

MIM(Prisons) Study Pack

The Labor Aristocracy and the International Communist Movement



Theoretical Origins in the Comintern

*This pamphlet contains the main theoretical article from MIM Theory #10, "Lessons from the Comintern: Continuity in Methods and Theory, Changes in Theory and Conditions," placing the question of the imperialist country working class in the context of the historical origins of the importance of this analysis to the international communist movement. The contents of this pamphlet are reprinted from MIM Theory #10, with study questions added by MIM(Prisons).
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MIM(Prisons)

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MIM(Prisons) is a cell of revolutionaries serving the oppressed masses inside U.S. prisons. We uphold the revolutionary communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and work from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat. Our ideology is based in dialectical materialism, which means we work from objective reality to direct change rather than making decisions based on our subjective feelings about things. Defining our organization as a cell means that we are independent of other organizations, but see ourselves as part of a greater Maoist movement within the United States and globally.

Imperialism is the number one enemy of the majority of the world's people; we cannot achieve our goal of ending all oppression without overthrowing imperialism. History has shown that the imperialists will wage war before they will allow an end to oppression. Revolution will become a reality within the United States as the military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony.

Since we live within an imperialist country, there is no real proletariat -- the class of economically exploited workers. Yet there is a significant class excluded from the economic relations of production under modern imperialism that we call the lumpen. Within the United States, a massive prison system has developed to manage large populations, primarily from oppressed nations and many of whom come from the lumpen class.

Within U.S. borders, the principal contradiction is between imperialism and the oppressed nations. Our enemies call us racists for pointing out that the white oppressor nation historically exploited and continues to oppress other nations within the United States. But race is a made-up idea to justify oppression through ideas of inferiority. Nation is a concept based in reality that is defined by a group's land, language, economy and culture. Individuals from oppressed nations taking up leadership roles within imperialist Amerika does not negate this analysis. The average conditions of the oppressed nations are still significantly different from the oppressor nation overall. As revolutionary internationalists, we support the self-determination of all nations and peoples. Today, the U.S. prison system is a major part of the imperialist state used to prevent the self-determination of oppressed nations.

It is for this reason that we see prisoners in this country as being at the forefront of any anti-imperialist and revolutionary movement.

MIM(Prisons) is our shorthand for the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons. Our name stems from the legacy of the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM), and their party based in North America that did most of the prisoner support work that is the focus of what we now do. When that party degenerated, the movement turned to a cell-based strategy that we uphold as more correct than a centralized party given our conditions in the United States today. Our focus on prisoner support is not a dividing line question for us. In fact, we believe that there is a dire need for Maoists to do organizing and educational work in many areas in the United States. We hope some people are inspired by our example around prisons and apply it to their own work to create more Maoist cells and broaden the Maoist movement behind enemy lines.

MIM(Prisons) distinguishes ourselves from other groups on the six points below. We consider other organizations actively upholding these points to be fraternal.

1. Communism is our goal. Communism is a society where no group has power over any other group.
2. Dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary. In a dictatorship of the proletariat the formerly exploited majority dictates to the minority (who promoted exploitation) how society is to be run. In the case of imperialist nations, a Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat of the Oppressed Nations (JDPON) must play this role where there is no internal proletariat or significant mass base that favors communism.
3. We promote a united front with all who oppose imperialism. The road to the JDPON over the imperialist nations involves uniting all who can be united against imperialism. We cannot fight imperialism and fight others who are engaged in life and death conflicts with imperialism at the same time. Even imperialist nation classes can be allies in the united front under certain conditions.
4. A parasitic class dominates the First World countries. As Marx, Engels and Lenin formulated and MIM Thought has reiterated through materialist analysis, imperialism extracts super-profits from the Third World and in part uses this wealth to buy off whole populations of so-called workers. These so-called workers bought off by imperialism form a new petty-bourgeoisie called the labor aristocracy; they are not a vehicle for Maoism. Those who work in the economic interests of the First World labor aristocracy form the mass base for imperialism's tightening death-grip on the Third World.
5. New bourgeoisies will form under socialism. Mao led the charge to expose the bourgeoisie that developed within the communist party in the Soviet Union and the campaign to bombard the headquarters in his own country of China. Those experiences demonstrated the necessity of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The class struggle does not end until the state has been abolished and communism is reached.
6. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China was the furthest advancement toward communism in history. We uphold the Soviet Union until the death of Stalin in 1953, followed by the People's Republic of China through 1976 as the best examples of modern socialism in practice. The arrest of the "Gang of Four" in China and the rise of Krushchev in the Soviet Union marked the restoration of capitalism in those countries. Other experiments in developing socialism in the 20th century failed to surpass the Soviet model (ie. Albania), or worse, stayed within the capitalist mode of production, generally due to a failure to break with the Theory of Productive Forces.

Coming to grips with the Labor Aristocracy

At the expense of the plundered colonial peoples capital corrupted its wage slaves. created a community of interest between the exploited and the exploiters as against the oppressed colonies - the yellow. black. and red colonial peoples - and chained the European an~ American working class to the imperialist fatherland.

- Comintern statement. March 1919

Editor's Introduction

During our 1995 congress, MIM adopted an important new resolution, reprinted below. Some of the work leading up to this decision appears in this Issue of MIM Theory, especially the long review of the Comintern's work on the question of the labor aristocracy. Here MIM advances our developing line on the international communist movement. And we take responsibility for pressing the world's imperialist-country communists in particular to come to grips with the sweeping international implications of labor aristocracy parasitism.

RESOLUTION: THE QUESTION OF THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY IS AN INTERNATIONAL LINE OF DEMARCATION

No International that has respect for national conditions in the spirit of Mao, or joint declaration involving imperialist country Maoists, will gain MIM's adherence without the following preconditions of membership by imperialist country parties if other imperialist country parties are involved:

- 1) The recognition of superprofits extracted from the oppressed nations as a central fact of economic life in the imperialist countries.
- 2) Upholding Lenin's distinction between labor bureaucrats and labor aristocrats.
- 3) Upholding Lenin's distinction between the labor aristocracy and the proletariat.
- 4) Seeking the dictatorship of the proletariat where that is defined as excluding the labor aristocracy.

In addition, MIM will not adhere to any international organization of communists or joint declaration or communique involving imperialist country parties that does not recognize that the imperialist country or "white" proletariat is either non-existent or a tiny minority as indicated in the conditions of white-collar work and the pay of those workers. This has become a matter of applying the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in the imperialist countries and continuing with the methods and definitions of "proletarian" and "labor aristocracy" laid down since Lenin.

We encourage all imperialist-country parties, and all other revolutionaries, to seriously consider the arguments put forward on these pages and debate them with us. We will devote space in future issues of MIM Theory to such exchanges.

This issue also includes in-depth reviews of the early Black Panther Party, which brings to light the powerful Maoism of the 1968-69 period, and of a recent biography of W. E. B. Du Bois. With the Comintern pieces, the further empirical investigations into the labor aristocracy, and the collection of reviews and correspondence, this issue serves to focus Maoists on the theoretical and strategic tasks we urgently confront.

- MC12

I. The question of multi-racial organizing versus national liberation in the U.S. empire

The Los Angeles rebellion in connection to the Rodney King verdict continues to be the most profound social explosion of a decade in imperialist North America. As the masses continue to assess this event, and as the Los Angeles cops to this day proclaim their innocence and organize with white supremacist groups to reverse public opinion, there is an imperative for a clear and active proletarian pole to present itself to the masses on the Los Angeles rebellion.

In the circles of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP-USA), MIM has heard some say that the beating of the white trucker named Reginald Denny by outraged Blacks saved the imperialists, who otherwise stood exposed on sheerly pacifist grounds. Trotskyists such as those in the Spartacist League are quick to chime in that Black workers saved Reginald Denny and provided a fine example of multi-"racial" working class unity. (Denny was attacked after shouting racial slurs out the window of his truck; his attackers were later acquitted of attempted murder charges.)

In a microcosm, the issue separates the social-chauvinist Trotskyists, crypto-Trotskyists (like the RCP-USA) and social-democrats on the one hand from the genuine communists on the other hand. Contrary to the pious wishes of those who would straddle the issue, there is no middle ground: either we pursue multinational working class unity or we recognize in the Los Angeles rebellion yet again the nature of the real proletarian material that will make the revolution in imperialist North America.

If our critics are correct, if we counsel the youth not to be so impatient, we can build multi-"racial" unity of the exploited workers and line up a majority within U.S. borders for proletarian revolution. For this reason, the argument goes, we must disown those who beat Reginald Denny and patiently explain why it would be better not to make enemies of white workers. When the white workers do take up active chauvinism, these phony communists say we should make excuses about false consciousness and keep telling the oppressed nationality youth to turn the other cheek as part of their moral education - even though such alleged "false consciousness" is several qualitative levels beyond what is seen in oppressed countries; working classes and indicative of bribery, not just a foginess.

In contrast with those making excuses so that oppressed nation youth will not avenge Rodney King, MIM would say we do not support immediate armed struggle as a strategic decision right now. That is the only reason we oppose the beating of Reginald Denny, not to preserve the unity of the allegedly exploited. No occupation by an oppressor nation is ever defeated without at least some violence against the occupiers of all classes. The errors of the youth and rebels in Los Angeles were our errors, the errors of the proletariat. Even in a moment of "error" the people who beat Reginald Denny reveal clearly, to any but the most blinded social-chauvinists, the social basis for revolution in the U.S. Empire.

We can ask ourselves: What kind of errors? The errors of the rebellion were the errors of desperate people - the proletarians. The error was fundamentally different from the error of excluding immigrant or foreign workers from a union or from the passive acceptance of injustice so often seen in the labor aristocracy. No, the proletarians who beat Reginald Denny were not individualists with the wrong class feelings. They had the right sentiments and they had a group analysis. They were beating Reginald Denny to send a message to euro-Amerikans that only so much oppression could be taken before all-out war. It wasn't that these people were personally affronted by Reginald Denny or the Los Angeles cops. The rebels were clearly thinking in terms of social groups and that is the excellent thing about what they did.

This kind of rebel is the hope of proletarian revolution. With that kind correctly channeled anger, we can make a big contribution to bringing down Amerikan imperialism.

Since many supposed communists still do not see beyond the borders of Europe and North America, they do not see that the contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialism is the principal contradiction in the world. Then it goes without saying that the pacifists, socialists and phony communists do not recognize the scientific truth that the national question is also the principal contradiction within U.S. borders. That means national liberation will do the most to bring about the fall of the capitalist system. Presently, the multi-"racial" class approach will only mislead the oppressed nationalities and the youth onto the road of political paralysis.

The oppressed nationalities must have the Menshevik obstacles placed in front of them by the multi-"racial" pacifists removed. Only the MIM line on the Euro-Amerikan working class puts the proper stress on self-ruleiance in national struggle and avoids the Menshevik trap of waiting for the white knight. Furthermore, it is the only MIM line that makes any sense to the oppressed. The oppressed cannot be told fairy-tales about white knights forever. Their scientific discernment is greater than that of dogmatists who understand very little of Lenin, Stalin and Mao and are fundamentally too lazy to study their own conditions the way Lenin and Palme Dutt did with great attention to both historical and statistical detail.(1)

Like the oppressed nationalities, the Euro-Amerikan youth cannot be told lies forever either. It is 1996, and they know that revolution did not happen as quickly as the general crisis theorists said. They know that decades of the multi-"racial" working class approach have produced nothing. If the Euro-Amerikan youth are counseled to continue a century of waiting for white working-class upheaval, their own ideological bearings will be lost the same way those of religious fanatics are disoriented when the apocalypse does not arrive at the appointed hour. It is fine to put off justice if God is about to appear. Unfortunately, the oppressed nationalities within the U.S. Empire have risen several times to lift the mountain of imperialism off their backs, but the white working class has shown no "signs" this century.(2)

The lazy dogmatists and social-chauvinists believe that this is an issue of ideology, and so - why not lie about the labor

aristocracy? Maybe some will be flattered into joining the proletarian movement, they reason. The lazy dogmatists actually see no real role for science in agitation. In response to Mao's proof that line is decisive, they accept at face value the revisionist slander that calls Mao idealist. By downplaying science, they pave the way for facism, which consciously relies on mysticism for victory in the people's hearts.(3) They imagine that being good Maoists means being idealist, not practitioners of the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Yet in reality we must put forward a line on the Reginald Denny case and all similar situations. There are concrete choices to be made. Here is what the Comintern of Lenin had to say about these choices:

"The Communist Party, as the representative of the interests of the working class as a whole, cannot merely recognize these common interests verbally and argue for them in propaganda. It can only effectively represent these interests if it disregards the opposition of the labor aristocracy and, when opportunities arise, leads the most oppressed and downtrodden workers into action."(4)

This is what MIM is doing with regard to the Los Angeles rebellion. That rebellion poses questions sharply - and as only reality can. Clearly we must understand the political economy of the friends and enemies of the proletariat, the national question and the principal contradiction and how errors on these questions show up in political work. For this purpose, we now turn to some of our legacy gathered from the Comintern.

II. The Comintern Line on the Labor Aristocracy

Lenin and World War I

MIM has already shown the basis for its view of the principal contradiction in the imperialist countries in the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao. (See the MIM Theory 7 for an article on Lenin and Zinoviev on the labor aristocracy.)

Our critics have argued that we should not quote Zinoviev from 1916, because Zinoviev disgraced himself 10 years later and turned around to support Trotsky. But even with Zinoviev purged from the party the Soviet Communist Party, with no Lenin, still said the same things on the labor aristocracy, if not as often or as well as Lenin and Zinoviev did in 1916 as imperialist world war revealed its ugliness for the first time.

Attacking Zinoviev in 1916 is just a covert attack on Lenin, because it was Zinoviev representing Lenin's party in many conferences and speeches on the imperialist world war, international relations and the labor aristocracy. In Lenin's criticisms till his death in 1924, he never said Zinoviev was wrong on the labor aristocracy. So to attack the Zinoviev of 1916 on the labor aristocracy is to claim that Lenin was an ordinary liberal blocking with Zinoviev in the same party for no reason of principle. For that matter, Stalin never said Zinoviev went too far on the labor aristocracy either, despite all the other criticisms he made of Zinoviev. On the contrary, as we shall see, the Trotskyist form of Menshevism showed the most interest in destroying Lenin's work on super profits and the labor aristocracy; even though it was obliged to pay brief lip-service to Leninism from time to time.

Criticizing Zinoviev's whole political career just because he degenerated in 1926 also creates the problem of not being able to quote Zinoviev against Zinoviev, as Stalin and his allies in the party did. This tactic was built right into the Comintern literature. After Zinoviev, as Stalin and his allies in the party did. This tactic was built right into the Comintern literature. After Zinoviev disgraced himself and had himself forced out of the Comintern presidency in November, 1926, the Comintern quoted from his documents in the past. (5) Attacking "social-democratic, reformist sentiments on the Levi pattern, which threatens to turn into direct reachery to the international working class," the Comintern of September 1927 said, "This appraisal by the Communist International, which was then still under comrade Zinoviev's leadership, has been completely confirmed."(6)

There would be no basis for Lenin or Stalin to criticize Zinoviev on the labor aristocracy, because they agreed with him back in 1916. As we have pointed out, whenever Engels or Lenin spoke of the future, they seemed to anticipate MIM's line in the future. Here is what Lenin said in his crucial struggle against the Second International:

"On the one hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to convert a handful of very rich and privileged nations into 'eternal' parasites on the body of the rest of mankind, to 'rest on the laurels' of the exploitation of Negroes, Indians, etc., keeping them in the subjection with the aid of excellent weapons of extermination provided by modern militarism. On the other hand, there is the tendency of the masses, who are more oppressed than before and who bear the whole brunt of imperialist wars, to cast off this yoke and to overthrow the bourgeoisie. It is in the struggle between these two tendencies that the history of the labour movement will not inevitably develop."(7)

It is now 1996 and our critics simply cannot face Lenin's predictions for the future written in 1916. No, Lenin did not say the labor aristocracy was always a tiny minority within nations. It is only a minority on the international plane and in certain countries at certain times, not necessarily within any imperialist entity for all time. From the above quote, it is quite clear that Lenin said there was a tendency for entire nations to be bought off - and he gives precise conditions under which that will happen: the lack of proletarian revolution to overthrow the bourgeoisie. Well, there has been no proletarian revolution to rid us of the bourgeoisie, so it is not the tendency of the masses that has won out. It is the former tendency - for entire nations to be bought out and use militarism - that has won out. That tendency is "the tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists." In the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), which proposes itself as the new Comintern, there is not a single party from the imperialist countries that recognizes this truth. And so we are still in the process of separating from the Second International, which is not surprising given the revival of social-democracy that has occurred in the absence of proletarian revolution. The establishment of the RIM without a correct analysis of the labor aristocracy and super profits in the imperialist

countries is simply part of the victory of the “bourgeoisie and the opportunists” so far this century.

Lenin and the Comintern: 1919-1922

Now we turn to some of the documents most embarrassing to our critics. In the period from 1919-1922, the Comintern published many documents that we know were drafted under Lenin's watchful eye because he attended the meetings. From that matter Trotsky did too, so there is no way for Trotskyists to disown the work of the Comintern from 1919-1922 unless they disown Trotsky and Lenin. Since Trotskyism has developed so extensively along Menshevik lines since 1922, the Comintern works that Trotsky upheld at one time will now seem quite distant to today's Trotskyists.

Already in March 1919 - with the carnage of World War I still fresh before it - the Comintern was hacking away at the Second International and the labor aristocracy:

“At the expense of the plundered colonial peoples capital corrupted its wage slaves, created a community of interest between the exploited and the exploiters as against the oppressed colonies - the yellow, black and red colonial peoples - and chained the European and American working class to the imperialist ‘fatherland.’”(8)

Nowhere does this statement say that the workers in the American working class, so corrupted, are a tiny minority, the way most of our critics talk about it today - if they talk about it at all. Quote the contrary, Lenin's Comintern said, “the same method of steady corruption which created the patriotism of the working class and its moral submission was changed by the war into its opposite. Physical annihilation, the complete enslavement of the proletariat, tremendous oppression, impoverishment and deterioration, world famine - these were the final fruits of civil peace.”(9) The Leninists explained under what conditions the “steady corruption” was interrupted. During the Vietnam War, we saw a small-scale re-enactment of these conditions, but since that time, we must say that the physical annihilation of the corrupted workers, an absolute decline in living standards and famine have not occurred. Hence, the corruption of the American workers continues unabated. Indeed, the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and China has added impetus to that corruption.

In 1920, Lenin and the Comintern were talking about what the conditions of membership in the Comintern ought to be. One statement, approved in February 1920, clearly showed that workers who were previously proletarian could no longer be counted as part of the basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat once they were bribed by the imperialists. Furthermore, the statement distinguished between the labor bureaucracy and the labor aristocracy, something that the vast majority of imperialist country phony communists refuse to do. Most inconvenient for today's Trotskyists, Trotsky signed off on this statement:

“The right Independents and the followers of Longuet do not understand and explain to the masses that the imperialist super-profits of the advanced countries enabled and enable them to bribe the upper strata of the proletariat, to throw them crumbs of these super-profits drawn from the colonies and from the financial exploitation of weak countries, to create a privileged section of skilled workers, etc.

“Without exposing this evil, without fighting not only against the trade union bureaucracy but also against all petty-bourgeois manifestations of the craft and labour aristocracy, without the ruthless expulsion of the representatives of the attitude from the revolutionary party, without calling in the lower strata, the broad masses, the real majority of the exploited, there can be no talk of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”(10)

The statement went on to castigate social-chauvinists for not supporting armed struggles in the colonies. Connected with this, MIM does to believe a dictatorship of the proletariat will sustain itself unless it gains the crucial power to open the borders of the United States. Then we can talk about the “real majority of the exploited.”

Although he signed this statement, Trotsky nonetheless gutted it in July 1920, when he wrote the conditions for membership in the Comintern. These conditions did not speak a word of putting forward the analysis of super-profits or combating the labor aristocracy.(11) Against MIM, on the other hand, it could be said that Lenin allowed this to happen.

In other documents from July 1920, the Comintern again very clearly stated a position for future readers like ourselves, and there was one written by Lenin himself as if to make up for Trotsky's the same month. In 1916, Lenin had explained that new labor aristocracies had formed in countries that did not have them when Engels was alive. Now he explained what the future hardening of the arteries would look like in the labor movement:

“The longer bourgeois democracy has prevailed in a country, the more complete and well established it is, the more successful have the bourgeoisie of that country been in getting into those leading positions people who are reared in bourgeois democracy, saturated in its attitudes and prejudices, and very frequently bribed by it, whether directly or indirectly. These representatives of the labor aristocracy, or of workers who have become bourgeois in outlook, must be pushed out of all their positions a hundred times more boldly than ever before, and replaced even by inexperienced workers, as long as they are closely tied to the exploited masses.”(12)

According to Lenin, then, since we have so long been immersed in successful bourgeois democracy, we will have to push a hundred times harder on this question than in countries where bourgeois democracy has been new or underdeveloped.

We must distinguish between the bribed and the exploited and be ruthless in casting out the bribed. It is MIM's duty to assert that the organizations of the international communist movement connected to imperialist countries have thus far failed to take Lenin's advice. One way the “representatives of the labor aristocracy” take leadership is by denying the existence of the bourgeoisified workers they represent, blithely referring to them as “exploited” even though that is a very precise Marxist term. Another means is to point to other leaders and call them the whole the labor aristocracy. The quote above again very clearly

distinguishes between the leaders and the class they "Represent" - so there is no way to say Lenin thought that a few leaders were the labor aristocracy. The thing that the labor aristocracy leaders or labor bureaucrats hate most is the material we have cited that shows entire nations can be bought off; these labor bureaucrats want to organize for scraps off the imperialist plate without being disturbed by the proletarians of the countries oppressed by imperialism.

In the same month of July 1920, Zinoviev wrote another statement on this for the Comintern, so important was the topic still, and it caused a reaction from the floor which led Lenin to rise in Zinoviev's defense. The gist of the criticism from the floor was that the Leninists had an overly narrow and monolithic view of the proletariat and should be more pluralist and syndicalist - that is, accept the petty-bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy as proletarian.

As did Lenin, Zinoviev clearly distinguished between the proletariat and the working class, which made it clear that the role of party leadership is critical:

"Thus, on the outbreak of the imperialist war in 1914 the parties of the social-traitors in all countries, when they supported the bourgeoisie of their "own" countries, always and consistently explained that they were acting in accordance with the will of the working class. But they forgot that, even if that were true, it must be the task of the proletarian party in such a state of affairs to come out against the sentiments of the majority of the workers and, in defiance of them, to represent the historical interests of the proletariat."(13)

Lenin and Zinoviev had good grounds from Marx to distinguish between the working class and the proletariat. The proletariat by definition is the revolutionary vehicle, the social group which has a destiny of bringing historical progress. Marx sought to find the proletariat of his day before he knew it was the industrial working class. He said:

"Where is there, then, a real possibility of emancipation in Germany? This is our reply. A class must be formed which has radical chains, a class in civil society which is not a class of civil society, a class which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere of society which has a universal character because its sufferings are universal, and which does not claim a particular redress because the wrong which is done to it is not a particular wrong but wrong in general. ... a sphere, finally, which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all the other spheres of society, without, therefore, emancipating all these other spheres, which is, in short, a total loss of humanity and which can only redeem itself by a total redemption of humanity. This dissolution of society, as a particular class, is the proletariat."(14)

Some might object that we quote Marx as a young man before he was fully a scientist; although the quote above shows what order Marx did things in his life. Later he wrote *Capital*. Nonetheless, Lenin himself returned to the history of the word "proletarian" - and it cannot be said Lenin did not benefit from Marx as the mature scientist. "The Roman proletarian lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletarian. Marx specially stressed this profound observation of Sismondi. Imperialism somewhat changes the situation."(15)

The most accurate definition of proletariat outside of a very concretely defined context is, "social group that is the revolutionary vehicle." Proletarian is not to be equated with industrial worker for all times and contexts, because "proletarian" is a word that does not even pertain to merely one mode of production. There is no other way that Marx and Lenin could be talking about Roman proletarians, although in both cases the group in question was also propertyless (unlike the labor aristocracy).

Returning to the Comintern documents, Lenin found it necessary to write another document relating to these questions in July 1920, approved by the Comintern with three abstentions. In that document he warned against failure to do concrete analyses of specific conditions. But most of our critics continue to quote Marx and Lenin out of context of the conditions of the time and only when it appears that the labor aristocracy could be just a tiny minority. Lenin said the communist party, "should not advance abstract and formal principles on the national question, but should undertake first of all a precise analysis of the given environment, historical and above all economic; secondly, it should specifically distinguish the interests of the oppressed classes, of the workers and the exploited, from the general concept of so-called national interests, which signify in fact the interests of the ruling class; thirdly, it should as precisely distinguish the oppressed, dependent nations, unequal in rights, from the oppressing, exploiting nations with full rights, to offset the bourgeois-democratic lies which conceal the colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world's population by a small minority of the wealthiest and most advanced capitalist countries that is characteristic of the epoch of finance-capital and imperialism."(16)

Again, we point out that Lenin spoke of countries, not a small minority of people or a class of imperialists, who enslave the world's majority.

Later in the same document, Lenin said it was impossible to eliminate nationalist distrust of the proletariat in the imperialist countries by the peoples of the colonies until "after the destruction of imperialism in the advanced countries and after the radical transformation of the entire foundations of economic life in the backward countries."(17) He also said progress toward trust could only be made "very slowly," and concessions would have to be made to the peoples of the colonized countries to assuage their feelings on this point; even though such nationalist distrust of other proletarians was out of date already. Hence, we find here complete justification for Huey Newton, when he said that he did not see the Black Panther Party as being only Black for all time, but that it was necessary not to get too far ahead of the masses (see MIM Theory 7 on this.)

In another July 1920 document, the English and U.S. delegates to the Comintern caused a ruckus, apparently along the lines that MIM does today and apparently as depicted in the movie *Reds*. Basically, Radek, backed by Zinoviev - both of whom later became Trotskyists - put forward that the English and U.S. communists should work within existing trade unions. The English and U.S. comrades said to form entirely new unions, because the existing ones were hopelessly corrupted. The votes connected to these motions were amongst the closest in the Comintern history with the U.S. and British delegates abstaining.

Reading the resolution, one might have thought that the British and U.S. comrades came away with victory:

"The trade unions, which catered primarily for the skilled and best-paid workers, who were limited by their craft narrowness bound by the bureaucratic machinery which cut them off from the masses, and misled by their opportunist leaders, have betrayed not only the cause of social revolution, but even the cause of struggle for an improvement in the conditions of life of their own members."(18)

Even in this document criticizing those who abstain from trade union work, the Comintern mentions two conditions under which it is fine to stay away from the unions. "Unless compelled thereto either by extraordinary acts of violence on the part of the trade union bureaucracy ... or by their narrow policy of serving only the labour aristocracy which makes it impossible for the masses of less skilled workers to join the union."(19) Readers will recall that at the time that women and oppressed nationalities, and some immigrants, could not gain entrance to most trade unions under discussion in the U.S. Empire, so the Comintern was trying to point out a contradiction.

To address this two years later, the Comintern in November 1922 stated that the communists should fight for the rights of workers to enter the yellow trade unions:

"This induces the workers in the imperialist countries to demand legislation prohibiting immigration and hostile to the colored workers, both in America and Australia. Such legislation deepens the antagonism between the colored and white workers, and splits and weakens the workers' movement.

"The communist parties of America, Canada, and Australia must conduct an energetic campaign against laws prohibiting immigration and must explain to the proletarian masses of these countries that such laws, by stirring up race hatred, will in the end bring injury to themselves.

"The capitalists on the other hand are prepared to dispense with the laws against immigration, in order to facilitate the free entry of cheap colored labour power and thus lower the wages of white workers. Their intentions can only be successfully frustrated by one thing - the immigrant workers must be enrolled in the existing trade unions of white workers."(20)

Hence the Comintern took a position like that of the Progressive Labor Party today. We sympathize more with the Comintern, because the length of bourgeois democratic stabilization in the U.S. Empire was more at issue then. Today it is clear that the conditions are not the same as the Comintern thought they would be then and in the future.

In August 1920, the Comintern used terminology that MIM often uses, to the consternation of our critics. MIM often uses the phrase "white working class" or "white nation." Some correctly object that this is a racial description while we maintain that our readers are more likely to understand us if we say "white" sometimes instead of just "Amerikan" or "settler," Noting that the liberation of workers is "an international problem," the Comintern went on to criticize its enemies in "the tradition of the Second International, for whom in fact only white-skinned people existed."(21) Later, with prodding from Stalin, the Communist Party, USA (CPUSA) frequently used the term "white working class" to help it overcome chauvinism in connection to the Black nation. (22)

Almost a year later, the Comintern spelled out precise attitudes toward the middle classes and the conditions that created their political attitudes.

"In Western Europe there is no class other than the proletariat which is capable of playing the significant role in the world revolution that, as a consequence of the war and the land hunger, the peasants did in Russia. But, even so, a section of the Western-European peasantry and a considerable part of the urban petty bourgeoisie and broad layers of the so-called middle class, of office workers etc., are facing deteriorating standards of living and, under the pressure of rising prices, the housing problems and insecurity, are being shaken out of their political apathy and drawn into the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution."(23)

Studying this quote, we see that, as explained in MIM Theory 1, these conditions do not apply to our so-called middle classes. Standards of living have risen since World War II. Moreover, prices have risen but not faster than wages and salaries for the middle classes in the past several decades. Of course, there is no ruinous war in Western Europe anymore either. That is thrust upon the Third World principally. Hence, these conditions no longer apply.

Even more important than the particular conditions of Western Europe today is the theoretical approach in the quote above to the "office workers." This section of the Comintern essay is titled, "Our Attitude to the Semi-Proletarian Strata." Today's opportunist, social-chauvinist or lazy dogmatist counts anyone who makes a wage or salary as a member of the "working class," and then counsels us to unite the working class. But MIM is the party counting the office workers as part of the labor aristocracy and upholding the letter and spirit of Lenin's Comintern. What these social-patriots won't tell the proletariat, and what they hope no one will notice, is that office-workers because a majority of the white working class in the U.S. Empire as of the 1980 Census.(24) Hence the majority of Euro-Amerikan workers belongs to "semi-proletarian strata" even by the old Comintern definition of 1921. That is just by one measure and one aspect of the definition of semi=proletarian. We do not even mention the pay these workers receive, only the conditions of work of the office workers. This definition of semi-proletarian by the Comintern alone is enough to justify MIM's line on the white working class.

In the same essay, the Comintern makes it clear that all the people our critics call "workers" were regarded as "petty-bourgeois" or "semi-proletarian" in the days of the Comintern:

"It is also important to win the sympathy of technicians, white collar workers, the middle- and lower-ranking civil servants and the intelligentsia, who can assist the proletarian dictatorship in the period of transition from capitalism to Communism by helping with the problems of state and economic administration. If such layers identify with the revolution, the enemy will be demoralized and the popular view of the proletariat as an isolated group will be discredited."(25)

Here there is no question of counting the majority of today's white working class a proletariat, only a question of possibly allying with them, and even then under conditions less favorable than the alliance with peasants in China or Russia. Whether it is the CPUSA, RCP-USA, Workers World Party, the Trotskyists, the PT Belgium, the MLPD (Germany) or the Progressive Labor Party - none are talking about setting up a dictatorship of the proletariat. Instead they are talking about letting "petty-bourgeois masses" - as the Comintern calls them - work their way into the dictatorship of the proletariat from the very beginning and hence killing the dictatorship of the proletariat before it is born. While organizations such as the MLPD may be the vanguard in the countries, it is difficult to say that they are fully communist, because they are only aiming at the dictatorship of the proletariat in words, and fall short of Comintern standards.

We stress again that every quote in this section was approved by Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. The last point we will make on the Comintern of Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev and Stalin is that it carefully distinguishes between proletarians and workers.

"The communist parties must bear in mind that while every bourgeois government is a capitalist government, not every workers' government is a really proletarian government, that is, a revolutionary instrument of power. The Communist International must consider the following possibilities:

"1. Liberal workers' governments, such as there was in Australia; this is also possible in England in the near future.

"2. Social-democratic workers' governments (Germany).

"3. A government of workers and the poorer peasants. This is possible in the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc.

"4. Workers' government in which communists participate.

"5. Genuine proletarian workers' governments, which in their pure form can be created only by the communist party.

"The first two types are not revolutionary workers' governments, but in fact coalition governments of the bourgeoisie and anti-revolutionary labour leaders."(26)

Lenin's Death and the Attempt to Rewrite Leninism

Lenin's precise and timely analysis of the Second International's opportunism cut internal Menshevism to the quick. But not surprisingly, the bourgeoisie wormed its way into the Third International, trying to gut Lenin's teachings once he was dead. These opportunists badly repeated the imperialists' flattering of the imperialist country working classes. According to the opportunists, super profits do not exist; the reason for higher wages in the imperialist countries is the higher level of productivity resulting from a higher level of technology and from a superior approach to class struggle. To corrupt Leninism, the opportunists also had to revise Marx and Engels, who also wrote on super-profits. Volume three of Capital, edited by Engels after Marx died, said,

"He thus secures a surplus-profit. As concerns capitals invested in colonies, etc., on the other hand, they may yield higher rates of profit for the simple reason that the rate of profit is higher there due to backward development, and likewise the exploitation of labour, because of the use of slaves, coolies, etc."(27)

In the same section, Marx said he would not address whether such surplus-profits drawn from activities in foreign countries could permanently raise the rate of profits of the home country; he thus put off the question of how much surplus-profits could cause stabilization in the home country.(28)

On the other hand, according to Marx, it was a law of human history that the portion of society that lives on the labor of others grows. Quoting someone else with approval, Marx said, "If each man's labour were but enough to produce his own food, there could be no property."(29) Furthermore, "at that early period, the portion of society that lives on the labour of others is infinitely small compared with the mass of direct producers. Along with the progress in the productiveness of labour, that small portion of society increases both absolutely and relatively."(30) Our critics are stuck between a rock and a hard place with this quote. Bolsheviks know that since there is no socialism the portion of the world that "lives on the labour of others" is even larger now than in 1917 - and the only possible candidates for that group are imperialists, bourgeoisie and labor-aristocracy. The social-democrats will say that their great reforms have apportioned more labor of society to tending to the needy, but the Bolsheviks realize that in countries like the United States the only possibility is that the parasitic strata have grown. The share of the live and sea labor consumed in the imperialist countries which originates in the super exploited workers of the oppressed nations must be even higher. For our Trotskyist critics to dispute this, ironically they must let go of another of their tenets, that decolonization of the Third World brought no progress. They must argue in fact that it brought tremendous progress - so that it cut back on the super profits extracted from the colonies. MIM would argue instead that imperialism has extended and deepened its grip. That is why we can see such extensive growth of what the Comintern called "semi-proletarian" strata who are less favorable to revolution than peasants.

Of course, by the reasoning of the Comintern comrades who wanted to gut Leninism, the workers who had the highest wages had by definition engaged in the best class struggle, so it was the American and British workers at the time who were the model to follow. Hence, these Mensheviks paved the way for organizing on the model of the American Federation of Labor around the world.

Today, some critics of MIM put forward the same line. The Spartacist League has argued that the American working class to this day is "the most advanced" or "among the most advanced" in the world. They argue that because white workers have

greater productivity than workers in the colonial countries, their higher wages are justified. Likewise, the Montreal publication Socialist Action attacked MIM along the same lines.

To support their argument, these misled comrades, Trotskyists and other Mensheviks rely on dogmatic faith in their own nation's workers, or occasionally, on the statistics provided by the imperialists on such questions. They never strain themselves to do their own research and synthesis. Hence, the statistics they refer to on "productivity" provided by the bourgeois economists start with the bourgeois assumption that the capital used by the imperialist country workers is the property of the imperialist countries, not the super exploited workers of the oppressed countries. With such assumptions it is of course easy to refute MIM - by the method of assuming that which was to be proved.

As a measure of the profound fog of social-opportunism and chauvinism, MIM notes that not one alleged social-democratic, socialist or communist organization in the imperialist countries that we know of even attempts to answer the question of labor productivity independent of the assumption of private property. In contrast, MIM assumes that if the Third World workers had the same capital as the First World workers, they would be as productive or more productive. Hence, the real issue is who owns the capital employed in the advanced imperialist countries. If we know that, we know the source of technological advancement and greater productivity.

The same argument arose - with more timeliness - in 1924 right after Lenin died. There was a move to strike the concept of super profits from Marxism-Leninism.(31) According to Jane Degras, a Trotsky-sympathizer and critic of Bukharin as Stalin's crucial ally of the time, Bukharin refuted this attack on Leninism. He pointed out that without the concept of super-profits there was no way to attack imperialism or the labor aristocracy. Furthermore, such an unencumbered view of labor productivity played into the hands of the imperialists and social-democrats who claimed that revolution interrupts the production process and contributes to the oppression of the people.(32) (It's also easy to see how this bourgeois view goes along with the revisionist "theory of the productive forces" as well.)

At the time of Lenin's death, the Comintern correctly institutionalized the study of theory. With Lenin dead, they feared that opportunists would arise to revise Leninism. Hence, the comintern immediately undertook a systematic analysis of its defects in theoretical work and raised up as examples those parties that made all their members take courses in Marxism-Leninism. At that time, there were also some important comments on the different roads to communism taken by recruits.

"The overwhelming majority of the party masses came to the party because they were convinced of the treacherous character of opportunism and reformism, and of the purely proletarian class character of the communist parties; they reached this conclusion almost entirely by empirical means, in the midst of the daily economic and political struggle. This is an immense advantage to the parties and to the CI in comparison with the Second International, but it also means that the party proletarian masses may themselves be burdened with survivals of social-democratic ideology. This social-democratic heritage cannot be eliminated in a mechanical way; it must be tackled by systematic propaganda of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, by implanting in them at least its basic principles and methods."(33)

When reviewing publications of communist parties outside the Soviet Union at about the same time, Bukharin reportedly thought "the English party press was best at dealing with its own local problems; he could not say that the British or American party press showed deviations, because there was no theory at all in their journals."(34) According to the Comintern, theoretical work was "at a standstill in almost all sections of the CI" and so some unhealthy theories arose in the void.(35)

We communists can always count on conditions to generate some revolutionary ferment and some communists who arrive at their conclusions "almost entirely by empirical means." We would also like to accept Bukharin's criticism as valid for the entire U.S. Empire and England, where individualism is rampant due to the huge petty-bourgeois and labor aristocracy strata. Theory requires the ability to generalize and compare generalizations and their evidence, but the settlers and other classes inclined to individualism have difficulty conceiving of classes, genders and nations, not to mention Marx's philosophy of dialectical materialism.

The intelligentsia produced by U.S. and English imperialisms are inclined to such nonsense as "history for its own sake," and even "economic theory for its own sake." Even compared with other intellectuals from Europe with a long history of class struggles, the intellectuals of England and especially the U.S. Empire do not connect theory with history or statistical information. Too often they study the two apart. This is seen in subjects that seem abstract to the layperson, because even those subjects Amerikan academia is groping in the dark without the light of historical materialist method or theory. In the case of philosophy as a subject, the U.S. Empire is known for a philosopher like William James, whose bourgeois pragmatism encourages the Americans to be "practical" and make real-world choices without regard for goals or larger concepts. And in academic game theory, Amerikan scholars try to sell "methodological individualism." Hence, overarching intellectual consistency is not a major part of North American communism or the traditions of North American academia, and so we at MIM have to look out for resistance to method and theory as a particular cultural defect rooted in our political economy.

Dr. Pepper and the Comintern

MIM is what the Comintern called "the American representation" in the Comintern, including a one Dr. Pepper who was there at the beginning. Many of the issues that MIM has raised arose in the Comintern via the concerns of various factions in the British and U.S. communist parties. It was impossible for Dr. Pepper to raise these issues as well as we do today, because they were a recent development. MIM has the extensive benefit of hindsight, history and statistics not available then. England was the only country with a labor aristocracy in the mid-100s, according to Lenin in his essay "Imperialism and the Split in

Socialism." Not until the birth of imperialism as apart from earlier colonialism did the imperialist countries develop a significant labor aristocracy.

Trotsky had this to say about Dr. Pepper in June, 1928:

"Pepper, the theoretician of this maneuver, one of those who ruined the Hungarian revolution because he overlooked the Hungarian peasantry, made a great effort (by way of compensation, no doug) to ruin the Communist Party of American by dissolving it among the farmers. 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' 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 leadership of the Comintern. For several weeks the issue swayed in the balance until finally a concession was made to the ABC of Marxism (the comment behind the scenes was: Trotskyist prejudices)." (36)

This still sounds fresh only because our dogmatist and opportunist enemies still attack us in the same language as the Comintern document to the CPUSA of 1929. Criticizing both Pepper's faction and its opponents, the Comintern said:

"This mistake lies in their wrong conception of the nature of the relationship between American and world economies and the underestimation of the increasing involving of American imperialism in the rapidly sharpening general crisis of capitalism.

"The rapid development of American capitalism does not exempt the United States, or any other capitalist country, from the crisis; on the contrary it accentuates the general crisis of capitalism as a result of the extreme sharpening of all contradictions which it leads to. On the other hand a sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism is to be expected, not because American imperialism ceases to develop, but on the contrary, it is to be expected because American imperialism is developing and surpasses the other capitalist countries in its development, which leads to an extreme accentuation of all antagonisms." (37)

From what Trotsky said against him, and from the general failure of Stalin's "general crisis" line, we conclude Pepper wasn't bad at all. He represented a concrete alternative to the line that arose in the Comintern with regard to England and the U.S. Empire. How would history have been different if his line had won out instead of that of the Trotskyists and Foster? Looking at the discontented farmers in the Depression era would have been helpful - and would have brought the party closer to the Black masses as well. What Pepper allegedly argued about farmers should not be contested by Trotsky, because Marx himself defined under what circumstances a proletariat forms:

"What constitutes the proletariat is not naturally existing poverty, but poverty artificially produced, is not the mass of people mechanically oppressed by the weight of society, but the mass resulting from the disintegration of society and above all from the disintegration of the middle class. Needless to say, however, the numbers of the proletariat are also increased by the victims of natural poverty and of Christian-Germanic serfdom." (38)

Along with the party majority, Pepper made self-criticism for lagging behind in work with Blacks. At the same time, according to Degras, Pepper took an active role in advocating the positions that Blacks were a "compact mass of farmers on a continuous territory" that constituted "a colony within the USA." (39) MIM holds that there is no one compact territory of the Black nation right now, but Blacks are a nation and should not be addressed as a "race" within U.S. borders. This position has precedent in the Comintern as well, as it was the position of the "Negro Commission" in 1928. Only after some struggle among Black revolutionaries, people like Pepper and Stalin himself did the Comintern push the Black-belt hypothesis, which did have considerable relevance at the time. From what we can see, Pepper may have had his flaws, but he was on the front lines of the struggle against Trotsky. When it came to the internal struggle of the CPUSA, Pepper was on the side deemed extra-"rightist" but "majority" by the Comintern in 1928. Pepper's enemies included Bittelman, Foster and Cannon. Cannon and Schachtman were members of the Central Committee who later left to take up Trotskyism and neo-Trotskyism. Pepper's ally Wicks was able to point this out about Cannon. Foster became the crucial leaders of the whole group, but he had links to Trotskyists, which he had the good sense to denounce by the end of 1928. (40)

In defense of the majority, Stalin ended up picking Trotskyists to support, who naturally soon left him. In 1926, when Comintern veterans such as Trotsky and Zinoviev were under fire, Pepper spoke up against Trotsky and Zinoviev were under fire. Pepper spoke up against Trotsky and Zinoviev for trying to build new parties and disrupt the Comintern. (41)

Nonetheless, the Comintern under Stalin's leadership criticized Pepper's positions. It was probably thinking of Pepper and Bukharin when it said the following:

"The conception of the conciliators that the inner contradictions in the capitalist countries are weakening and that it is possible to organize the internal market while preserving anarchy exclusively on the world market is refuted by the entire development of capitalism in recent years, and in reality means capitulation before the reformist ideology." (42)

We must say that that was a pretty good position in July 1929, but it has proved more wrong than correct in the years since. The basis of internal contradiction in the U.S. Empire has since weakened, not least of all because the Depression drove it into another victorious world war that was not fought on its soil. Quite the contrary to what the Comintern said, what has led to reformism is chasing after the labor aristocracy as if it had a revolutionary character or was about to get one. Failing to recognize the reformist interests of the labor aristocracy, many communists have corrupted themselves unconsciously by labeling bourgeois reform part of the revolutionary movement. Immersing oneself in an objectively counter-revolutionary class can only lead one to counterrevolution.

The comintern also encouraged a nationalist error when it attached the MIM-type line on the class structure of the U.S. Empire in the name of attacking Menshevism. The Comintern examined the prospects of revolution again only from a white-

centered approach. They did not see what would later become Mao's international strategic conception, by which revolution arrives in the imperialist citadels mostly after it has arrived in the Third World. MIM is not a Menshevik party, because MIM has full confidence that the Third World proletariat will land a decisive blow against Amerikan imperialism one way or another. Hence revolution is possible here and we are preparing for it. If material conditions were such that we ignored the possibilities for revolution in the imperialist countries, we would be Mensheviks for our line on the labor aristocracy, but since the conditions are not such, it is actually Menshevik to chase after the labor aristocracy its demands. In most countries the basis for revolution is principally internal, but in the leading imperialist countries the role played by external forces is principal. Marx spoke of such a scenario in his own days:

"After occupying myself with the Irish question for many years I have come to the conclusion that the decisive blow against the English ruling classes (and it will be decisive for the workers' movement all over the world) cannot be delivered in England but only in Ireland."(43)

Who will deliver the decisive blow to the U.S. Empire - the youth and oppressed nationalities within U.S. borders or the oppressed nations outside U.S. borders? This question can not be answered in advance. The nations outside U.S. borders will have to land some big blows before the activity of the internal oppressed nations and youth really come into play however.

There is no need to cry wolf or "general crisis" forever in the imperialist countries. Doing so will only encourage practical minded workers and youth without dogmatic preconceptions to think communists are like religious fools, and that in turn will tend to push them into the fascist camp. Instead, we must talk sense to the masses, starting from their own correct knowledge, that the Amerikan masses are not revolutionary hand are not momentarily due to become revolutionary. When we do that, the masses will finally know we have both feet planted on the ground and that we actually listen to them. When we do this, we often learn that the masses think the mIM line on the bought-off white workers makes abundant sense. It allows the advanced masses to maintain their hatred for imperialism while making sense of the workers all around them. The labor aristocracy thesis makes sense of everything from the white "anti-crime" movement to the lack of revolution in the imperialist countries, and the advanced masses can see this.

Pepper's gut sense of the labor aristocracy seemed to be more on the mark than those of other Comintern leaders. In the case of Lenin in 1920, he said the Communist Party in Great Britain (CPGB) should support the Labour Party even though it was a bourgeois-imperialist party. In helping the Labour Party get into the government, the CPGB would have been able to show the workers that the Labour Party wasn't going to change anything.

If England had been in a revolutionary or near-revolutionary situation in 1920, then Lenin would have been correct. As it turns out, Pepper was more correct, because he believed a number of material conditions would have to change in the U.S. Empire and England before revolution was possible. He argued that the CPGB would win leadership of the workers "only over the dead body of the Labour Party" and so there was no point in supporting the Labour Party and concealing differences with it.(44) Lenin himself did not believe this dispute was a sufficient reason to split a communist party; although the issue attracted great attention, he thought it was relatively minor.(45)

What Lenin advocated for England amounted to fixating on the sentiments of the labor aristocracy. If the labor aristocracy were due for a major crisis, as everyone seemed to believe in 1920, then it would have been okay to make such an effort to teach it patiently through election of the Labour Party. While Pepper was more correct on this question, it was perfectly reasonable for Lenin to think what he did in 1920. Support for the Labour Party was a means of chasing after the labor aristocracy and consciously or not it exerted a corrupting influence on the CPGB. That is the danger in misassessing the balance of forces. If one counts on revolutionary forces that aren't there, one will only end up corrupting oneself by militantly pushing the demands of the bourgeoisified workers or petty-bourgeoisie. This intervention by Lenin in the Comintern's early, Eurocentric ultra left days, when revolution in Europe seemed around the corner, helped lead the CPGB into revisionism; English communism has yet to recover. What started as a simple mistake has been repeated for decades to become revisionism.

This error also stemmed from another error that Mao summed up in his assessment of the Comintern - insufficient attention to national conditions. Mao eventually judged that the universals of Marxism-Leninism are not a sufficient basis for having a world party, because the world party ended up stifling the application of universal principles to local conditions (see Mao's statement in sidebar). In the case of England, if it had been Mao's way, Lenin would never have had such an impact on the question of Parliament and the Labour Party. Mao had a line difference with Lenin. If the question is just an occasional mistake on the balance of forces, then it is simply a strategic error. If there is a consistent pattern to strategic errors, then that is a line error, or line deviation or revisionism. In this case, Mao identified the lack of attention paid to national conditions as a line error of the Comintern. Something similar we see today is a consistent strategic error with regard to how to count the labor aristocracy in the balance of forces. That is the root problem in why the English communists still can't come to grips with Lenin.

We should point out here that the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) is in error in its foreign policy when it supports the RCP-USA for setting up the RIM, which the RCP sees as a Comintern. The Peruvian comrades claim to uphold "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism," but they have gone along with the RCP's back-to-Lenin bullshit on the question of having a world party. This is also related to the PCP's failure to see that the RCP line is a return to Euro-centered Menshevism based on the labor aristocracy. We are encouraged by the direction of PCP criticisms of the RCP, but there remain many issues and many more specifics of RCP literature distribution that remain unchallenged and unchanged despite the obvious effort of the RCP to appease the PCP with a few general pronouncements and press releases.

The British and Amerikan communists tried to tell the Comintern why they should not fixate on the labor aristocracy and the yellow trade unions, but the Comintern did not understand because it believed the British and the U.S. Empire were about to

go to war against each other and destroy the labor aristocracy. Dr. Pepper came up with the political economy to back up his position, but he and his comrades did not have the seriousness that Mao did to stand up to the Comintern.

Apparently Stalin considered both factions in the CPUSA to be rightist (46) and supported the Foster-Trotskyist faction as the lesser evil eventually to the extent of seeing Dr. Pepper pulled from the Comintern. In retrospect it is clear that Stalin was briefly vindicated by the Depression of 1929, but on the whole expectations of Anglo-American war and the collapse of the labor aristocracy pushed the CPUSA in an ultra left direction before it settled into a dogged rightist-liquidationist position. For the years around 1929, the line on the labor aristocracy was not bad at all. Given that the labor aristocracy never did collapse and instead stabilized over decades, the real revisionism comes from tailing after it year in and year out. The irony of this is that what started as an ultra left line of expecting revolution around the corner ended up being the basis for Gus Hall's reformism. The continuity between Foster and Gus Hall's dogged pursuit of the labor aristocracy. Foster originally pursued it for ultra left reasons connected to capitalist crisis, while Gus Hall's party chased after the labor aristocracy for reasons it didn't know itself, as attention to theory went out the window and the CPUSA fell for Soviet revisionism, Gorbachev and just about anything from the Democratic Party that had a pulse.

Trotsky on the way out

With Lenin dead and Trotsky receiving public criticism in April 1925, we see that the Comintern occasionally put the correct focus not on the labor aristocracy. In marching orders of the English communist party, the first two points of the "central task" were: "1. Work in the trade unions, Particular attention for the Minority Movement. ... 2. Agitation against the imperialist sentiments of the English labour aristocracy." (47) This undermines the view that Marxist-Leninists view the labor aristocracy as a peripheral issue. In fact, once against categorical language about whole classes being bought-off came into use in the Comintern in 1926:

"English capitalism in its classic period gave rise to the classic type of English trade unionism. Its socio-economic basis was the surplus profit which the English bourgeoisie received from all quarters of the globe, part of which entered into the wages of the English proletariat, which thus steadily raised its living standards and improved its skill.

"Within the international labour army the English proletariat thus developed as a privileged group, occupying an exceptional position as a labour aristocracy." (48)

Continuing in the general crisis vein, however, the document went on to say that the decline of English capitalism "and the parallel decline in imperialist surplus profits have radically changed class relationships." (49)

Struggle Against Bukharin

Although Bukharin initially defended Lenin's theses on super profits, as time went on he turned to a more Menshevik position. Whereas he had refuted the productivity nonsense upon Lenin's death, by the end of 1928 Bukharin fell for a similar arrant of the theory, that American and German wages were high because of rent or differential profits arising from advanced technology. (50) Again the issue of whose labor allowed the creation of that technology and the application of that technology in capital goods (dead labor form) and in the production process itself - Bukharin left that out.

At root, Bukharin and Trotsky fell for what became known in Mao's day as "the theory of the productive forces." In Marxism, there is no doubt that the growth of the productive forces is a central force effecting the whole society. Yet the revisionists like Trotsky and Bukharin tended to look at the productive forces in isolation from the class structure and wound up with the same kind of one-sided predestination thinking common to Protestantism and Menshevism.

In contrast, Lenin and Stalin considered the impact of class relations, including the relations among classes of different countries. By March 1929, the Comintern had taken a left turn against Bukharin, almost as if to prepare for the Depression. Here is what the Stalin-led Comintern had to say about the relationship between the wealth or productive forces of England and the colonies at that time. "The plundering of [India's] natural wealth is English imperialism's chief source of power. On the stability of English rule in India depends the strength of English imperialism on the world stage." (51) Treating the issue of class relations between countries goes a long way toward defeating the revisionist theory of the productive forces. The Trotskyists and other Mensheviks see Britain's working class as the most advanced because its productive forces are most advanced, while revolution is least likely in places like India because the productive forces are too backward. Left out is the corrupting influence of super-profits on the imperialist-nation working classes, as well as the historical record.

In the 1920s, Trotsky also treated the issue of the productive forces and the impact of their accumulation on increasing labor productivity.

"The fundamental economic superiority of bourgeois states consists in the fact that capitalism, for the present, still produces cheaper and better goods than socialism. In other words for the present, productivity of labor is still considerably higher in the countries that are living in accordance with the law of inertia of the old capitalist civilization. ... We are acquainted with the fundamental law of history: victory ultimately goes to that system which raises human society onto a higher economic level. The historic dispute will be decided - and of course not at once - by the comparative coefficients of labor productivity." (52)

There is no mistaking the whole materialist feel to this and the whole first chapter of Trotsky's book, *The Revolution Betrayed*. The old-fashioned Mensheviks, unlike today's social-democrats, seek to protect themselves in Marx by looking at the

role of the productive forces in the mode of production, which according to Marx are indeed generally decisive in the last instance. Yet, the mode of production is also composed of production relations or a class structure, which necessarily comes with some class struggle. Trotsky missed this and instead proposed that the workers of socialist countries make up the distance between themselves and those of the capitalist countries in labor productivity by taking up the military organization of industrial work.

From our perspective, the question becomes, will the Indian masses put up with colonial plunder and can England's superior technology prevent it from losing India as a colony? Historically the Indian masses have since answered, at least partly, "No."

Mao answered that technology and property is obtained by force and fraud, but in the end, this ill-gotten advantage is not decisive. People, not technology are decisive. Hence, People's War can and does defeat technologically superior opponents all the time.(53) This is what is missing from the theory of the productive forces. The masses ultimately will not put up with the extraction of super-profits. Plunder may raise the labor productivity of corrupted workers using stolen capital, but it will also provoke wars of national liberation. Hence, when Bukharin defended Lenin's theory of super-profits when Lenin died, he was more correct. But when he took to the Menshevik line in later years, he fell in with a long line of revisionists. There is a huge chasm between people who can see what happened subsequently in China and Vietnam against vastly superior enemies (technologically speaking), and the revisionists.

This difference is based in the theory of the productive forces. The capitalist means of technical and productive advancement bears within it the seeds of its own destruction - of conflict. And so technological and production advantages do not accumulate forever in the hands of the same exploiters in a peaceful and harmonious system.

Dutt and the 1930s line on the Labor Aristocracy

Finally, we review R. Palme Dutt's examination of the labor aristocracy. His book *Fascism and Social Revolution* is an excellent book for exposing social-democracy, reviewing fascist ideology and detailing the concrete conditions underlying Comintern analyses.

"What is to happen to the 'superfluous' workers? For long, the old theory of 'alternative employment' was still endeavored to be put forward as applicable to this situation. The decline in the industrial and productive workers was to be 'compensated' by the increase in auxiliary 'services' and luxury occupations (clerical, distributive, advertising, commercial, and luxury services). Certainly, a very considerable increase in these auxiliary and in the main non-productive occupations is to be traced in the United States, Britain and other countries during the post-war period, thus providing the basis of the rapid expansion of the so-called 'new middle class,' which became one of the breeding-grounds of Fascism; just as the growth of the permanent unemployed army provided a further breeding-ground. The expansion of the rentier class on the one side, and of luxury services and endlessly multiplied 'salesmanship' services on the other, is a measure of the degeneration of capitalism

"Nevertheless, this supposed 'compensation' was soon revealed as a doubtful solution. In this first place, it was manifestly no solution for the millions of miners and heavy industry workers thrown out of work. In the second place, the extent of 'compensation' had obvious limits which were soon reached. For in these occupations, too, rationalization begins to get to work and to repeat the process of throwing off the superfluous workers. Mechanization transforms clerical work, and begins increasingly to replace clerks by more and more elaborate calculating and book-keeping machines; centralization cuts down the number of competing businesses; staffs are reduced. The 'white-collar workers' also find themselves increasingly thrown on the market alongside their industrial brothers."(54)

In the same passage, Dutt quotes Marx and remains true to the definition of proletarian and the concept of "productive work. He doesn't try to smuggle parasitic "work" into the definition of "proletarian," the way our critics do today. Dutt spoke so precisely and with correct reference to Marxism-Leninism that we can now honor his work by showing where it no longer applies using his own yardsticks. The things that happened to the middle classes in the Depression(55) did not continue after World War II as MIM Theory 1 and Sakai's Settlers show, and the above quote from Dutt turned out to be wrong as a prediction about the imperialist countries.

As a measure of parasitism in the case of England, Dutt suggested that anyone salaried is likely holding a "non-productive" job. Also, according to Dutt, workers in "Commerce, Finance and Personal Service" constituted members of a class, "virtually unorganisable to the working-class movement."(56) Dutt volunteered that 15% were parasites amongst English workers on this basis alone.

In the United States, Dutt analyzed the 1930 Census and he found only 19 million of 49 million workers in manufacturing, industry and transport. Farmers along were one-quarter and he admitted to a "very wide expansion of the solaria, salesmen, etc."(57) Even among farmers, not all were poor - and they could provide a basis for the fascist movement, Dutt said. Little did Dutt know that while 40% of workers in 1930 were in the productive sectors, by 1980 that figure was only 13%. Even within the sectors formerly thought of as productive, the percentage that engages in non-productive work (supervising, management, other paper-shuffling administration) has tripled to about one-third.(58) To Dutt's credit, had he seen the 1980 Census 50 years later and used his 1934 standards, he would have concluded the same thing as MIM. The conditions have changed, but the definition of proletarian has not under imperialism.

If we changed the names from the "United States" and "England" to the world as a whole in Dutt's quotes above, more would be true still. And if we changed the parts about imperialist-country workers to oppressed nation workers, again we would see much truth in Dutt's analysis. It remains true on the world scale that "The capitalist 'way out' is at each stage a way of increas-

ing destruction, of mass-starvation, of violence, of war, of decay.”(59)

III. Comintern Ultraleftism: Temporary Mistakes Ad Nauseum by Lazy Dogmatists, Opportunists and Revisionists

“The party must guide the masses to a revolutionary position in such a way that they are convinced by their own experience of the correctness of the party’s policy. If this rule is not observed, the party will inevitably be cut off from the masses and fall into putschist; communism will degenerate ideologically into ‘left’ dogmatism, petty-bourgeois ‘revolutionary’ adventurism. Equally ruinous is it if the party fails to act at the height of the revolutionary movement, when a bold and resolute attack on the enemy is called for. To allow such an opportunity to pass without going over to insurrection is to leave the initiative to the enemy and to condemn the revolution to defeat.”(60)

MIM Theory 6 and MIM Theory 8 talk about ultraleftism. Ultraleftism is an overly optimistic assessment of the balance of forces that results in fighting losing battles which set back the revolution. The contrast is rightism, in which people do not recognize the power they have in their hands and hence demoralize the proletariat and its allies while giving the bourgeoisie a reprieve. Rightism is the general problem of the time. Occasionally we see a gloss of ultra left rhetoric on top of rightism.

From the perspective of hindsight, which is in essence an idealist and hence mistaken approach, we see in the Comintern mostly ultra left mistakes. From the perspective of the Comintern’s time, there was still some ultra leftism because there was a range of views from the alleged right that the Comintern chose to ignore. As an extreme example, the right-wing of the German communist party, led by Maslow, believed the German revolution was decades away in 1926.(61) As it turns out, a revolutionary situation arose in the 1930s and 1940s in Germany, so Maslow’s claims seem dubious if not entirely ridiculous.

On the other hand, in 1919 the Comintern was talking about England and the U.S. Empire’s ability to survive without socialism a year or two longer than Europe as a whole, which they saw as on the brink of revolution. They also proclaimed the social-democracy of the Second International dead.(62) In 1919 no one claimed to see otherwise except the mensheviks, who opposed revolution generally.

Given what happened in Germany in 1923, MIM has sympathy for Lenin and the other Bolsheviks who maintained a taut posture with regard to the possibility of revolution. The problem only emerges when decade after decade the lazy dogmatists utilize the same old formulas from 1922. In 1922, the Comintern was saying that material conditions for revolution abounded and it was even more important than in previous years to pay attention to the “subjective factor” - the boldness to create revolution out of existing possibilities. Not surprisingly, at the same time in the same document, the Comintern continued with its mistaken view that “to win the majority of the American and European working class - that is, now as before, the Comintern’s cardinal task.”(63)

It is easy to confuse dialectics with ultra leftism. Dialectics tells us that at all times what is possible through struggle is more than what is immediately apparent. Political analysis without dialectics is conservative and reflects at best pragmatism or formal or mechanical materialism. Dialectics is part of our philosophy and methodology and is always true for our purposes. Struggle and conflict are permanent for our lifetimes and longer.

On the other hand, dialectics does not mean that at all times going on the offensives - not to mention seizing state power - is possible. Such a view is not dialectics but ultra leftism. In its extreme form this view is idealism, a very common belief underlying much Trotskyism and anarchism. Trotskyist Isaac Deutscher elevated “overreaching” to a principle that made Trotsky a great man.(64) It was this kind of “overreaching,” based on an overestimate of the capacity of Polish and German workers, that led Trotsky to ignore Lenin’s order to negotiate the end of World War I sooner than he did. From MIM’s dialectical materialist perspective, this “overreaching” did not serve to advance the revolution, but ended up giving the German imperialists huge chunks of Soviet territory and thus setting back the revolution.

Later, Trotsky would accuse Stalin of seeing “stabilization” of capitalism more than it really existed and hence accused Stalin of rightist mistakes after Lenin died. Stalin and Bukharin replied in December 1926 by saying that Zinoviev and Trotsky were exaggerating the balance of forces and making ultra left deviations. The Comintern published a list of reasons regarding conditions for its view.

“Notwithstanding certain statements by opposition leaders (Zinoviev, Trotsky, and others) capitalist stabilization is an indisputable fact (the growth of world production, of international trade, currency stabilization, etc.). Equally indisputable, however, is the partial and unstable character of this stabilization, as shown in the feverish fluctuations of the market, in the extreme unevenness of development, in the enormous contradiction between the capacity of the productive apparatus and the actual volume of output, in the magnitude of chronic unemployment. Among the most important factors disturbing the process of capitalist stabilization are the growth of socialism in the USSR, the decline of English capitalism, the unprecedented acuteness of class struggle in England, and the great national revolution in China.”(65)

The above on the immediate prospects for revolution showed that Stalin and Bukharin were willing to stake out a position nominally to Trotsky’s “right” - but in fact more correct. If we re-read the statement above in terms of conditions that can produce de-stabilization, we see that socialism is no longer growing anywhere, so this is a large factor for stability in the imperialist countries; British capitalism is still declining, so that remains the same as in Stalin’s day; there is no huge class struggle in the U.S. Empire and only the Los Angeles rebellion approaches the struggles of the 1960s; and the national revolutions are not doing as well as they did in China, although that could easily change and be a factor for de-stabilization, as the case of Peru and the Philippines show.

Neo-Trotskyist Max Schachtman admitted that Trotsky overestimated what was possible in the 1920s, and this cost him support from the communists at the time:

"The highest hopes had been placed in the prospects of a revolutionary victory in the convulsive social crisis of 1923 in Germany. ... But it did not come. The defeat marked the end of the first big post-war revolutionary wave in Europe and the ushering in of a period of relative capitalist stabilization. The bureaucracy rose on this leaven, too. The defeat of the Opposition was due in part to the repercussions of the defeats of the proletariat in the West."(66)

Schachtman should have added that Trotsky's Eurocentric ultra leftist theory of permanent revolution never had any relevance again after 1923.

Eurocentric Ultraleftism and Economic Conditions

"It must be frankly said that the strength of the Hitlerites lies in the meekness of the German masses, and primarily the German workers." - Comintern, May 1943 (67)

A great weakness of our movement has been its willingness to write propaganda unconnected to facts having to do with economic crises, usually as a matter of repeating old analyses that were once reasonably correct. The ultraleft "general crisis" line has been mostly incorrect for the imperialist countries, even as it mostly underestimated revolutionary potential in the Third World. While Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin all admitted they were wrong about how soon the revolution in Europe would happen, they never broke with the idea entirely that revolution was imminent in Europe. This is clear already in the Comintern documents approved by Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. In August 1920, the Comintern was saying something we hear the RCP-USA and others say 75 years later: "The bourgeoisie have entirely abandoned the idea of conciliating the proletariat by means of reforms. They demoralize a small and dwindling upper group with a few gifts and force the great mass into obedience by blood and iron."(68)

The paragraph preceding was about World War I in which the carnage did reach Europeans, as it did in World War II. In this sense, it was true that imperialism was destroying the comfort of its own working classes. However, after World War II, we see that the imperialists made more use of the techniques of "modern militarism" that Lenin spoke of with regard to colonized peoples and not Europeans. In exceptional cases, as in the Vietnamese war, we did see the rebirth of the revolutionary movement. For the times without those conditions it has been false to predict the use of blood and iron against the imperialist country workers. The use of violence against the workers in the imperialist countries has been the exception for quite some time, mostly because the workers do not make demands; they negotiate their alliance with the imperialists. The lack of violent convict itself is a fundamental reason for the lack of political consciousness among the workers.

The practice of separating the economic conditions from the political demands of the proletariat was not rife in the Comintern meetings Lenin attended. Rather, there was a precise explanation of conditions that gave rise to various ideologies. For this reason, political demands were not merely a matter of cheerleading or writing militant poetry.

In July 1921, the Comintern clearly linked together the conditions of the labor aristocracy and the prospects of revolution based on the working class. "The majority of the working class is nevertheless outside the Communist sphere of influence. This is particularly true in countries such as Britain and America where finance capital is so powerful that it has enabled imperialism to corrupt entire sections of the working class."(69) The solution they proposed was to enter the trade unions and transform them.

While the Comintern described conditions that led to corruption of the proletariat and formation of a labor aristocracy, it also explained under what conditions that labor aristocracy might break down. The simple line was often that capitalist crisis would bring about the fall of the labor aristocracy and the re-proletarianization of those workers. In 1928, the Comintern explained in more detail a list of such conditions. MIM agrees with these conditions, but they were largely ignored for the last 70 years. More communists should note how the labor aristocracy will truly fall:

"For the heightening of imperialist contradictions, the worsening of the position of large masses of workers and mass unemployment, the enormous costs of military conflicts, the loss by certain Powers of their monopoly position on world markets, and finally the loss of colonies, etc., undermine the foundation of social-imperialism among the masses."(70)

We can see that inter-imperialist rivalry has not been waged on imperialist soil since World War II. This is a central fact for our times and one reason why the labor aristocracy has not fallen. In the 1920s, Stalin and Trotsky both thought that Anglo-American conflicts would lead to world war - the rising American empire against the declining British one. In 1929, they thought this was the same contradiction as that which led up to World War I, except "more intensified than ever. ... The conditions for a new imperialist war are accumulating, particularly in connection with the struggle between Great Britain and the United States for hegemony."(71) If WWII had pitted France and Germany against each other, as well as the United States and England against each other, with Japan siding with one or the other, the labor aristocracy indeed might have gone down the drain. It didn't. So we must not repeat an analysis designed for the 1920s as if it were good for all time.

Continuing with the list of conditions above, we can see the position of oppressed nationality workers has sometimes fallen, but the living standards of European and American workers has generally improved over time since World War II. Moreover, while there is chronic and Depression-level unemployment among the oppressed nationalities, the same is not true for the white masses; although it does sometimes reach double digits as in parts of Canada and in France today. Finally, the blows anti-colonial struggles have not been as decisive as we wished. This is in large part because the struggle was usually not able to advance to the socialist stage - and where it attempted to go further capitalist restoration followed. Hence, the imperialists

have found ways to gain super profits from puppet regimes in the Third World. Many have referred to this as the development of neocolonialism and, along with the lack of war on imperialist soil, it is a crucial factor to evaluate in the conditions of the labor aristocracy.

as time went on, the Comintern leaders became more removed from political economy and settled into a "General crisis" school of thought which discouraged concrete analysis of the kind above. Trotsky took one step in this direction when he wrote a Comintern manifesto in July 1924. Here he claimed that World War I made all the imperialist countries poorer, even 10 years later. According to Trotsky, even the workers of the victor states were poorer.(72) From this of course Trotsky concluded that revolutionary conditions are hastened and there should be no underestimating the potential for a revolution. "There is not a single healthy spot in Europe," said Trotsky who went on to list each country as collapsing.(72) The only exception he made was that of the "Economic boom in North America, based largely on the home market."(74)

While Trotsky overestimated the situation in Europe, he continued to underestimate the revolutionary potential in the colonies. He managed to get the Comintern to publish this statement: "The workers in the colonies must be taught to regard white workers as their brothers, and to do that the white proletariat must learn to act as brothers to the colored population of the colonies."(75) His article pits the proletariat of the world against the peoples of the colonies and sees the liberation of the colonies as a matter of extending imperialist country communist help into the colonies. This was a common attitude at the time, but Trotsky was its most consistent proponent: "Proletarians of Europe! Pay more attention to the colonial question, devote more of your forces to revolutionary work in the colonies. There, where the bourgeoisie would wish to find their most reliable supporters, they must instead be dealt a damaging blow."(76) Here Trotsky has continued with the white workers view of colonial workers that they work for too little money and are not even proletarian, just scabs who have to be corrected by European guidance.

Yet it was not just Trotsky introducing Eurocentric ultra leftism. It was also Stalin and his supporters:

"Relations between the capitalist States and the Soviet Union, between imperialism and China, between Europe (primarily England) and the United States are at the basis of all international relations today. Germany's development and the consequent regrouping of powers are one of the main factors in the change in the relations between European States.

"8. The most important factor in capitalist development as a whole today is the shift of the economic centre of gravity to the United States."(77)

Although Lenin and Stalin had turned the party's attention to the colonies, especially in the East, they did not succeed in getting the comrades to make a clean break with Eurocentrism right away. As with many profound ideas, it had to germinate for a period before it made its full weight felt.

Right into 1935, the Comintern could not resist the idea that the white labor aristocracy was going to return to the proletariat, even in the United States. As Manuilsky said, "The American worker is sinking to the level of the majority of the European workers, as the bolsheviks foresaw. The colonial workers are not becoming decolonized ... the European white worker is sinking more and more to the level of the colonial coolie."(78) Dimitrov, who approved Manuilsky's somewhat wishful thinking, said such an economic situation forced the social-democratic parties to be more open to a united front and not just be the main bulwarks for capitalism. Strangely, while Dimitrov maintained an underlying ultra left view of political economy, his view of the political situation in Europe was known for being much more restrained. According to Dimitrov, the proletarian dictatorship was not on the agenda in Europe, only the choice between fascism and bourgeois democracy. The contradiction in Dimitrov's position was that he no longer saw social-democrats or labor aristocrats as props of capitalism, but at the same time he believed that new alliances were possible, not because of political economy but because the labor aristocrats wanted to side with the communists to defend bourgeois democracy. The change in political situation was so great that suddenly the Comintern saw social-democrats once again as in "proletarians."(79) We do not see the distinction between workers and proletarians appear again until after the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany, when exposing British and French war preparations because a concern of the Soviet Union.(80)

Failing to discern a revolutionary upsurge from an ebb period leads to strategies and tactics that would be perfectly good in one situation but are abysmal in another. Lenin sounded a word of warning in this regard in 1922:

"We have given scarcely any thought to the possibility of retreat, and of securing this retreat. In view of the fundamental change that has taken place in the world ... we cannot absolutely ignore this question. We must not only know how to act when we are passing to the offensive and are victorious. ... If the enemy possesses sufficient power of endurance, he can rally his forces, and so forth; he can easily provoke us to attack him, and then throw us back for many years. That is why I think that the idea that we must prepare for the possibility of retreat is very important. ... Even from the practical point of view, all the parties which are preparing to pass to the direct onslaught upon capitalism in the near future must now also think of securing for themselves the possibility of retreat. ... I think that after five years of the Russian revolution the most important thing for all of us, Russian and foreign comrades alike, is to sit down and study. ... We must tell both the Russian and foreign comrades that the most important thing in the ensuing period is to study. ... If they do that, I am sure the prospects of the world revolution will be not only good, but excellent."(81)

This idea of Lenin's goes along with our idea of fighting "winnable battles," not just in military strategy, but in all strategy. Even more remarkable about this quote from Lenin is that, as Mao explains in "On Contradiction," things that are not ordinarily principal may become principal in certain circumstances thanks to the law of uneven development. In periods of retreat, Lenin is saying study is principal, even in a situation where the communists hold state power in at least one country. Times of success perhaps especially may drag comrades away from their duties to study. MIM has seen some of this in the period of the

1980s, where the successes of the 1960s and 1970s dialectically led to some looseness and pluralism in the proletarian movement - a lazy pluralism means unresolved contradictions and unresolved contradictions can mean paralysis. In the process of weeding out in the 1980s and 1990s, we are seeing the most hypocritical and contradictory ideologies decline or die outright, especially the hodgepodge connected to defending Soviet revisionism. We are now setting up a clear pole to lead the next upsurge, and it is our duty to prepare to have the correct analysis at hand and on the tip of our tongues the next time the masses initiate a revolutionary upsurge. The better our preparation, the further we will be able to take the next upsurge. If we do not in some sense surpass the theoretical understanding of the previous generation, the embassies may not be able to push the revolutionary wave any higher than last time. All this is to say that in one situation the principal task may be training military regiments. In another it may be studying. Our central task at the moment is creation public opinion, which is perhaps only one step ahead of the task of study. And so there is still a great need for study, especially among today's youth, who must be tomorrow's leaders of the revolutionary upsurge.

An incorrect assessment of material conditions, and ultra left dogmatism, also means people miss possibilities where they do exist. A good example of this is the Comintern's explanation that the communists always received millions of votes in Germany, but that this should not be mistaken to indicate significant influence among workers, where the social-democrats continued to dominate. For example, between 1928-1930, the communist vote increased from 3.3 million to 4.6 million while the Social-Democratic Party vote fell from 9.2 to 8.6 million, thus vindicating the communist strategy of equating social-democracy with fascism.(82) Between 1930-1932, Reichstag votes rose again for the communists, who went from 13.1% to 14.3%, while the Social-Democratic Party went from 24.5% to 21.6%.(83) The question arises, where did the votes come from between 1928 and 1932? Who supported the communist movement and how did the communists let the fascists seize a generation of youth from them to use in street battle? These questions did not arise because of the straight-jacket imposed by an incorrect understanding of imperialist-country political economy.

Yet, compared with today's lazy dogmatist defenders of the prevalent "general crisis" line, even Comintern activist R. Palme Dutt was much more concerned to such an extent that we are able to compare his situation in the 1930s with ours today.

One key condition is the world's overall production level. In 1932, the communists were correct to hunk the downturn was more than an average cyclical downturn. Dutt pointed to figures that showed industrial production in 1932 was lower than in 1913. He concluded: "Thus the war and post-war period, taken as a whole, reveals the first large-scale absolute set-back of capitalist production."(84) This only makes MIM wonder why our lazy dogmatists cannot look at the world production statistics like Dutt did and see that nothing of the sort has happened since World War II. We can understand how Dutt thought he was seeing the very end and needed to take a view toward going on the offensive in the imperialist countries, and take the view that the labor aristocracy was going to fall momentarily. We cannot understand how people persist in this error now that "modern militarism" has spread the world across thanks to the imperialists.

Of the conditions most important to the general crisis that Dutt saw, two of three definitely do not exist as he thought they would indefinitely. First, there are currently no wars in which imperialist country masses are killing each other. Second, the compensation of the imperialist country workers has increased, and in fact it is no longer linked to directly controlling colonies. The German and Japanese workers are not left out of the swag just because they lost their right to colonies in World War II. The imperialists allow each other great latitude in investing and operating in each other's spheres and have done more to equalize the rat of profit among them - all through an ideology of bourgeois internationalism. Because imperialists no longer directly administer their they have no need to not cut each other out in the manner of the past. The only condition that could arguably be the same as in the days of Dutt's "general crisis" theory is the difference between productive capacity and actual utilization.(85) This gap has declined since the Depression, but (as in Dutt's day) the decline in the gap is occurring partly through the destruction of productive capacity through war. Even so, the meaning of this contradiction is not the same under the condition of increasing overall world production.

Dutt specifically predicted that the conditions of U.S. workers would steadily deteriorate.(86) However, MIM has shown in MIM Theory 1 that this is not true. Even in the 1980s when liberals went bonkers with their lies about the conditions of the white workers, the decline in conditions was concentrated in the bottom 20 percent of workers, who were predominantly oppressed nationalities. The top 80 percent either held its own or saw its living standards increase. Such a fact can be lost momentarily through figures using averages that mask the harsh realities of the bottom fifth. The liberals, social-democrats and various bearers of the menshevik legacy continue in this way of lying about the workers' conditions so that they can use the oppressed nationality workers to struggle for better working conditions for the top half of workers. Because the state smashed the Black Panthers, and other genuine vanguards fell in the 1960 and 1970s, the Mensheviks and bourgeoisie have gotten away with this trick.

The same thing is happening as we speak. The advocated of multi-"racial" working class unity are preaching pacifism to Black youth. They are telling the youth to wait for the white working class and hence things like the beating of Rodney King did not justify a violent response against the white nation. The result is that another generation of youth may be lost to the revolution, as opportunists preach paralysis. Whatever the balance of forces in the class struggle, that cannot go on forever without generating fascist victory.

Our critics say we treat youth as a class to substitute it for the white working class. Our reply is that youth are not a class, but white youth are the white social group most in line with the interests of the international proletariat. The Comintern of Stalin (and yes, Trotsky, still thought he was being criticized in the same article) went further and did not bother breaking youth down by class for some purposes: "One of the tasks of bolshevization is to win over the youth of the entire world without

exception.”(87) It’s a remarkable statement, since one might think the Comintern would oppose recruiting bourgeois and petty-bourgeois youth.

Comintern Ultraleftism and Social-Democracy

Despite the line on the labor aristocracy of the early Comintern, the Bolsheviks held a basically ultra left line with regard to the decline of the labor aristocracy, based on the experience with World War I. They thought imperialist war would end the privileges of the labor aristocracy. When World War I ended, the majority of Bolsheviks continued to believe they would be handed sufficiently bad crises such that the labor aristocracy would be destroyed. As we have stressed, it’s one thing to make a mistake for a few years and it is another thing to repeat it out of lazy dogmatism. In the 1930s, revolution did not happen in Germany, but it had some probability of success, and likewise in the United States the labor aristocracy did not go down the drain as predicted, but the chance that World War II would have made that happen was real. It’s only when we look back at this over a period of decades, in which simple mistakes have been repeated over and over, that we can say we are looking at the root of revisionism in the labor aristocracy and the political tactics connected to it. Chasing after social-democratic workers is partly caused by the logical political expression of an ultra left line on the labor aristocracy in the imperialist countries.

In April, 1919, as a corollary to its Eurocentric ultra leftism, the Comintern wrote that the Second International and social-democracy were dead - killed by World War I.(88) In later years, all the Bolshevik leaders admitted they were wrong about 1919 and the whole immediacy of revolution. At the time, however, the Comintern argued that right opportunists missed opportunities in this period by failing to provide staunch leadership. In such periods, leadership has not only the duty to improve the position of the communist movement dialectically with respect to its past position, but also to improve it to such an extent that it goes all the way to state power. To do less is a rightist error that can easily usher in fascism as its price: that is the case the Comintern thought Europe was in during the 1920s.

Excerpts from a 1923 statement issued in January 1924 showed that the Comintern continued to have a rather immediate sense that social-democracy was going to collapse.

“The time will come when entire social-democratic parties, now still strong, will collapse or, if they continue their treachery, burst as soap-bubbles do, when entire strata of social-democratic workers will complete the turn to our side. United front tactics proote and accelerate this process.”(89)

While these views had considerable validity in the colonies, because the colonies were never fertile grounds for social-democracy, these theses were centered on a discussion of Europe and hence incorrect.

The obsession with winning over social-democratic workers continues to this day. Lazy dogmatists never realized that all their patient explanations and united front maneuvers hadn’t worked since World War II, because the imperialists had managed to stabilize themselves internally through the purchase of a labor aristocracy and petty-bourgeois majority.

Of course, every year there is a possibility for capitalist collapse into a depression. The lazy dogmatists do not consider that the question now has a history and even a temporary bubble burst is not going to change the historical and hence political perspective of the labor aristocracy overnight. The labor aristocracy has not faced a Depression situation or possibility for decades, even as the workers of the oppressed nations continue to do so. The trajectory of a class cannot be predicted by taking the lies and flattery of the lazy dogmatists as truth. The calculations of the labor aristocracy leave it little sympathy for communism.

Idiots in the British Labour Party and the Vienna section of the Second International proclaimed Hitlerism dead in 1932. These fools equated declining Nazi vote results with actual power.(90) Meanwhile, their own strategy of the “lesser-evil” handed Hitler state power, which they then had to uphold as legal, as the social democrats always sod in respecting bourgeois democratic institutions.

Dutt goes over how the Communist and Social Democratic votes combined always surpassed those of the Nazis in each election except one. He then explains how then it was possible for the German workers to go along with the Hitler dictatorship without so much as a wimpier.

“The question reveals a failure to understand the conditions. The control of the majority of the working class, and in particular of the overwhelming majority (nearly nine-tenths, according to the factory council elections) of the employed industrial workers, and the entire trade union machine, lay with Social Democracy.”(91)

From this, Dutt should have concluded that the question of social-democracy and the labor aristocracy were inextricably linked together. It is a case in which today’s blind followers of Dutt “doth protest too much.” One cannot complain year in and year out that the Social-Democrats are “treacherous” without appearing naive oneself. The masses learn sooner than the lazy dogmatists that the social-democrats are not treacherous: they perfectly represent the labor aristocracy and its interests of alliance with the imperialists. We cannot blame the failure of communism on the social-democrats, who are merely representing their class. We communists must focus on what we can do within our existing conditions to improve the situation through struggle.

For the youth communists must stop looking like religious fools by giving up the nervous habit of banging their heads against the labor aristocracy wall, ever thinking it is going to crack or even respond. For the oppressed nationalities, communists must stop with the part about waiting for the imperialist-country workers and for the advanced workers themselves; we explain why their peers are not interested in revolution. When we do these things, the advanced amongst the feminists, the

lumpenproletarian organizers and others seeking progressive change take note with a sigh of relief that finally the communists are beginning to show some sense.

Dutt should have realized that if the communists enjoyed so little support from industrial workers but such high vote totals, that the support for a proletarian line was coming from somewhere else. If Dutt is correct that the social-democrats so dominated industrial labor, it was the duty of the communists to the international proletariat to find the bases for its own support apart from the industrial workers. The failure to do so turned the youth over to the fascists and meant losing the struggle in the streets. While not excusing the German youth for turning to fascism, we certainly understand that they didn't join the communists decisively, because it would have meant banging their heads up against the wall of the conservative labor aristocracy. While the communist leadership could not get over its obsession with the labor aristocracy, because of some well-written words in books, the youth kept moving along and never looked back. The experience and vision of the movement was sidetracked while the energy and muscle-power went to the Nazis. Such a mistake may have been preventable and hence tens of millions dead in World War II may have been spared. It was questionable enough once to lose the youth while flirting with the social-democratic workers, but now after years of consolidated bourgeois democracy and imperialist bribery, it is a crime against the teachings of Marx and Lenin, and all the lessons of this history.

Comintern and United Front: Opposing Conglomeration

Before we get into the issue of World War II again, we should also point out that there were a number of Comintern documents from 1919-1922 that Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin all supposedly agreed on. There is much in these documents that clears Stalin for later years when Trotsky started criticisms of Stalin's idea of the united front.

The subsequent criticism of Stalin for making defense of the Soviet Union so central in World War II - criticisms made by open Trotskyists as well as crypto-Trots like Bob Avakian of the RCP-USA - does not make sense in light of Comintern documents that existed long before World War II. In July 1921, the Comintern said, "Unconditional support of Soviet Russia remains as before the cardinal duty of the communists of all countries." (92) This was not something that Stalin invented in a fit of Russian-identified nationalism. This was something Lenin and Trotsky also approved. There are no holy principles with which Stalin can be criticized on this score.

For that matter, while Lenin was still attending Comintern meetings, Radek gave Stalin ample grounds for allying with imperialists or anyone else in World War II. A relatively independent but nonetheless prominent Trotskyist at crucial points, Radek said in 1922:

"Soviet Russia, its Government, and its masses, pursue a cool realpolitik ... The Soviet Government knows that the first wave of world revolution has subsided and that the next will mount only slowly. ... Therefore the Soviet Government declares: we need world capital and therefore we must give it profits. ... Fools, who call themselves communists and even left communists, have accused us on this account of treachery to the proletariat. ... We answer: Then show us another way. ... Split into hostile camps, the capitalist world fears that we shall ally ourselves with the enemies of any State which tries to starve us out. We shall ally ourselves not only with Beelzebub but with his grandmother too if it is a question of defending the rights for which the Russian working class bled and starved." (93)

To which MIM says, "Right on!" Too bad the Trotskyists couldn't support Marxism-Leninism this way more steadily and changed their minds in later years to turn to counterrevolution. If Stalin were guilty of heresy to Marxism-Leninism in World War II (94), the Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists should explain why Lenin didn't throw Radek out on his ass.

Similarly, ultra left Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists say the Comintern did not put forward a principled concept of the united front, and this led among other things to the massacre in Shanghai in 1927. Yet all along, in the collection of documents edited by Jane Degras, we see that the Comintern clearly explained that the united front never means the surrender of the independent agitation of the communists.

"It is necessary for communists in all countries to get clearly into their minds what the united front tactics are, and what they are not; they are tactics of revolution, not evolution. Just as the workers' (and peasants') government cannot, for us, be a fixed democratic coalition, an alliance with social-democracy. They are only a method of revolutionary agitation and mobilization. We reject all other interpretations as opportunist." (95)

The united front was in no way thought of as a means of rightist opportunism. The tactic was to show the bankruptcy of social-democracy by showing what the social-democratic parties would not agree to negotiations. In this way the workers understood why the communists were separate from the social-democrats and could not always fact in unity with them.

"United front tactics ... are the tactics of a revolutionary strategic maneuver of the communist vanguard, surrounded by enemies, in its struggle against the treacherous leaders of the counterrevolutionary social-democracy. ... United front tactics were and are a means of gradually drawing over to our side the social-democratic and the best non-party workers; they should in no circumstance be degraded to the tactics of lowering our ideals to the level of understanding reached by these workers." (96)

According to the Comintern, those in the U.S. Empire had particular problems in grasping this.

"The appearance of Trotskyism in the United States can be explained by the fact that the Trotskyists opportunist doctrines on the question of the party and its structure, at the basis of which lies the 'principle' of unprincipled alliance with all and sundry right and 'left' groups and organizations fighting against the Comintern, seems to fit perfectly into the scheme of political

struggle in the United States where lack of principle was always the underlying principle in the activities of all bourgeois parties. Nowhere, in no other country in the world, have we witnessed so easy and rapid formation of a bloc of the Trotskyists and the out-and-out right-wingers as in the United States.”(97)

This fits in with earlier statements from the Comintern about the general lack of attention to theory in the U.S. Empire. U.S. communists have a reputation for a general pragmatism.

In 1932, as a means of creating some basis for separating his line from Stalin’s, Trotsky argued that the Mensheviks of Germany should unite with the Bolsheviks as a united front to stop facisms, and he argued that Stalin was ultra left for refusing an “alliance from above” with the Social Democratic Party of Germany.(98) Yet, in 1924, Trotsky belonged to the Comintern which said: “The leading strata of German social-democracy are at the present movement nothing but a fraction of German fascism wearing a socialist mask. ... This circumstance induces us to modify the united front tactics in Germany. there can be no dealings with the mercenaries of the white dictatorship.”(99)

The Comintern also made all the same analyses of the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries that Stalin and Mao later did, while Lenin was still on hand. For Trotskyists to argue that proletarian alliance with the national bourgeoisie is incorrect is fine, but to say it is a deviation from Marxism-Leninism is a bald-faced lie.(100) Noting that the colonial bourgeoisie initially supports the revolutionary struggle, the Comintern referred to the indigenous bourgeoisie as a “vacillating” force with which the proletariat could enter into temporary alliances. For this reason Lenin’s Comintern distinguished between the “proletarian united front” in the European countries and the “anti-imperialist united front” in the colonies.(101)

Foreshadowing what Mao systemized in “On Contradiction,” the Comintern of Lenin argued that the class struggle takes the backseat to national struggle under certain conditions depending on which classes are allied with the imperialists.

“In the colonial countries with an oppressed native peasant population the national liberation movement is composed either of the entire population, as for example in Turkey, in which case the struggle of the oppressed peasantry against the landlords inevitably begins after the victory of the liberation struggle; or the feudal landlords are allied with the imperialist robbers, and in these countries, for example India, the social struggle of the oppressed peasants takes place at the same time as the struggle for national liberation.”(102)

It goes without saying that if the “entire population” including the most backward class of feudal lords can be allied against colonialism, then there are certain circumstances when the national bourgeoisie, representative of a more modern mode of production, is also an ally.

The United Front and Mass Organizations

The Comintern said that communists should not put forward minimum programs that help stabilize capitalism. On the other hand, we do have to take up partial demands to connect them to the broader picture. With regard to the mass organizations, the comintern said:

“The bigger they are, the greater the potential nerves of the party, the wider the audience to which it can turn. A policy of splitting the mass organization is therefore one which will diminish our reserves, narrow our radius of action, weaken our ties with the masses, and isolate us from them.”(103)

Combined with its policy on the trade unions, the Comintern policy appears at least superficially in contradiction with MIM line. MIM does not join trade unions in imperialist North America. We see no reason to strengthen organizations that have been used historically to attack foreign workers. On the other hand, if we had enough comrades we would send one to every trade union, church and other mass organization out there. The connection to the masses of whatever class background or ideology is indeed important.

It is only possible for a communist not to split a mass organization if the communist does not join or if the mass organization acts for anti-imperialist or anti-militarist causes. If a communist were in a labor aristocracy organization acting for labor aristocracy goals, then a communist could not remain a communist without disrupting the activity of the organization and splitting it. This has to do fundamentally with the definition of masses. If the masses are by definition our allies, then we don’t have to worry. If the masses include enemy classes which are the majority in the U.S. Empire, then we have a duty not to build their organizations. Hence, what the Comintern thought was correct for the imperialist countries is no longer correct. The labor aristocracy has hardened and did not return to the proletariat in the crises predicted by the Comintern.

The United Front and Imperialist Allies

As scholar Robert Tucker has point out, Stalin did have a basis in Lenin for his management of alliances with imperialists during World War II. Already in 1925 the Comintern was point out that the social-traitors of Germany were looking toward an anti-Soviet foreign policy for Germany.(104) Another example of this idea appeared in 1931:

“The parties of social-fascism are sharing openly and directly in the policy of armaments, blockade, and intervention. The strongest party of the Second International, the German Social-Democracy Party ... is the most active of all German parties organizing the anti-Soviet front.”(105)

Hence, Stalin saw little reason to form a bloc with the party that was an accomplice to the German occupation of the Ukraine. The Social Democrats specialized in anti-communist treachery while the Nazis aimed their fire at a wider range of

enemies.

Contrary to Bob Avakian and the Trotskyists, the Stalin-led Comintern did in fact continue to support the call for India to break away from England. After the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany, the Soviet Union again took up its cudgel against British imperialism(106). At that time, they again shifted toward support for united front from below in Europe. This also meant criticism of social-democratic leaders in 1939.(107) Only after the German invasion of the USSR, and only for approximately two years, did the Comintern put any pressure on the comrades from India to focus fire on the Nazis.

In 1939, the Soviet Union continued to issue warnings about German imperialism as well. The Comintern explained that the English and French imperialists had tried to aim the Nazis eastward and failed. There was nothing "secret" about Comintern diplomacy in this sense. It explained each step of the way the Soviet Union was trying to do to play the imperialists off each other. This included denouncing the "Shock troops of international reaction against 'world bolshevism'" that the Nazis were (108), and condemning "the much-noised 'anti-Comintern' Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan" right after the Soviet Union signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Hitler.(109) At no time did the Soviets hide their criticisms of the Nazis or Anglo-French imperialists. It was only the ignorant and superstitious who claimed the tStalin did not prepare the people for battle. They never read any Comintern publications, but that didn't stop them from spreading all kinds of slander and libels about the Comintern's stance.

The idea that Stalin encouraged some some kind of permanent policy of "popular front" that resulted in the deterioration of the European communist parties is also easily disproved by simply reading the Comintern documents. MIM addressed this issue in MIM Theory 6, but we reiterate that the ignorant, schematized view of the Comintern spread by Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists is easily refuted. On the question of the "popular front," the Comintern said already by 1939 that such alliances were still possible in those countries like China where there was a role for the national bourgeoisie to play, because it could participate in the new democratic stage of revolution. On the other hand, the Comintern also made it clear that as the imperialists were going to war in a sheerly inter-imperialist war, there were no longer the correct conditions to ally with sections of the bourgeoisie represented in the leaders of social-democratic and "radical" parties:

"The tactics of the united people's front presupposed join action by the communist parties and the social-democratic and petty-bourgeois 'democratic' and 'radical' parties against reaction and war. But the top sections of these parties are now openly supporting the imperialist war. The social-democratic, 'democratic,' and 'radical' flunkies of the bourgeoisie, are brazenly distorting the anti-fascist slogans of the Popular Front, and are using them to deceive the masses of the people and to cover up the imperialist character of the war."(110)

This alone from the Comintern documents is enough to refute the nonsense propagated by Bob Avakian in "Conquer the World, the Proletariat Must and Will," and by the ORU in its "Roots of Revisionism," both of which sought to blame Stalin for the collapse of the European communist parties into revisionism. When the Soviet Union was not being invaded, the Comintern clearly stated the workers had no interest in the war. "They must concentrate the fire against opportunism, expressed in slipping into the position of 'defending the Fatherland,' in support of the fairy-tale about the antifascist character of the war."(111) Again in April 1940, the Comintern said the working masses had no interest in the imperialist war: "In all capitalist countries the working people want to put an end to the imperialist war."(112) Almost all the criticisms of Stalin on the united front and World War II come from Trotskyists, anarchists and crypto-Trotskyists and almost all of these criticisms are not even relevant except for a two-year portion of the World War II, during which the Soviet Union's fighters did the principal fighting - losing 22 million dead or more in four years.

For this reason, we see not one iota of truth to the criticism of Trotskyists, crypto-Trotskyists and anarchists on Stalin and World War II. These idealists did not distinguish between the criticism of words and weapons; had they succeeded in criticizing the imperialists with weapons before the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the idealists would not have seen Stalin side with one imperialist bloc against another. As it turns out, the idealists and the rest of the world let the Soviet Union down, not the other way around.

Conclusion

Our critics in the international communist movement say that our view is clear, but we need to prove it in practice, the way Mao proved that peasant rebellion an protracted warfare emanating from the countryside would be key.

What our critics miss is that history has already spoken. There is nothing to wait for. There is nothing to be putting up Trotskyist/Menshevik obstacles in front of the advancing masses such as those in the Los Angeles rebellion. Such rebellions have already proven that they show the most potential of any spontaneous outbreaks within U.S. borders - and the Black Panther Party has already proved that national liberation organizations will take the Maoist movement the furthest.

The issue of who will make the revolution and hence what kind of strategy is necessary in the U.S. Empire has engaged the international communist movement since Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized state power in 1917. There is no lack of precedent for MIM's line in the works of Lenin, Stalin and Mao and indeed, in the 1960s the Chinese Communist Party and Mao had already pointed out to U.S. residents that the rebellions of the oppressed nationalities surpassed those of alleged "labor." Let the Mensheviks pretending to claim Mao read the following about the U.S. Empire from Mao after the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968:

"This has taught the broad masses of the Black people in the United States a profound lesson. It has touched off a new storm in the struggle against violent repression sweeping well over a hundred cities in the United States, a storm such as has never

taken place before in the history of that country. It shows that an extremely powerful revolutionary force is latent in the more than 20 million Black Americans.”(113)

Can there be any doubt from reading this where Mao would have stood in the Reginald Denny case? Can't we just hear him criticizing the Mensheviks who thought the attack on white people during the Los Angeles rebellion was “terrible”?(114)

It is true that Mao somewhat reversed Stalin's view of Blacks as a nation and made a point of struggling with Blacks to view themselves as a race that needs to hook up with white workers. We see Mao wrong in this regard at that time and since that time as well. He summed up the relative revolutionary force of the Black masses compared with the white working class correctly, and so did Peking Review at the time. Those reading Mao's and Peking Review's accounts of the U.S. Empire at the time will see that we don't differ with Mao much on the facts. Our critics will strive in vain to find where Mao or Peking Review point to white labor struggles as more advanced than those national struggles that already existed. Mao also referred to the Black struggle as a “national struggle” twice, even though he spoke of “race” and the need to unite with white workers.(115) We are now in the position to say that Mao's predictions about the white workers' joining up with the revolutionary Black movement never came true. Mao had that part wrong, and his teachings on self-reliance, national struggles and youth are the more relevant ones.

Notes:

1. Many have criticized MIM's use of statistics, usually percentages or numbers and nothing involving probabilities. However, Lenin used many more such statistics including Tsarist statistics and criticized those who would not make use of such statistics. See his “Statistics and Sociology,” Collected Works, Vol. 23. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964, pp. 271-. For Mao talking about dogmatist lazybones, see Mao Tse-Tung, “On Contradiction,” Four Essays on Philosophy. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968. p. 37.

2. For Mao talking about how to remove mountains by hand, see “The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains,” Selected Reading from the Works of Mao Tsetung. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971. p. 320-.

3. R. Palme Dutt, who lived at the time, explained how the European fascist movement openly appealed to mysticism in the 1920s and 1930s. Today's New Age spiritualists should take note the consequences of not handling the realities of state power and oppression head on. R. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution: How and Why Fascism Came to Power in Europe*. Chicago: Proletarian Publishers, 1974. pp. 206-7.

4. Alan Adler, ed., *Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*. London: Ink Links, 1980 (hereafter Adler). p.288.

5. Jane Degras, ed., *The Communist International: 1919-1943 Documents*. London: Frank Cass & Co., 1971 (hereafter Degras). Vol. II, p.310.

6. Degras, Vol. II, p. 403. German social-democracy was very hostile than any other bourgeois ideology, which is what the Comintern is referring to.

7. V.I. Lenin, “Imperialism and the Split in Socialism,” *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, John Riddell, ed. New York: Monad Press, 1984. p.501.

8. Degras, Vol. I, p.18.

9. Ibid.

10. Degras, Vol. I, p.78.

11. L. Trotsky, “Theses on the Conditions of Admission to the Communist International,” in Adler, p.92.

12. Degras, Vol. I, p. 119. Mao was consistent with this quote of Lenin while he criticized another quote of Lenin's. Mao said, “In the various nations of the West there is a great obstacle to carrying through any revolution and construction movement; i.e., the poisons of the bourgeoisie are so powerful that they have penetrated each and every corner. While our bourgeoisie has had, after all, only three generations, those of England and France have had a 250-300 year history of development, and their ideology and modus operandi have influenced all aspects and strata of their societies. Thus the English working class follows the Labour Party, not the Communist Party.

“Lenin says, ‘The transition from capitalism to socialism will be more difficult for a country the more backward it is.’ This would seem incorrect today.” Mao Tsetung, *A Critique of Soviet Economics*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977. p. 50. Originally MIM and the RCP-USA split over this question among others, with the RCP-USA favoring Lenin. Now the RCP-USA has been forced by the hand of the Peruvians to cover its tracks. As we detail elsewhere, we do not believe the Peruvians have succeeded in getting the RCP-USA to change. The Peruvians have only gotten the RCP-USA to put on a more Maoist veneer, to cover revisionism better.

13. Degras, Vol. I, p.129.

14. Karl Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction,” *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., Robert C. Tucker, ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978. p.64.

15. V.I. Lenin, “Imperialism and the Split in Socialism,” *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International: Documents: 1907-1916*, John Riddell, ed. New York: Monad Press, 1984. p.497.

16. Degras, Vol. I, p.140.

17. Degras, Vol. I, p.144.

18. Degras, Vol. I, pp. 145-6.

19. Degras, Vol I, p.147.

20. Degras, Vol. I, p.392.

21. Degras, Vol. I, p. 163.

22. For frequent use of these terms in the Stalin era, see the collection of documents edited by Philip S. Foner & Herbert Shapiro titled *American Communism and Black Americans: A Documentary History, 1930-1934*; there they have a whole chapter titled “Against White Chauvinism.” These documents will also help the reader to understand that MIM's line on the Black nation has clear precedent in the Stalin era.

23. “On Tactics,” in Adler, p.293.

24. J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, 3rd ed. Chicago: Morningstar Press, 1989. p.138.

25. “On Tactics,” in Adler, p.294.

26. Degras, Vol. I, p.427.

27. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol III. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959. p.479.

30. Ibid., pp. 479-80.

31. Degras, Vol. II, p. 162.

32. Ibid.

33. Degras, Vol. II, p.123.

34. Degras, Vol. II, p. 180.

35. Ibid.

36. Leon Trotsky, “The Chinese Revolution,” *The Third International After Lenin*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970. pp.219-20.

37. Degras, Vol. III, p.11.

38. Karl Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction,” *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., Robert C. Tucker, ed. New York: W.W.

Norton & Co., 1978. pp. 64-5.

39. Degras, Vol. II, p.552.

40. Degras, Vol. II, p.448.

41. Degras, Vol. II, p.329.

42. Degras, Vol. III, p.44. See also references to Pepper, Lovestone and Bukharin, Vol. III, p.104.

43. Karl Marx, April 9, 1870, On Colonialism. New York: International Publishers, 1972. p.335. Note that in both cases the basis for change is internal to the imperialist country's economic system, although outside of its physical borders.

44. Degras, Vol. II, p.428.

45. Degras, Vol. I, p.154.

46. Degras, Vol. III, p.14.

47. Degras, Vol. II, p.195.

48. Degras, Vol. II, pp. 302-3.

49. Ibid., p. 303. See also German situation, Vol. II, p. 288; see how Amerikan-style bribery politics would not be seen in Japan with its relatively smaller labor aristocracy, Vol. II, p.399; American trade union methods as the latest in corrupting the working class and used by the international social-democratic movement, Vol. II, pp. 459, 514; general labor aristocracy, connection to social-democracy and World War I, Vol II, p. 473; "This systematic bribery was and is practiced in the strongest imperialist countries on an extremely wide scale." Vol. II, p. 479, September, 1928, also, "Imperialism piles up untold wealth from the immense supper profits it squeezes out of the millions of colonial workers and peasants. In this process imperialism creates the type of decaying, parasitically degenerating rentier State and entire strata of parasites who live by coupon-clipping," also how war changes that, Vol. II, p.481.

50. Degras, Vol. II, p.446.

51. Degras, Vol. III, p.22.

52. Leon Trotsky, "The Tasks of Soviet Reconstruction" in Isaac Deutscher, ed., *The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology*. New York: Dell, 1964, p.134.

53. An example of Mao talking about technology and the People's War strategy is in Mao Tsetung. *A Critique of Soviet Economics*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977. p.91.

54. R. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution: How and Why Fascism Came to Power in Europe*. Chicago: Proletarian Publishers, 1974 (hereafter Dutt). p.38-39.

55. Dutt, pp. 104-7.

56. Dutt, p.257.

57. Dutt, pp. 259-60.

58. J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, 3rd ed., (Chicago: Morningstar Press, 1989), p.138.

59. Dutt, p.63.

60. Degras, Vol II, p.523.

61. Degras, Vol. II, p.290.

62. Degras, Vol. I, p.51. See also July 1920, "the proletariat in every country" becoming more revolutionary "every day," Vol. I, p.150.

63. Degras, op.cit., Vol. I, p.424.

64. Isaac Deutscher, ed., *The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology*. New York: Dell, 1964 (hereafter Deutscher), p.37. What did we expect of Deutscher who worshipped someone who said of the Soviet socialist revolution: "The Soviet proletariat has achieved great successes, great - 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 weigh little on the scales of the socialist ideal." L. Trotsky, "Crisis of the Theory of Socialism in One Country," Ibid., p.150, Trotsky started by making intellectual comparisons of actual history before and after Soviet revolution, but could not resist ending up comparing a concrete situation with a pre-formed idea of socialism in his head. So it was that he fell into the Christian ethical pattern of coming up with absolutes, such as the Ten Commandments, and then holding human beings up to those principles instead of finding those changes in material circumstances that would compel human beings to behave better.

65. Degras, Vol. II, p.320.

66. Max Shachtman, *The Struggle for the New Course*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1965, p.185.

67. Degras, Vol III, p. 472. For every moment of such frankness, the Comintern had its moment of ultra left cheer leading. For R. Palme Dutt, it was worth nothing that opposition to Hitler in the plebiscites reached a whole 20% in August, 1934 in the large industrial cities. Dutt, p.8. For MIM this just shows how limited the Comintern's horizons had become to have to strain to find some evidence of dialectics within the purview of its own analysis.

68. Degras, Vo. I, p.176.

69. "On Tactics," in Adler, p.277.

70. Degras, Vol. II, p.480.

71. Degras, Vol. III, p.18 See also, "No negotiations or temporary agreements ... will avert the inevitable armed conflict between the United States and Great Britain" as a reason for chasing after the labor aristocracy with calls to revolutionary action, Vol. II, p.46, "The chief contradiction in the capitalist world - the struggle between Britain and the United States for world hegemony," April 1931, Vol. III, p.158.

72. Degras, Vol. II, p.107.

73. Degras, Vol. II, P. 108.

74. Ibid., p. 109.

75. Ibid., p.112.

76. Ibid.

77. Degras, Vol. II, p.457.

78. Degras, Vol. III, P.358.

79. Degras, Vol III, p. 382.

80. Degras, Vol. III, p.445.

81. Degras, Vol. I, pp.375-6.

82. Degras, Vol. III, p.121.

83. Degras, Vol. III, p.217.

84. Dutt, p.32.

85. What Dutt considered the most important conditions of the "general crisis" are listed in Dutt, pp. 33-4.

86. Dutt, p.37.

87. Degras, Vol. I, p.51.

88. Degras, Vol. I, p.51.

89. Degras, Vol. II, p.72.

90. Dutt, pp. 143-4.

91. Dutt, op.cit., p.146. See also p.150 for exact statistics on reformist influence.

92. Degras, Vol. I, p.255.

93. Degras, Vol, I, pp.342-3.

94. See for example Trotsky object to Stalin's attempt to ally with one faction of imperialists against another in Deutscher, p.250.
95. Degras, Vol. II, p.72; see also Vol. I, p.341 on united front as a means to unite all workers of whatever ideology in struggle, without their social-democratic leaders.
96. Degras, Vol. II, p.152; see also Vol. II, p.253; also Vol. I, p.351, on how leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-half Internationals broke the united front of workers.
97. Degras, Vol.III, p.14.
98. "It is absolute balderdash to identify social democracy with Fascism," said Trotsky, in Deutscher, p.170. When Hitler came to power and outlawed social-democracy and Stalin turned to allying communists and social-democrats, especially in the rest of Europe, Trotsky said Stalin went too far. As a result, Trotsky made the incorrect prediction the Stalin's popular front would convert France to fascism by driving the French masses to fascism. Deutscher, p.190. While a quisling regime did come to power it was only imposed after Nazi invasion. The French masses did not fall in for fascism of their own accord before that. See again his criticism of Stalin's "popular front" idea as too rightist in 1939, before the Non-Aggression Pact in Deutscher, p.251.
99. Degras, Vol. II, p.77. See also Vol. I, p.347 on German social-democracy's hostility to the Soviet Union in foreign policy.
100. Trotsky himself said in 1924, "We approve of the Communist support to the Kuomintang Part in China, which we are endeavoring to revolutionize." Deutscher, p.234. Subsequent Trotskyists talk as if Trotsky had made it into a sacred principle that working with the Kuomintang was an alliance with the national bourgeoisie and hence wrong. Thus the most Trotsky can claim is that he foresaw the balance of forces in China more correctly in 1927 (and Mavrakis and others have shown that he did not do that either especially relative to Mao). There is no way for him to make it a matter of principle set in stone that the alliance with the Chinese national bourgeoisie was wrong without contradicting himself.
101. Degras, Vol. I, pp.388-90.
102. Degras, Vol.I, p.396.
103. Degras, Vol. II, p.400.
104. Degras, Vol II, p.403.
105. Degras, Vol III, p.166.
106. Degras, Vol. III, p.446.
107. Ibid., p.447.
108. Degras, Vol. III, p.451.
109. Ibid.
110. Degras, Vol. III, pp. 455-6.
111. Degras, Vol. III, p.459.
112. Ibid.
113. Mao Tse-tung, April 16, 1968, "Statement in Support of the Afro-American Struggle against Violent Repression," Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao: Post Revolutionary Writings. K. Fan, ed. New York: Anchor Books, 1972. p.300.
114. Mao explained that when communists in China first saw the peasant rebellion, even they had a hard time accepting it. His statement on seeing the revolutionary force in action is in "It's Terrible! or 'It's Fine!" in Vol. 1, Selected Readings of Mao Tse-Tung, Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1975. p.26.
115. Mao Tse-tung, August 8, 1963, "Statement Supporting the American Negroes in Their Just Struggle against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism," Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao: Post Revolutionary Writings. K. Fan, ed., New York: Anchor Books, 1972. pp.288-90.

Study Questions

1. Why is understanding political economy important for determining who our friends are? Give an example of another approach people take to political alliances and explain what is wrong with it.
2. How does idealism pave the way for fascism?
3. MIM explains many problems with condemning everything Zinoviev said because he was denounced later in life. This is a type of "logical fallacy." Besides the specific points made in the reading, explain what is wrong with the logic of saying everything he said was bad. (bonus: what is the term for this logical fallacy?)
4. MIM quotes the Comintern on the five types of "workers' governments." How does the quote demonstrate the distinction between the proletariat and workers?
5. Why have exploiter classes, in particular the labor aristocracy, continued to expand even though Marx said that capitalism pushed people into the proletariat and pushed a wedge between the exploited and the exploiters?
6. What is the "cultural defect" we must address among Americans referred to on p. 10?
7. What was Stalin's "general crisis theory"? What are the shortcomings of this theory?
8. Explain how we often see continuity between ultra-left politics and rightism, in both individuals and organizations?
9. What is idealist about using hindsight to analyze a situation?
10. How has neo-colonialism affected the evolution of imperialism and its ideology?
11. What kinds of things might we organize youth around to prevent fascism?
12. What is the significance of when pressure was applied to India to focus fire on the Nazis discussed on p. 20?