, etc. This is all important for Marxists to understand. We should never be satisfied by the claims of those who say they want a socialism that "realizes" democracy instead of just promising it, or those who say Amerika would not be oppressive if only it

"lived up" to its promise of democracy.

The question at hand, however is different. First, what is the role of democratic struggles in the socialist revolution; and second, what is the role of democracy under socialism and communism? Avakian uses the Marxist analysis that democracy will be unnecessary in classless society in order to take away from the crucial importance of democratic struggles in the socialist revolution, especially struggles for national self-determination, as well as popular struggles under socialism on the way to communism.

MIM maintains that bourgeois democracy is a particular political form through in which one or several classes of rulers exert their control over those whose labor provides the wealth of the society. Any oppressed person who wants to be president is free to raise a billion dollars and run, provided she or he doesn't propose anything illegal, such as abolishing property, patriarchy or privilege. That's bourgeois democracy — the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie — and it is in need of destruction, not perfection.

Socialist democracy, on the other hand, is the temporary political system through which the formerly oppressed classes exert control over their former exploiters, even as they encourage the conversion of all those who can be convinced or coerced to come over to the side of the people, to the side of socialism and communism. And it is how the socialist masses propel society forward toward communism.

Socialist democracy, however, is still a class system — part of the dictatorship of the proletariat — and not a system of complete equality and openness to all. The former exploiters lose some of their privileges and "rights" during this period, especially their right to use property to exploit others, and their right to buy political influence greater than their numerical strength, but also, in extreme cases, their basic democratic rights period.

Complete freedom, complete equality, the end of oppression and coercion — all that will be strived for under communism, when democracy itself will no longer be necessary to mediate the relationships between classes, because classes themselves, along with national and gender inequality, will no longer exist. In a literal sense that will mean the realization of "true democracy" — rule by the people — but it will not make sense to call it democracy because it will mean so much more than that historically-specific term was ever meant to imply.

Avakian does take on some more recent mani-

festations of bourgeois ideology on the question of democracy, particularly social-democratic apologists for capitalism and Soviet revisionists. In some of these passages, Avakian's description is useful.

But he didn't write a whole book to do that. No, Avakian's purpose in *Democracy* is rather to make several very specific points relevant to the international communist movement and Maoism in particular in the late 1980s.

First, Avakian wants to distance Maoism from national liberation movements as an essential, decisive component of socialist revolution in the era of imperialism. He does this by stressing the conceptual relationship of national liberation to bourgeois democracy on the one hand and neglecting the role of national liberation struggle in the socialist revolution on the other.

Second, and in a very related point, Avakian wants to criticize the United Front (U.F.) policy led by Stalin and the Comintern before and during World War II. This is partly because of the implications of the U.F. for current national liberation struggles — the necessity of strategic unity between communists and such non-proletarian sectors as the progressive national bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations — and partly because he wants to criticize the concept of socialism in one country.

Third, in direct contradiction to Mao and all materialist dialectics, Avakian wants to say that conditions external to a particular country are fundamentally decisive to its development, rather than internal conditions and movements.

These three characteristics of the book are subtly written as a subtext, and have to be drawn out by careful readers of RCP-Avakian-thought, who have learned to watch him as he fakes left and runs right, as in this case, or vice versa.

At the root of all three of these characteristics — and the reason MIM asserts the comparison between Avakian and Leon Trotsky — is an oppressor-nation chauvinism, which is always at the root of Trotskyism. The thrust of all three is that revolution in the imperialist countries is at the center of world revolution, that it is the most important, decisive element in the course of socialism in the USSR, China and other countries. This ideology is poison to the oppressed majority of the world, and music to the ears of First-World chauvinists.

This error — or deception — on Avakian's part, from the mouth of a (sometime) self-proclaimed Maoist, underscores the vast international impor-

tance of MIM's analysis of the labor aristocracies of the imperialist countries as opposed to revolution under current conditions, and the urgent necessity of struggling over this issue among all communists, especially those in the imperialist world.

The fourth underlying point Avakian makes, in his criticism of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China (1966-1976), and in his proscription for future revolutions, is that struggle against capitalism within the communist party in power should be primarily directed and led by the party and state rather than by the masses themselves.

By this Avakian means that in the relationship between socialist democracy and proletarian dictatorship, it is the job of proletarian dictatorship (the state led by the party) to conduct the struggle against revisionism — to restrict the rights of oppressors and would-be oppressors — and the job of socialist democracy (mass participation) to contribute to the construction of communism. In this, as we will describe below, Avakian learns the wrong lesson from the GPCR, the failure of which he takes as a call for more repression under socialism.

AVAKIAN AGAINST NATIONAL LIBERATION (AGAINST LENIN)

National self-determination at the turn of the century belonged to the sphere of bourgeois democracy. Nevertheless, in the era of imperialism, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party recognized that the democratic demand for self-determination was not only an essential step in the process of anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle for socialism, it was also an important means of uniting the oppressed peoples of different nations, especially those of the oppressed and oppressor nations, such as Russia and the nations it oppressed under Tsarist rule. Only by explicitly guaranteeing the right of nations to self-determination — embodied in the right to secede at will — will it be possible to forge trusting alliances between the workers of different nations as they struggle against imperialism.

(In the case of Amerika, this means oppressed-nation masses will only come to trust the masses of the oppressor nation after a period of receivership in which the liberated oppressed nations rule the former Euro-American oppressor nation until its masses are sufficiently transformed to be allowed back into the cooperating human race.)

The struggle for national self-determination is a democratic demand. It belongs to the era of nations, which is the era of bourgeois democracy.

When successful, however — when it is led and won by communist forces — it leads to the period of New Democracy and the establishment of socialist democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat — toward socialism and communism. When Avakian says democracy is not only mythical but against the interests of the oppressed, he negates a crucial stage in the revolutionary struggle.

Avakian complains that the masses have naive views about democracy, that it means "economic opportunity" or "the rights of man." And he says:

"While such views of democracy and freedom serve to foster and reinforce the inclinations and prejudices of these privileged strata, they also exert considerable influence among the dispossessed in society — both because of the prevailing social 'atmosphere' and values and because of massive promotion of these ideas through media, the educational system, and other means — they serve to channel and contain outrage and outbursts against oppression.... In reality and in essence, democracy, in whatever form, means democracy only in the ranks of the ruling class (or classes) in society." (p. 5)

Now read Lenin, from 1916:

"It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy." (1)

So, contrary to Avakian-thought, Lenin argued that the struggle for democratic rights was also an important element in the development of socialist revolution, even if it encountered failures along the way. Lenin addressed such views as Avakian's directly when he argued that it was wrong to consider the possibility of self-determination and other democratic rights "illusory," and thus not worthy of struggle:

"This is because not only the right of nations to self-determination, but all the fundamental demands of political democracy are only partially 'practicable' under imperialism, and then in a distorted form and by way of exception.... The demand for the immediate liberation of the colonies that is put forward by

all revolutionary Social-Democrats [what they called communists] is also 'impracticable' under capitalism without a series of revolutions. But from this it does not by any means follow that Social-Democracy should reject the immediate and most determined struggle for all those demands — such a rejection would only play into the hands of the bourgeoisie and reaction — but, on the contrary, it follows that these demands must be formulated and put through in a revolutionary and not a reformist manner, going beyond the bounds of bourgeois legality, breaking them down, going beyond speeches in parliament and verbal protests, and drawing the masses into decisive action, extending and intensifying the struggle for every fundamental democratic demand up to a direct proletarian onslaught on the bourgeoisie, i.e., up to the socialist revolution that expropriates the bourgeoisie. The socialist revolution may flare up not only through some big strike, street demonstration or hunger riot or a military insurrection or colonial revolt, but also as a result of a political crisis such as the Dreyfus case or the Zbern incident, or in connection with a referendum on the secession of an oppressed nation, etc." (2)

Avakian wants to argue that imperialism is the highest stage of democracy, that it represents the culmination of the system started into action by Plato, picked up by the French Revolution, etc. So he rejects Lenin's argument that imperialism negates democracy by denying the "rights" it sets out to greater and greater numbers of people. He denies the value of the lessons learned and the gains won in the revolutionary struggle for such democratic rights as self-determination. So Avakian denies a qualitative difference between Nazi German fascism and Amerikan bourgeois democratic rule, and he rejects the struggle for democratic rights among the oppressed as a component of the revolution.

Avakian is against Lenin on this point, so he fakes left — in preparation for running right. He says:

"It is also true that, in making the flat statement that imperialism represents the negation of democracy — and that democracy corresponds to free competition while political reaction corresponds to monopoly — Lenin went overboard and was guilty of some exaggeration and one-sidedness." (p.163)

Then Avakian turns the question into one of the necessity of armed struggle, which of course

Lenin supported.

For Avakian on national liberation:

"From all this [discussion of Thomas Jefferson & Co.] it can be seen that the democratic principle of the equality of nations and the right of nations to self-determination, while it must be upheld and fought for today in opposition to the domination of oppressed nations under imperialism, nevertheless is historically delimited and in the final analysis is not sufficient even to illuminate the way to the abolition of national inequality and oppression. It falls far short of pointing to a world in which humanity is no longer marked by division into nations as well as classes." (p. 63, emphasis added.)

In contrast, Lenin argued that not only did national liberation illuminate the way toward socialism, it was an absolutely essential element. Lenin said:

"In the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through a transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of nations only through a transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations, i.e., their freedom to secede." (3)

Avakian's struggle against revolutionary nationalism is relentless. He sees national liberation as a part of democracy which must be left behind — and not just in the future: he faults the Black Panther Party for their "ultimate failure to rupture with the whole framework of democracy." (p. 88) National liberation for the Black nation, of course, is part of the "whole framework of democracy."

For Avakian, there have been "deviations within the Marxist movement" that included not only social democracy in the imperialist countries, but also:

"toward nationalism (as well as some other manifestations of bourgeois democratic tendencies) in the oppressed nations (though, again, the latter does have the virtue of often assuming a revolutionary expression, even if not a fully Marxist-Leninist one)." (p. 260)

In opposition to this, Lenin, Stalin and Mao all recognized that revolutionary national liberation struggle does not merely "often assum[e] a revolu-

tionary expression" — in the era of imperialism there is simply no socialist revolution that does not include this "bourgeois-democratic" demand. (MIM also notes that on the same page Avakian ominously refers to the development of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement — the RCP's international front — as an "extremely important, if still beginning [in 1986], step, including in terms of making such a rupture" against the nationalist deviation within Marxism.)

In imperialist oppressor nations such as Euro-Amerika, the struggle for democratic rights on the part of the labor aristocracy or other privileged groups does indeed have negative consequences for the oppressed of the world. J. Sakai calls this the dialectic of democracy and oppression in Amerika (4). For this reason MIM does not agitate for the democratic demands of the oppressor nation labor aristocracies, even as we continue to uphold the essential need for democratic struggle — especially national liberation struggle — among the truly oppressed as a stage in socialist revolution.

AVAKIAN AGAINST THE UNITED FRONT AND NEW DEMOCRACY (AGAINST STALIN)

Avakian correctly criticizes those theories that lump the Stalin-led USSR with Nazi Germany into the category "totalitarianism," in the process denying the class-specific character of each political system. But his real purpose in the discussion is to say that Nazi Germany was not qualitatively different from other imperialist countries at the time, and thus the United Front was a wrong-headed policy:

"Throughout this period Germany was and remained nothing other than a bourgeois imperialist state, though it ruled at home not in the 'classical' form of bourgeois democracy but through a fascist — an openly terroristic — form of bourgeois dictatorship." (p. 173)

Maybe Avakian considers Poland and Czechoslovakia, not to mention the USSR or France, to be Germany's "home," but MIM does not!

Nazi Germany not only unleashed a new level of terror and repression within its borders, but expanded that system across Europe, up to and into the Soviet Union. But there is no room for such trivialities in Avakian's analysis, which is bent on showing the worthlessness of democratic right, and thus wants to paper over any difference between imperialists — who all represent the height of democratic

oppression.

MIM knows it is important to point out the similarities between fascism and bourgeois democracy in the imperialist countries, especially in their conquest of oppressed nations, the complicity of their labor aristocracies, and in their expansionist aggression. In fact, as MIM repeatedly points out, the United States and Germany colluded during World War II, as Amerika was willing to let parts of Europe fall to fascism in exchange for a Nazi attack on the socialist USSR.

Nevertheless, MIM does not make the mistake of saying there is no significant difference between the two systems either. Nor does MIM deny the critical importance of the Soviet Union's position in the world revolutionary movement at that time in history, something Avakian ignores.

On the subject of New Democracy, Avakian says as much by what he doesn't say as by what he does: he devotes less than three pages out of 269 to the concept. In those three pages, he grudgingly accepts that in the Third World, the "immediate transformations" that must be carried out:

"conform, as a general rule, to what can broadly be defined as democratic tasks: the winning of genuine national liberation and the elimination of various forms or vestiges of precapitalist economic relations and their reflection in the superstructure."

When he says things "as a general rule" or "broadly defined," look out! He's after these ideas, leaving the extent of the implied exceptions purposefully undefined, even though he calls new democracy a "decisive component" of world revolution. MIM, on the other hand, unequivocally states that New Democracy is absolutely essential in all cases for the transition to socialism in the oppressed nations, and that national liberation in the oppressed nations is absolutely essential in all cases for the transition to socialism.

At the same time, MIM believes that more developed countries will have shorter periods of new democracy, as one of the critical tasks of the period is to gradually eliminate precapitalist economic arrangements and gradually win over some members of the progressive national bourgeoisie and peasantry to the socialist consciousness.

Avakian's revisionism on New Democracy is very related to the United Front. Both involve the strategic necessity of enlisting the efforts of the national bourgeoisie and other middle elements in

the struggle against imperialism — efforts that are crucial to the victory of national liberation and the transition to socialism. Both avoid the ultraleft error of isolating middle forces that can be won over to socialism. Here again, Avakian fakes left.

Once he has supposedly established that Nazi Germany was no different from any other imperialist country, and without any reference to the international situation, including the threat to the Soviet Union, he attacks the United Front thus out of context. The Comintern called on workers in the imperialist countries to support their countries against fascism, prompting Avakian to declare:

"Not only was the Leninist line on the nation in the imperialist era openly reversed — it was stated that the communists should be the best representatives of the nation, even of the imperialist nations, whereas Lenin had insisted that the statement in the Communist Manifesto that the workers have no fatherland applied precisely to the imperialist countries — but, despite talk about finding ways to make the transition to the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, it was actually argued, 'Now the working masses in a number of capitalist countries are faced with the necessity of making a definite choice, and of making it today, not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism.'" (p. 258, with quote from Georgi Dimitrov.)

Avakian is upset that:

"It was not emphasized that bourgeois-democratic rule means bourgeois dictatorship, and fascism was presented as a dictatorship only of the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie — rather than as the dictatorship of the bourgeois class as such — in open terroristic form."

In other words, Avakian objects to the application of materialist science to the existing circumstances of World War II, instead preferring abstract or out-of-context criticism — idealist criticism.

What the idealist criticism boils down to, whether advanced by open Trotskyists or Avakian crypto-Trotskyism, is that revolution in the imperialist countries was stalled by the decision to support the war against fascism. In other words, that the political decisions of foreign leaders were decisive in determining the course of events internal to the imperialist countries — the blame-it-on-Stalin school of explaining why no labor aristocracy has ever pro-

duced a revolution. (Further, any local decision to follow the advice of foreign leaders does not place responsibility for the outcome of that advice on the foreign leaders; revolution can not be exported or imported, as Mao said.)

Aside from political opportunism and idealism, this approach reflects a basic misunderstanding or distortion of materialist dialectics. Therefore, in educating open-minded revolutionaries to understand and oppose this view, we go back to dialectics: to Trotskyism, socialism in one country, and the determination of internal forces.

AVAKIAN AGAINST THE DETERMINATION OF INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS (AGAINST MAO)

Let us begin by examining Mao's central thesis on this question. In "On Contradiction," Mao wrote:

"Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary causes. Thus materialist dialectics effectively combats the theory of external causes, or of an external motive force, advanced by metaphysical mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism. ... Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions of society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new [which includes the gender contradiction —MC12]; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new. Does materialist dialectics exclude external causes? Not at all. It holds that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes. In a suitable temperature an egg changes into a chicken, but no temperature can change a stone into a chicken, because each has a different basis."(5)

This scientific truth has been most sorely tested by the revisionist claims that it is impossible to develop socialism in one country; these claims were advanced by Trotsky, and are now continued by Avakian, among many others. Maoists do not take this principle as an abstract matter of dogma or religious adherence to holy scripture. Avakian's problem is not simply that he disagrees with the letter of

Maoism; his theory is wrong.

Under imperialism, and indeed for many years before the highest stage of capitalism, the whole world was interconnected economically, militarily and politically — to different degrees. Nevertheless, the most profound changes in any particular society were always principally the product of internal developments.

Thus, even when colonialism imposed severe conditions upon oppressed nations, the effects of colonialism were always filtered through local conditions, and the colonists were constrained by the characteristics of the society under attack.

For example, in North America, where many different small indigenous nations existed before European conquest, and they were mostly not politically centralized, the colonists ended up destroying or dispossessing the First Nations little by little and in different ways, in the process killing or dispossessing almost all of them. This in turn shaped the development of the settler society.

In contrast, in those areas of South America where there were developed, centralized societies prior to the European conquest, the colonists sought to take over and then undermine existing hierarchies. This resulted in a less complete genocide and displacement in these areas, and led to the hierarchical structure of settlers oppressing indigenous peoples, living much closer together for much longer than in North America. Thus, even in the case of colonialism, where one could make the best case for the decisiveness of external forces, we see that internal conditions play a decisive role in shaping the outcome of these societies.

Mao wrote:

"In the era of capitalism, and especially in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the interaction and mutual impact of different countries in the political, economic and cultural spheres are extremely great. The October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history as well as in Russian history. It exerted influence on internal changes in the other countries in the world and, similarly and in a particularly profound way, on internal changes in China. These changes, however, were effected through the inner laws of development of these countries, China included."(6)

This is a liberating, empowering theory, because it makes it clear that, as Mao said, that "it

can be seen that to lead the revolution to victory, a political party must depend on the correctness of its own political line and the solidity of its own organization."(7)

In other words: no blaming Stalin if the revolution in your country doesn't work out. This is liberating because it recognizes that the destiny of a people is in its own hands. This was so even in the Warsaw ghetto, in which Jews were imprisoned by Nazi Germany during World War II, totally surrounded, walled in and trapped by the Nazi army. There, once they saw the extermination Hitler had in mind for them, the Jews waged a heroic uprising, and fought to the last person. Even there, where external conditions left them with only two options — to die lying down or to die fighting on their feet — they determined their own destiny, and in so doing set an example for all oppressed people.

After praising the accomplishments of the GPCR, which "brought into being new, indeed unprecedented, transformations in the economic relations and the political and ideological superstructure of society," Avakian adds:

"At the same time, it is important to stress that the struggle for communism is, and must be, an international struggle, and that the class struggle within a particular country, even a socialist country, is, and must be, subordinate to the overall world revolutionary struggle to achieve dictatorship of the proletariat and carry through the transition to communism. Here my purpose is not so much to repeat the criticism I have previously made that the Cultural Revolution, while it indeed represented the highest pinnacle yet reached by the international proletariat, was still treated, even by Mao, a bit too much as a thing unto itself and 'too much apart from the whole, worldwide struggle ...' and 'even though support was extended to revolutionary struggles elsewhere and it was stressed that the final victory of a socialist country requires the victory of the world proletarian revolution, it was not firmly enough grasped and popularized that the socialist transformation of any particular country can only be a subordinate part of the overall proletarian revolution.' But what must be emphasized here is that the overcoming of the social inequalities characterizing the old order — the eventual elimination of bourgeois right in the broadest sense — must be approached, above all, on the world level in order to carry through the transition to communism."(p. 225, quoting himself.)

Left unsaid here is what it means, practically, to subordinate the struggle in one country to the world proletarian revolution, in the case of the GPCR. Lenin, for example, said:

"internationalism ... means waging a revolutionary struggle against [one's own] government and overthrowing it, and being ready to make the greatest national sacrifices (even down to a Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty), if it should benefit the development of the world worker's revolution."(8)

In Lenin's case, the principle is materialist, not idealist, and the example is concrete. What is the sacrifice in the case of the Brest-Litovsk treaty (in which Bolshevik Russia conceded territory in order to get itself out of World War I) to which Lenin is referring? He explained in 1918, that the peace deal increased the conflict between imperialists, and he added:

"Here is something that has decisive significance.... For, until the world socialist revolution breaks out, until it embraces several countries and is strong enough to overcome international imperialism, it is the direct duty of the socialists who have conquered in one country (especially a backward one) not to accept battle against the giants of imperialism. Their duty is to try to avoid battle, to wait until the conflicts between the imperialists weaken them even more, and bring the revolution in other countries even nearer."(9)

Thus, Lenin, for one, described as a sacrifice the concession of conflict with imperialism in order to advance socialism in one country! Left to Avakian is the task of explaining how the Cultural Revolution went against this principle of internationalism.

While Mao, Stalin and Lenin understood that the world situation set conditions for the decisive internal developments within socialist countries, Avakian in Democracy sees the priority reversed. He notes that socialism develops unevenly, in a few countries at a time, and says:

"So, especially viewed in light of all this, it becomes clear that not only does the bourgeoisie still retain the upper hand in the world as a whole — and is likely to for some time — but this interpenetrates with, and indeed sets the overall framework and foundation for, the struggle to carry forward the

revolutionization of society in any particular socialist country." (p. 226-7. emphasis added.)

Thus, Avakian converts Mao's "external condition" into an external "foundation" which determines the course of internal events. He futilely tries to take destiny out of the hands of the revolutionary masses of socialist countries.

Avakian explains this crucial revision more clearly a few pages later, when he says "the contradictions and struggles within the particular socialist country intertwine with and are ultimately determined by the contradictions and struggles on a world scale." (p. 231. emphasis added.)

In general, these ideas belong to the theory of Trotskyism, which holds that socialism is impossible in Third World countries before the imperialist countries have had revolutions. And in particular, Avakian here belongs to the economist school of thought that puts the development of productive forces over the development of production relations in the transition to socialism and communism.

Avakian says that:

"a decisive point which the historical experience of the socialist transition so far has underscored is that this transition cannot be approached, fundamentally, within the particular countries, taken by themselves, but must be approached, above all, as a worldwide process...."

And the "basis does exist for carrying through this worldwide, and world-historic struggle, exactly because of the previous development of human society...." So, again, it is development in the advanced industrialized countries that make it possible to achieve socialism in the Third World.

As a corollary to that is the RCP thesis, wrong at the time and now decisively proven wrong, that the conflict between Amerika and the social-imperialist USSR was the principal contradiction on a world scale. Avakian quotes himself on that point again in this book (from *A Horrible End Or An End to the Horror?*):

"a deadly serious struggle is going on between these two trends which will have everything to do with determining the direction of human society, and indeed the destiny of humanity itself." (p. 267)

Again, by this non-materialist theory, the people of the oppressed nations will not decide their

own fate.

AVAKIAN AGAINST PROLETARIAN DEMOCRACY (AGAINST COMMUNISM)

Communists have learned a lot about how to bring about socialist and communist society, primarily from the experience of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, as well as others. In particular, we have learned that when a communist party comes to power after a military struggle, it cannot simply institute a classless society (communism) or even a society without private exploitation of labor or ownership of the means of production (socialism). Instead, the protracted revolutionary struggle continues, and goes through many stages, some of which have been identified and developed into useful models.

As already discussed, the period of new democracy is a transitional period before socialism, in which progressive capitalists — those who are willing to contribute to socialism even though it will mean the end of themselves as a class — are included in a democratic process, under the leadership of the working classes. After that transitional period, the dictatorship of the proletariat has replaced the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie that existed under capitalism, and socialist construction begins in earnest.

Even under socialism, classes still exist, and therefore socialist democracy represents proletarian dictatorship: the former bourgeoisie — which still exists and still poses a threat to socialism either through its own organic power or through its connections with international capitalism — finds some of its bourgeois-democratic rights restricted. No longer can the bourgeois class use its property to extract surplus value from workers and peasants; no longer can it use its wealth to buy political power. At the same time, the working classes have greatly-increased democratic rights.

And under conditions in which the leading communist party directs economic planning and management, the party has a great potential power, including the power to exploit labor for a profit, in the process developing within itself a new bourgeois class. In the case of the USSR, this new class developed over a long period, and finally seized power after Stalin's death. In China, where Mao and the communist leadership had learned lessons from the USSR and China, the people and the party launched a vast popular struggle against the new bourgeois class within the party, the GPCR. Despite

10 years of acute struggle, the new bourgeoisie still won the battle and seized power in 1976.

Avakian's book raises the question: what do we learn from the USSR and the GPCR for future struggles? Avakian's conclusion is mostly implicit and we will attempt to draw it out. Avakian argues that democracy has only a minimal role to play in the advanced struggles of a cultural revolution, that proletarian dictatorship — exercised primarily by the party and the state — plays the decisive role in the acrimonious development from socialism to communism. MIM does not deny the crucial role of the party and the state in this struggle, but we believe Avakian sets up a false dialectic — that the dictatorship exercised by the party has a democratic form at this stage of the struggle. The masses participate in the party and the state democratically, and together the masses, the state and the party exercise dictatorship over the enemies of socialism.

We know, although Avakian tries to conceal, that democracy under socialism is fundamentally different from democracy under capitalism, that because of this difference it is not something that must be limited beyond the concrete restrictions placed on the bourgeoisie. In short, democracy under socialism has lost its bourgeois character.

When the masses struggle against new or old bourgeois forces under socialism, they can be increasing the power of the proletarian dictatorship over those bourgeois forces, even as they increase socialist democracy. The more the dictatorship wins victories over the enemies of socialism, the more socialist democracy the masses can enjoy.

Avakian focuses this discussion around a critique of the bourgeois philosopher John Stuart Mill. And it is here that we see the danger in Avakian's concepts of democracy and dictatorship, which, as he applies them, would lead to strengthening the state exclusively, but not increasing socialist democracy in the process. He writes:

"Whether Mill meant to say so or not, the reality is that some kind of authority, in one form or another, has to provide guidance, direction, leadership — and in the final analysis, dictatorship, so long as we are talking about class-divided society — in determining what will and will not be discussed, and in what terms, in society at large..." (p. 244)

Here he says it is dictatorship, not proletarian democracy, that in the final analysis, shapes the public debate under socialism. In contrast, we argue

that the means of dictatorship are only necessary to restrict the old and new bourgeoisie from generating influence beyond the strength of their numbers in the population, while the means of proletarian democracy exercise the greatest influence on the course of political and economic development.

Avakian paraphrases Lenin: "... Lenin's answer to the accusation that he was a dictator ... can stand as an answer to Mill and all other apologists of this system: better me than you, better the dictatorship of the proletariat than the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. When such apologists ... insist on equality for all opinions and denounce attempts at dictatorship not only in the sphere of action but in the ideological sphere as well, they are actually ... insisting on the continued domination of the bourgeoisie in the domain of ideas — and in society as a whole." (p. 250)

But under socialism, especially after a certain amount of extended mass struggle, the ideas of the bourgeoisie are no longer the dominant ideas; they still exist, but they no longer dominate. When the bourgeoisie has lost its previous hegemony over popular thought — lost control over schools, mass culture production, and so on — and when the state apparatus is used to keep the bourgeoisie from gaining influence greater than its numbers, then a freer flow of ideas is better, not worse. Thus the dictatorship gets stronger even as it is required to act less in its repressive capacity. As the people gain strength, letting the bourgeoisie express itself politically — letting them speak with their mouths, not with their money — will result not in the resurgence of bourgeois ideas, but in a strengthening of the masses' ability to create and advance their own socialist ideas. At the same time, when the dictatorship has less work to do to repress the bourgeoisie, the masses will be able to have a more productive political debate among themselves, in a freer environment.

Finally, Avakian speaks of the "withering away of democracy," through the strengthening of dictatorship:

"This process — this struggle — is dialectical in a two-fold sense: it involves the dialectical relationship between dictatorship and democracy in socialist society...; and it involves the dialectical relationship — the unity and opposition — between strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat and, at the same time, by the same means, creating ... the conditions whereby the dictatorship of the

proletariat will no longer be necessary ... or possible." (p. 253)

This requires careful scrutiny to understand. Remember, when two things are in dialectical contradiction, it means one is coming and one is going, one will replace the other in a process that transforms both. There are two dialectical processes in Avakian's analysis. This first is between dictatorship and democracy. He sees democracy — which he has defined as universally bourgeois — being replaced by dictatorship. MIM, on the other hand, sees no such opposition. More proletarian dictatorship means more proletarian democracy. Democratic methods are used to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat, and democracy is the means by which the masses participate in and criticize the state and the party on the way to constructing communism.

The second process he sees is that which at once builds up and tears down dictatorship, as dictatorship eventually eliminates classes. MIM agrees that such a process is necessary, but again, it is not a matter of dictatorship triumphing over democracy, but rather both triumphing over the bourgeoisie and revisionism.

Notes:

1. Lenin, "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," 1916. In *Selected Works in One Volume*, International Publishers, 1971. p. 158. While Avakian's comment is vague and general, Lenin was speaking specifically of nations in which bourgeois democracy had not been established, which is also the case in struggles for national self-determination.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 158-9.
3. *Ibid*, p. 160.
4. J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*. Morningstar Press, 1983. p. 16.
5. Mao Zedong, *Selected Readings*, Foreign Languages Press, 1971, pp. 88-9.
6. *Ibid*, p. 89.
7. *Ibid*, p. 90.
8. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, in *SW in One Volume*, p. 473.
9. Lenin, "Left Wing" Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality," 1918, in *SW in One Volume*, p. 433.

MLP Statement

In the 1980s, MIM witnessed two liquidations

— the Maoist Organization for Revolutionary Unity (ORU) in the United States and the vanguard Maoist party in Canada. In 1993, another party — but one claiming to uphold Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Hoxha — also collapsed. Before it collapsed, it underwent internal split and toward the end of its life, MIM spoke to MLP members that knew nothing about Hoxha or the MLP's earlier history. What all three dissolutions had in common was relentless pursuit of the industrial worker.

The following is an excerpt of the MLP's dissolution statement, a negative example:

Our collective existence sprang from a single precept: as revolutionaries coming from different walks of life and varying experience in mass struggles, we shared a common conviction of the need for a party of the proletariat. Over the years, our particular views on a host of questions evolved or changed. Pretenders to the heritage of the world movement came and went. Yet we remained dedicated to the aim of building a party, and toward that end we oriented ourselves toward concentrating our forces in the industrial proletariat, toward intervening in all social movements from a revolutionary standpoint, and toward carrying through the theoretical struggle and theoretical clarification.

Our attempt at realizing this project has been approaching the end of its natural life. For nearly a decade the social movements have failed to give rise to new forces attracted to this program as we in our time rallied to it. Our forces have slowly eroded, while the pressures on us have mounted. Our industrial concentration has nearly been extinguished, while our capacity for intervening in the social movements has by-and-large become marginal. Outstanding theoretical problems have multiplied beyond our ability to satisfactorily address them.

This process of erosion has culminated in a crisis in our central organs: the National Executive Committee is dysfunctional, and we are unable to sustain our existing system of publications. That we are unable to overcome this crisis is due not only to the practical problem of numerical erosion of our forces, but also to the loss of ideological cohesiveness and to the loss of most reflection among the masses of our activity. These factors, when continued over a protracted period, could not be overcome simply by individual belief in the need to maintain party organization at all costs, and inevitably reflected themselves in the spirit of the party as well.

Maoism Around Us

by MIM(Prisons)

May 2009

We chose the title above, because this is not meant to be a comprehensive analysis of Maoism around the world today. Rather it is Maoism from the limited perspective of a small organization with a fairly limited scope of work, located in perhaps the least likely part of the world for Maoism to arise, or at least to take hold.

If MIM(Prisons) had more time, we would have put out statements on the question of the state of the Maoist movement and fraternal organizations sooner. Yet, if we had more time we could do much more in our specific role as a Maoist prison organization in the United States, so this is not something we can promise to update often. We are going to lump a bunch of topics into this paper and make it available to the minority of our readership that has been asking these questions for some time. As things develop, we need to be accountable in the work that we do and who we do it with. The decision to work on this also followed the public disclosure of information around individuals in the Maoist movement. We will address this question first.

Old MIM, New MIM

After a couple years of intense struggle between some long-time members of the Maoist Internationalist Party - Amerika and various state agents, one founding member has come forward publicly. MIM has always promoted anonymity for both security and to disarm tendencies towards identity politics and cults of personality among pre-scientific thinkers. Therefore, the state's success in forcing this person to go public was a significant task and evidently a significant setback to the movement.

In the last couple years, many comrades have moved away from those under attack. Part of this was an intentional response by the movement to protect our various forces from being pulled into further attacks. But some got frustrated with the state of the etext.org website, which had been a beacon for revolutionaries in the First World for decades, but had become a battle ground focused on discussions that most could make no sense of. This was an unfortunate setback, as those who ran the etext.org site acknowledged on many occasions.

Eventually, some who had distanced themselves from etext.org claimed to have made an open break with MIM as a whole. This paper, in part, will attempt to question that break.

First, let us define some terms as we see them. We define MIM as MIM defined itself:

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) is the collection of existing or emerging Maoist internationalist parties in the English-speaking imperialist countries and their English-speaking internal semi-colonies, as well as the existing or emerging Maoist Internationalist parties in Belgium, France and Quebec and the existing or emerging Spanish-speaking Maoist Internationalist parties of Aztlán, Puerto Rico and other territories of the U.S. Empire. MIM Notes is the newspaper of MIM. Notas Rojas is the newspaper of the Spanish-speaking parties or emerging parties of MIM.

MIM upholds the revolutionary communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and is an internationalist organization that works from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat.

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

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

This is from the 1999 Congress where "About MIM" was revised to define MIM as "a collection of existing or emerging Maoist internationalist parties." MIM had always defined the scope of its work to be within the First World. As the movement evolved, that vision took shape and the Maoist Internationalist Party -Amerika was no longer synonymous with MIM, even though some still identify themselves as "MIM" to this day. The only part of the above definition that is no longer true is that MIM was an organization with centralized party organs called MIM Notes and Notas Rojas. MIM is now a "movement" without a central organizational structure. Therefore its members are defined ideologically and fluidly, and not by a membership roll or card.

The 2005 MIM Congress resolutions on cell organizing (1) stressed the importance of organizing and documenting the development of our political line, specifically using the worldwide web. Hence the importance of keeping the work that was hosted by etext.org online, especially in a period where our movement is so decentralized. MIM(Prisons) has a particular interest in playing this role in that we may be more true to the etext MIM-line than any other organization with an online presence. We also use these materials regularly in our education work offline.

The cell resolutions set up a division of labor that left the original MC cell as a sort of center. The current complete decentralization seems to be the logical outcome of the cell resolutions, and MIM(Prisons) holds that there is no center of the MIM today.

Those resolutions also put forth an outline for recognizing fraternal cells, stating that the MC cell would renounce such status if line changes deemed it necessary. In many instances, it is better to just talk about line and take positions in struggles within the movement without naming names. Timeless documents on these struggles will be more useful in the long run. Favoring in depth anonymous analysis over short, substanceless denunciations or lists discourages cheerleading and meddling by those who are not engaged in line struggles but want to have something to say anyway. Therefore this document is structured as an in-depth discussion and not a list of who's hot and who's not.

We do however, see the importance in addressing specific organizations here by name. In MIM's original proposal they had specific projects that they were recognizing as fraternal that they were then recommending others be involved with as a form of division of labor. As long as the movement discourages the centralized party structure, we will by necessity have such a division of labor. Therefore, if one cell does not offer something, it is beneficial to be able to point to that something from another cell. This is the simplest example of cells working together. Any such work together requires accountability, especially if there are any differences in lines between the cells. Having such accountability is one of the main purposes of this paper.

Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons

MIM(Prisons) has built itself on the legacy of the MIM Prison Ministry, benefitting greatly from their work. We have improved on some aspects of the work of the Maoist prison ministry, but it has taken us some time to update all of the materials passed on to us. We have recently put out a revised version of "What is MIM(Prisons)?" which should be compared to the "What is MIM?" statement above:

In September 2007, the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons or MIM(Prisons) was formed as an independent Maoist cell. In 2007, the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) took some security hits and changed its organizing strategy as a result. One of the significant changes relates to cell-based organizing as opposed to having a centralized party. MIM(Prisons) upholds the MIM cardinal questions and uses the overall political line put forth in MIM Notes, MIM Theory and on the former website as our starting point to develop our own line and practice. We distribute MIM Theory and serve an archive of the old MIM web site, which we also use as a regular source for prison-based educational work. The MIM legacy in fighting the criminal injustice system is strong and we carry that legacy forward in our own work.

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) is the collection of existing or emerging Maoist internationalist parties in the English-speaking imperialist countries and their English-speaking internal semi-colonies, as well as the existing or emerging Maoist Internationalist parties in Belgium, France and Quebec and the existing or emerging Spanish-speaking Maoist Internationalist parties of Aztlán, Puerto Rico and other territories of the U\$. Empire.

MIM(Prisons) upholds the revolutionary communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and is an internationalist organization that works from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat.

MIM(Prisons) struggles to end the oppression of all groups over other groups; classes, genders, nations. Our current battles in the United States are legal ones. We encourage prisoners to join these battles while explicitly discouraging them from engaging in any violence or illegal acts. MIM(Prisons) and its publications explicitly oppose the use of armed struggle at this time in the imperialist countries (including the United States). We do recognize that history has demonstrated that armed struggle is a necessary step to bring the oppressed to power to determine their own destinies. Revolution will become a reality within the United States as the military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony.

Fighting the injustice system is just one part of the anti-imperialist struggle, and it is important that organizers on the outside and prisoners not lose sight of the connections to this larger battle. For this reason, in addition to news about prisons and prison struggles, we will also publish more general news articles from both organizers and prisoners, as well as some general theoretical writings from prisoners. We welcome support and collaboration from those who are focused only on the prison struggle, but we also challenge them to see the bigger picture of imperialism and the importance of carrying out their work as a part of a larger anti-imperialist strategy.

The differences in our statement and the old MIM statement stem from the fact that we are not a centralized party, but a project with a specific role to play. As such, the question of armed struggle is not one that we must engage directly as an organization. While MIP-amerika had aspired to play a vanguard role in armed struggle some day in the future, MIM(Prisons) will never play this role. Our role is in supporting the development of other organizations and projects, whether initiated by MIM(Prisons) or our allies. We cannot give up this role in order to take on these new projects as our own as some have asked us to do. Our principal task is to maintain the prison ministry as a source of educational and agitational material and as a central coordinating body for the anti-imperialist prison movement.

To an extent, the change in wording regarding armed struggle is tactical in our efforts to reach agreements with various departments of corrections regarding our literature. But it is also strategic in relation to organizational strategy. It is not just a change of semantics, MIM(Prisons) does not now nor ever will be an organization for carrying out armed struggle. Our theory on the topic, however, does not differ from the Maoist line in any way. We recognize the need for armed struggle to achieve true independence. As long as the oppressor has a gun to the head of the oppressed, they cannot be free. Peaceful transitions to so-called "independence" have only resulted in neo-colonialism, a 0% success rate in liberating a people from poverty and oppression. Armed struggles have also ended in neo-colonialism, but armed struggle increases the chances of independence to much greater than zero. By studying history we can continue to increase the success rate by learning from past mistakes.

As mentioned, one of MIM(Prisons) primary tasks in the division of labor is as a distributor of revolutionary, particularly Maoist, materials among prisoners in the united States. There is always a major problem among the masses and the general public of not being able to distinguish between political lines. Many newsletters for prisoners pick and choose articles from all over the place and send them in together. While lacking in leadership, this is a fine service for a prisoner support group that is not claiming to represent a particular line to provide to those who would otherwise have no access to the information that anyone on the outside can obtain on their own. However, there have been other newsletters that claim to be produced by, or under the leadership of a Maoist organization that practice

this form of distribution, muddying the waters of revisionism. This same problem is seen online, where comrades have criticized such practices already.

Currently, Under Lock & Key (ULK) is under the complete editorial control of MIM(Prisons). In ULK, most of the writing is by prisoners, but we add commentary and analysis where necessary to push the most advanced line. Most of the prisoners that write us are not Maoists themselves. Most cannot distinguish us from revisionist organizations. Many don't understand why we are separate from liberal bourgeois organizations.

When MIM(Prisons) reprints material from other organizations we will specify our differences with the material. While we recognize that many of our readers don't see a difference between MIM(Prisons) and reformist or single issue groups, we will not do a full review of every such organization that we work with. That is United Front work. Fraternal work is another story. Organizations that claim Maoism as their ideology (in full or in part) must be assessed in the spirit of combating revisionism and staying on the road to liberation.

In the future, ULK may expand to include materials from more sectors of the Maoist movement. At this time, MIM(Prisons) occasionally distributes materials from other Maoist cells, where those materials correctly answer questions that we have not publicly provided analysis of ourselves or otherwise play a role that we cannot. This use of the division of labor allows MIM(Prisons) to serve more prisoners, without taking on the burden of a full Maoist Party that writes its own theory journal and has an up-to-date analysis on various international questions, among other tasks that the movement must tackle.

Organizational Strategy

Some very experienced comrades have fallen into the habit of, "if you can't google it, it doesn't exist." Many of the organizations we mention below are primarily or strongly online entities. We focus on them because they inherently have a broader audience and serve as potential information sources for our comrades. The division of labor puts certain cells in more prominent roles of developing political line (or muddling it as the case may be with revisionist organizations claiming Maoism). Some groups are going to get more attention, but just like number of members is not a meaningful measure of success in itself, neither is number of readers. Building public opinion does have something to do with the number of eyes and ears we can get a succinct revolutionary message to, but taking full advantage of a cell structure requires the movement to promote and embrace organizational obscurity.

There is a role for more widely read and more prominent online entities, which should in turn inspire more obscure and behind the scenes organizers. The traditional practices of announcing new chapters and describing on the ground organizing strategies are not generally a good idea. While the oppressed nation lumpen may find organization building type work to come with more ease than the petty bourgeoisie, this is still best done in relative obscurity. To the extent that the lumpen are on the periphery of amerikan society, we should use that to our advantage. Roads of outreach that are more closed and specific to the lumpen provide greater security and room for independent growth. There are already enough snitches in our ranks, we do not need to advertise to the cops and the cop-loving amerikan public. The Panthers inspired many lumpen with their audacity. Our challenge is to create the same inspiration without bringing the same attention and repression from the state.

As a cell that spans the country and is not internet only, MIM(Prisons) is unique, facing unique challenges. We support the 2005 MIM Congress cell resolution that stressed the benefits of localized cells that only work with people they know as well as internet cells that are completely anonymous. We are neither of these. We also support the resolution's arguments for why a centralized Party is not an appropriate strategy at this time. But we are clear that democratic centralism is an essential tenant of communist organizing and that a successful revolutionary movement needs the leadership of a Leninist party.

Discussion of other groups

Since we distribute materials from a few different cells in our own work, work with other cells directly and criticize other formations, we want to be a little more accountable about where we stand. The organizations discussed below are not meant to define the MIM at this time. These are merely the organizations that we come across in our day-to-day work that also claim to uphold Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. There are others claiming Maoism that may be doing great work for the movement (or may be revisionist). In many cases that may require that we don't know about their work, in other cases we might just not be paying attention. Either way, this document is not meant to disparage the work of those not discussed here. In addition, there are many groups that we work with, and many others that we are in United Front with through practice, that we do not mention here. Some are mentioned elsewhere on our website. But the point here is not to assess the prison movement, but the Maoist movement. Some not discussed below have contacted us expressing interest in "working together." There is nothing to say over email to such newcomers that is not already on our website.

Notes on the International Communist Movement

In addition to being a part of the u\$ prison movement and the Maoist Internationalist Movement, MIM (Prisons) plays an additional role in the International Communist Movement (ICM). The ICM is different from MIM in that it includes, and in fact is dominated by, the Third World. Our focus as an organization is not on resolving issues within the ICM or between the MIM and others in the ICM. As a Maoist organization with a public practice we will be a voice in the ICM. And our practice, both public and not contributes to the advancement of the ICM.

While we are letting people know where we stand, we did want to mention the ICM, which is merely shorthand for the global struggle to end all oppression of groups of people over others. For without such a global perspective, our movement loses our main source of strategic confidence: the Third World. A few points that Maoists are united on include: 1) there is no Maoist (read: communist) party in state power today. 2) parties denying that imperialist nations are exploiters and oppressors are not leading the people towards a communist future, but a future based on the false hope of the theory of productive forces; thoroughly criticized during the Cultural Revolution in China. 3) the idea that there is a third choice in the principal contradiction between oppressed and oppressor nations is petty bourgeois vacillation.

The etext cell did good work in its last few years in exposing the problems within the ICM. Readers should be aware that older documents in the etext archive represent an earlier stage in MIM's international work and so contradict these more recent developments and do not represent that current state of affairs. Other cells continue to do excellent work to push these points as well. We also have great hope for our comrades in the Third World that seem to still be on the Maoist road, and those who have yet to take it up. The internet may skew things to appear that the strongest positions in the ICM are coming from the First World. While the loudest voices claiming Maoism from the Third World are steeped in revisionism, without strong leadership from the Third World there is no ICM to speak of; that is inherent in the global class analysis of Maoism. A genuine ICM led from the First World is a Trotskyist fantasy.

Those Relating to the original MC-cell

Some have made it clear that they see splitting with the cell based around the etext.org website as a dividing line question. MIM(Prisons) still fails to see the line divisions between these groups, which we will address further below. But this does bring up an interesting question of cell structure, fraternal status and revisionism. At some point, harboring revisionism puts a cell in the revisionist camp, and it is the duty of communists to address this. But our disagreements with the critics are with their analysis, or lack thereof.

The online journal, Monkey Smashes Heaven(MSH), says this of MIM in one of their primary documents "In the past year or so, MIM degenerated into a freak-show wrecking-ball organization whose main activity is to discredit Maoism and sabotage revolutionary work." This is about the extent of their analysis of why everyone needed to denounce the cell around etext.org before it was completely destroyed by the oppressors. We complained about this kind of substanceless bad-mouthing in April 2008, but MSH continued with such off-the-cuff "criticisms."

Until recently, the only announcement where they attempt to explain their position was in November 2007, where they refuse to get "into the minutiae." As we are preparing to release this draft of Maoism Around Us, MSH put out a statement on 4/25/2009 that addresses the issue in less flippant language, but still don't get into any details. Well, MIM(Prisons) is compelled to address the few minutiae we can cull from the MSH position in order to defend our own. The main way that MSH is able to cover for its denouncing of etext.org is by tying them to the alleged Art Minister of MIM. This was truly a perplexing ordeal, and it continues to damage us. Some may argue that abandoning the MIM name is important to distance ourselves from the "Art Ministry", who had successfully positioned itself as the primary online entity using the MIM name with etext.org's demise. We favor the counter argument that over 2 decades of history that represent a legacy that all of us are building on should not be handed over to the pigs who have been trying to bad-jacket Maoists as wackos for just as long. With the regrowth of the genuine Maoist movement online, our position that our legacy is too strong to be hijacked like that is proving true. While etext.org once claimed the "Art Ministry" was bringing internet traffic to the MIM site, it is pretty clear to us that on the contrary the Art Ministry blog would have no readership without the MIM legacy in its name.

With recent public documents and one comrade going public as an individual, some of the gaps have been filled and the story alluded to on etext.org over those last tumultuous years has become more real. The problem is that people need to acknowledge the reality of bourgeois repression and meddling without having to out someone. The pigs have gotten exactly what they wanted. They destroyed what was left of the original MC-cell and got at least one underground organizer to come above ground.

Until its demise, etext.org continued to produce theoretically sound material. Even though the majority of the "security" related posts are meaningless to most, the posts that drew general lessons from these experiences were correct, and provide material well worth studying. With the pigs conducting a strong counterintelligence and disinformation campaign it is inevitable that some statements posted at etext.org contained incorrect information about others. MIM never claimed to be right 100% of the time. And in a fight against the state, not all actions are going to make sense to everyone all the time. But the fact that some will raise up a perceived mistake or two over MIM's willingness to engage in scientific analysis and fight state repression head on suggests that these people are not up to the depth of commitment and struggle necessary for revolutionary politics. We cannot explain every statement made on etext.org, nor would we want to share that with the state, but can only look at the big picture and say that the political line stayed good and the security struggle was real.

Back to the so-called "Art Ministry." The "Art Ministry" is allegedly run by a persynality that has had a long history of working with MIM. Therefore, to those paying close attention, it seemed that the "Art Ministry" was officially sanctioned by the MC-cell as was clearly implied at least once on etext.org. However, at no point did etext.org link to the blog or any of the video sites run by the "Art Ministry" or endorse them specifically. The last comments from etext.org on the subject was that others should watch the "Art Ministry" closely. There was a reason the MC's felt they couldn't say anything on the subject and there was implied acknowledgement that what was going on in that self-proclaimed cell was bad.

In response to the November 7, 2007 MSH policy on linking, MIM(Prisons) will no longer link to etext.org as it no longer exists.(2) We now host the most complete archive of the site on our own server which we can link to and encourage others to update their links to. With etext.org's recent demise, we can speak more definitively of it than we can of other cells that are living, evolving organizations. If we had to review

the etext.org archive we would say that it is our starting point, that no other collection of writing of comparable size is close to it in correctness, and we have no major splits with the line there, though it certainly evolved over the years (an evolution that represented advances in the line through study and practice).

We will also point out that while MIM(Prisons) still looks to the work of the original Maoist Internationalist Party - Amerika as its legacy and theoretical basis, timely questions like relations with other parties should not be transferred to us. We do not have an international ministry. As for fraternal parties in the united States, one that always seemed a bit eclectic in its inspirations has allegedly appeared online as an organization deep in mysticism, while still claiming Mao. Another party seems to have degenerated in favor of mass work within lumpen organizations. MIM(Prisons) upholds the MIM-line on not joining mass organizations. (6) We also can point to the New Afrikan Maoist Party (NAMP) as an example of a much more correct approach to deal with the same question of organizing the lumpen that those comrades faced, without liquidating the vanguard party.

It is lamentable that the activities that pushed MIM to a cell structure seemed to destroy most of the work coming out of the party itself. MIM talked about degeneration in its discussions of these struggles, and the apparent lack of follow up by comrades around the MIP-Amerika seems to confirm that. The current generation of MIM in a very different form has already provided great leadership in pushing the movement forward. While our movement is weak, our power comes from our correct political line. And while we are far from the masses for the most part, there is much work to be done at the margins in the imperialist countries, while we work in a United Front with the world's majority who oppose oppression and exploitation.

Crypto-Trotskyists

The crypto-Trotskyists (those claiming Maoism, but putting forth revisionist lines that come from Trotskyist tendencies) have been thoroughly criticized by those at etext.org as well as others who have followed the MIM line. Rather than repeating that analysis we want to comment on the (not so) recent split in the crypto-Trot camp, mainly because in many circles these are the people who represent Maoism in the united States. Namely the rcp=u\$a and now the kkkasama project (led by former rcper Mike Ely). In many ways, kkkasama project is a natural progression of the liberalism and white nationalism of the rcp=u\$a. They still promote Conquer the World, and are working to out do Afakean's populism.

Overall, what we have is kkkasama project taking typical liberal pot-shots at Maoism, while rcp=u\$a tries to make its revisionist drivel look good by standing up to them. Kkkasama's attacks on rcp=u\$a try to paint it as dogmatic and authoritarian, while the rcp=u\$a criticizes the Cultural Revolution with its liberal democratic line popular among RIM affiliated parties. You could argue that at least Kkkasama isn't claiming to be a Maoist vanguard, and is more openly playing the role of Mao sympathizers. But both groups are doing continued damage to a movement that they falsely represent.

It's interesting how quick and thorough rcp=u\$a is to reply to their liberal defectors, when after 2 decades they were never able to respond to MIM criticisms in a principled way. Of course it's harder to ignore defectors from your own party. But it's also convenient that the rcp=u\$a can appear to be fighting revisionism by battling a liberal foe (though they do claim that the Ely camp is not even fighting for the same thing and might therefore be considered degeneration and not revisionism).

Kkkasama wants to tear down Afakean with identity politics by making some broad generalizations about revolutionary leaders developing their ideas through struggle. While the importance of leaders developing their ideas through struggle is not incorrect, it is also not incorrect for a First World communist with lots of leisure time and access to research material and sparse revolutionary masses nearby to take up the task of studying. Such crude anti-intellectualism has no place in a group claiming to be putting forth the scientific method.

Ely points out in the "Nine Letters to Our Comrades," the rcp=u\$a has raised the appreciation of Avakian to cardinal question for those in the united \$tates. They take Lenin's theory on leadership to a cultish extreme with a psychological approach that was never intended or useful to the oppressed.

Ely's best criticisms are of the cult of persynality and the crisis analysis. But even these are fairly superficial compared to criticisms being made by Maoists for decades, mainly issues where Ely still agrees with the rcp=u\$a.

In classes that MIM(Prisons) leads, comrades study On Contradiction and are asked to develop their own examples to demonstrate that internal contradictions determine the nature of a thing, while external conditions are secondary and can effect the development of those internal contradictions. This is a principal of Dialectical Materialism. Afakean would have answered that question wrong with his New Synthesis that "the class struggle in any particular country was more determined on the international plane than by the unfolding of contradictions within a given country somehow outside of, or divorced from, that context."(3) It would logically follow from this understanding that the rcp=u\$a is so caught up on hyping up the next crisis that is gonna bring amerikkkan imperialism toppling down, which Ely is critical of. This stems from a Trotskyist desire for global revolution, led by the imperialist country so-called "working class."

Maoists take a dialectical approach and see that not only did WWI create opportunities for the Bolsheviks, but more importantly, the conditions for revolution evolved because of the unique conditions in Russia as the weak link in the imperialist world. And it was the oppressed classes within Russia and its neighboring states that made the revolution happen. Despite a more globally integrated economy 90 years later, the differences in internal conditions between different countries have only become more extreme.

The rcp=u\$a's strong opposition to nationalism of the oppressed nations also follows from their "international" understanding of the world. Why focus on narrow nationalist goals, when imperialism isn't going to fall until there is a global crisis to bring it down? This is also borrowed directly from Trotsky. Today, Maoists continue to look for the weak links in the imperialist system as openings for revolution, rather than beating our head against a brick wall waiting for imperialist crisis when "our people" can become revolutionary - that is the narrow nationalism of amerikans not internationalism.

On religion, Ely tries to play the middle ground liberal. Afakean is wrong for being militantly atheist, and MIM is wrong for supporting radical Islam's jihad against the imperialist invader. "Can't we not be racist and oppose Islam at the same time?" the good liberal asks himself. Nope, rcp=u\$a already tried it, and they get more internationalist points for pointing out to Ely that yes, silence is complicity.

Rcp=u\$a wants to flirt with MIM Thought to silence the detractors, yet they still muddle the issue. Kkkasama is clear in their attacks on what they see as Afakean's dismissal of the amerikkkan mAsses, thereby completely distancing themselves from the labor aristocracy line. Rcp=u\$a brags about refocusing on the oppressed nations and lumpen in recent years; following MIM's practice without the theory to back it up. In "Reinvisioning Communism and Revolution," they refer to so-called "African-Americans" as "wage-slaves." As usual, they can spit populist rhetoric while misapplying terms and hoping to avoid giving critics a clear class analysis to critique.

The most hilarious claim of the article defining the Avakian's "New Synthesis" reads: "Avakian upheld and deepened Lenin's understanding that the division of the world between imperialist powers and oppressed nations had given rise within the imperialist powers to a section of the working class, and an even bigger section of the middle class, that not only benefitted materially from the parasitism and plunder of imperialism, but came to politically identify with their imperialist masters."(3) It was Engels who said that whole nations were being bought off. And it was MIM who quoted Engels and Lenin to refute rcp=u\$a white populism for decades. Now they want to take it and twist it into the Trotskyist line that

"some workers are bought off" or "some of the imperialist country middle class is bought off," as if there were separate "working" and "middle" classes within the imperialist countries. Come on, can we use terms with real definitions? Can we say who is exploited and who is exploiter? The rcp=u\$a avoids it at all costs.

Soon after in that essay the rcp=u\$a upholds the need to "listen to criticisms" from "every quarter." Yeah, they listened, and they stayed silent and after a long wait they responded by twisting the critics line to hide their own revisionism. Tell us rcp=u\$a, have you taken up the MIM line or not? No honest communist, claiming to be combatting revisionism can put stuff like this out and be silent on the most thorough criticisms made of your organization on this very question.

This whole split and debate is useful to the enemies of Maoism in two ways. On the one hand, it may help the rcp appear to be combatting revisionism and upholding Maoist principles in its replies to kkkasama. (More recently, the government of Nepal has proven to be no more worthy an adversary to rcp=u\$a's anti-revisionist campaigning). In some individual statements the rcp criticisms are correct, but their overall orientation is the same old crap. A similar eclectic picking and choosing from Maoism on the part of kkkasama creates another revisionist alternative for the petty bourgeoisie who was never really too hot on the whole dictatorship of the proletariat thing anyway. So Kkkasama mostly helps reinforce the typical anarcho-liberal anti-Maoism. For these reasons, we've probably said more than we should on this "split" already, because the whole thing is nothing but an attack on Maoism. If you haven't yet read the documents behind the discussion in this section, our recommendation is not to bother. Even the article cited below that actually explains what the "New Synthesis" is, is typical rcp=u\$a doublespeak: take every position so that you can agree with everyone.

A 4th Stage? - on Thoughts and isms

Now that we've discussed the recent split in the crypto-Trot camp it is logical for us to tackle the question of the stage of development of revolutionary science. Both the above parties and others internationally have used the perceived need for a new stage for the 21st century to leave behind the universal aspects of Maoism, i.e. take the revisionist road, or rather continue down it.

Kkkasama project describes 3 "packages" of MLM that currently exist in the International Communist Movement, yet strangely leave out MIM Thought and Maoism-Third Worldism. This isn't too surprising since rcp=u\$a's official line for decades was to ignore MIM Thought and hope no one notices. And since Kkkasama does not agree with MIM's principle differences with the rcp=u\$a, they will follow the same path so as not to reveal the revisionist swamp that the ICM is currently sinking in. We take the opposite approach, and believe that by shedding light on the errors of others we can best combat those errors. As Afakeanites argue so strongly in their response to Ely, there is only one truth and it is in the interests of the people.

To ring in the New Year in 2008, a few groups including Monkey Smashes Heaven released "Sunrise in the East," declaring a new stage of revolutionary science they named "Maoism Third Worldism." (5) The Maoist Information Web Site (MIWS) then put out the most complete analysis of the question of a fourth stage of communist theoretical development we've seen in response. (4) We have strong agreement with the work of MIWS, and have distributed their economic works in the past. The main criticism they put forth of the Sunrise statement is that "a new stage of Marxism should not be defined in relation to the counterrevolutionary ideas of fakes, zombies and clowns calling themselves 'Maoists.'" The Sunrise statement says it is "naming a new stage of revolutionary science" in order to get past the debates over "Maoism" dating back to at least the Cultural Revolution. While we can't deny that an arena where contenders include Avakian's "New Synthesis" and "Prachanda Path" is not a very worthy one, we agree with MIWS that this does not denote the emergence of a new stage, but rather an ebb in revolutionary science that must be combated.

The reason we do not see MTW as a new stage of Marxism is that the 8 "breakthroughs" are mostly

found in Maoism and completely found in MIM Thought. What these 8 points are is some important dividing lines between Maoism and fake "Maoists." They clearly did not come out of thin air, but from a careful study of the dividing line questions of the day. But as MIWS pointed out, leaving the term "Maoism" as outdated further allows the fakes to lay claim to our revolutionary legacy, as if their ideology even represented a correct "Maoist" line for the last generation.

It is new in the last decade to claim the first point of the MSH statement (that there is no significant exploited population in the First World) is a universal point that communists must agree on. In its early years, MIM only held First World parties to this cardinal principle. We agree with the evolution of the MIM line that this must be upheld by anyone claiming communism anywhere, as it is a well-developed aspect (a principal aspect) of the global class analysis. But a honing of our political economy during the ebb in revolutionary activity does not represent a new stage as such.

The idea that Maoism has entered a new stage because Mao did not uphold the Maoist line of 2009 is also too simplistic.

Maoism-Third Worldism

MIM(Prisons) agrees with the 8 "breakthroughs" of Maoism-Third Worldism (MTW) listed in the Sunrise statement.⁽⁵⁾ Those identifying as MTW have made particular contributions on a number of fronts. One is research on China and in particular the Cultural Revolution and the line struggles within the party during it. They have made important connections between the struggle against the Theory of Productive Forces and relating it to a Maoist class analysis. This is the main argument behind the position that the cardinal principle on the labor aristocracy is not something we can let slide in the Third World. To do so opens the door to revisionism after the seizure of state power.

The MTW groups have also done a worthy job of commenting on the International Communist Movement. In particular, we support their criticisms of those claiming Maoism while promoting revisionism. We have distributed some of these documents to answer questions about the struggles in other countries that we have not covered ourselves.

If there is a difference between MIM Thought and MTW, it would be that MTW is national reductionist. However, we must acknowledge that the founders of MTW have a well-documented and worked out class analysis to go along with their analysis of nation (one that comes primarily from MIM Thought). Therefore, we cannot put them in the camp with bourgeois nationalist formations such as the African People's Socialist Party (APSP), which puts nation as primary but then follows the white nationalist class analysis. Such a class analysis would threaten their line of the New Afrikan "proletariat" as the vanguard of the world revolution. MTW comes from a much clearer internationalist position than that. The problem is when comrades at the Maoist Third-Worldist site Monkey Smashes Heaven (MSH) try to deal with gender and just wrap it into nation wholesale. How many strands of oppression does MTW claim exist? MIM Thought claims 3.

In writing about MIM, the main ideological struggle MSH has taken up has been the gender question. We whole-heartedly agree with the MIM gender line and disagree with MSH. Our limited work on gender relations within the prison environment and application of MIM's gender line to other recent political issues demonstrates this position. MSH's gender line accepts some important aspects of MIM Thought, while tossing out the truly new work that MIM did on gender. The idea that gender is a social construct in the first world is less and less a revolutionary position that Maoists need to stress, though we still favor using language that exposes this truth. The MTW groups have taken the important gender battle of the day and pushed it to the forefront. But the MIM gender line predicted the current attacks on the Muslim world via gender a long time ago. Failure to grasp the theory behind these positions will lead to failures in positioning the movement correctly for the next attacks by the imperialists. To accuse MIM of sneaking First Worldism into Maoism via gender is a joke when MIM consistently critiqued white pseudo-feminism for decades and usually stood alone. They use incomplete MIM Thought to attack the coherent theory

behind MIM line, and then act as if they have exposed MIM's revisionism.

To be able to criticize homophobia and biological determinism in gender is not revolutionary. Branches of the Democratic Party beat the rcp=u\$a in the realm of gay rights. Social democratic Kkkasama project criticizes rcp=u\$a homophobia and their lack of transparency and self-criticism with a liberal line on sex. Anarchist-communists supporting the MIM-Sakai line on nation/class picked up this same article uncritically. Unless MSH really wants to throw out gender as a strand of oppression, they leave us with no alternative but this sexual liberalism by denouncing the MIM gender line without replacing it.

MSH says First Worldism is the modern incarnate of revisionism and we agree, but this is nothing new. Trotskyists have been putting forth the First Worldist line of the Theory of Productive Forces since the time Mao was still alive.

Single Nation Parties

MIM(Prisons) upholds the MIM-line on nationalism and single-nation parties.(7) While MIM Thought seemed to rely on the experience of the previous generation as the main evidence of the usefulness of single-nation formations, we believe more recent developments confirm that this is still the case. Though we also have no disagreements with those who focus on cross-national organization, even of the lumpen class where national divisions are much more pronounced. In some ways this approach is superior in promoting a humynism based on the commonalities of the lumpen situation, rather than slipping into pork-chop nationalism that attempts to capture and romanticize a culture of the past based on one's ancestry. For example, Hip Hop culture is a more promising battle ground for the oppressed today than Egyptology or even Kwanzaa.

There are two kinds of nationalism, revolutionary nationalism and reactionary nationalism. Revolutionary nationalism is first dependent upon a people's revolution with the end goal being the people in power. Therefore to be a revolutionary nationalist you would by necessity have to be a socialist. If you are a reactionary nationalist you are not a socialist and your end goal is the oppression of the people.

Cultural nationalism, or pork chop nationalism, as I sometimes call it, is basically a problem of having the wrong political perspective. It seems to be a reaction instead of responding to political oppression. The cultural nationalists are concerned with returning to the old African culture and thereby regaining their identity and freedom. In other words, they feel that the African culture will automatically bring political freedom. Many times cultural nationalists fall into line as reactionary nationalists. -- Huey P. Newton, 1968 (8)

There are a number of groups upholding "Pantherism" and "Intercommunalism" that do not claim to be Maoists or even communists of any sort. While MIM(Prisons) sees the Black Panther Party developed by Huey P. Newton as the Maoist vanguard of the united States in the late 1960's, the Panther legacy took on such a mass character that Pantherism and Maoism are often not treated as the same thing. The BPP's own former Chief of Staff uses "intercommunalism" as a cover for the Panthers' communist ideology.(9) Meanwhile, the Panther legacy is so strong that people use it to this day as a cover while doing work for the state.

But just as we don't abandon Maoism to the revisionists, we do not leave the Panthers to them either. We uphold the Panther legacy and learn from their lessons. Two other organizations that we have distributed materials from and worked with also explicitly claim the Panther legacy while claiming Maoism. They are the New Afrikan Maoist Party (NAMP) and the New Afrikan Black Panther Party (NABPP), the latter we maintain to be revisionist. The MIM has had a long-standing policy of not working with revisionist organizations so as not to confuse the people. This is not a universal principal, but one that the party correctly applied for decades. In most cases we have also taken on this practice, but have made an exception with the NABPP who has had a long history of work with MIM. The nature of

this work has been in the interests of u\$ prisoners, fighting against abuses such as torture, censorship and ongoing COINTELPRO campaigns by the state.

It is to our dismay that the New Afrikan Black Panther Party (NABPP) has developed the political line that it has, despite some members having had a long history of exposure to MIM line. Regardless, we have continued to work with their members on specific projects and even distributed particular writings. When doing so we have specified our disagreements with NABPP. We continue to see this practice as correct in the interests of the oppressed. [For the record, there is no validity to rumors that created bad feelings between some close to the NABPP and the MIM. All we can say on that is emails can be forged just as easy as letters.]

The NABPP, formerly known as the New Black Panther Party - Prison Chapter, evolved from within u\$ prisons and continues to have a significant overlap with our own work. Therefore it is of great importance that comrades understand the differences between us, even if we can admit that the NABPP has done some good work. A while back there was a discussion of publishing the debates between NABPP and those in the MIM camp. Until that happens, this will have to serve as the best public documentation of those differences.

Actually, there is not much in the debate that has not already been addressed by MIM in its debates with other Trotskyist and crypto-Trotskyist groups. The NABPP calls for working class unity within the united \$tates and refers to the New Afrikan nation as an almost wholly "proletarian slave nation." (see ULK 8 for MIM(Prisons)'s analysis of prison labor) They decry outsourcing for reducing the ranks of the labor aristocracy in the united \$tates, claim that people wouldn't be employed if they weren't being exploited and deny the history of white nationalism spelled out in J. Sakai's *Settlers: the Mythology of the White Proletariat*.

In the debates with NABPP, comrades in the New Afrikan Collectivist Association, a precursor to the New Afrikan Maoist Party (NAMP), criticized NABPP on its line on the New Afrikan proletariat as well as its line on a Pan-Afrikan nation. The latter question which NABPP addresses theoretically has been taken on in practice by the African People's Socialist Party (APSP), whom our comrades have also allied with in the past. (The APSP does not claim Maoism but does claim the legacy of the late BPP.) In recent years they have combined their line that Africans (including New Afrikans in the united \$tates) are the vanguard of the revolution with an apparent inability to build mass support for revolution within u\$ borders to come to a position of forming the African Socialist International, being led by the APSP. We see this as being much closer to the rcp=u\$a's Trotskyism in building the u\$-based Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, than to Pan-Afrikanism, and caution our revolutionary comrades in the Third World to be wary of any such First World-led organizations. In the earliest history of Pan-Afrikanism, the different conditions faced by New Afrikans compared to most of Africa were quickly realized by many, resulting in separate efforts. And as stated above, a correct global class analysis would lead one to conclude that there is no need for First World leadership to create a revolutionary pole in an international arena.

Internationalism will come in many forms among the internal semi-colonies. Those with links to the Third World will tend to develop special relations along those lines. But any group based in the imperialist countries that is attempting to build internationalist ties on the basis of mutual class interests is falling into Trotskyism. NAMP's line that the New Afrikan nation is primarily a petty bourgeois nation, and that they do not form chapters in the Third World in respect of local comrades who can do a much better analysis of their conditions are key positions for any First World based communist organization or party.

NAMP sees single-nation party organizing as a logical high-priority given the principal contradiction as being between the oppressed nations and imperialism. MIM(Prisons) does not see this as a dividing line question, but would encourage all to take seriously the considerations put forth in the 2005 MIM cell resolution, particularly in reference to maintaining the security and longevity of the movement as a whole. Last we heard, NAMP was holding its first congress to tighten up its line and practice, so we

have not seen any recent theoretical works. But we look forward to the outcome of that congress, and continue to be encouraged by developments within the New Afrikan Liberation Movement.

While we do not have a list of fraternal organizations to publish at this time, this paper should give a good outline on where we stand, particularly in relation to those that we work with. If you see us distributing materials by a self-proclaimed Maoist group or working with them in any other way, you can assume that we see them as part of the MIM unless we explicitly state otherwise.

NOTES:

(1) MIM. *Resolutions on Cell Structure. MIM Congress 2005, Session II.*

<http://www.prisoncensorship.info/archive/etext/wim/cong/cells2005.html>

(2) MSH. *Policy on linking Maoist groupings and Etext. November 7, 2007.*

<http://monkeysmashesheaven.wordpress.com/2007/11/07/policy-on-linking-maoist-groupings-and-etext/>

(3) *Re-envisioning Revolution and Communism: What is Bob Avakian's New Synthesis. Part III.*

(4) MIWS. *On whether there is a fourth stage of Marxism. March 2008.*

<http://maoist.ws/theory/fourthstage.html>

(5) MSH. *Sunrise in the East. January 1, 2008.*

<http://monkeysmashesheaven.wordpress.com/sunrise-in-the-east/>

(6) see *Pitfalls of Single Issue Organizing by MC5 and MC17 in What is MIM? or on our website in the etext archive FAQ.*

(7) see *MIM Theory 7: Proletarian Feminist Revolutionary Nationalism*

(8) Foner, Philip S. *The Black Panthers Speak. Huey Newton Talks to the Movement... p. 50.*

(9) while we do not address all of the new "Panther" groups here you can read an article on the prominent NOI-linked "New Black Panther Party" and an interview on former BPP Chief of Staff David Hilliard's work in our archive of the etext.org website:

<http://www.prisoncensorship.info/archive/etext/bpp/defendlegacy.html>

<http://www.prisoncensorship.info/archive/etext/bpp/hilliardclass.html>

* * *

Revisiting RCP Revisionism

by Wiawimawo

December 2009

published in ULK Issue 12

Revolution #183 : Special Issue on Prisons and Prisoners in the U.S.

November 15, 2009

Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

Calling me an African-American

like everything is fair again, shit

Devil, you got to get the shit right, I'm Black

Blacker than a trillion midnights

--Ice Cube from the song When Will They Shoot?

Many years ago MIM had disregarded the so-called "Revolutionary Communist Party, USA" (rcp=u\$a) after it repeatedly served as a mouthpiece for the CIA in relation to People's War in Peru, the invasion of Iraq, and supporting regime change in Iran.(1) Our predecessors had spent decades drawing sharp lines between the Maoist line and rcp=u\$a's revisionism. In recent years, Monkey Smashes Heaven has continuously exposed the rcp=u\$a's phony Maoism. To date we have not spent too much time on the subject except in some discussions of Iran and a high level document entitled "Maoism Around Us" that was not printed in Under Lock & Key. We believed there was no reason to prioritize doing much more when so much was already out there on the subject that we could point to.

However, the fact remains that most of our readers do not have access to the internet, and therefore will only be aware of this longstanding battle against revisionism if they have been reading MIM Notes or MIM Theory for some time. This month the rcp=u\$a published an issue of their newspaper dedicated to the topic of u\$. prisons. This caught our eye, and reiterated the need for MIM(Prisons) to continue to draw the line between Maoism and revisionism.

Many comrades write in praising the virtues of Maoism and we take this as a sign that we are doing something right in connecting the struggles of the oppressed in this country to an ever developing proletarian ideology. But we must be real, only a handful of our readers are seriously grappling with the questions facing Maoism today. And those that cannot distinguish Maoism from the right opportunism of groups like the rcp=u\$a have not yet grasped it.(2) So let us begin.

"African Americans"

Did they say "African Americans"? Following the Black Power movement of the 60's there have been debates among revolutionaries between the terms Black Nation and New Afrikan Nation. But the rcp=u\$a is still writing about "African Americans."

What's wrong with this terminology? Well, nothing really if you believe that Black people are amerikans as rcp=u\$a does. Some have suggested the term African Amerikan for our enemies of African descent; another term for Uncle Toms. You see, to Maoists, amerikans are oppressors. To be amerikan is to be the enemy of the proletariat and the struggle of all oppressed people. Rcp=u\$a in contrast calls for the leadership of the multinational labor aristocracy to lead the revolution in the u\$.

We must acknowledge that the rcp=u\$a came out in support of (actually it was more like giving permission to) an independent Black state in their Draft Program. They did so, while maintaining that the "other" oppressed nations in the u\$. must be part of their "multinational proletariat."(3) In other words, they were offering a special neo-colonial deal to the Black nation.

One letter writer in this issue addresses the rcp=u\$a's predecessor, the Revolutionary Union, in their handling of the question of the Black Nation:

From the beginning, the RU's scientific attitude impressed me. The RU's analysis of the Black national question stood out from that of other organizations. My friend and I had read Lenin's and Stalin's writings on the national question, and like many people in the movement at the time, we were pretty sure that Black people in the U.S. were a nation. However, we didn't have a very deep understanding. The lines of groups like the Black Workers Congress and the Communist League either proceeded from the point of view of the Black nation itself rather than from the international proletariat, or were bizarre attempts to shoehorn the Black national question into Stalin's definition of a nation with little or no "concrete analysis of concrete conditions." The RU came at this question scientifically. Guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, it analyzed the history of Black people in the U.S. from slavery, through Reconstruction, and on through the great migration to the cities in the 20th century, and developed not only a scientific explanation of this question, but a program for the revolutionary movement and for the future socialist society."

We quote at length here so as to capture the full content of the writer's point. She writes in typical rcp=u\$a style, hyping up the "analysis" and "science" without actually giving you an analysis. She implies criticisms of Stalin, but offers no explanation of the alternative.

On this topic, in their title article rcp=u\$a writes:

"The concept of the targeting of Black people and Native Americans as a 'pariah class,' dating back to the early days of the U.S., and the overall way in which white supremacy has served to blunt class-

consciousness in the U.S. since then, has been drawn on and further developed by Bob Avakian in the important work, Communism and Jeffersonian Democracy."

They pick up the tactics of the white communist movement dating back to at least the 1930's of talking hard about the special oppression of Black people, while pulling them away from developing an independent movement for self-determination. Maoists have long upheld the thesis developed in the book Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat that there is no progressive class-consciousness among amerikans.

Letters from Prisoners

The rcp=u\$a prints a number of letters from prisoners and former prisoners in this issue. They have a disclaimer saying that the views in the letters are not those of Revolution, yet fail to criticize anything in them. This is a textbook example of rcp=u\$a liberalism in practice right in their so-called Maoist newspaper that is supposedly providing the great leadership of Bob Avakian that we all need in order to get free. They regularly use the "masses" to say stuff that they don't want to take responsibility for.

One example of this is the prisoner who mentions, "The so called 'Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo' that called for the theft of half of Mexican land." As referenced above, the rcp=u\$a has refused to acknowledge the right of Mexicans and their descendants to independence in Aztlán. But they like to print stuff like this to give the impression that they do in order to lure revolutionary nationalists into their ranks.

Rcp=u\$a gives lip-service to the principal contradiction under imperialism being between nations, but their revisionism is exposed in their applications. Another example is plain as day in a discussion of Islam:

"When I first tried to understand what Bob Avakian was talking about with the two outmoded ideologies and systems, Islamic Fundamentalism and Imperialism, I said "Damn!" this is something. And Islamic Fundamentalism, I really didn't understand what that was until I started reading Revolution. The oppression of women, backward ideas, fighting to go back not forward, reading what was in the paper really helped me. This is not a national liberation struggle or something good. It's not part of any solution for humanity. And, imperialism is not only no better, it's even worse. We need to put communism and real revolution on the map. This is something way different from Imperialism and Islamic Fundamentalism. Where are you going to find out about this, not in the Daily News or the New York Times, or these other movement newspapers. People, and not just people locked up, need Revolution and Avakian's leadership. I felt I can explain it to people. It's clearer now."

Uh, what? Actually, The New York Times is all over this shit painting Islam as a threat to feminism everywhere. Where are you going to find out about this? How about from Condoleezza Rice's speeches when she was head of the State Department? They were given at the same time that the rcp=u\$a was pushing the same line of woman's liberation through regime change in Iran by organizing marches and rallies across the u.\$.

Or you could go to frontpagemag.com and read fascist David Horowitz who fought it out with Bob Avakian over who was going to control the discussion of "Islamofascism." Horowitz has an out for using this term, he doesn't claim Maoism so he can define fascism however he likes. As Maoists, MIM agreed with Dimitroff that fascism is "the open terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and the most imperialist elements of finance capital." There are no imperialist Muslim countries, thus, no fascist Muslim countries.

As mentioned above, not all of our readers get Maoism right, but we don't print their letters uncorrected. One letter printed in Revolution #183 claims that after reading the newspaper for awhile, "I began to see that this capitalist-imperialist system is fundamentally based on the exploitation and oppression of the

vast majority of humanity at the hands of the few within the ruling class who own and control the means of production." Not surprisingly, readers of Revolution come away with the white nationalist dogma that in the u.\$. we are all united against the handful of rich who run the world, and rcp=u\$a concurs.

The same writer stressed that the fight for abortion rights are vital. An accompanying article in this issue on the Stupak-Pitts Amendment reads: "This devastating development has shocked and angered many who put their hopes in the Obama presidency to bring change from years of war, repression and Christian fundamentalist onslaught and who now feel thrown under the bus instead." Thrown under the bus by whom, RCP? If anyone was deceived, it was by the so-called Maoist party that campaigned to get Obama elected to combat the rise of the bogeyman of "Christian Fascism!"

The gender aristocracy rallying to protect their rights to sexual pleasure and promiscuity is not exactly a battle for the international proletariat. But right opportunism says to let the gender aristocracy set our gender line so that we can be more popular. This approach to gender was so disgustingly obvious in rcp=u\$a's approach to homosexuality. As long as gay rights was a minority issue they promoted homophobic literature targeting queers for their sexuality while promoting sexual liberalism for heterosexuals. It wasn't until after the issue began to strike a popular chord, and discrimination against gays became unacceptable that rcp=u\$a followed suit. Nice "vanguard."

Back in the day, MIM promoted the sterilization of all men in order to eliminate abortion while avoiding the obvious campaign of the anti-abortion movement to control the sexuality of wimmin. While rcp=u\$a debated with the Christian right about how they like their wimmin (liberated vs. barefoot and pregnant), MIM took a shot at male supremacy. More importantly today, the pro-choice movement has dovetailed nicely with the pro-war movement targeting countries that oppose abortion and sexual liberalism. But rcp=u\$a has harped against Iran for years, promoting the overthrow of the anti-american government there, so this is not a contradiction for them.

One more interesting note on the gender question: The rcp=u\$a article reads: "If the Senate passes a health care bill that effectively prohibits abortion, women will be cast back to the days when only the very rich could determine the course of the rest of their lives." In other words, wimmin would be coerced into having sex that leads to pregnancy. MIM has long said that all sex is rape, and this is probably the closest the sexual liberals at rcp=u\$a have come to recognizing this. The problem is that they deny the existence of the gender aristocracy and the reproductive health benefits that it receives by virtue of living in the First World. Even in cases of unplanned sex, birth control is accessible after the fact without abortion. So the rcp=u\$a rhetoric is just another example of their exaggerated demagoguery.

A final letter writer catches them up with a direct quote from "The Revolution We Need... The Leadership We Have," another self-congratulatory rallying cry from the rcp=u\$a. "For a revolution, there must be a revolutionary people among all sections of society but with its deepest base among those who catch hell every day under this system." No, the revolutionary people are found among the exploited and oppressed and we don't need the exploiters and oppressors to join us before we can be successful.

Whether Barack Obama or Bob Avakian, personality cults have no progressive role to play in the First World today. The oppressed need to move beyond trying to pick the right candidate to vote for.

Amerikans Need to be Imprisoned

Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois.

- from "Lenin on the Struggle Against Revisionism", p.31

... right up to the very wholesale deportation or internment of the most dangerous and stubborn exploiters - putting them under strict surveillance in order to combat inevitable attempts to resist and to

restore capitalist slavery - only such measures can ensure the real subordination of the whole class of exploiters.

-from "Lenin on the Struggle Against Revisionism", p.41

Regarding our lines on prisons in general, the rcp=u\$a supports a line that political prisoners make up a small portion of the population and focus on the cases of Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier as examples. MIM's line has been that all prisoners are political. In other words, the system is set up to control certain populations, while the real criminals that are murdering people en masse make fat paychecks and live free. This issue of Revolution on prisons by a self-proclaimed communist group leaves out what their approach to prisons would be (they mention the need for an "earth-shaking revolution"). They sidestep the two line struggle within the Maoist movement between mass re-education camps in the First World and a dispersal method of sending the former exploiters to the global countryside as they did on a smaller scale within China. This discussion would be too scary for their populist amerikan readership.

As revolution will come to the heart of imperialism last, MIM has long discussed the Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat of the Oppressed Nations over the oppressor nations as we work to break down the backwards ways of our imperialist past. The rcp=u\$a, like all white nationalist so-called communists, sees no reason for such a dictatorship.

In the system that communists are fighting for, much of the First World will face potential prison time in order to right the centuries of injustices that this system is built on. Prisons will serve to develop productive members of a society that serves people's need, rather than as a warehouse of torture and wasted lives.

Covering for the bourgeoisie

Practice has shown that the active people in the working-class movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie, than the bourgeoisie itself. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not have remained in power.

- from "Lenin on the Struggle Against Revisionism", p.74

While we have no exploited working-class movement in the imperialist countries to speak of, this quote from Lenin still rings true in terms of the usefulness of what he calls "bourgeois socialism" in neutralizing those who want an end to oppression. During the Bush Jr. regime the rcp=u\$a were constantly crying that "christian fascism" was taking over the country. They led the "World Can't Wait to Throw Out the Bush Regime" campaign, which was the radical wing of a many year long campaign to get Obama into office. Rcp=u\$a of course would never openly support Obama as that would totally discredit them as communists. But they do openly support the 90% of the u.\$. population that they claim have an interest in socialism.

As the radical branch of the Democrats, rcp=u\$a works to unite these same people for their own interests. When they see their interests in a neo-colonial u.\$. president who will expand the occupation and slaughter in Central Asia for amerikan economic interests, the rcp=u\$a balks and pretends that the people are confused. This is all part of their game to maintain their radical facade to continue to be an effective recruiter of youth for the Democratic Party.

In 1902, VI Lenin published "What is to be Done?", which set the theoretical stage for the split of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party into the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks were the communists led by Lenin who eventually led the successful revolution of 1917. In "What is to be Done?", Lenin opens up by criticizing one of the Menshevik tendencies for right opportunism and economism.(4) He describes how he had to expand the essay to deal with all aspects of a group that wasn't even speaking the same language and often playing both sides of an issue. This is a great description of the rcp=u\$a's approach to theory. Of course, rcp=u\$a economism takes on a whole new

meaning among the exploiter nation in this country, where economic demands actually mean increased exploitation of the proletariat.

History of Struggle vs. Revisionism

While Maoists effectively split from Avakian's revisionism in the 1980's, our conditions leave us at a disadvantage compared to Lenin in that many still see the rcp=u\$a as representing Maoism because their populist politics gives them a greater public face in many areas (inside u.\$. prisons is one exception to this).

Despite volumes of criticisms of the rcp=u\$a's revisionism from the left, they have publicly responded to the Maoist Internationalist Movement only once. It was in 1994 to respond to a paper presented by MIM at a conference, "it argued that white workers as an economic-social grouping in the United States are not exploited, are part of the process of exploitation of the workers of the Third World and have no revolutionary interests. This is a wrong and counterrevolutionary idea." Clear as day, right? Too bad, the rcp=u\$a back tracks on this line and implies certain things about the white nation more in line with MIM when it is dealing with the oppressed. The RCP's fear of Maoism comes through in their discussion of supermax prisons where they cite vague statistics, but fail to reference the most thoroughly documented list of control units on the internet because it is produced by comrades affiliated with MIM (Prisons).

Combating revisionism is usually a frustrating task that eats up time that could be spent building the movement. While we hope to not have to spend much time on this particular group in the near future, we know that the struggle against revisionism is continuous. And ultimately it is one part of building a strong movement.

notes:

- (1) See the archive of the Crypto-Trotskyists page from etext*
- (2) While Lenin warned that there is no shortcut to identifying revisionism, MonkeySmashesHeaven has a pretty good cheat sheet for our times. see: Clues to help you find out if someone is a revisionist*
- (3) 2001 MIM Congress. Resolution on the "Draft Programme of the 'Revolutionary Communist Party, USA' May 2001"*
- (4) For a full discussion of "right" and "left" errors see MIM Theory 5: A Diet for a Small Red Planet.*

* * *

Oscar Grant: organization, line and strategy

by MIM(Prisons)

January 2010

As we marked the anniversary of the uprisings in Oakland that were sparked by the murder of unarmed Oscar Grant while face down on the ground by BART(local transit) police, no justice has been served. An anniversary vigil was held on New Year's 2010, but the crowds and energy had dissipated from a year ago. This may have been a result of weed and video games, but we think it may have been the left wing of white nationalism who did the most to defuse the resistance.

Anniversary Vigil

The vigil was held at the Fruitvale BART station where Oscar Grant was shot on New Year's 2009. Upon my arrival I saw police surveiling the vigil. I also saw news organizations with their cameras video taping. I had a rag covering my face partially to keep from being taped by pigs. The head of security, which was being run by the Nation of Islam (NOI), approached me and gave me a little trouble. Apparently they thought the rag on my face symbolized the acts of rebellion that took place last year in response to the murder and they didn't want a repeat. If they were concerned with the security of

protesters and not property they would not facilitate the pigs surveillance efforts.

Later, people met up at the Humanist Hall to continue the vigil for Oscar Grant. The pigs came sure enough, but what was interesting is that the same NOI person that approached me was hugging the pig "Negotiators" (which was written in big letters on their jackets) who showed up. This seemed to indicate a higher level of collusion between event "security" and the pigs than we saw last year with CAPE running around trying to keep people from confronting police or any other symbol of wealth and power. How are people supposed to organize safely in a space openly infiltrated by police? The same people who shot Oscar Grant in the back!? If groups like NOI and CAPE don't keep the pigs out then all they are doing is serving to pacify the people, not secure them.

The first speaker spoke what I feel to be a criticism of the people there. A divide and conquer tactic straight out of the government play book saying that people there had different agendas, as if we weren't there to support Oscar Grant and work for change. She criticized others "agendas" while preaching a pacifist line, and insisting that we be led by the Oscar Grant family in the fight for justice. By labeling others lines as "agendas" she tried to delegitimize lines opposed to pacifism, while pretending her agenda didn't exist. History has shown that the oppressor will not loosen their grip without the oppressed rising up in arms. This was the only significant event we know of to mark the anniversary and it was dominated by those who saw no need for fundamental change.

After that, the NOI ministers got up and preached a revolutionary gospel. One NOI minister made the point that its the gangster or thug that needs to be organized for revolution and that they will be the ones to fight and win freedom. On the surface this was the speech that resonated most with the MIM(Prisons) line, but the NOI and their offshoots like the New Black Panther Party have been consistently petty bourgeois in their practice and line since the murder of Malcolm X, despite rhetoric to attract the lumpen to their ranks.

The rcp=usa got up and talked about communism and atheism bringing a pseudo-anti-religious perspective to the debate. They said something very interesting. They said that we shouldn't criticize the movements but just get in there and lead the movement. This makes no sense. Criticism and self-criticism is at the root of dialectical materialism. Which is why the rcp=usa continues to fail to be seen as a viable vehicle for revolution.

The latest on the case are that the shooter, Johannes Mehserle, has been charged with murder, but the case has been moved from Oakland to Los Angeles. Mehserle is out on bail with the support of police unions that are backing his defense. So far there has been much to see as the case develops that has exposed the vast injustices of the system, but the battle to convict Mehserle itself is not so strategically important for us. The state has much more invested in the outcome of the case. A conviction would be the first murder conviction against a cop in the united States. A failure to convict could prove problematic for them, and the reverberations will likely now be in both Oakland and Los Angeles.

We encourage strategic legal battles as a form of struggle in order to expose the system and create room for the oppressed to live and organize. Simultaneously, we are clear that the injustice system is not fast nor even effective.

Organizational Lessons

What is more important is learning organizing lessons from what happened around the struggle for justice for Oscar Grant. Two detailed papers have been well-distributed on the topic. One is by a group of anonymous anarchist writers, another is by a self-proclaimed "Marxist" group called Advance the Struggle(A/S), that is focused on uniting the "working" class. Comically, the rcp=usa who got up to condemn analysis and criticism of the movement are outdone here by a group of self-proclaimed anarchists. Let us begin with the anarchist discussion, as we largely addressed their line in our original article on the riots.

The anarchist piece is mostly a story, and probably the most complete documentation of what went on those days in January 2009. Both papers did a thorough critique of the non-profit/reformist coalition turned police that we touched on last year. The Coalition Against Police Execution (CAPE) imposed its "security" on a large spontaneous movement. While this was an inappropriate role for them to assume, it should be noted that CAPE's organization gave it an advantage over the disorganized angry crowd. And while the anarchists recognized CAPE members as their friends in social life and A/S sees them as workers duped by non-profits funded by imperialism, they were really representing a clear class position of the petty bourgeoisie. They served to protect businesses and prevent conflicts with the police as a matter of principle not a strategy of struggle.

As the anarchists pointed out, riots (can) work. We can't get free by rioting, and in many cases riots end in more repression and no gains. They are not a strategy to be promoted as the anarchists do. But in this case they put more pressure on the state than hugging pigs, holding vigils and asking for "police oversight." What those nights represented was a budding system of justice outside of the established imperialist order. Meanwhile, the non-profit/reformist movement did much to pressure the existing institutions to prosecute Meserhile and reform the policing system to defuse independent justice. But if we want to stop the killing, what the oppressed need are their own institutions. An institution is something that is consistent that we can rely on. Not something we pray for every day and emerges in an eruption of undisciplined energy once every 5 years.

The anarchist authors are avowed focoists, claiming that "our actions create a contagious fever." But as we said at the time, "nights of Black youth roving the streets among groups of riot cops, being videotaped and snatched to prison cannot continue much longer." And to the anarchists disappointment, it did not. Power must be built and fought for, it is not something we can just reach out and grab. We promote a strategy that depends on deep political understanding among as broad a population as is sympathetic to revolutionary change. Advance the Struggle agrees with this, but their assessment of who is sympathetic is stuck in outdated dogma.

A/S opens their paper, "Justice for Oscar Grant: A Lost Opportunity?" claiming that the "working class people of Oakland... found an inadequate set of organizational tools at their disposal." Who are they talking about? It's not "workers" who are being murdered by pigs, it's oppressed nation youth. The anarchists at times also fall into this dogmatic analysis by talking of "those of us who toil in Oakland." Just because Oscar Grant had a job doesn't mean this is a battle between the workers and the bosses.

The most interesting critique in the A/S piece that we have not seen elsewhere is regarding the so-called "Revolutionary Communist Party - USA" (rcp=u\$a). Again the main point of A/S is that there was no vanguard in place to lead the movement for justice for Oscar Grant. Here they address the rcp=u\$a's lame attempts to play this role. They correctly criticize the rcp=u\$a for setting up the students they organized to fail, which had the effect of diffusing further militant organizing among oppressed nation youth because their leaders were in jail. Their vague, nonexistent, and false political line and failure to correctly organize for revolution plays an integral part in the imperialist plan to keep the people disorganized and divided.

As we mentioned last year, the Panthers were a common topic of discussion as the budding movement faced a leadership void. A/S made some correct analysis about the way the Panther legacy has been transformed into a justification for non-profit/charity type organizing. This is reinforced by founding and leading members who still get a lot of respect in the Bay Area. The anarchists also provide an elementary discussion of the Panthers in their paper.

While both groups of authors turn around and condemn nationalism, this experience demonstrates the need for it. Everyone lamented the lack of the BPP, the Maoist, Black nationalist vanguard of the late 1960's. Today we have the Nation of Islam dominating the role of Black nationalism. Nationalism is relevant because it is the oppressed nations that are targeted by police terrorism and concentration

camps. Nation-based organizing is the best path to get us away from the non-profiteering and the dogmatic "worker"ism that has so clearly muddled the waters in this period of struggle. The experiences in Oakland reinforce the Maoist class analysis and the importance for having one. The petty bourgeoisie has dominated the movement for justice for Oscar Grant, while white nationalist revolutionaries vie for influence from the sidelines.

notes:

Justice for Oscar Grant: A Lost Opportunity? by Advance the Struggle. 2009.

Unfinished Acts: January Rebellions. Oakland, California 2009.

* * *

On the Importance of Political Line

by MIM(Prisons)

February 2010

published in ULK Issue 13

A California comrade who has long thought we should do an issue criticizing the rcp=u\$a writes:

I disagree with MIM however on one fine point in the article where you state that "many still see the rcp=u\$a as representing Maoism because their populist politics gives them a greater public face in many areas (inside u\$ prisons is one exception to this)." Do you mean to imply that the rcp doesn't hold much sway in u\$ prisyns because the masses here know better? If this is the case then I would say no, they do appear to at the very least to have some kind of foothold in CA prisyns.

I've noticed more people than there used to be are familiar with the rcp's rag, but not many. Some even spew their distractionist rhetoric. Of course I debate them but there's only so much that can be said to those who already believe avakian to be the "great man of hystory."

Since the upcoming ULK will be centered on strategies & tactics, the exposing of the rcp's counterrevolutionary activities might be able to play some kind of role. They must be beat back to the hole from which they came! I hypothesize that the rcp is siphoning off many potential revolutionaries from inside the prisyns. Might this be MIM's assessment as well? The deadly rcp strategy of substituting eclecticism for dialectics is I believe at the heart of their strength and success. Would you agree?

A Missouri comrade also responded:

I wanted to briefly respond to something that comrade Wiawimawo said in the article Revisiting RCP Revisionism in ULK 12. The comrade said many of the readers of ULK are not grappling with the questions facing Maoism today. And those that cannot distinguish Maoism from right opportunism of groups like the rcp=u\$a have not yet grasped it.

I am not refuting what this comrade said, I just want to say that a lot of the readers lack the information and some have never been involved in revolutionary activity. We would hope that comrades would become inspired from reading ULK to go on to study harder and learn faster. But again, there is a lack of authentic material. I have quite a bit of material and none from the rcp=u\$a, so even I can't really argue against their line when I haven't read shit they've wrote. I haven't seen a Revolutionary Worker or Worker's World in years. The same for the Burning Spear.

At the same time, it is on us to teach those who will listen and I believe that ULK is doing a tremendous job and the Book to Prisoners Program is also a great resource.

In the last couple years, MIM(Prisons) has stepped in to re-establish the prevalence of Maoist literature available to the prison movement. This came after years of inconsistency as the Maoist Internationalist

Party - Amerika degenerated. The need for this literature is clear from this discussion. So supporters who can provide money or other resources to expand this work should reach out to us.

We agree with our CA comrade about the importance of combating revisionism as part of building a strong movement. While the author of that article was lamenting the need to spend time on such work, it would be idealist to expect otherwise. However, as our MO comrade points out, most of our readers are not familiar with the rcp=u\$a anyway. To focus an issue of our newsletter on them would give undo attention to the topic. An issue reviewing many different political lines would be more useful, as most readers will find lines that they have come across.

We do not believe that the prison masses know better than to follow the rcp=u\$a, that is why we thought it important to print that review. We do believe that MIM has had much more influence on the prison movement, despite its weak points. So MIM Thought is more likely to be identified with Maoism inside prisons than on the streets in the united \$tates where rcp=u\$a will be.

And yes, we agree that rcp=u\$a eclecticism serves its popularity. Even among prisoners, the hard line of MIM loses us many friends. But we aren't looking for friends, we're looking for real allies who will stand strong for the revolutionary road.

The point made by Wiawimawo was not to say that you must understand the difference between MIM (Prisons) and rcp=u\$a in particular, but rather that you must understand why the MIM line is correct in general. If you don't you will fall for the eclecticism of rcp=u\$a or any other snake oil salesman that comes along.

Certainly, rcp=u\$a is recruiting people who might have otherwise worked with the Maoist movement. That could be said about a number of groups out there. But we aren't too worried about that. We are confident in our political line, which makes us strong. Other groups will come and go, or if they have state funding they will stay and stagnate. But only the correct ideological line can build a new prison movement that has real power.

Review of rcp Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America

by cipactli of United Struggle from Within

March 2011

published in ULK Issue 13

I was recently able to read a new publication which was published by the rcp-USA titled "Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America" (draft proposal) from the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

I have been at many prisons in California where I came across rcp literature, including its newspaper 'Revolution.' While at first glance this rcp literature may seem "progressive," and a novice revolutionary may even think the rcp is fighting in the best interest of the masses, a closer look into its political line may surprise many prisoners who are developing their political stance.

The society that U.\$ prisoners dream of is one that turns the pyramid of power upside down where those on the bottom of today's totem pole are the ones who have a say in running a society based on new democracy as was seen in Mao's China where landless peasants were freed from the chains of oppressive feudalism and colonialism. The prisoner in today's capitalist Amerika understands that such a society will not come easy and we learn this valuable lesson by attempting to change the oppressive environment behind prison walls. We learn 'grass roots' organizing and how hard it is to kick start even simple resistance to injustice on a micro-level.

As we learn these lessons we also begin to see what it will take to change a society, combat the

capitalist and build the revolution. One of the key components of transforming society is a vanguard party; this is common sense as we know from the prison experience that issues that are not coordinated often prove disastrous. So on a large scale effort like transforming society we can see how a political party would be needed to lead the masses on the right path to liberation on all fronts. Understanding this we often meet others in prison who seek out political parties and begin the arduous work of studies in all the revolutionary groups' theories, their political line, so that we can determine who is the vanguard party, who has the correct political theory on what it will take to reach liberation here in the belly of the beast.

I began to really study the rcp literature as it is a party that claims to be struggling on behalf of the people. Along my path of really analyzing the literature of the rcp is where I stumbled upon its stance on the oppressed nations' right to self-determination.

The portion of this constitution that is of concern is "Article 11. Regions, localities, and basic institution, Section 3. minority and formerly oppressed nationalities." This section starts off pointing out the crimes and injustices that were perpetrated against oppressed nationalities by the former government of the USA. It explains how in the future socialist state they believe elections and legislature would work, among other new rights, in the interest of the oppressed. Subsection "A. African-Americans" correctly states that under a new socialist state Black people would have the right to self-determination all the way up to the right to secede and form a separate country outside a new socialist republic if Black people so choose. This is correct. The ability for an oppressed nation to govern themselves is a right that all should have under a socialist society.

Under Subsection "B. Mexican-Americans" the guarantee to the right of self-determination up to the right to secede does not exist. Rather in subsection B2 it states:

"Relations with Mexico, and policy with regard to the former southwest region of the imperialist USA, shall, from the time of the founding and in the first few years of the new socialist republic in North America, take into account the nature of the society and government - and the level and character of revolutionary struggle - in Mexico, as well as the actual extent of territory which has been liberated through the revolution which led to the defeat and dismantling of the imperialist state of the USA and the founding of the new socialist republic in North America. At the same time, the necessary consideration shall be given to the situation in the world as a whole, in determining how to proceed with regard to this region. In this over all context and also taking into account the sentiments and aspirations of the people in the region, in particular those of Mexican origin and descent, the question of whether to return at least parts of this region to Mexico, and/or whether there should be established, within parts of this region, a country that is separate from both Mexico and the New Socialist Republic in North America, shall be taken up by the government of the New Socialist Republic in North America."

The above portion of the rcp document is an incorrect line. The fact that rcp feels that once a "socialist republic" is established that the Mexican people would not be entitled to their right to full self-determination but rather their right to secession would be "taken up by the government of the New Socialist Republic in North America" as they put it is simply wrong. All communists should uphold the right to self-determination! The Leninist principle of self-determination is an essential aspect for a socialist party in general and would surely be a requirement for a vanguard party in particular.

The rcp has also stated the same line for the "Native Americans" - that if it took power the rcp itself would decide on the future for "Native Americans" but would allow "autonomous zones" for the "Native Americans" within an rcp socialist republic.

This line will prove to be a grave error for any party that sets its sights on attaining state power. National liberation struggles will not cease to exist until oppressed nations acquire full liberation - regardless of who is in power, denying their freedom. Lenin understood this and thus promoted self-determination as he understood that the basis for revolution is liberty at its core.

What seems to be lost on the rcp is that the oppressed nations, whether Latino, First Nations or any other, are not going to put their lives on the line to transform this society only to allow themselves to be ruled by what the rcp feels is best. Once oppressed nations see a New Socialist government is truly in the interest of the people it is for them to decide to join this republic. The vast majority of the land today is First Nation/Mexican land and for rcp to state they'll decide on who lives where is ludicrous. This position is as ridiculous as if the oppressed East Indians and other Asians living in South Africa were to create a party, gain power and then tell the native "Black" South Africans "we'll decide if you can secede or where you'll live"! This colonization is incorrect and does not represent a righteous revolutionary line.

The liberation of Aztlán (what is currently the southwestern U.\$.) under an all Latino socialist government must be the primary objective of all Brown revolutionaries in North America. By showing its true colors, rcp demonstrates once more that many parties claim to fight for all, but in the end don't truly seek liberation for the oppressed nations, as MIM has correctly taught. It is the oppressed nations ourselves who must seek self-determination, this can only be done by using Maoism as the primary vehicle.

We need political parties that guarantee the Leninist principal of self-determination! we need to build Maoist parties led by and for the oppressed nations! Long live the national liberation struggles worldwide.

MIM(Prisons) responds: We have not reviewed this rcp=u\$a document but this criticism is consistent with our readings of other material by this organization which fakes left but actually opposes the liberation of oppressed nations, instead favoring the struggles of the Amerikan white oppressor nation for a bigger piece of unearned imperialist pie.

Based on this comrade's review, we can condemn the chauvinism of the rcp=u\$a that is writing the plans for some utopian white socialist state, while asserting that the future of Aztlán is uncertain. If anyone's future is uncertain it is the hundreds of millions of Amerikans whose nation must be destroyed as part of the anti-imperialist struggle. It is hard for us to imagine how this will happen without the indigenous people of the southwestern U.\$ already being well onto the socialist road. If we're going to predict the future, we should be thinking about how the socialist republics of Aztlán, New Afrika and countless First Nation states will determine the form of transition for a large Amerikan population who is generally opposed to the socialist project.

The land question is no more settled for New Afrika than it is for Aztlán, and certainly not more so than for First Nations. We support all nationalism, including struggles for independent territory, that is opposed to imperialism.

* * *

Pigs Cannot Make Revolution, but the Third World Masses Can Smash U\$ Imperialism!

by USW C-4 of United Struggle from Within

June 2011

rcp=U\$A chair Bob Avakian once again sets his sails towards billowy clouds in the May 29, 2011 issue of 'Revolution' newspaper, the official mouthpiece of the rcp=u\$a, in which the party leader once more makes the case for a socialist revolution in the U.\$ with the labor aristocracy at the helm. He puts forth this idea in a talk broken down into series of articles titled: "Birds cannot give birth to crocodiles, but humanity can soar beyond the horizon." He states that: "...in imperialist countries in particular it is only with major qualitative change in the situation - that is, the eruption of a revolutionary crisis and the emergence of a revolutionary people in the millions and millions - that it becomes possible to wage the all out struggle for the seizure of power..."

To begin with, it is important that we point out that socialist revolution will not reach the bastions of imperialism until the Third World proletariat and peasantry rises in the billions to first eject the imperialists, subsequently defeating the compradors and then mobilizing itself to smash the imperialists on their home turf with the help of the oppressed nation lumpen of the internal semi-colonies. These oppressed nation lumpen who are currently situated within the internal semi-colonies, i.e. barrios/ghettos/reservations of amerika and it's prisons, are the only people in the U.\$. with any kind of revolutionary potential whatsoever!

So we don't know where all these "millions of millions" of revolutionary people that Avakian loves to harp about will be drawn from, unless he's counting on the labor aristocracy to take up arms and call itself "comrade."

Something else worth nothing here in the chairman's flawed war thesis, if you could even call it that, is that this economist/opportunist deviation is not just owed to the RCP's failure to acknowledge the outcome of a proper class analysis, but also, because of their erroneous line on the self-determination rights of the oppressed nations. The rcp-u\$a's line is that all nationalism is bourgeoisie, hence reactionary. More pointedly they don't think there's any nations within the United States that need liberating, with a possible exception for the Black Nation.

The party leader goes on to talk about how important it is for the struggle not to settle into "protractedness" because according to Avakian "that would very much be a recipe for defeat." The chairman then makes some completely ludicrous and out of context comparisons when he describes how the Maoist concept of a protracted Peoples War is no longer a viable solution in the Third World and certainly is not suited for U.\$. conditions. Well, he's certainly right that in regards to the United States this is not a viable solution. However, with respect to the former, Avakian attributes this to a lack of "finiteness" in the struggle, instead, pushing for one big decisive battle. I assume here that Mr. Avakian is referring to the now defunct Maoist struggles of Nepal and Tamil of which the rcp=u\$a has been very critical.

The fact that the rcp=u\$a would denigrate various revolutionary Third World struggles as "too much of things unto themselves" (which is also a common rcp-u\$a criticism of the Chinese Cultural Revolution) is a straight up disrespect to the Third World masses dying daily at the hands of imperialism and it's comprador cartels, as well as delegitimizing to the real science of revolutions: M-L-M.

No Mr. Avakian, the fact that the Nepalese and Tamil struggle has not brought the proletariat victory has nothing to do with the failure of the Maoist concept of a protracted peoples war, rather failure in these struggles can be directly linked to revisionist leadership of the rcp-u\$a sort!

Continuing with this bourgeois-centric analysis, the party leader then goes into some detail concerning the crucialness of public opinion building and cultural work in general when it comes to preparing the "masses" for revolution. However, and this is where you have to watch him, he gets sneaky and besides already counting the labor aristocracy as proletariat, he attempts to smuggle broad sections of the petit-bourgeoisie into the revolution and eventually the dictatorship, thereby killing the dictatorship of the proletariat before it's ever even born. This is what he says: "there is also, very importantly, the problem of the development of the necessary political and ideological conditions for the initiation of this struggle for the seizure of power - and the organized expression of the political and ideological influence of the vanguard - among the basic masses but also, to the greatest degree possible at every point along the way, among other strata of the people as well, in order to have the best possible basis for carrying forward the struggle for power once it has been launched and not, in fact to be contained and crushed, but to have the best possible basis to 'break out of encirclement.'"

It is true, historically speaking, that once socialist revolutions had begun and proletarian victory was within reach, hoards of the enemy class have come over to the side of the revolution. However, it has never been the intent of the vanguard to focus their efforts so ferociously on the enticement of parasites as Afakian and the rcp-u\$a so incessantly advocate for. It was however and remains so the principal task of the revolutionaries, to unite all who can be united, i.e. the truly oppressed and exploited.

If sections of the bourgeoisie so wish to either, (a) commit class suicide and join the revolution or (b) see that victory is inevitable for the proletariat and it's allies and decide it better to be on the winning side of the war, then so much the better. But neither Marx nor Engels, Lenin, Stalin or Mao ever sought to actively recruit pigs who were not dedicated to the revolution and neither should we.

If anything, the "middle" and "broad strata" would only be too happy to swell the ranks of the imperialists armed forces and smash the internal semi-colonies to pieces; they know which side their bread is buttered on.

Indeed, seasoned readers of Kautsky's, I mean Avakian and the RCP's vile distortions of M-L-M have come to understand that whenever Avakian and company casually, indirectly or directly throw out the terms "middle" and "broad strata" what they're really trying to emphasize is the reliance and inclusion of the bought off traitorous sections of the population into and with the revolution. Notice how they consciously exclude the true element of change from the equation the Third World masses.

The rest of the chairman's article basically rehashes some of the points already made such as work in the cultural sphere prior to and during the seizure of power, the importance of the "one, two, knockout blow" to the bourgeoisie which serves to counteract the problem of "finiteness." And of course, he can't emphasize enough the reliance of the revolution on the "middle" and "broad strata". And oh yea his deep lamentations that white people have been turned against the oppressed by way of propaganda, and all that's needed for their return to the side of the revolution is arduous public opinion building.

It is fitting that Bob Avakian's piece is concluded by his making comparisons between Mao's China, pre-liberation and the United States today, drawing parallels between the middle strata of the revolutionary base areas in the Chinese countryside (the better off peasants) and the decadent labor aristocracy which the rcp-u \$a knows and loves today.

Truly, Bob Avakian is delusional.