

More Accounting on the Labor Aristocracy

REVIEW:

WORKERS WORLD

OCTOBER 20 & OCTOBER 27

Workers World Party
55 W. 17 St.
NY, NY 10011

by MC5

MIM reviewed the CPUSA's paper, People's Weekly World, and the Workers World (WW) paper at the same time. As a result, we notice that the subject areas of both papers are fairly similar. WW gives more attention to international and gay issues, but both papers tail after the insecurities of bought-off workers in the imperialist countries. The Workers World Party describes itself this way: "JOIN US. Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples — Black and white, Latino, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian and gay, disabled, working, unemployed and students."

Like PWW, the WW opposes NAFTA, supports the players in the sports strikes, makes solidarity with Cuba a special task above solidarity with other Third World countries and believes the conditions of the white working class are ever-declining. MIM does not agree with PWW or WW on any of these issues.

THE \$10 AN HOUR DEMAND

Typically, the WW does not explain anywhere how it is going to achieve its demand for a \$10 minimum wage for workers of the whole world. It only talks about a \$10 an hour minimum wage for U.S. workers, specifically in the context of a Michigan campaign.(1) Just as the bourgeois candidates ask each other how they are going to pay for more prisons, cops, war and other programs, we must ask the WW how it is possible for U.S. workers to receive a \$10 minimum wage without joining in an alliance with the imperialists to oppress other workers abroad. What the WW is doing with this \$10 an hour thing is like the bourgeois politicians' promising tax cuts without telling how they are going to pay for them. It's just vague opportunism.

MIM does not support a \$10 an hour minimum wage. Of course that will come some day under socialism, but for the immediate future, such a demand only stokes up the chauvinism of American workers who will make a deal with the imperialists to share in the exploitation of Third World workers. Even if all the profits of the U.S. imperialists were re-distributed to American workers, the imperialists still could not afford a \$10 an hour minimum wage without sucking even more superprofits out of the Third World. Hence, MIM does not make this sort of demand at this time and instead our first

priority is redistributing U.S. profits to the Third World, because that is where they came from in the first place.

NO EXPLOITATION OF THE WHITE WORKING CLASS

MIM proved this idea in MIM Theory 1 and subsequently (including in this section), but let's take this opportunity again to undo the distortions of the "Left" and fight for some sense of proportion. Here we use figures previously unpublished by MIM.

The figures on wealth in the United States show, as MIM explained before, not that a class of new trillionaires is created every year, but that the relevant surplus value total extracted by capitalists is never enough to create more than one trillionaire a year (but it never happens that way because then there would be nothing left over for other capitalists), probably something like \$500 billion or less. According to the *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1993* "fixed reproducible tangible wealth," including nonresidential equipment, nonresidential structures, residential property and government property

MIM asks Workers World: How is it possible for U.S. workers to receive a \$10 minimum wage without joining in an alliance with the imperialists to oppress other workers abroad?

increased \$510 billion adjusted for inflation between 1990 and 1991. \$96 billion in that growth of "gross stock" was in government wealth. Other parts of that wealth are mostly owned by the middle classes. That means the growth in gross wealth (which is different from net wealth created) does not all go to the capitalist class, which in this society is dominated by private capital instead of state capital. Once again the evidence points to the surplus-value extracted by capitalists being less than \$500 billion a year in categories relevant to exploitation of white workers.

Of course, if we were to look at the surplus-value sucked in by the white workers as white collar workers in government, advertising, the military, banking and so on, we would be talking about over \$2 trillion a year. We aren't counting that \$2 trillion because it is going to the white workers and we are concerned with whether it can be said capitalists exploit white workers.

We go through these exercises because looking at the same pie it is possible to do different accountings. The same slice of pie can be counted under different names or concepts

invented for accounting purposes. The Department of Commerce offers us at least two more of interest not previously discussed by MIM.

One way of looking at the pie talks about corporate profits and net interest as separate categories. Looking at the 1990 pie of \$4.46 trillion, the Department of Commerce sees \$819 billion of net interest and corporate profits, mostly net interest. Most of this actually ends up in the hands of the middle classes, including the labor aristocracy. Yet it is another way of setting an upper limit on surplus value relevant to our calculations of whether or not the white working class is exploited.

If you don't look at net interest and corporate profits and instead look at things in a different stage, like after the corporate profits have been distributed, then you get a second way of accounting. There was \$124 billion in dividends in 1990. That shows what happens to profits after paying taxes and leaving some around the company to invest. MIM has already shown that the capitalists only own about half the stocks, so they may receive about half the dividends and even 100% of \$124 billion going to capitalists is definitely no sign of white working class exploitation, as we showed in MIM Theory 1. Then if we count people's savings accounts, bonds and pensions, we get \$721 billion in "personal interest." MIM has already detailed in MIM Notes how the largest pension funds are worker-owned. This accounting does not account for inflation from year to year, so this category of "personal interest" is also not very promising for revealing much surplus-value being extracted by the capitalists from white workers.(2) The surplus-value is easily accounted for by exploitation of Third World workers and oppressed nation workers within U.S. borders.

Perhaps the best accounting is the most simple, and it is made possible by figures released in the *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994*. These figures give us a look at the bourgeoisie roughly speaking, because the cut-off the government chose to use also includes some people in the middle-classes (and of course the government didn't set out to do an accounting of the "bourgeoisie.")

The government looked at the "gross assets" of everybody who has "gross assets" worth more than \$600,000. All capitalists must have substantial "gross assets" unless they control production through the state, which is not the main approach of capitalists here within U.S. borders. On the other hand, not everyone who has large gross assets has high "net worth," which accounts for debts and losses. A large portion of people in the above-\$600,000 gross asset category actually had negative net worth, as shown right in the government table. Yet again, people allowed to roll the dice by the banks may have negative net worth one year and positive net worth the next. One such person is Donald Trump, who has not escaped speculation concerning his net worth being very low or negative at times.

In any case, if you think about people with \$600,000 in gross assets, it's conceivable at an average profit rate of 8%, a person would obtain \$48,000 a year. After inflation and taxes and supporting family, we might think of this as a good cut-off

point number: the cut-off between having to work and being able to live just from owning things. In a corporate capitalist society like U.S. society, this is a distinguishing feature of the capitalist class. Capitalists here may choose to work, but they don't have to because they would survive just by owning things.

The one drawback of what we do with this favors our critics. We count some people in the middle class by using the gross asset definition instead of "net worth." Actually for many with gross assets greater than \$600,000, some or all of that \$48,000 has to go to paying interest on debts. These people aren't really capitalists, but we don't want anyone to say we undercount the number of capitalists or the surplus-value we calculate, so we include the people with low or negative net worth.

This government definition counts about 3.5 million people, many who aren't millionaires. Their net worth totals under \$5 trillion according to the *Statistical Abstract*, so let's round up to \$5 trillion for our final calculation just to make calculations and to flatter our critics further.

The \$5 trillion is one part of the puzzle. The other part we need is the profit rate on capital, the rate of return capitalists get just for owning things.

Luckily for us, by both bourgeois economic assumptions and Marxist economic assumptions, the interest rate is a good indicator of the average rate of return on capital. The reason is that capitalists invest where they can make money. The interest rate tends to reflect the average profit rate because capitalists will borrow money whenever they can make more profits than they pay in interest on borrowed money. They keep borrowing money until they can't find anymore places to make profit exceeding the interest rate. By doing this, they bid up the interest rate to be something like an average profit rate. This is another way of saying the capitalists are willing to loan out money to other capitalists based on supply and demand, so the interest rate will tend to reflect the average profit rate.

In recent months, the "prime rate" of interest has been around 8%. Mortgages are around 8%. As long as we don't think the rate is 80% because we are from Mars, like some "leftists," it won't matter too much whether we use 6% or 10% as our interest rate. In actuality, inflation is 3-4%, which cuts into that, so the real interest rate is lower than 8% per year.

The interest rate is the second part of the puzzle we need here. If the interest rate is 8% and we assume no inflation, then the capitalists with \$5 trillion rake in \$400 billion a year in surplus-value. If the rate is 10 percent, they get \$500 billion. In actuality, a realistic estimate is probably closer to \$300 billion, given inflation. In MIM Theory 1, and again in this issue, we showed it is easy to account for \$300 billion just from discrimination against non-white workers within U.S. borders. There is no way to see any net surplus-value coming from white workers as a class.

DIVIDING UP THE BOOTY

Even with figures larger than \$500 billion for surplus-value — extracted by capitalists for themselves and not paid to white workers in advertising and so on — we have already

shown elsewhere that a majority of white workers cannot be exploited. If we take all of that \$500 billion we originally discussed in the section above on "gross assets" and re-distribute it to 250 million U.S. residents, there will be \$2,000 for every person. There will also be no growth in housing, government or workplace property by that means of accounting. If the actual figure is more like \$100 billion, then there is only \$400 a year for every person to re-distribute.

From such calculations we see that giving the entirety of the surplus in wealth to the Third World in re-distribution still would not come close to cutting the inequality between imperialist countries and oppressed countries. If we go further and cut the salaries of the top 5% of the population by two-thirds so that their income is more like that of ordinary people, we might gather another \$350 billion a year. If we go after the top fifth of the population, we can squeeze out about \$700 billion a year.(3) This would mean some very serious political egalitarianism not likely under imperialism.

SPACE-ALIEN RULE

What the Workers World Party is doing only ends up stoking up the economic demands of workers in a vague sort of way without explaining the economics of socialism. The workers are likely to turn around and ask the imperialists for \$10 an hour to join in exploiting the Third World. The Amerikan workers will not attempt to carry out the above redistribution.

Still, say the workers and imperialists suddenly agreed to a completely equal redistribution of income, or — more realistically — space aliens landed in the United States and through absolutely superior force imposed egalitarianism. MIM would go to these space aliens and suggest that a \$10 an hour *maximum* wage within U.S. borders would be a good first step forward given the history of social relations on our planet, which the space aliens might not know about.

If we take the U.S. GNP and set aside a realistic part for health care benefits and investment in the means of production, then we can have approximately \$4 trillion a year to distribute to workers in wages. How many could we hire for \$10 an hour? If people work 30-hour weeks 50 weeks a year, that will be \$15,000 a year. That means we could hire 267 million at \$10 an hour, in addition to the medical sector and other workers we provide for. This leaves no money for additional programs in the Third World itself for reparations owed to the Third World. That would be a serious drawback of our proposed plan for the space aliens to implement. The oppressed peoples should not have to go to the United Snakes to collect their reparations.

On the other hand, right now, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, only about 120 million have jobs. If we had 267 million jobs at \$10 an hour, we could take care of the unemployment of the United States and open the borders to give jobs to many immigrants — a kind of reparations program, not the only kind and not necessarily the best kind, but a step in the correct direction. Chances are that with that many people working, and working hard thanks to the space alien slave-drivers, a person's \$15,000 would go a lot farther than it

does now, as people get paid for shuffling paper and owning things — welfare handouts for the rich and the labor aristocracy. Economic development throughout the world might be spurred in a socialist way through the establishment of a maximum wage in formerly imperialist Amerika under enlightened communist space-alien rule.

Nonetheless, the above is an interesting arithmetic exercise, but it does not address political realities, since there are no all-powerful communist space invaders to ally with. It is difficult for MIM to see a glimmer of socialism from what WW says, but if WW agreed to \$10 an hour as the maximum wage for Americans, MIM might also agree to \$10 an hour as the minimum wage. Usually, MIM is just in favor of "from

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each according to ability, to each according to work," and no pay for just owning things, for the first stage of socialism. The space aliens idea would be much further advanced.

In general, the WW shares with most of the "Left" the incorrect idea that Amerikan workers are exploited. What the social- democrats, Trotskyists, crypto-Trotskyists, neo-Trotskyists and CPUSA all have in common is a mythology of the white proletariat. This means putting together half-baked analyses and half-truths to sustain a sentimental view of white workers as oppressed.

THE SOCIAL-CHAUVINIST STATISTICAL ARSENAL

One of the more valiant attempts in backing this white proletarian mythology appears here:

"In 1993 the U.S. economy was in an upswing. Official unemployment dropped to 6.4% from 7.4% the previous year. The overall economy grew by 3%.

"Yet annual income for the median working family dropped by \$300. And a million more people sank below the official poverty line.

"The median income is the one right in the middle. It's the most typical. Half the households have higher incomes, half have lower.

"Last year confirms a longer downward trend. Since 1989, the median annual income has decreased by \$2,344, or 7% of total family income. The U.S. Census Bureau released these numbers Oct. 6."(4)

MIM appreciates this attempt at analysis, which is all too rare. Perhaps the collapse of the Soviet Union and much phony

socialism has some people in WW and the PWW using their own brain cells for once.

The above is the best our "Left" can do in defeating MIM's analysis. The last bit is the single most effective statistic in the arsenal opposing us. Let's look at this in more detail.

First, WW mentions the unemployment figure and concedes the possibility given by the government that unemployment actually went down. This is better than what some "leftists" would do: just ignore the unemployment rate without believing any figures and still manage to believe that the unemployment rate is always increasing. Obviously that is not possible because once you get to imagining 100% unemployment it's not possible to fantasize about any further degradation of white workers, so good for the WW for recognizing the possibility that unemployment does not always go up.

Second, poverty is still confined to the bottom fifth of the population, which is disproportionately oppressed nationalities and single women.

With regard to this bottom fifth, MIM does have considerable evidence that its position has gotten worse in recent years. National oppression is largely centered in that bottom fifth and MIM champions the people in that group. Average U.S. income goes up while the income of the bottom fifth can and does go down. Where MIM disagrees with the other organizations is that MIM does not believe it is possible to stand for the majority of people within U.S. borders without selling out the bottom fifth, not to mention the more abundant proletariat outside U.S. borders. This also has the implication that democracy, or majority rule within U.S. borders, is infeasible for progressives. We must instead insist on majority rule without borders, majority rule for the Third World laboring masses. Right now we have majority rule within the white nation determining the rules for the governments peoples everywhere.

The strategy of obtaining a majority for elections or independent movements within U.S. borders necessarily means that the movement is not anti-imperialist. MIM is only interested in movements that can be sustained as anti-imperialist movements in line with the interests of the international proletariat. That is one reason we support the maximum wage idea as superior to WW's minimum wage idea. The more immigrants U.S. residents come in contact with and have surrounding them, the greater the chances a really strong and dominant proletariat can form within U.S. borders. For that matter, that is another reason to hold the internationalist bourgeoisie to its free trade rhetoric and never ally with the anti-NAFTA, anti-GATT Amerika-first bourgeoisie as the CPUSA and WWP do. The U.S. residents will never develop a dominating proletarian consciousness without more open borders.

We also support reparations to the Third World countries in their countries and not just by opening the borders to share the wealth with those who walk in. This is a priority for us before various demands of the white nation working class.

Finally, even if we grant the WW its best statistic, we do not support forming a coalition with the people of the 50th percentile to get their 7% back. Even if the median is down 7% over four years that does not make the 50th percentile people

interested in revolution. They just want their goodies back like in the old days of imperialism. This year, they think they want to cut welfare and keep immigrants' children out of school. That way they think they will get their 7% back. And if we encourage the labor aristocracy of the imperialist countries to think about its 7%, that is what it is going to do, try to shave it off the hides of genuinely oppressed people.

As it turns out, that figure on the median is bound to get a lot of play in upcoming months, so let's look at it carefully. One thing misleading about household or family income is that it does not account for how many wage-earners are in the family or household. If divorce or death rates affect this from year to year, the median family income figure will change from year to year without meaning anything in incomes changed. The figure also can't account for trends in family structure and it arbitrarily defines "primary families" as the only object of study. It turns out that between 1985 and 1993, the size of households and families went down.⁽⁵⁾ With fewer people in households and families and the number of single-person households and families rising, of course the median household and family income is going to go down.

What we really want to know is the median of individual workers in 1989 and 1993, adjusted for inflation. When we look at men, we do see a decline. However, female full-time year-round workers did not see a statistically significant decline in income between 1989 and 1993 and their incomes as individual workers have increased dramatically since 1970.⁽⁶⁾ More importantly, the number of female workers went from 53.03 million in 1989 to 54.61 million in 1993, while the number and percentage of male workers working has stayed pretty much the same. There were 64.32 million male workers in 1989 and 64.7 million employed in 1993. In fact, the participation rate in employment by male workers with less than a high school education increased between 1985 and 1991.⁽⁷⁾

The figures on male and female participation rates by education level also bring up another problem and a weakness of using median figures. If there are ten people and only three work one year and then seven out of ten work the next year, the median income can go down, but some people will have incomes for the first time. That is one way average incomes can go up while median incomes go down, besides the usual mechanism of the rich getting richer and the middle getting poorer. When it comes to the revolutionary consciousness of white nation workers in their alliance with imperialism, workers employed for the first time may bring down the median figures but they are not likely to be in a revolutionary mood. From their perspective, these new workers think their position has improved and in some sense, they are right because overall a higher percentage of the white nation is employed while the median goes down.

No one contends that average per capita income figures are going down. The latest figures still show them going up — just slower than they used to in the 1950s and 1960s.⁽⁸⁾ Furthermore, many misleading statistics used by the social-chauvinist "left" discuss a decline in hourly wages excluding benefits, but the index of compensation including benefits has

always increased. Even between 1989 and the 1993, which is the selection of years the social-chauvinists like to talk about lately because of the recession, compensation including benefits (employment cost index) increased 20.2%!(9) Finally, between 1989 and 1993 even one index that the social-democrat chauvinists like to talk about increased — the share of total income going to employees as salaries and benefits. It went from 73.0% to 73.4%.(10) The remaining 26.6% of the pie goes to the petty-bourgeoisie that works for itself or on its own property, the middle classes' dividends and interest payments, and the capitalists' share of the surplus-value.

In any case, 7% just isn't going to make a class revolutionary. A 7% decline every year over 10 or 20 years would make a difference, but the 1980s saw gains for all but the bottom fifth, so the middle classes still think this is a temporary problem and they are correct.

Related to this, we are disturbed to see that the CPUSA, the Workers World and the Spartacist League could not use Lenin's term "labor aristocracy" even to refer to the baseball players, who are members of the labor aristocracy, petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie. To these fake communist groups, the baseball players are all just exploited workers. At least David North's Trotskyist group said the baseball players were the "most pampered workers," but even those Trotskyists supported the baseball players. MIM for its part does not care. It's like watching a battle between GM and one of its glass or steel suppliers as they haggle over price. The international proletariat

does not care about the outcome of the baseball players strike except in a Hollywood entertainment sense.

In contrast with its stuff on U.S. economic conditions, the WW articles on proposition 187, Haiti, Iraq, Korea and Turkey are more reasonable. As in the case of the PWW though, the good work is just the lure. It is an attempt to mislead the international proletariat into being used by the Amerikan labor aristocracy. What the one hand offers, the other takes away in chauvinist class demands via NAFTA, the minimum wage and general class collaboration with imperialism. MIM invites the WW members to bag WW and the reactionary part of its line and join MIM.

Notes:

1. WW, Oct. 20, 1994, p. 5.
2. *The World Almanac and Book of Facts* 1993, p. 130, is one place to obtain this common Department of Commerce accounting.
3. Based on chart 722, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 1993, p. 463, and GNP figures in the same section repeated in several tables.
4. WW, Oct. 20, 1994, p. 3.
5. *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 1994, p. 58.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 473.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
9. *Ibid.*, 431.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 459.



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A SPIRAL TRAJECTORY: THE FAILURE AND SUCCESS OF COMMUNIST DEVELOPMENT

Workers World: Inconsistent Socialists or Consistent Opportunists?

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by MC49

September, 1992

The Hoover Institution, a right-wing think-tank, calls Workers World Party's (WWP) political line a "bizarre mixture of Trotskyism and Maoism." (1) MIM thinks that's pretty accurate. However, Trotskyism plus Maoism equals opportunism, so perhaps the blend of contradictory views is more repulsive than bizarre. MIM hopes this is not the case, and encourages WWP and its members to drop Trotskyism in order to advance socialism.

WWP's politics are more muddled than consistently bad. The 4/16/92 *Workers World* newspaper (WW) played Peru's declaration of open fascism on page 8, NOW's pseudo-feminist march on Washington on page 1, and white working-class wage struggles on pages 1, 2, and 3. Doing this seemed to show that WWP was more interested in first-world reform than in Peru's real-world revolution. The next week, however, WW put Peru on page 1. WWP's schizophrenia manifests itself not only in their twin support for national liberation and the Amerikan labor aristocracy, but in their stance, or lack thereof, on the Maoist revolution in Peru: "Revolutionary groups like Shining Path and Tupac Amaru have rallied support in the countryside and urban areas. Although their programs differ, these groups challenge the legitimacy of a system that keeps the people in dire conditions. They call for the ouster of U.S. imperialism from Peru, and the overthrow of bourgeois politicians who do the bidding of the rich against the poor." (2)

Not only does WW not take sides between the competing factions (showing their usual lack of concern about finding the correct line to lead revolution), they refuse to tell their readers HOW Tupac Amaru's revisionist program "differs" from the best way forward: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism. Furthermore, WW does not bother to mention that "the armed organization Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path)" (PCP) is Maoist. (3)

Perhaps WW is embarrassed that the PCP has found the best way forward, while WW still can't—or won't—make up its mind.

Furthermore, while north Korea (DPRK)'s government is and has been providing the Peruvian regime with weapons and assistance in training its counterinsurgent forces, WWP has been voicing its support for both north Korea's government and the PCP. "The Peruvian army...can rely on advice, logistical and military support from the US, Soviet Union, Germany, France, Israel, North Korea, Argentina and other countries." (4) With "friends" like Workers World, the PCP doesn't need enemies.

WW reports on "mass public celebrations of the 80th birthday of President Kim Il Sung, the leader of the Korean Revolution." At this celebration, "Sam Marcy, chairperson of Workers World Party, led the highest-level delegation from the United States...In addition to Marcy, other participants from the U.S. included Scott Marshall of the Communist Party [and] James Warren and Estelle Debates of the Socialist Workers Party...Socialism is alive in People's Korea." (5) Unlike WW, the SWP and CPUSA are consistent. Both condemn the Maoist revolution in Peru and support its enemies in north Korea and the ex-USSR. (6) Again, *Workers World* tries to have it both ways.

WWP supports "the Peruvian revolutionary movement" because it is "a national liberation struggle...an important battle for the workers and oppressed peoples of the world, just as the revolutions in Vietnam and Cuba were." (7) WWP's analysis fails to recognize how Maoism makes the Peruvian revolution an improvement over the other two. Capitalism was restored without a fight in both Vietnam and Cuba. The Maoist PCP knows that class struggle will continue after it seizes state power. Despite this important oversight, WWP correctly supports the PCP. WWP challenges other leftists to do the same: "In the worldwide struggle for liberation and self-determination, there is a wide spectrum of viewpoints and strategies among the hundreds of organizations. The question, though, always invariably boils down to: which side are you on?" (7)

MIM challenges the Workers World Party to answer their own question. Which side are you on, *Workers World*? Are you on the side of the Amerikan labor aristocracy, or are you on the side of the Third World proletariat? Are you on the side of Trotskyism or the Castroite Tupac Amaru, which fail to liberate people and which instead attacks successful movements from the sidelines, or are you for

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national liberation and the PCP? Are you on the side of the DPRK and exUSSR, or are you for the Peruvians fighting a people's war against those countries' weapons and training? MIM encourages you to take clear stands on these and all other issues. If you opt for Trotskyism, revolutionaries will know to look elsewhere for leadership. If you opt for Maoism, MIM looks forward to working with you in the future.

Notes:

1. *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs*, 1991, Hoover Institution, p. 144.
2. *Workers World*, "U.S. paves way for repression in Peru," 4/23/92, p. 9.
3. *Ibid*, p. 1.
4. Committee Sol Peru—10b Homestead Rd. London SW6 7DB, England, May 17, 1991, "The Prospect of Power for the People's War in Peru."
5. WW, "Worldwide support for People's Korea," 4/30/92, p. 11.
6. CPUSA's *People's Weekly World*, 11/30/91, "Peru and Sendero Luminoso charged with terrorism." and SWP's *Militant*, 4/24/92, "Peru's Shining Path uses terror to impose reactionary policies on working people."
7. WW, "Solidarity needed for Peru revolutionary struggle," 5/7/92, p. 10.

Slingshot

Summer 1992

Free

Published by a collective at University of California, Berkeley

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review by MC86

Slingshot is published by a collective of UCB students and others on an irregular basis. It is usually thoughtful and informative. Like many anarchist-dominated zines it does some excellent exposure of imperialism and patriarchy. Unfortunately, the collective generally remains stuck in the fantasyland of anarchism and has difficulty putting forth a working revolutionary solution to the ills of capitalism and the culture of decadence.

Slingshot's real strength lies in its alliance with the oppressed nations. The 16-page Summer 1992 issue features numerous articles in solidarity with the Los Angeles uprising. Other pieces expose INS sweeps, police brutality by the Oakland Police

Department and the history of the Amerikan genocide against the oppressed nations. A two-page prison spread and essays on homosexuality, heterosexism, the patriarchy and Bay Area demonstrations round out this revolutionary read.

Much of *Slingshot's* analysis is summed up in this quote: "The civil liberties that liberals whine about losing today—freedom of speech, assembly, the press, free expression—have never existed for entire sectors of this society." (p. 4) Putting its newspaper where its mouth is, *Slingshot* gives space to articles by the New African People's Organization (a revolutionary nationalist party), Mumia Abu Jamal (a political prisoner framed up on death row in Pennsylvania) and other Third World representatives. *Slingshot* is anti-liberal and anti-imperialist and provides a service to the people. Unfortunately, it has no viable revolutionary method to extoll.

Slingshot does not fall into the revisionist trap of reducing revolutionary movements to solely the class struggle. It is very on top of national liberation and gender liberation movements and the collective obviously is deeply involved in street politics.

Unfortunately, *Slingshot* is anti-Maoist and hence anti-progress. Past issues have glorified María Elena Moyano (the Peruvian counter-revolutionary executed by the Communist Party of Peru) and dismissed the revolution in Peru—which is the hottest and most successful revolutionary people's armed struggle in the world today—with the same lying criticisms of the Communist Party of Peru as are leveled by the reactionary *New York Times*. To its credit, *Slingshot* is also anti-revisionist and has no truck with Trotskyism, organized religion, homophobia and other pro-imperialist trends.

The problem with *Slingshot's* philosophy is that it fails to think big. This is the historical contradiction of the anarchist ideology. How do we overthrow the state and use the lessons of the most effective revolutionary experiences to date—of which the Chinese Cultural Revolution remains the pivot—and truly dismantle monopoly-capitalism and patriarchy? *Slingshot* counsels resistance, but fails to find an operational focus in the present.

Overall, *Slingshot* tries to take the point of view of the international proletariat and oppressed nations; but by its reliance on small individual actions, and loathing of the efficacy of disciplined vanguard people's parties, *Slingshot* dooms itself to