

Chicago Workers' Voice

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- * ABORTION RIGHTS MOVEMENT:
History of the Emergency Clinic Defense
Coalition**
- * MEXICO: Research on the Myth and
Reality of Cardenismo**
- * Luxemburg, Trotsky and Semi-
Anarchism**

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Editorial Guide to issue #8 of CWVTJ

by Jake

This issue is dedicated to Rich Lee, a long-time comrade of *Chicago Workers' Voice* and the Marxist-Leninist Party. The first article is a tribute to Rich from Oleg. Many of Rich's old comrades wrote or called him in the last weeks of his life and he wanted to thank all of you. The Lee family also expressed their gratitude for the sympathy and support shown by so many former members of the MLP.

Our correspondence column features two letters from prison including an article, "The State of Wisconsin Under Siege."

Julie presents a major article assessing the life and work of the Emergency Clinic Defense Coalition or ECDC. This was the major clinic defense organization in Chicago and its passing is an important event.

Continuing our coverage of Mexico, Oleg presents two articles which developed from his research on Lazaro Cardenas (the President of Mexico from 1932 to 1940 and a mythical hero of the working masses). In the first article he refutes Joseph's accusation that the *CWV* supports Cardenismo. In the second, Oleg goes into what Cardenas actually stood for, separating the myth from the man and his actual policies. Inside the Mexican left there is a debate over Marxism. We are reprinting from the newspaper *El Machete* one of the articles from this debate, "In Defense of Marxism."

Trotsky takes it on the chin once again. This time Barbara shreds Trotsky's self-image as the genius behind the October Revolution with "The Trotsky School of Confusionization." She follows up with another major article on Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky. Here she points out some of Luxemburg's political errors and the similarity to Trotsky in "Luxemburg, 'Semi-Anarchism' --and Trotsky."

Oleg looks at the question of a "labor party." He deals with Jesse Jackson's and proposals from the Labor Party Advocates to form one. This is an issue in the Staley workers' struggle, a struggle which is continuing more than two years after the lockout.

N.C. from Los Angeles provides an article on John Sweeney, an alleged militant unionist who is the current president of the SEIU and a candidate for President of the AFL-CIO. This article details some of Sweeney's history of suppressing rank and file militants.

We are also reprinting two leaflets from *Los Angeles Worker's Voice*: "On the 25th Anniversary of the Chicano Moratorium" and "America means Prison."

We are reprinting an article from *Detroit Worker's Voice* on the Detroit newspaper strike. This militant strike not only shows the power of mass struggle, but along with the continued activity around Staley, that a certain percolation is taking place among workers.

Please note that we are planning to publish the next issue of *CWVTJ* in January 1996. Once again, comments, contributions and articles are welcome.

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In Memory of Rich Lee

On Aug. 22 our dear friend and comrade Rich Lee died from complications of AIDS. The Chicago Workers' Voice dedicates this issue of the *Theoretical Journal* to the memory of comrade Rich. The work and activity that Rich contributed to the practical and theoretical advance of the proletariat lives after him.

Like many of his generation, Rich was in the military in Vietnam. His experiences led him to oppose this unjust imperialist war. In Buffalo, NY, he became active in the organization Vietnam Veterans Against the War. He also participated in the student movement in Buffalo. In the early '70s he took up the cause of proletarian revolution and joined the American Communist Workers' Movement (Marxist-Leninist). In April of 1972 Rich participated in a famous fight against a fascist police attack on the newly opened communist bookstore in Buffalo. Along with other comrades, he was arrested and charged with assaulting the police and other such bogus charges. This fight against the cops and assorted right-wing goons was one of the important events in the early life of the ACWM(ML). Rich and his comrades stood up to the fascists and the cops in the streets and later they waged such a spirited and skillful defense in the courtroom that they were able to defeat all but the most minor of the charges. The resistance movement of which Rich was a part was an important component of our struggle to keep revolutionary politics before the masses.

From 1972 to 1982, Rich was active in the internal and external political life of the ACWM(ML) and the subsequent organizations formed by it, the Central Organization of U.S. Marxist-Leninists and the Marxist-Leninist Party. He was a member of the National Committee of the COUSML and of the Central Committee of the MLP. He was also a factory worker in Buffalo until he was unjustly fired.

In 1978 he came to Chicago and helped lead the work of the Chicago branch of the COUSML. This was a period of intense debate in the revolutionary movement in the U.S. The COUSML exposed the so-called revolutionaries who were actually social chauvinists, giving support to U.S. imperialism. This campaign led to the formation of the Marxist-Leninist Party in 1980. Rich did his best in the Chicago Branch to help sort out the many tactical and political questions that came up in this struggle.

By 1982, Rich felt the personal need to step away from active political work and he resigned from the MLP. However, he maintained contact with us and in the late 1980's he again participated in revolutionary work. When the Chicago Branch of the MLP established a study group on women's emancipation and the Bolshevik Revolution, Rich enthusiastically joined in this work. The book, *From Baba to Tovarishch*, which we published last year, rests in part on the several years he devoted to reading, analyzing and discussing these questions.

When the MLP's internal debate broke out in 1992, Rich read all the documents produced by all sides and participated in group discussions of the issues. Rich was quite sharp in his grasp of Marxist-Leninist theory. He made many contributions to our writing and the development of our thinking. We will miss him.

CORRESPONDENCE

From a California Prison:

Dear Jake,

I am an inmate at the California Medical Facility (Calif. Dept. of Corrections), who is interested in Left-Progressive ideology. I have been reading material produced by the MLP-USA and the "minority" trend of the former MLP since 1993. This material includes the final issues of the WA, Struggle, all of the documents from the MLP 5th Party Congress, the first five issues of the CWVTJ, the CWV/DWV, LAWV and the DMLSG/CV. In addition, I have exchanged letters with Tim and Neil.

I have closely followed the debate among "minority" members (and friends) of the former MLP in the DMLSG/CV with the CWV/TJ. In the CV#1, I read an article by Jake (with help from Julie) "Regarding Communist and Mass Work." I am interested in learning more about the Trotskyists (the Sparts in particular!) and Anarchism as part of the anti-revisionist problem. On page 48 of this article, you mentioned having articles on both of these topics.

Could you please send me a copy of these articles? If this is not possible, could you please send me related documents from another source, or point me in the right direction? Also, please send me a copy of the most current issue of the CWV/TJ for my review. It has been a long time since I saw this publication.

I trust all is well with you and yours. I greatly appreciate your continued support and hope to

hear from you soon. Keep up the good work and think kindly of me. I send you my greetings.

Chris Alferitz
Vacaville, CA

* * *

From a Wisconsin Prison:

Dear Friends,

Thank you for sending me the *CWVTJ*. I thought you might be interested in a few thoughts on the current reactionary situation in Wisconsin, typical of what's happening all over. I call it:

THE STATE OF THE STATE UNDER SIEGE

The Governor of Wisconsin, Tommy Thompson, was elected in 1987, and he is enjoying his third term in office. During his tenure, he has received some national attention for his "innovative" welfare and educational programs.

As a self-proclaimed "conservative Republican", he won his last three campaigns for governor on his political platform to reduce welfare rolls and welfare costs, fight youth crime and violence, not to increase taxes, to give property tax relief, and to build more prisons and pass more criminal legislation.

The Governor of Wisconsin definitely marches to the same drummer as his national conservative republican colleagues. In fact, he carries out their program with a vengeance. While they act

out on the national level and proceed to dismantle national social programs and make claims to "take government out of the people's business," the Governor of Wisconsin has thoroughly dipped the long fingers of the state into the pockets of the taxpayers.

In his own right, the Governor of Wisconsin has become a political demagogue, ruling over the state through the state agencies he has created during his tenure. He has constructed an exact model of a southern "sovereign state bureaucracy." Since he has been in office, he has created no less than ten new state agencies under the guise of more administrative accountability -- but actually for more government control over people's lives and personal choices.

Under the color of state law (crony politics and bourgeois sycophancy), there hardly remains any flesh on the bones of political freedom and individual choice that is not under the auspices of some state agency. And since his tenure, Thompson has increased the number of state employees by 44%, whereas employment in the private sector has fallen by 13%.

Thompson's political success has come by way of appointing his cronies to head those new state agencies, playing the "race card" against the welfare recipient and the young poor Blacks, shifting and re-allocating federal money designated for education, employment training, supplemental social security, daycare, and disability income. His support for School Choice is just a political ploy that would further enable him to confiscate

more money from the public school system. He has already dismantled the Office of Public Instruction (the public watch dog of public education), and has created his own Office of Public Construction (administrative positions for his political cronies). The Governor's national recognition has come about by way of his diabolical program methods and plans dealing with the state welfare recipients -- primarily AFDC single parents.

Over the years, he has been able to secure specific government waivers of standards that permitted him to "experiment" with his welfare plans and programs. This has also allowed him to discontinue General Assistance (supplemental social security), lower eligibility standards for the disabled, take cash from those parents whose children skip school, reduce the cash amount of those parents who won't work for minimum wage, and has established a waiting period from six months to a year for women who are pregnant and in need of pre-natal care and public assistance. The governor's answer to counter balance the many poor men and women who are kicked off the general assistance and welfare rolls is "MICKEY DEE!"

Of the 44% of newly hired state employees, at least 32% have been hired to work for the newly created Department of corrections (DOC) and Wisconsin Parole Commission (WPC). Of the 32% now working for DOC and WPC, 10% are prison guards and 22% are minor administrators and parole and probation agents. Whatever federal money there has been for providing prisoner rehabilitative treatment programs has been reallocated to pay the administrative costs and wages of these two newly created state

agencies, DOC and WPC. 85% of prison costs goes to employee benefits and wages. New rules are now being considered to make inmates pay some minimum cost for medical and dental care, but at the same time, the state is collecting all social security income from those inmates who are eligible to receive SSI (mostly those who are elderly and handicapped).

Since 1987, the state legislature has passed no less than 17 Wis. Act Youth Omnibus Crime Bills as a means to further imprison the young and penalize the parents. Since 1987, there have been four new prison facilities constructed with an increase of 213% in the state prison population. 17% of the 23% increase in the prison population are from the ages of 15 to 19 years old. Newly passed state legislature has made it possible to waive juveniles from juvenile court to adult court at the age of 14 years. HSS 348 is legislation that authorizes the judiciary to criminalize young children at the age of 8 years old if their mothers are receiving AFDC. The Department of Corrections is now the administrative state agency supervising juvenile offenders.

Since 1987, the state legislature has passed no less than five new laws for those convicted of murder: (1) life, (2) natural life, (3) life mans life, (4) life with a determinate sentence, (5) life without parole. All of these categories of a life sentence are the republicans' response for failure to pass a Death Penalty bill.

The Governor has pushed for state legislation that would discontinue mandatory release on parole, discontinue parole eligibility, and require convicted

felons to serve out the full and complete sentence without "good time" to be earned. He is also pushing for state legislation that will establish a "chain gang" and compel inmates to work 16 hours a day for private industry. Of course, inmates who would be working will be required to pay for their room and board. But even though most of his prison proposals are still waiting for legislative passage, most of his proposal are already being acted upon by his new DOC and WPC administrators. The prison system is overcrowded; men and women sleeping on top of each other and on the floors and the state courts have granted no judicial relief from such overcrowded conditions and health hazards.

The DOC and WPC are just two agencies out of the ten new state agencies created by the governor since he has been in office. The other eight new agencies are primarily state agencies that administer "gaming laws", state agriculture, state-sponsored business ventures, education and social oriented programs. At this printing, the Governor has committed the tax payers to finance millions of dollars to build a new sports stadium for the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Team.

The State of Wisconsin is prime for the block grants coming down to the states from the new conservative republican congress in Washington, DC. It is little question as to what those block grants will finance, given the huge octopus state bureaucracy built by Thompson. The children, the poor, the unemployed an disabled will

(continued on page 12)

The Emergency Clinic Defense Coalition: A History and Assessment

Sarah (formerly Julie), Chicago

For six and a half years the Emergency Clinic Defense Coalition (ECDC) played a major role in the pro-choice movement in Chicago. It spearheaded the defense of clinics in Chicago when Operation Rescue attempted to shut them down. Many saw it as an alternative to the bourgeois feminism of NOW and NARAL.

At a meeting in February 1995, it was decided to put ECDC on the "back burner." There was some discussion of continuing a newsletter (which has not come out yet) and people keeping in touch. However, any other activity was put on hold. Thus, ECDC's life as an organization has ended.

Operation Rescue (OR), an extreme right-wing anti-abortion organization, launched a national campaign of blockades of clinics which provide abortions in 1988. ECDC arose in response to this, as did pro-choice and clinic defense groups in a number of cities. It was an organization in the radical wing of the movement for women's rights as it was manifested at that time (late 80's early 90's). It may be a somewhat better representative of the more radical wing than some others at the time as it was more broadly based than some others. For example, Refuse and Resist and NWROC, which were also in the more radical wing, were more connected to the particular organizations.

The mass movement which emerged to defend the clinics was a significant class, social and political phenomenon of the time.

ECDC came directly out of this motion and it embodied many features of that movement, both good and bad.

It is important for women's rights activists and revolutionaries to sum up the experience of ECDC and of the clinic defense movement of the late 1980's and early 1990's. ECDC's strengths and weaknesses provide many lessons for the development of the struggle for women's liberation in the future.

In this article I would like to discuss what I consider to be some of the important features of ECDC. I will also try to give an account of the important issues discussed and debated internally by ECDC. Note that during most of the existence of ECDC I was also a member of the Marxist-Leninist Party. My views are very influenced by how the MLP viewed the issues at the time and how we thought various political and tactical matters should be addressed. Finally, I will give my views on what is important for the future development of the struggle for women's liberation.

I have also written a chronology of ECDC's activities. It is not printed in this issue of the CWV Theoretical Journal. However, I will provide it to anyone upon request. Hopefully it will help the reader relate what was going on in the pro-choice movement to ECDC's activity and internal life.

Operation Rescue and the anti-abortion cause

ECDC arose as an organized response to the clinic blockades launched by Operation Rescue in 1988.

Operation Rescue is a fanatical anti-abortion organization. It aims to have abortions outlawed. It aims to intimidate abortion providers so that few or no providers are available to women. It tries to intimidate women from seeking abortions. It would like to go back to the days of back-alley abortions when thousands of women died and were maimed from unsafe abortions.

Besides blockading clinics, OR's political stand is very conducive to the bombings and murders at abortion clinics. Its leaders say that they don't organize the murders but that they consider them to be justified.

OR is opposed to birth control. Its leadership quite openly wants to get women out of the workforce. Their leaders blame many of the ills of society on "the working mother". OR wants woman in her "rightful place," subservient to man in all aspects of life.

At the time ECDC was formed, Operation Rescue was openly supported by several spokesmen of the religious right, Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority and Pat Robertson, for example. As well, it was supported by several prominent leaders of the Catholic Church.

Why did OR emerge at that

time? It arose as an attempt to turn back the clock on abortion rights. After years of growing mass protest for abortion rights, the legal right to have an abortion was established by the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973. From day one there were attempts to reverse or restrict that legal right. Even before the *Roe* decision, "right to life" bigots were mobilized by the Catholic Church. After the *Roe* decision, the Catholic Church, various fundamentalist Christians and other rightists mobilized against it, trying to turn the clock back.

Abortion became lightning rod issue. Around it major social, class and political issues were and are being fought out. For the right wing, the abortion issue was a transmission belt for reactionary politics. They hoped that people sucked in by propaganda about "saving babies" could be mobilized to support their whole offensive. Of course for the misogynist elements that joined clinic blockades and opposed equality, OR provided a means to network among other fascists and served as a recruiting ground for right-wing shock troops.

The anti-abortion crusade was one of the planks in the platform of Reaganite reaction. Please note that the rise of this conservatism began under the Carter administration in the late 1970's. The bourgeoisie launched a broad offensive against the workers and poor. This offensive was marked by such events as the concessions drive in auto and other industries where workers were forced to take cuts in their wages and benefits. Along with this, there were campaigns against affirmative action, immigrants, welfare and a foreign policy offensive of naked

imperialism.

Reagan's election in 1980 marked a consolidation of this offensive, not the beginning of it. Jimmy Carter's State of the Union address in 1980 was remarkable for its blatant imperialism. Carter had been elected on a bogus "human rights" platform, but the revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua forced Uncle Sam to drop the human rights mask.

Although he did not initiate it, Reagan gets the credit he deserves for stomping on the working class and poor in the US and around the world. The term "Reaganite reaction" is certainly appropriate although we should never forget that the Democrats are also responsible for the capitalist offensive. One of Reagan's first actions was to break the PATCO strike. Soon after he invaded Grenada. In regard to women's rights he was not just the male chauvinist neanderthal that so many perceived. Reagan was perhaps the greatest champion of the anti-abortion cause. He supported the anti's politically and used the power of the Presidency to aid their organizing. He also packed not only the Supreme Court, but hundreds of positions in lower Federal courts and thousands of positions in Federal law enforcement agencies with like-minded right-wing creeps, big champions of the anti-abortion movement.

In this atmosphere of political reaction, the anti's began harassing women, coming into clinics and trying to shut them down. For instance, the anti's started picketing at the American Women's Medical Center at Diversey and Western around 1978. Moreover, the attack on abortion rights signalled a broad

attack on the livelihood of women.

Opposition to abortion rights was and is a key issue on the agenda of the religious right. The Christian right was a major component of the bourgeois forces behind the Reagan and Bush administrations and behind the current Republican majority in Congress. While to some it may appear to be a radical right fringe, it is actually quite closely connected to the mainstream of bourgeois politics. It frequently acts as a battering ram for programs the bourgeoisie wants to carry out. And over the last several years the program of the more liberal bourgeois politicians has moved closed and closer to the right wing.

Social Changes Since the '50s

One must consider another reason for the rise of the religious right and the groups such as Operation Rescue. This is the social changes that have occurred over the last 40-50 years. There are a series of objective developments in society that reactionaries want to stop and even reverse if they can.

Especially since the 1960's more and more women are in the workforce. Today the workforce is half women and the majority of child-bearing age women work. These social changes mean that women appear more and more in political, social and economic life. This is a basic social requirement for women's liberation. It gives us the basis to fight for access and equality in politics and economics. And we can fight that this access and equality be shaped not on the basis of men's experience, but taking into account the needs of women.

Along with the large scale participation of women in the workforce and the resultant economic and social changes, there are changes in the structure of the family. There is the increase of single parent families, an increase in the number of households headed by women and the number of women having and raising children without being married. There is also an increase in the number of blended families and an increased openness of gay and lesbian families.

Some of these changes are particularly painful for women. Single women with children are the fastest growing section of those in poverty. But even where the changes are painful, there are many potential benefits for women: the breakdown of the authority of men, the increased authority of women in the family, a broader consideration of what family is, an increased consideration of the interests of children and their rights. There is also increased public attention to issues such as child care and domestic violence. And women's rights activists generally are fighting for ways to lessen if not to eliminate the pain of poverty that most women feel.

The religious right is also quick to point to the pain caused by the changing place of women in the world. However, the politics of the religious right is aimed at **increasing** this pain. It is unlikely that women will be driven out of the workforce. But a lack of day-care makes work very difficult and severely restricts what kind of job a woman is able to take. Randall Terry, the former leader of Operation Rescue, considers day-care to be the work of Satan. According to the religious right women shouldn't be working

anyway so why make it easier for them to stay on the job. As for equal pay, that would take more women away from their sacred roles as housewives. Besides, it would be heresy to consider a woman as good as a man, wouldn't it? Why, then, should women and men fight for equal pay?

The religious right considers sex to be sinful. Thus, according to them, single women having children is a sin. If one listens to some of the current discussion around welfare "reform" (gutting), then it becomes clear that single mothers on welfare are responsible for many of the ills of the country. Thus, the right wing argues that it's okay to throw her and her children into the streets. It is a splendid example of criminals blaming their victims.

In fact, the agitation and politics of the religious right seem to do a lot to help profits - the almighty bottom line.

The anti-abortion campaign is against laws and court decisions that gave women the right to an abortion. The campaign is to make abortions effectively unavailable even if the laws are not changed. And the campaigns of the religious right seeks to reverse decades of major structural changes in our society.

Thus the fight over abortion rights was and is closely connected to the efforts by the religious right and others to drive the conditions of women backwards.

Clinic Blockades

I have gone into these points a bit as a means of explaining the social backdrop of the struggle over abortion rights which took place at the time. It

was in this context that Operation Rescue launched a nationwide campaign of clinic blockades in 1988.

This campaign provoked a response in city after city. During the clinic blockades in October, thousands of people came into the streets to fight back against this attack. In a number of cities there were sharp confrontations with the anti-abortion blockaders, including Boston, Seattle, New York City, Chicago, Atlanta, Buffalo, and Providence, Rhode Island.

In the struggle which came up against the anti-abortion blockaders there were a number of political forces.

NOW hampers the struggle for clinic defense

The dominant force on the political scene in the women's rights movement in 1988 was NOW.

NOW emerged out of President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women. It was formed in 1966 by a group of women who were attending a conference of the State Commissions on the Status of Women. About two dozen women, mainly upper-class, formed it when they became discontented over the slowness of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to open its door to women. Specifically, they decided to propose in the conference that the EEOC should call for an end to sex-segregated employment ads. When this was declared out of order, these women met in a hotel room and formed NOW.

In October 1966 a second meeting was called to formalize the organization. NOW's declared goal

was "taking action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now." The three immediate concerns were 1) participation on juries, 2) enforcement of Title VII prohibiting sex discrimination in employment, and 3) that the EEOC should change its position and oppose sex segregated employment ads. Further, they opposed discrimination in public accommodation because it was "...a handicap to their position in the business world." In general, NOW's identified concerns stemmed from their interest in the upward mobility of professional women. Thus, when NOW talked about bringing women into the "mainstream," it is doubtful that they meant all women. They were talking about upper-class women.

NOW's first campaign was against the sex-segregated want ads. This campaign reflected motion against job discrimination that was growing among working women. But when NOW took up this issue, it took it up from the angle of the rising professionals and business persons that they were. In the late 1960's it began a campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment. In this effort NOW showed a disdain for working women's interests by offhandedly denouncing all protective legislation for women as the source of "job discrimination."

Opposition to laws restricting abortion rights were not among the initial issues raised by NOW. However, by the end of 1967 Betty Freidan raised the issue. Abortion rights were hotly debated in the 1967 NOW convention. It took a stand for the removal of laws banning the distribution of contraceptive information and banning abortion

from the penal code. A right-wing section of NOW, which did not support abortion rights, resigned in protest.

This reflected some hesitance to campaign on controversial issues. NOW did not want to campaign for gay rights at that time either. Even after the split at the '67 convention, it hardly campaigned for abortion rights. In New York, Pennsylvania and some other places it waged some legislative struggle. In 1969 protests demanding the elimination of Mother's Day were organized. Some chapters used these protests to call for repeal of all laws banning abortion. However, in many of the cases where some struggle was waged, the call for abortion rights was closely connected to campaigns for repressive population control. The Pittsburgh chapter pushed for abortion reform in combination with proposals for tax laws which would refuse deductions to parents of more than two children. And by 1971, when it went wholehog into work for an electoral bloc around George McGovern, NOW refused to support pro-choice demonstrations altogether.

During the huge tide of mass struggles in the late 60's to 1970, NOW called some mass actions. The biggest was the 1970 Women's Strike for Equality which demanded abortion rights, childcare, and equal opportunity in education and jobs. This action, in which all trends participated, made NOW's reputation and created illusions that it might really fight.

This was indeed an illusion. In fact, NOW called virtually no mass actions after 1970. It subordinated every issue to electoral campaigns and its legislative drive for the Equal

Rights Amendment.

NOW's second president was Aileen Hernandez, an African-American EEOC commissioner. She vowed to change what she termed NOW's "embarrassingly elitist" image. She criticized NOW's membership for "looking for a place in an essentially corrupt society." However, this general perspective did not change, and it gives a background for the types of politics and tactics NOW advocated in this pro-choice movement of the late 1980's and early 1990's.

This general perspective led to a number of deleterious stands in the clinic defense movement. These stands and politics stood against building a militant working class women's movement. These stands hampered bringing masses of women and men into the movement. These stands stood against fighting for the particular demands of working class and poor women.

1. On abortion itself. Many activists, including those connected with ECDC stood for safe, legal, funded abortions. On the funded aspect of this there were severe differences with NOW. During a Michigan referendum on Medicaid funding for abortions NOW supported Medicaid funding with an anti-welfare argument. This dovetailed with long standing racist arguments against welfare in general. NOW appealed to a prejudice against women and children on welfare with the promise of fewer welfare babies. The more radical wing did not see abortion as a means of keeping poor women from having children nor did it support, by any argument, cuts in welfare spending. The radical wing stood for reproductive choice.

2. NOW's perspective on clinic defense was to pursue injunctions, court rulings and to rely on the police. It's bad enough to have illusions in these institutions when they pretend to be neutral, but the Reagan-Bush administrations made it clear that it would be tough to get any pro-choice rulings. Worse, NOW actually begged for more repression and blessed some of the most repressive aspects of the state machinery. NOW invoked the RICO law against the anti-abortionists. The RICO law is supposedly a law against organized crime. However, its provisions are very suitable as a means to throttle strikes and other actions of the masses. And NOW's suit to invoke the RICO law was in the direction of setting precedents with this law that will be used against progressive people in the future.

Finally, NOW's tactics of organizing people to call on the power of the state to defend abortion rights was designed to stop the pro-choice movement from taking any action of its own. First of all, the police and courts, in many cases, allowed the antis to block the clinics with almost no interference. And NOW worked to keep the strongest pro-choice force out of the battle. In many places NOW organized some escorting of women into clinics. And even this was not universal. But NOW was opposed to clinic defense.

From the time OR launched its rescues, NOW counseled activists not to go to the clinics. From the beginning, this "advice" was not taken by everyone. And as the campaigns to block clinics continued, more and more activists ignored this advice and went out to defend the clinics. Thus in a later period and in later

defenses, NOW in some places did organize large numbers of people to go to the clinics. But then NOW insisted on "non-violence pledges." They wanted no slogans and no placards, etc. They even insisted on no eye contact with the antis. The issue for NOW is to be respectable in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. They want people under control. They don't want the activists to do anything that might offend the bourgeoisie.

4. NOW connected itself up with reactionary population control politics. This was not something totally new. NOW's 1989 conference talked about reaching "out to new allies." And these new allies were racist population control groups. NOW's November 1989 march on Washington had Zero Population Growth listed as a major sponsor. A major theme of this group is to support abortion rights because it will prevent more poor people from being born. This is consistent with NOW's agitation in Michigan for Medicaid funding of abortion - fewer "welfare" babies. No progressive person can go along with this type of backward appeal. It appeals to racist and anti-poor prejudices.

5. NOW promoted that the solution was to elect politicians. Many of the politicians that NOW supported were very mild in their support of abortion rights. And many of these politicians had severe overall stands against the workers and poor.

ECDC

ECDC was formed in the fall of 1988 as a response to the campaign of clinic attacks and blockades by the religious right. At that time in Chicago there was a

section of more left and militant activists. They did not wish to stay away from the clinics. They did not agree with the policy of having only a few escorts at the clinics. They wanted a defense of the clinics. These included people in or around various organizations. Some of the organizations were Prairie Fire, No Pasaran - a women's affinity group in the Pledge of Resistance, ISO, Act-up, the Chicago Women's Aids Project, Women Organized for Reproductive Choice, and the MLP. There were activists who had been involved in other left-wing political movements and activists who had little or no previous activist experience. Ad-hoc committees organized clinic defense in Chicago in the summer of 1988. Activists from Women Organized for Reproductive Choice, Prairie Fire and No Pasaran were probably the most influential in this. In the fall the ad-hoc committees were formalized into the founding of ECDC.

The members were mostly women and some men. In age they ranged from high school students to women in their mid-50's. A number of the activists had experience in the women's movement of the 60's and 70's. In vocation most of the participants were lower level professional and in the arts. Its class composition was not working class and working class poor. But neither were they business women aspiring to the board rooms of the banks and corporations. There were a number of school teachers, secretaries, several who made their living in the arts, some in the health field, etc. Thus, its membership was not made up of those who aspired to the citadels of power. And its purpose was not expressed in terms

of getting women into the citadels of power.

Objectively, because ECDC stood for clinic defense, it gathered together the more militant activists of the pro-choice movement of the time. Its strength was that it did this. It was the form that these activists used to organize clinic defense. Without some means to bring together these activists there would not have been clinic defense. Its main weakness was that, while it was objectively an alternative to NOW and NARAL, it was not conscious of the need to develop an all-round alternative to the bourgeois feminism of these organizations.

It was always hesitant to declare itself directly in opposition to and an alternative to NOW. Most of its activists did recognize, to one degree or another, problems with NOW's politics. This was a feature of all of the clinic defense organizations which arose outside of NOW and to one degree or another opposed NOW's politics and tactics. To my knowledge, they were all hesitant to directly oppose NOW's bourgeois feminism. None of them saw the need for an all-round alternative to NOW's bourgeois feminist politics. This, to my mind, was a big drawback to how the movement was organized at the time. It may be part of the reason why not much lasting came out of those organizations. Some, such as BACOAR, still exist. Most I think no longer exist. And, I know little of the way of even networking that even remains.

ECDC's activities

1. It took an active part in the **clinic defense** movement. In the Chicago area those who wanted a mass clinic defense or who desired

militancy or who had left-wing political views generally gravitated around it. It organized several defenses against clinic blockades. It did not rely on the police. And some of the defenses of the clinics succeeded in independently keeping the anti's from the doors or dragging them away.

2. It organized to confront the anti's at various times and places that they showed their heads. For instance, it organized demonstrations against conferences of the anti's and participated in demonstrations against Henry Hyde. On a couple of occasions it organized demonstrations in front of the Armitage Baptist Church, a major staging ground for the anti's.

3. It organized demonstrations on such occasions as the anniversaries of the Roe V. Wade decision, against the Supreme Court decisions in the Webster case and the Supreme Court decision upholding the "gag" rule (a ban on funding to clinics that even mentioned the word abortion when counseling women). It organized a demonstration at a conference of governors, against parental consent laws.

4. It organized demonstrations in support of the resumption of abortions at Cook County Hospital and to oppose the anti-abortion fanatics' demonstrations outside the hospital.

5. From June, 1990 to the summer of 1994 it organized weekly clinic defense at the American Women's Medical Center.

During the course of these actions from 1988 to 1994 there were numerous discussions on tactics. In general ECDC did stand for a clinic defense. It mobilized people to come out to the clinics in Chicago. It stood for taking an

active stance against the anti's. It brought banners and pickets to the clinics. Thus, all could see that those who stand for a woman's right to choose an abortion were also in front of the clinics. Some of the slogans and tactics to confront the anti's were quite creative.

Its active and confrontational stance towards the anti's at the clinics brought down the wrath of NOW and the Pro-Choice Alliance. On at least one occasion the Pro-Choice Alliance called on the police to remove ECDC activists from in front of a clinic that the anti's had blockaded. There were occasions where NOW and NARAL even refused to send information regarding abortion laws to activists who identified themselves as being from ECDC.

During the course of its existence there were several discussions and some internal forums on issues facing the pro-choice movement. There was a forum on the political issues around population control. There was a lot of opposition to the racist and anti-poor bias of the population control agitation. There was a forum on the FACE law. It was discussed that the FACE law did not mean that we no longer had to defend clinics.

ECDC's role in the pro-choice movement

How did ECDC fit into the pro-choice movement of that time - from 1988 to the early 1990's?

In general there were two wings to this movement. One was dominated by the bourgeois politics of NOW and like-minded groups such as NARAL and Planned Parenthood. The other wing was generally more militant and many (though by *no means all*) of its

activists were more oriented towards the working class and poor.

When talking about the pro-choice movement as a whole, there was a break with NOW's politics over the issue of clinic defense. This break existed from the time national campaigns of clinic blockades started in 1988. The existence of ECDC was evidence that this break existed. This break was also manifested in the militant clinic defenses that were organized in places like Boston, Los Angeles, the Bay Area, Detroit and other places. This was in opposition to the counseling of NOW, NARAL, Planned Parenthood and others. There were also other organized expressions of this more militant wing such as BACOAR in the Bay Area and CDAR in Detroit.

This break over the issue of clinic defense developed on a more mass scale in 1991.

In the summer of 1991 the anti's launched a several week campaign of blockades in Wichita, Kansas. They did this in part because their blockades across the country did face an active opposition. Clinic blockades at that time had somewhat dwindled and OR was facing an organizational crisis. They needed something to spark a new round of attacks on clinics across the country. They gathered their supporters from across the country. They picked a city which they hoped would not have much of a progressive movement. They picked a city with an anti-abortion city government and an anti-abortion state governor. They picked Wichita. They knew the local officials would wink at them no matter how much mayhem they caused.

A small number of

pro-choice counter-demonstrators did show up at the clinics to oppose the OR blockades. However, NOW and NARAL did not organize mass counter-demonstrations at the clinics. They advised activists not to go to the clinics. And they advised those activists that they couldn't keep away from the clinics not to confront OR while they were there. Essentially, they also allowed OR to run roughshod.

This created a whole debate in the pro-choice movement generally. Many activists were angry at NOW's opposition to clinic defense.

OR, The Lambs of Christ and others announced campaigns of clinic blockades directed towards particular cities in 1992. This became an issue in the pro-choice movement across the country. Operation Rescue announced a "Spring of Life" for April-May 1992 in Buffalo. Activists mobilized from around the East Coast and the Midwest to go and confront OR. The NOW dominated coalition in Buffalo tried to tell activists not to come. There were even threats from a clinic director to have pro-choice activists as well as anti's arrested if they came out to the clinics. Yet a militant clinic defense was organized. One of the slogans developed towards the anti's was "You're not in Kansas anymore."

There was a sharp fight against similar campaigns in Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Baton Rouge and other places that summer and fall and in the spring of 1993 in South Bend, Indiana. In each of those cities activists who wanted mass confrontation against the anti's at the clinics had to face the opposition and wrath of NOW, NARAL and similar organizations.

The whole issue of the need for clinic defense, for mass confrontation against the anti's at the clinic and the bankruptcy of NOW's tactics was a hot issue of discussion that summer.

And during that summer ECDC's weaknesses showed through. Though ECDC had the opportunity (due to geography) of actively participating in the defense of the clinics in Buffalo, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and South Bend, it did not. The MLP, anarchist circles and some others who were in ECDC did. And MLP members did speak in ECDC meetings about the need to actively participate and the need to break with NOW's politics. But it can not be said that ECDC as a whole participated. This very clearly showed its weakness that it did not see the need for an all-round alternative to the bourgeois feminism of NOW.

I think most of the people that participated in ECDC actions did recognize the differences with NOW over clinic defense. And as the events in the summer of 1992 showed this difference was recognized fairly generally. And many ECDC activists clearly recognized that there were other differences - over NOW's connection to politicians, over NOW's bias against the working class and poor, etc.

And, with their experience in the pro-choice many became increasingly opposed to NOW's politics. Yet, in general, the more militant wing was not very conscious of itself. It did not present itself as a clear working class or radical alternative to bourgeois feminism.

Among the activists who clearly saw the distinction in politics and orientation for the

movement between ECDC and NOW, many of the activists considered NOW mistaken but a legitimate political approach. "They have their strategy, we have ours." Others saw better, but in principle, they thought it would be wrong to pose ECDC as an alternative to NOW. They thought this might be sectarian.

In part this was because there were political trends in ECDC which opposed a radical break with the bourgeois feminism of NOW and other organizations.

For instance, in ECDC, at one time, the political stands taken by Prairie Fire had a very strong influence. At a later time, the politics of Solidarity dominated. RWL and RCP while not actually in ECDC. But they were organizations which had a major influence nationally in the more militant wing of the clinic defense movement and so impacted on ECDC.

Some members of Solidarity will be shocked at me saying that Solidarity has something in common with RWL and RCP. But in fact they do. These organizations criticize many of the stands taken by NOW and they advocate an activist approach to clinic defense in particular. RWL and RCP advocate a more activist approach than Solidarity. But none of them see this as a task of the movement. None of them see the necessity of building up a movement and organizations truly independent of NOW and its politics. They all have hopes of being able to reunite with NOW.

As well, anarchism had a lot of political influence in ECDC circles. And anarchist politics also did not see the need for a political break with the politics of NOW.

These political trends are

part of the explanation of why ECDC never saw itself as an all-round alternative to bourgeois feminism. In addition, the broader section of activists which made up ECDC in general did not see the need for a thorough break. On a broad scale the main discontent with NOW's bourgeois feminist politics was over the issue of clinic defense. As activists gained experience, discontent developed over other issues such as tailing behind liberal, and sometimes not so liberal, politicians; the politics of population control; and other issues. However, while activists gained a lot of political experience and consciousness, a mass radical and proletarian women's movement did not develop. And ECDC very much reflected the level of the movement as a whole

What happened to ECDC.

ECDC played a key role in clinic defense in Chicago until 1994. After the murder of a doctor and his escort in the summer of 1994 in Pensacola, Florida, the large numbers of anti's quit coming to American Women's Medical Center. ECDC faced the question more squarely of having to redefine itself if it was going to continue to exist. A planning meeting was held in January 1995 for the anniversary of Roe v. Wade.

A number of possibilities were posed. None were actively taken up. Networking with other similarly oriented groups and individuals around the country was one proposal. There was little enthusiasm for this. I think one hang-up was that then ECDC would have to deal with Refuse and Resist. This necessity I think was distasteful to a number of its activists. R and R is associated

with RCP and NWROC is associated with RWL. The only way most could see to deal with these two organizations was to oppose RCP and RWL as RCP and RWL. ("They're just RCP They're just RWL.") They could not see the broad issues facing the struggle for women's liberation. A political discussion about these organizations raises again the need for an all-round alternative to the bourgeois feminism of NOW. Both NWROC and R and R have a policy of trying to approach NOW, that the women's movement can not advance unless big organizations like NOW come along. They do not see the need for an independent radical women's movement. There was a proposal to organize a march and activity for International Women's Day. There was a proposal to organize an alternative contingent in a NOW march on Washington. Neither of these proposals got off the ground after the meeting. There was a proposal to take up a focus on the current governmental attacks on women, especially "welfare reform." There was some consideration of taking up clinic defense at other clinics. But everyone knew that this would mean direct confrontation with NOW which had organized escorts at some of these clinics. It was clear to everyone that NOW would not want ECDC activists at these clinics. (NOW had quit sending escorts to American Women's Medical Center because ECDC was there. So there had not been direct confrontation with NOW at that clinic for some time.)

All of this I think would have meant a more defined radical perspective and a plan to address ECDC to a broader section of women, especially working class,

poor and minority women. And it was not capable of rising to the challenge.

This still leaves the question that an alternative to the bourgeois women's organizations is needed.

The attack on abortion rights has not stopped. It is more serious than ever. There is still violence directed against the clinics, against abortion providers and the women who use them. There are a series of legal restrictions to abortion being passed in a number of states.

The current budget cuts mean a major worsening in the conditions of poor and working women. And much of the current agitation for "family values" is aimed at driving women backwards.

A response requires organizations of activists. It requires organizations that are conscious of the need for politics and tactics coming out of a perspective of a fight for working and poor women.

Unfortunately there are no organizations on the horizon with such a perspective.

(Trotsky: cont. from p. 28)

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(Luxemburg: cont. from p. 44)

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(Estrada: cont. from page 3)

not be the recipients. And given this scenario, no wonder the conservative republicans have been so busy scrapping so many federally funded national social programs. Given what the Governor of Wisconsin has done in the State of Wisconsin, the conservative republicans have built a southern state bureaucracy on the local level in order to regain state sovereignty and a larger piece of the pie for themselves and their special interest groups.

Whatever block grants that come to Wisconsin are already under **STATE SEIZURE**, and the people of Wisconsin are effectively under a **STATE of SIEGE**.

Carl Estrada
Racine Correctional Institution

Special Issue of *The Chicago Worker's Voice Theoretical Journal*

Documents on the controversies among the "minority" of the former MLP. This issue includes all email letters relating to this debate from Nov. 25, 1994, through Feb. 28, 1995.

Available by mail from CWV for \$3.00.

[Some of the documents written after Feb. 28 were printed in the Detroit publication *Communist Voice*. Write to them, address on p. 33]

Does the CWV support Cardenismo?

Oleg, Chicago

Joseph Green accuses us (CWV as a whole and Julie and me, specifically) of supporting Cardenismo. Although in most cases I have not replied to Joseph's accusations, I think it might be worthwhile to do so in this case. A close look at Joseph's accusations against Julie and me will do two things. It will show the intellectual dishonesty of his criticisms and thus why it is not worth it to reply to all of his wild charges. Further I hope it will clarify a little bit more as to what the Cardenista program really is and is not.

Here are some quotes from Joseph: *Communist Voice* #3, p 23

Joseph. "The CWV continues to sugarcoat the politics of the EZLN...

"But when Oleg talks about the EZLN program, whose agrarian demands, whose nationalism, and whose vision of national consensus are essentially an idealized version of the program of Lazaro Cardenas, he enthuses that **'the main slogans of the Zapatistas are for Democracy, Liberty, and Justice.'**" He doesn't refer to the connection of the EZLN's program to the program of Cardenas. Instead, he holds that the EZLN has a correct immediate program, whose only flaw is that it is **"only one step in the direction of complete emancipation of the oppressed in Mexico"** —i.e. it is only the first step. So much for Oleg's view that the program of Lázaro Cárdenas is unworkable."

"The CWV itself has trouble differentiating itself from the program of Lázaro Cárdenas."For

example, Julie seems unaware that her own program for Mexican struggle, with her demands for state support for ejidos and for integrating ejidos into large-scale production, repeats basic features of the agrarian program of Lazaro Cardenas. ...

"The presentation of government assistance to ejidos, the development of some communal forms, and better government planning as a sort of socialism that can save the peasantry is in line with the rhetoric of the late 30's in Mexico. And under Lazaro Cardenas, there was the most massive distribution of land to the peasants in Mexican history. A large number of peasants and even some agricultural laborers were organized into "ejidos" where they had their own land. Moreover, the Cardenas government made some attempts at building collective ejidos that preserved large-scale production. The most famous example was the organization of ejidos among the agricultural laborers of the Laguna cotton fields.

"Of course, even under Cardenas, only a minority of peasants received land, and still less were in collective ejidos, and the amount of machinery and other aid to the ejidos was insufficient. But if that is the main difference with the program of Cardenas, then Julie is basically asking for the extension of that program. And isn't it promoting capitalist illusions, as Lenin and Engels and Marx thought it was, to hold that peasant agriculture can be transformed into large-scale production, with all the

peasants reaping the benefit, prior to the achievement of socialism? How can one promote the radical carrying out of bourgeois democratic reform in the countryside, and yet specify that all the consequences of the development of capitalism—such as class differentiation among the peasants—be eliminated? Julie's "socialist measures" in the countryside are the dreams of peasant democracy."

I think these quotes illustrate a general method of Joseph—

1. take some statement or phrase from his opponent

2. expand that statement way beyond the bounds of credulity to say it is equivalent to some other stand

3. prove that that other stand wrong

I think any fair minded reader will find it an unjustifiable stretch for Joseph to argue that:

1. Oleg sees some merit in the Zapatista program of "Democracy, Liberty and Justice".

2. This program bears some resemblance to the rhetoric of Lázaro Cárdenas

3. Therefore Oleg really does consider the Cardenista program to be workable even though he says otherwise

In regard to number 1, I did say I thought that if the Zapatistas achieved their demands for democracy, liberty and justice, it would be a step forward for the Mexican working people. Then I went on to explain how I did not find this program sufficient. I think Joseph is twisting things when he says that "Oleg enthuses"

for the EZLN program.

In any case I think the big leap of accusation by Joseph is in number 2. Joseph claims that the program of the EZLN's agrarian demands, nationalism, and vision of a national consensus "are essentially an idealized version of the program of Lázaro Cárdenas." These programmatic points are much too general to be made the specific property of Cárdenas. Furthermore, I have not seen any EZLN statements praising Lázaro Cárdenas or saying that their program is based on his. The EZLN does trace its program back to Emiliano Zapata as their name suggests. Cárdenas certainly paid verbal homage to Zapata as do nearly all modern Mexican politicians. Joseph needs to do a lot more serious research if he wants to prove that the EZLN is idealized Cardenismo. The research I have done on Cárdenas so far does not prove such a thing.

Joseph's conclusion is that I am really a reformist even though I say I am a revolutionary. I think the conclusion is that Joseph stretches and bends statements to "prove" that his opponents are no good.

Joseph resorts to similar gymnastics to "prove" that Julie's program for Mexican agriculture is that same as that of Cárdenas. Joseph starts with the fact that Julie calls for struggle to keep the peasantry from being devastated and driven off the land. He then claims that this is Cárdenas's program and therefore Julie must really be a Cardenista.

In fact it was not Cárdenas's program that the peasants struggle against the government. In fact he suppressed some peasant struggles. He did distribute a lot of land to peasants,

but he gave a big impulse to the development of modern capitalist agriculture in Mexico. Cárdenas is by no means unique in implementing some concessions to the Mexican peasantry.

In this same issue #3 of the Detroit journal there are two book reports by Pete Brown, one concerning the development of a particular *ejido*, and the other on Echeverria's agricultural program. Each of these cases show the Mexican government taking measures which temporarily and partially alleviated the plight of impoverished Mexican peasants. Pete's articles show that to get any measures from the Mexican government to do something for the peasants requires a class struggle.

I can't make out whether or not Joseph considers any general program of political and economic demands in relation to the struggle of the peasantry worthy of his support. For example, he says, "Yet the most radical democratic measures in the countryside, measures that eliminate the marginalization of the indigenous people, provide maximum state aid to the countryside, etc., would in the long run accelerate capitalist development among the peasantry even faster than now." (CV #3, p.25). Is he saying that in the countryside the struggle must be straightforward and only for socialism? Joseph should clarify.

For my part I do think it is necessary to support the struggle of the impoverished Mexican peasantry for such things as government financial assistance and protection from the big landowners. I don't think such a position makes one a Cardenista. I think it is possible to participate in and support struggles for such reforms

without abandoning the struggle to organize for socialist revolution.

I am not carrying out agitation in the countryside of Mexico so I can't do much about trying to clarify to the Mexican peasants that there is no permanent cure for their problems outside of getting rid of capitalism. The former Marxist-Leninist Party and the Chicago Workers' Voice have tried with varying degrees of success to continue to develop agitation for socialism in connection to the living political issues we have been fighting on. We have tried to organize workers to participate with us in this fight. Yes, I think that revolutionaries organizing among the Mexican peasants should organize peasants in the fight for socialist revolution while carrying out the immediate struggle against the peasants' escalating marginalization.

Joseph likes to chop words and stretch them beyond recognition when he is trying to demolish someone, but I don't think he would come up with any substantially different formulation if he had to state his views just in a straightforward positive manner.

Joseph will likely be hot to disprove everything I have said in this short piece, however, I would encourage Joseph to divert some of his energy into a serious study of a general political issue such as a real analysis and critique of Cardenismo. I'm not sure he can, but if he could it would be more a contribution to the proletariat than "proving" in 10, or maybe 50, pages that each and every person who writes in our journal is a worthless reformist scumbag. In fact, the more stones he throws and the wilder he gets, the less anyone cares what he says.

To repeat my main points:

1. Joseph is logically and factually wrong to equate Julie's position or my position to Cardenismo. 2. Joseph should clarify what his general stand is on the struggle in the countryside in Mexico. 3. Cardenismo is not just a generalized reformist political position but a definite political program which does have a big influence in Mexico today. See the attached article for some further research I have done on this topic.

Lázaro Cárdenas, What does he really stand for?

Lázaro Cárdenas, the man and especially the myth, is a very powerful symbol in Mexican politics, even today 55 years after he left office. His son, utilizing to the hilt the popularity of his father, has run for President of Mexico twice. The first time he probably won the popular vote but was cheated of the presidency by fraud. Cuauhtémoc does not have an identical program to his father, but he benefits enormously because his father has come to symbolize government support for the peasants and protection of workers' rights.

Cardenismo is an obstacle in developing revolutionary politics in Mexico; for one thing it points to the Mexican government as the solution to the problems of the poor. Those of us who believe that a permanent and full solution to the problems of the masses of workers, peasants, and the poor in general can only be achieved through socialist revolution must come to some clear understanding of what

this politics of Cardenismo is. The actual historical actions of Lázaro Cárdenas are one thing and the mythology which has grown up around him are another. In general I think a careful evaluation of Cárdenas's actual actions will not support the myth that he was simply a champion of the poor.

Over a period of time I have been trying to look into this question. I have a lot more to do to feel completely confident in my conclusions, but I think it would help to present what I see so far. In this article I will report in more detail on the views of James Cockcroft on Cárdenas as a start to evaluating Cárdenas's actual program.

I. James D. Cockcroft, *Mexico, Class Formation, Capital Accumulation, and the State*, 1990 edition, Monthly Review Press, New York. [mainly Chapter 4, the Roots of the Modern State, pp. 115-141.

One Correction to My Article in the Last Issue

Cockcroft makes clear that I was wrong in stating that Cárdenas was the first of the post-revolutionary presidents to form a close alliance with trade union leadership. In fact alliance with a major section of the trade union leadership was a constant political program of all Mexican presidents from the mid 1920s when Obregon made a deal with CROM (Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana). By the time Cárdenas became president CROM had become a conservative bureaucracy of hacks rejected by many workers.

History: Cárdenas takes office, sponsored by Calles

[According to Cockcroft]

In the early 1930s Mexico was in a severe social crisis. Three times as many were unemployed as 1929. Many Mexicans were being deported from the U.S.

Cárdenas was nominated by previous president Calles. In period of the Mexican Revolution Cárdenas had been a general. From 1928 to 1932, Cárdenas had been governor of Michoacán. He had listened to the grievances of the people, implemented a modest agrarian reform, encouraged the development of peasant and labor organizations and opened one hundred new rural schools. In 1933 he did Calles bidding, disarming the peasant militia in Veracruz.

Calles agreed with program of social reform, parallel with new Roosevelt administration in U.S. 1934 U.S. silver purchase program helped Cárdenas finance social development program. Roosevelt pledged not to intervene in Mexico; he called his policy the "Good Neighbor Policy".

Cárdenas prepared for power struggle with Calles. He strengthened his base in the military by raising military salaries and courted the rank and file soldiers and maneuvered among the generals. He tried to defuse the Catholic Church opposition. He appointed a pro-Catholic general to his second cabinet and declared the "era of Church persecution" at an end.

In education he promoted radical sounding programs. Two months before he took office, a constitutional reform had made education "socialistic", which in fact just meant "education to

community responsibility". Many radical revolutionaries were drawn into this program. In fact Cárdenas was not a socialist; his policy was a government which was "liberal, democratic, and nationalist."

Cárdenas Utilizes a Different Sector of Organized Labor

Cárdenas was able to make use of a growing movement splitting off from the CROM, which had become a conservative and bureaucratic arm of Calles. Cárdenas developed close ties to CGOCM which was lead by a demagogue, Lombardo Toledano, who claimed to be a "Marxist" but who said that, "We cannot proclaim or praise the dictatorship of the proletariat ... because we are living during a period of organized capitalism."

Cárdenas allied with this militant reformist wing and made it the officially recognized national labor movement, renamed the CTM (Confederation of Mexican Workers) in 1936. "Yet Cárdenas's handling of labor was highly complex, assisting here, restraining there—and in the long run continuing the state's role of controlling labor." (p.127) ... "Cárdenas's actions throughout his regime ranged from approvals of socialism to denials that he sought it; from outright support of workers on strike to declaring strikes illegal; from appearing at worker demonstrations to sending troops to quell them." (p.128)

"He was aided in this by the political line taken by organized labor's most popular leader, Lombardo Toledano, who argued that if capitalism were to be abolished it would happen only in a distant future after the break with "feudalism" and "imperialism"

necessary to establish Mexico's economic and political freedom." (p.128)

"Cárdenas's administration set about supporting the most modern and patriotic segments of the bourgeoisie, those most rooted in nationally controlled areas of production, at the expense of *comprador* and imperialist groups." (p. 129) Cárdenas allowed government money to be used to provide the initial capital for industrial enterprises. He doubled the federal expenditures for economic development between 1934 and 1937 "... the Cárdenas administration did indeed pull the country out of its economic slump." (p. 129)

In 1934 and '35 strikes and mass mobilizations were at a high level. In June of 1935, the former strongman Calles denounced the strikers as traitors and called for severe repression. Cárdenas took a middle position saying that strikers' demands should be granted "within the economic possibilities of the capitalist sector." Cárdenas thus firmly wedded himself to the labor movement. "In February 1936, when striking workers immobilized the city [Monterrey, a hotbed of bourgeois reaction], Cárdenas took the occasion to issue his famous "Fourteen Points"—the statement that best reflects his populist and corporatist strategy. It was a broad appeal to almost all social classes and groups, particularly those with any kind of real or potential power, in order to bring them under state regulation." (p. 130)

Cárdenas encouraged both the workers and the employers to form associations which would then all look to the state to resolve their problems for them.

Cárdenas Defeats Calles

Through this period Cárdenas developed his political strength in the ranks of the army and by arming 100,000 peasants and a lesser number of workers into militias controlled by the ministry of defense. In April of 1936 Cárdenas was able to deport Calles and the labor hack, Morones, associated with him. "Once again, a new political leadership had met the rising demands of the workers part way, and in so doing had replaced the older, more recalcitrant political leadership—as Obregón and Calles had done against the Carrancistas in 1919-1924. Once again it was the actions of the working class, through large-scale strikes and demonstrations, that had precipitated the change." (p. 132)

Cárdenas "introduced reforms in agriculture and industry that sometimes permitted workers' increased involvement in the management of select enterprises. But this involvement was short-lived, since he also took care to appoint state bureaucrats to manage and control the reforms in order that workers might be disciplined and production increased." (p. 132)

Cárdenas Carries Out Land Reform

Through 1936 Cárdenas carried out a rapid pace of land distribution. It was by far the biggest distribution in Mexican history. Many of the unproductive and idle lands of the *latifundistas* were taken away. Some state credits and aid were provided for small farmers and for productive *ejidos*. On the other hand, "in the areas of the most radical land distribution, the Laguna and

Yucatán, where labor unrest was intense, many of the largest landholdings and productive installations were also protected from expropriation. ... But Cárdenas also used agrarian reform to avoid impending agricultural paralysis and peasant disruption, as in the troubled Laguna region, which was selected for an ambitious state-sponsored project of collective production on *ejido* lands. Nationally, however, less than 10 percent of all *ejido* farmers worked on a collective basis; most farmed individual small parcels with an *ejido*." (p. 133)

Cárdenas made sure that the peasant organization developed under his protection did not affiliate with the official labor organization, the CTM. All control flowed back to the president. Many of the militants in Cárdenas's peasant organization, renamed the National Peasant Confederation (CNC) in 1938, "fought the iron-fisted control of *caciques* and government bureaucrats and sought to create an independent movement, but the influential Communists chose to go along with Cárdenas and to 'bore from within' the CNC." (p. 134) "In reality, Cárdenas's agrarian-reform policies—which in any case were curtailed in 1936 when the combined turmoil in the countryside and cities led food production to plummet and prices to skyrocket—while arousing the enthusiasm of hundreds of thousands of Mexicans and granting the peasant a dignity not felt since the days of Zapata, were intended and served primarily to preserve and stimulate the private system of farming for commercial profit." (p. 134)

The Oil Nationalization

Oil workers had been striking on and off from 1936 to 1938. Fascist organization was growing in Mexico. By 1940 the Sinarquistas had half a million members, some in paramilitary units. By 1938 the oil workers were calling for a nationwide general strike to force the government to nationalize the oil companies. Since Cárdenas had backed off on his rapid pace of reforms he was losing popularity among the poor. Conservative army generals were rumored to be plotting against him. Cárdenas needed a dramatic move to recoup his popularity. The hated foreign oil companies were a perfect target.

The oil companies made an arrogant move (I'm not clear on the details of this) as Cárdenas attempted to settle the strike. On March 18, 1938, Cárdenas ordered the foreign-controlled oilfields expropriated. The oil companies were not that interested in Mexico and had a small stake there, at least relatively. However, they could not tolerate losing their property. The oil companies struck back with an blockade of oil sales to the U.S., England, and France. The Roosevelt administration terminated its agreement to buy Mexican silver, and England broke diplomatic relations.

"There took place a massive outpouring of public support for Cárdenas's act of economic independence, including approval by the Church. Millions of people contributed whatever they could to a national indemnity fund that had been created to pay off the oil firms." (p. 136)

Mexico negotiated to pay off these companies. The agreement was completed in 1941.

They got \$200 million. "Cárdenas assured foreign investors that the oil case was exceptional and that their investments would be protected as long as they served the national interest and conformed to Mexican law." (p. 136) Cárdenas broke a mineworkers' sit-down strike which was directed mainly against the Anaconda Copper Company, and he assured the mining companies that further expropriations would not occur. "In fact, despite Cárdenas's "anti-imperialist" and economic reforms, by 1940 Mexico depended more than ever on foreign trade, particularly with the United States, which accounted for 87 percent of its foreign commerce." (p. 136)

The strike movement declined drastically in Mexico after 1937. However, in 1940 the oil and railway workers were still on strike. The oil workers objected to Cárdenas's plan to reorganize the industry's work force along state-controlled corporatist lines. Cárdenas refused their demands. The oil workers pulled out of the CTM. "Cárdenas responded by sending federal troops to break the strike at the Azcapotzalco refinery. This broke the back of the strike movement but not the militancy of the workers."

A Few Points from Another Author

Roger A. Hansen, **The Politics of Mexican Development**, (Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore and Washington), 1971.

This book mainly focuses on relationship between the Mexican political system and the development of the Mexican economy. The author is very impressed by the fact that from the mid 1930s until the time his book

was published the Mexican economy had been growing at an average annual rate of about 6%. Hansen's main thesis can be seen in this quote, "Two generalizations with regard to the course of economic development in Mexico seem valid. The first is that no other Latin American political system has provided more rewards for its new industrial and commercial agricultural elites. ... The second generalization is that, excepting the impact of land redistribution, in no other major Latin American country had less been done directly by the government for the bottom quarter of society." (p. 87) By the way, Hansen does not necessarily think that policy was wrong.

He mostly deals with Mexican politics after 1940, so much of the book is not relevant to the specific study of Cárdenas. However, I think the analysis and facts about Cárdenas that he does include support or at least do not contradict what Cockcroft says. He discusses the large distribution of land to *ejidos*. He discusses how the government became the agency to decide whether workers' demands for wages increases should be granted. Hansen explains in more detail that Cockcroft the controlling role that the Mexican government took on in regard to labor-management relations. All contract disputes went to a government agency which decided what was fair. Hansen thinks that the government tended to favor labor. In any case the government decided if it was all right for workers to strike. If they got approval, the company could not hire scabs and had to pay workers back pay when the strike was settled. Hansen quotes Cárdenas's famous speech in

Monterrey referred to above, where Cárdenas, "told those employers whom he classified as 'tired of the social struggle' to turn their properties over to workers and to the government to run for the benefit of the workers." (p. 92)

I should note that Hansen does not report the examples cited by Cockcroft of Cárdenas using state power to against worker or peasant organizations that would not go along with him. Hansen gives a quotation about Cárdenas that crystallizes a typical mainstream bourgeois historian's evaluation of Cárdenas. "Cárdenas accomplished the feat of bringing off a class war, while at the same time subordinating it to the overriding theme of Mexican nationalism." (L. Vincent Padgett, **The Mexican Political System**, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966)

What Can Be Concluded?

In my article in *CWVTJ#7* I stated that Cárdenas saved capitalism in Mexico. That statement may be a little overblown, but it is obvious that Cárdenas converted a major part of the peasant movement and the workers' movement into pro-government forces. He controlled and contained powerful mass struggles of peasants and workers. He developed the PRI in roughly the form it still has. Cockcroft only touches on the issue, but it sounds as if Cárdenas was helped in this by the Mexican Communist Party. This would not be surprising, given what we know about the international line being pushed in the Comintern and the actions of the U.S. Communist Party relative to Roosevelt.

Anyway it is clear that

Cárdenas became widely known as the protector of the Mexican workers and particularly of the peasants. It's also clear that he was in fact a defender of the capitalist system. Cockcroft shows that at times Cárdenas straight-up attacked workers or peasants in struggle. He also shows how Cárdenas maneuvered many struggles to his personal political benefit while curtailing and diverting them so that the militancy was toned down and the masses in struggle looked to Cárdenas and the Mexican government for salvation.

The actual history of what Lázaro Cárdenas stood for and did as President of Mexico from 1934 to 1940 is different from the mythology that has been built up around him. If you want to fight for socialist revolution in Mexico or if you want to support this struggle, you just oppose the ideology of Cardenismo. My study of these questions is not complete, but I think all the evidence I have so far proves this point.

* * *

(EL Mach., cont. from p. 20)

necessary to shake up the imagination, to get out of [doing] the wasteful mobilizations of always, and to prepare other actions which win the **sympathy** and the growing participation of the unorganized masses. This will only be possible to the extent that the political organizations identify the general interests of the distinct sectors [of the population] and to raise regional or national programs which break with "sectorism" [narrowness] and immediate petitionism [petitioning for immediate demands only].

* * *

From *El Machete*, Number 63, July 19, 1995

(translated by *Chicago Workers' Voice*)

CWV note: In April, 1995, El Machete newspaper became the voice of some of the most important independent mass organizations, some of which are grouped in the national coordinator of independent social organizations, CNOSI. These organizations make up much of the left-wing of the mass movement in Mexico City, Puebla, Michoacan, and other areas. They were, for example, responsible for organizing the May 1st protests in Mexico City this year in which approximately one million people participated. Some of the better known organizations which participate in this wing of the movement are El Frente Popular, Francisco Villa, CLETA (Coordinator for Free Artistic and Theatre Experimentation), the peasant organization, Union Campesina Emiliano Zapata, and the MPI (Independent Proletarian Movement), which is the political leadership of SUTAUR-Ruta 100 (the bus drivers' union which is currently waging a massive struggle in Mexico City).

Within the left wing of the mass movement and within those forces which collaborate to produce El Machete, there is lively debate over how to move forward and to better organize and to extend the struggles that exist in some parts of the country and, over what ideology and organizational forms are needed for the revolutionary movement in Mexico. The article below was published in El Machete in July and has engendered responses and more debate which appear in later issues of the paper. The Chicago Workers' Voice

believes that this debate is important and of interest to those in the United States who share the goals and concerns of the revolutionary movement in Mexico. In subsequent issues of CWV we will reprint more of this debate. Please note that CWV translator notes appear within brackets [], while all other interjections and parentheses are those of the author.

IN DEFENSE OF MARXISM

by Tono Garcia

It's impressive to read or hear the opinions of some intellectuals, members of the Revolutionary Democratic Party, who, leaving aside any serious analysis of reality, embrace (without thinking?) the confusing verbiage which the dominant class uses to try to keep itself in power.

With the clear intention of not being marginalized from the public budget (scholarships; subsidies; appointments and salaries, such as advisors, project directors, commentators, etc.), they try to hide the facts that might show the workers and the people the situation in which we are living.

They say that what is missing in Mexico is democracy, but they are talking about the same bourgeois "democracy" installed by dominant capitalism to fool the people, to make them believe that they themselves elect their rulers -- getting rid of some, putting in others, but without substantially modifying anything which goes

against their [capitalist] interests.

On the contrary, and just like the well-paid opposition parties, they [the PRD intellectuals] agree fully with **respecting the constitution and the law**, which guarantees submission to the state and the exploitation of all the producers to the benefit of big capital; which maintains the parasitic bureaucracy that lives by appropriating the public resources and, guarantees the domination of the transnationals.

They are especially careful not to say a single word about corporativism, which is the vertebral column of the bureaucratic State, and which guarantees the control of and crushing of the workers, peasants, shopkeepers and all the people through semifascist organizations and confederations. This includes the thousands of small and medium businesses which are controlled by the officialist leaders of their organizations.

It seems that they [the PRD intellectuals] are betting that one day these mafioso-like leaders will come into contradiction with the government so that the "opposition" can then receive them with open arms as it has done with all the scum that has left the PRI [the ruling party].

The "ideologs" of the petty bourgeoisie limit themselves to talking of "democracy" in the abstract without clarifying whom it would benefit. The same thing appears when "critics" of the system win "friendship" with the government bureaucrats and end up converted into the best tricksters

[for the government] of the people, when they are not just simply salaried spies.

Other terms which have become fashionable are the struggle "against the party of the state" and for the "alternation of power" which clearly reveal that their only objective is to get themselves into government and nothing else.

But we can see past these empty phrases. In France, the self-named socialist party kept Francois Mitterand in the presidency of the country for fourteen years, without affecting, in the least, the profits of capital and while participating in the interventionist wars just like any other imperialist country. In Spain, Felipe Gonzalez plays the same role. Eight years of the government of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (?) ended just as corruptly as whatever other government, never ceasing to be capitalist.

The Italian government is one of the governments in power which has the most alternation of power. It has had false socialists and communists, social democrats, christian democrats, fascists, "leftists" and "rightists"; all have passed through power. And it continues to be one of the most corrupt governments.

In Latin America, since the fall of Soviet state capitalism and its European satellites made the "communist threat" (?) and the open dictatorships disappear, the North Americans have been converted into the most feverish defenders of "democracy" and the alternation of power, in order to favor the bureaucracies which are most docile in turning over to them the resources of the Latin American countries.

Suddenly, "public opinion" pollsters, human rights

commissions, "civic alliances", "defenders of the vote", and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have appeared like mushrooms all over the place. They are almost always promoted by adventurers who lend themselves to the most unimaginable games of the espionage and interventionist agencies.

The Iberoamericana University, an institution financed by groups like the CIA and the Company of Jesus (the Jesuits), summed up its strategy for work in Mexico in the June 16th issue of the newspaper *El Financiero*,

"To promote in the fields of ideology and culture, the agents for activities for citizen consciousness and social responsibility"; in the social field, **"the articulators of the necessities and demands of the collective and organized attention, such as the creators of public policies (???)"**. In the political field, "to promote those vigilantes of **human, social and ecological rights**, as well as the use of three key words to mark its action: **consensus, dialog, ethics**."

Retake Marxist Scientific Analysis

As we can see, this elegant language (common in the press of the "left" and which has infected more than a few companeros and organizations) has a well-defined origin.

This phraseology is very careful to elude any concept related to the **reality** of the division and **struggle of classes**, the internationalization of capitalist exploitive relations (which they call, for example, "globalization"), about the necessity of **eliminating** the backwards and dependent capitalism to which we belong and

its greedy and corrupt bureaucracy. The exponents [of this phraseology] are more worried about finding jobs and personal positions than in developing the independent organization of the Mexican people.

To fight these positions and to break their influence in the mass movement is the responsibility of all those who say they are revolutionaries.

A principal task of all those who understand the need for a Proletarian Party is to replant the intense and serious study of Marxism and the national and international reality of current capitalism and its world imperialist system, pushing forward propaganda and organization in the working class and all the proletariat.

But, it is necessary to **break** theoretically and practically with all those petty-bourgeois ideological positions, confusion, and pretensions, calling these things by their names and explaining to the population what is really going on!

It is necessary to break with the pure unionism and practical corporativism of some organizations and to develop political-revolutionary work for education and consciousness-raising among the masses.

It is necessary to **understand** practically that "the people" are 91 million Mexicans and not only those small groups who are already organized and which traditionally mobilize. And, above all, in this epoch, it is

(continued on page 18)

The Trotsky School of Confusionization

Barb, Chicago

Lenin's Definition of the "Opportunist":

"...a characteristic feature of present-day opportunism [is] its vagueness, amorphousness, elusiveness. An opportunist, by his very nature, will always evade taking a clear and decisive stand, he will always seek a middle course, he will always wriggle like a snake between two mutually exclusive points of view and try to 'agree' with both, and reduce his differences of opinion to petty emendments, doubts, innocent and pious suggestions, and so on and so forth" (CW, 1974, Vol. 7, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," p. 402).

Trotsky romanticized and aggrandized his role in the October Revolution. As regards this event, and many others, Trotsky demonstrated considerable cleverness in covering his tracks in order to rewrite his role in history. As the opportunist *par excellence*, Trotsky's goal was always to emerge as "correct" and/or to insist that he and Lenin were in essential agreement on "principle" but merely differed on organization or tactics.¹ [He had a variation on this: If I was incorrect, so was Lenin!]

For example, his differences with Lenin on the Bolshevik-Menshevik split were merely that of "perspective" and "organization." Lenin "came around" to his view of the permanent revolution. Brest-Litovsk was merely a difference in "tactics."² And he actually had two versions of the trade union dispute: 1) he was "correct" for the time of War Communism, but Lenin was already thinking ahead to NEP, and 2) maybe his views were "incorrect" but so were Lenin's, and NEP resolved the matter anyway.³

Following is detailed example of Trotsky's methods.

The incident to be described is not perhaps the most significant of his career, but it is representative. Multiply this many times over, and you have the Trotsky School of Confusionization of History which fully rivals the Stalin School of Falsification of History.

To briefly put matters into context.⁴ Lenin's April Thesis, which called for plans to proceed to the proletarian/socialist revolution, took the Party by surprise. The Central Committee (except for Alexandra Kollontai) were unanimously against such an idea. It was too rash, too hasty, the bourgeois revolution had not been completed...of course, in the future...

At this time, Lenin also gave the slogan "All Power to the Soviets." Lenin's ultimate plan was to seize power and hand it over to the soviets, which would function as the structure of the new proletarian government. But first, the Bolsheviks had to gain power in the soviets, which were under Menshevik and Social Revolutionary dominance. These petty-bourgeois parties regarded the soviets essentially as an "arm" of the government.

So there were major tasks

to be accomplished. Lenin had to convince the Party that the socialist stage of the revolution had arrived, the peasantry had to be persuaded to the Bolshevik side with the promise of "peace" and "land," and the soviets had to be won.

During this time, the Provisional Government was delaying plans to call the Constituent Assembly, which was to be a universal suffrage, secret-ballot parliament. This had been a major victory of the democratic February Revolution and was extremely important to the masses. A great deal of Party attention was also fixated on the CA. The old Party view was that eventually the soviets could convene (or take over) the CA to establish a "democratic republic."

So, also at this time, the soviets were making plans for a "democratic convention" to elect their candidates to the CA. These soviet candidates would form a "pre-Parliament" which would serve in the interim until the CA was called. . . Lenin's opinion of the bourgeois CA, however, was that "Without armed insurrection, a constitutional assembly is a phantom, a phrase, a lie. . ." (Carr, p 86)

The period from April to June involved a lot of discussion and arguing while the Bolsheviks built up strength in the soviets. During the summer of 1917, however, the Bolsheviks reached a low point. They had failed to achieve delegate strength in the 1st All-Russia Congress of Soviets, and Lenin wanted to withdraw his slogan of support to the soviets. A premature and abortive uprising of the workers in July, which the Bolsheviks were forced to go along with, resulted in the dispersal of the Bolsheviks into prison and exile. And a White Guard invasion in August threatened the gains of the February Revolution; the leader Kornilov was easily repulsed but not beaten.

Then in September, things picked up, and it is the period from September until the October Revolution that this article concentrates on. The Bolsheviks began to gain control of the soviets, and the soviets were increasingly operating as a dual, shadow/proletarian government. The Soviet leadership (the Mensheviks and SRs controlled the Executive Committee) dragged their feet on calling the 2nd All-Russia Congress of Soviets for fear the Bolshevik delegate majority would oust the leadership. The Bolshevik slogan of "All Power to the Soviets" was renewed.

So there were a lot of currents and cross-currents operating in this period, and most of the Party were confused. The disagreements and confusion were precipitating a crisis situation. In Lenin's view, it became a race against time. The Bolsheviks must take power before the CA was called or the revolutionary fervor of the masses would be palliated.

Among the "skeptics" (not

to mention the "defencists"),⁵ there were those who were frankly against a takeover, fearing that the Bolsheviks were not capable of mastering the machinery of the state and could not control the vast Russian empire, or who did not have faith in the system of soviets. There were those who preferred to adopt a wait-and-see attitude until the Provisional Government ran itself totally into the ground. Many wanted to wait until after the 2nd All-Russia Congress of Soviets convened. At the bottom of this thinking was the hope that an insurrection could be avoided.

The more radical felt that under Bolshevik control, the Congress could declare itself the government of Russia, the proletariat would back this up, by force if necessary, and the Soviets could then call the CA. The less radical, who were against the seizure of power, hoped that either some kind of "socialist" government could result from a coalition of the soviets and the Constituent Assembly, or that the soviets could peacefully and gradually take over the government through the Bolsheviks operating within the CA as a communist opposition.

Why was the issue of which came first -- the Insurrection or the Congress -- so important to Lenin? In practical terms, to declare a new, proletarian government without forcibly overthrowing the existing bourgeois government was nonsense. In theoretical terms, this violated the very principle of proletarian revolution, that the machinery of the bourgeois state must be seized and as far as possible destroyed.

It was also essential to Lenin that the Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, call the

insurrection and that the *matter not* be left up to the soviets. Lenin's reasoning was that to put emphasis on the Congress of Soviets (and the Constituent Assembly) misled the masses into putting faith in parliamentary methods. One could not "appoint" a revolution; it spawned "constitutional illusions;" it was essentially a Menshevik idea.⁶ Many of the Bolsheviks had become sidetracked by the Democratic Conference and the Pre-Parliament which Lenin wanted to boycott.

Lenin clearly saw grave danger in the "vacillations...at the top levels of our Party, a "fear", as it were, of the struggle for power, a tendency to substitute resolutions, protests, and congresses for this struggle" (CW, 1972, Vol. 26, "Thesis for a Report....," p. 143).

Instead, Lenin began urging preparations for a covert military insurrection (or surprise coup) from the middle of September. He insisted that the "crisis is ripe," feared that Kornilov was preparing a second advance, that the imperialists were conspiring against Russia, and that the Provisional Government would concede Petrograd to the Germans. He saw that the soldiers were deserting, that famine was scourging the land, and that the workers could not wait. The peasants were also beginning to revolt, and he feared especially that if the government had a chance to put down the peasant rebellion, the insurrection was lost. He also saw signs that the European, especially the German, proletariat was rebelling and could eventually come to the aid of the Bolsheviks. The CC, however, unanimously voted him down.

Frustrated though Lenin was, he understood the confusion

in the Party. Wasn't this a change of plans? Wasn't this a going back on the slogan "All Power to the Soviets?" And it must be emphasized that after the Revolution, the "dissidents" were welcomed back into the Party bosom to join in creating the new proletarian society.

Now whether Lenin actually was premature or not is open to debate. Lenin himself suggested that perhaps his thinking (from abroad) was a little "left" at this time. But that is not the real point. Lenin was not fighting for an exact "date" nor at this point for the specific form of proletarian government which could eventually be established, but for something much more important. "Conquer Kerensky first and then summon the Congress" was Lenin's battle cry because he fully saw the potential destruction of the revolution which lay disguised under the endless debate over "when" and "how" to call the insurrection. It is in this context, that he said that "to 'wait' for the Congress of Soviets would be utter idiocy, or sheer treachery" (CW, 1972, Vol. 26, "The Crisis Has Matured," p. 82).

Lenin even threatened to resign from the Central Committee and go directly to the Party rank and file for support, although in the end, he did not do so. Only after Lenin had exerted extreme pressure of persuasion did the CC agree to armed insurrection (10 votes to 2), but not until October 10/11th. This was by no means the end of it, however, as a subsequent vote at an enlarged CC session showed 6 votes out of 15 as opposing Lenin's plan. The chief dissidents, Kamenov and Zinoviev, had rallied this support, and indeed as late as Oct. 18th had

broadcast their protest in the non-party press. It was an unbelievably tense situation.

As the twist and turn of events played out, however, the Insurrection more or less coincided with the Congress. The date of the Congress had been put back to Oct. 25. Technically, both the bourgeois and the proletariat began military preparations during the day and evening of the 24th; the Insurrection began at 2:00 a.m. on the 25th; the Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet announced that the Provisional government had been deposed at 10 a.m. on the 25th [Trotsky, as head of the Petrograd Soviet, admitted this was premature]; the Congress convened at 10:40 that evening while the Winter Palace was being stormed, and at 3:00 a.m. on the 26th, it was announced that the Provisional Government had been arrested at 2:00 a.m. (Kerensky himself escaped). The Insurrection continued for several days, and the Congress met for one more session.

Thus, if Lenin's plan was fulfilled, it was only by a hair, and a case can be made equally that his plan was frustrated.

Now, what was Trotsky's position on this matter of crucial importance to Lenin: which to come first, the Insurrection or the Congress? The official (Stalin) version was that (up until the 10th) the CC had wanted to "convene the Congress of the Soviets; launch the insurrection and proclaim the Congress of the Soviets as the organ of state power" (*Stalin School*, p. 202). But that after the 10th, the CC came around to Lenin's position. The specific charges against Trotsky were that he "insisted on a postponement of the uprising until the Second All-

Russia Congress of Soviets, which meant frustrating the insurrection because this gave the Provisional Government a chance to concentrate its forces on the opening day of the Congress and crush the uprising" (CW, 1972, Vol. 26, Notes, p. 540).

Trotsky, of course, had to refute these charges, and moreover, as usual, had to prove he was "correct" and "right" with Lenin (and the necessary concomitant, Stalin was "incorrect" and "wrong" with Lenin!). Let's see how he went about doing this. Get ready for a high-wire act of verbal acrobatics!

Trotsky's first version of the event appeared in "my little book on Lenin," the unfinished, *Notes for a Biographer*, 1924, written in tribute three months after Lenin's death. The portrayal of the Bolshevik insurrection is essentially the "official Trotsky" story which he came back to late in life. In it, Trotsky presented a portrait of Lenin that was both obsequious and deprecatory, and a portrait of himself which was artlessly self-serving, the intent being to align himself with Lenin in the face of the impending, inevitable campaign against him.

Trotsky described the three positions in the Central Committee toward the insurrection as: those who opposed the seizure of power and whose logic of the situation led them to reject the slogan "all power to the Soviets;" Lenin, who demanded the immediate organization of the uprising, independently of the Soviets; and third, those [i.e., Trotsky] who considered it imperative to link the uprising closely with the Second Congress of the Soviets so that even the date of the two events should coincide" (p. 93). This was

an inaccurate portrayal, however, in that it omitted those who believed the Revolution could be achieved through gradual takeover by the soviets, those who wanted to delay until after the Congress of Soviets met, as well as those who simply believed the time was not ripe for an insurrection. However, what this false division implied was that there was a "right" (non-revolutionary position, an "ultra-left" position which Lenin held, and the "correct" position which Trotsky held.

The portrait in this work is of a saintly Lenin, totally "in tune" with the mood of the workers and the concrete revolutionary situation but, unfortunately, just a little off in his calculations: "He had analyzed the whole situation from the point of view of our enemies." So, Lenin's "haste" was just a matter of "too energetic experiments" and of "overrating the enemy". Yet, "to some extent, [it] had a purpose which was tactically correct. By overestimating the enemy's forces, he aimed at stimulating the party and provoking it to redouble its efforts" (p. 92). Despite admitting that Lenin's "frantic pressure saved the revolution" (against, however, the blatantly anti-revolutionary faction), basically what Trotsky had done was to separate the matter into "politics" and "military strategy". He willingly relegated Lenin to "political leader" -- more like "cheerleader," but granted the honor of "military leader" to himself.

This was Trotsky's position: "...the party could not seize power by itself, independently of the Soviets and behind its back. This would have been a mistake, the consequences of which would have affected the

attitude of the workers and might have had harmful repercussions within the Petersburg garrison..." (pp. 92-93). This put the soviets before the Party in importance as head of the revolution. The refinement of Trotsky's plan was that the uprising should be "linked closely" with the Second Congress so that even the date of the two events should coincide" (p. 93). He interpreted Lenin's insistence that "the uprising must precede the Congress, otherwise they will disperse you and you will have no chance to convene the Congress!" (p. 93) as meaning only the need "for a close deadline." He insisted that the consensus of the CC after the 10th revealed that the initial conservative opposition had been "not so much political as psychological."

His portrait of Lenin was as "the old man" who had these slightly senile and stubborn "quirks." Lenin "rebuked" those who went about in public connecting the uprising with the Congress, scolding that it was "ridiculous and absurd to warn the enemy about the date of the rising." However, Trotsky reassured Lenin that this was only to "hoodwink" the enemy, and reported that Lenin applauded his cleverness. He also portrayed Lenin on the day of October 25th as seriously worried that Trotsky was conducting the vagaries of revolutionary negotiations in the Party press, and most of all that he had printed a poster threatening with execution any person caught in the act of plunder or looting during the uprising -- this circulated on the day before the insurrection -- the 24th!

Trotsky answered Lenin's ironic query, "So you are aiming at a compromise solution, are you?"

with reassurance that this was only a *ruse de guerre*, and received Lenin's blessing: "Oh, all right, one can proceed in this fashion as well, provided we seize power." This represented the fact that "he finally made peace with the fact that we were not proceeding by way of a conspiracy and a plot" (pp. 95-96). In other words, before the victory of the insurrection had been assured, Lenin acknowledged that Trotsky's strategy had been correct, and that he himself had only been an old worrywart.

In 1924, in the midst of battling the campaign against him, Trotsky began his new account of the insurrection by backpeddling somewhat. In "The Lessons of October," Trotsky readily admitted that Lenin "presupposed that the preparation and completion of the insurrection were to be carried out through party channels and in the name of the party, and afterwards the seal of approval was to be placed on the victory by the Congress of Soviets" (*Left Opp. I*, pp. 238-39). He quoted Lenin as adamantly affirming that "Delay is criminal. To wait for the Congress of Soviet would be a childish game of formalities, a disgraceful game of formalities, and a betrayal of the revolution" (CW, 1972, Vol. 26, "Letter to the Central Committee..." (p. 141), and that "It is necessary to fight against constitutional illusions and hopes placed in the Congress of Soviets, to discard the preconceived idea that we absolutely must 'wait' for it" (CW, 1972, Vol. 26, "Theses for a Report...", (p. 144). Here, Trotsky rather blandly stated only that: "The CC did not adopt this proposal. The insurrection was led into soviet channels and was linked in our agitation with the Second Soviet Congress" (*Left Opp., II*,

"Lessons," p. 239).

Trotsky admitted that he had voted along with the others against Lenin in September. But here we see his essential "centrist" position (which enabled him to squirm out of ticklish situations) come to the fore. Now Trotsky's version of the events was that while Lenin was still underground (until Oct. 10), he did not have a clear view of the situation and that "we" realized it was necessary to use the convening of the Congress of Soviets as a front, a trick, a trap, a "cover" to lure the Kerensky government into complacency while the insurrection was being prepared.

There is a problem with pronouns here, since Trotsky always spoke as "we". But who was the "we"? How could it be Trotsky and the Central Committee (whom Lenin portrayed as having all those dangerous vacillations?) Or was it Trotsky and the Petrograd Soviet? Or did Trotsky really mean "I"? Moreover, he omitted dates: Was the conception of this "plan" the reason why the CC voted Lenin down in September? When did this "plan" come into being? He also conveniently omitted Lenin's key point: "To insist on connecting this task with the Congress of Soviets, to subordinate to this Congress, means to be merely playing at insurrection by setting a definite date beforehand, by making it easier for the government to prepare troops, by confusing the masses..." (CW, 1972, Vol. 26, "Thesis...", pp. 143-44).

Trotsky being Trotsky, he could not backpeddle for long. Now he took the matter completely out of Party hands.⁷ He asserted: "As a matter of fact, we had here an armed insurrection -- an armed

though bloodless insurrection of the Petrograd regiments against the Provisional Government -- under the leadership of the Revolutionary Military Committee and of preparing the defense of the Second Soviet Congress, which would decide the ultimate fate of the state power." In addition he asserted: the "outcome of the insurrection of October 25 was at least three-quarters settled, if not more;" "the insurrection of Oct. 25 was only supplementary in character" (*Left Op. I*, "Lessons," pp. 240-41).

So, not only did Trotsky take credit for the insurrection, but also more overtly stated that he had possessed greater foresight than Lenin, greater skill at tactical planning, had been more adept in the "art of insurrection" (one of his favorite phrases).

But of course, he and Lenin must have agreed on "principle": "[This] did not involve any naive hopes that the congress itself could settle the question of power...." "A detailed explanation of this difference of opinion will make it clear that this question pertains not to principle but rather to a technical issue of great practical importance" ("Lessons," p. 243).

Was "betrayal of the revolution" - was Bolshevism vs Menshevism -- were "constitutional illusions" -- a mere technical issue or the deepest, most fundamental principle dividing revolutionary from non-revolutionary politics?

However, later in 1924, as the campaign against the Left Opposition grew increasingly serious, Trotsky backed off again, recanted somewhat. In "Our Differences," he denied that in his previous statement -- "Our 'trickery' proved 100 percent successful" --

he had really meant "trickery" or that he had exalted his own policies at the expense of Lenin's: "No artful scheme devised by wily strategists was involved." Rather, "it was not a question of someone's subjective cleverness but the result of the objective development of relations growing out of dual power." He gave full credit to Lenin: "He [Lenin] was undeniably right in demanding that power be seized before the convening of the Congress of Soviets and only because of his pressure was that accomplished" (p. 283).

So here we learn that the Insurrection was indeed accomplished before the Congress, and that Lenin was correct.

In 1932, in *The Russian Revolution*, "Lenin Summons to Insurrection" (pp. 261-303), Trotsky gave supposedly the full and real account of these times. It was quite a different version from the 1924 ones. He now asserted that Lenin had made "mistakes," with tremendous verbal convolutions, he qualified, arguing that these mistakes weren't really mistakes but part of Lenin's thinking process or working out of strategy -- but still in the end mistakes! Since he was not with Lenin on this matter, he went back to his old theme that Lenin was only "testing the waters" and applying psychological pressure in his urging the insurrection in September -- as part of a clever strategy to turn the Party leftwards.

Trotsky also downplayed the fact that, despite voting against it, he had been a participant in the Democratic Conference and an elected member to the Pre-Parliament. After Lenin had put enough pressure on the CC so that it finally voted to pull out of the

Pre-Parliament (on Oct. 7th), Trotsky portrayed himself as gloriously "leading his army out of the Pre-Parliament!" (p. 283).

In the crucial session of October 10th, when Lenin finally succeeded in persuading the CC to agree to immediate insurrection, Trotsky confirmed that of the members present, "10 against 2 [Kamenev and Zinoviev] voted for the insurrection," however, Stalin charged that Trotsky abstained. What is to be believed here? Trotsky also admitted that Lenin "had fears of opportunism from the side of the internationalist fusionists," but these were dissipated." He ingeniously wondered who that could possibly have been. "Aside from Trotsky, whom Lenin could hardly have had in mind," the other internationalists...all three took the side of Lenin" (p. 285) ⁸

Even after Lenin had finally persuaded the CC to agree to an immediate insurrection to precede the Congress (and indeed begin if possible on the 15th), Trotsky portrayed most of the CC members as the worst kind of wafflers, agreeing with Lenin in words but spreading private reservations. He also portrayed the leadership of the Petrograd Soviet and the Military Council in a similar fashion (Trotsky was head of both). His point here was to deny the popular conception that the Bolshevik leadership had been 100% behind Lenin. He traced these oppositional attitudes in a straight line back to the opposition against Lenin's April Theses; no more were they merely "psychological differences."

The perfidy (in Lenin's terms "strike-breaking" - "a crime!") of Kamenev and Zinoviev who openly in the non-party press

defied the decision of the CC is well documented. Moreover, Trotsky accused Stalin of tacitly supporting them in the Party press.

Now what has happened to Trotsky's contention that "we" had this artfully worked out scheme to fool the bourgeoisie by hiding the insurrection behind the Congress?

There is also the problem that at a public session on October 10th, Trotsky announced that "The Soviet has not set the date for an insurrection in the coming days, but if it became necessary to set one, the workers and soldiers would come out as one man" (p. 298). With his usual "centrism," in effect, Trotsky announced the insurrection and denied it at the same time! Lenin generously attributed this to necessary caginess in dealing with an "enemy's" question.

However, a problem arose in that both Kamenev and Zinoviev felt Trotsky's answer validated their position and jumped to line up behind Trotsky. Although there is evidence that he actually was covering up for Kamenev's rash act, Trotsky, of course, accused K and Z of base opportunism (Carr, p. 97)

This reminds me of Trotsky's Brest-Litovsk "Neither peace nor war" slogan -- a disguising with vague rhetoric the fact that he was not willing to oppose Lenin overtly, but at the same time was determined to hold on to his own position and proceed with his own plans. Moreover, the "revolutionary defencists" interpreted Trotsky's slogan as backing up their own position, as inevitably [and rightly] the opposition to Lenin always interpreted Trotsky's "centrist" positions.

Here is another example of his clever ambiguity: He related

that another member of the CC had opposed Lenin on one point: "It is not true that the question is now purely technical. Now too the moment of insurrection must be considered from the political point of view" ("Lenin Summons...", p. 297) As if Lenin had ever conceived of the matter as "technical" and not as "political"!

In Trotsky's final version of this matter, *The Stalin School of Falsification*, "How the Insurrection Took Place" (1937), he went head-to-head with Stalin with no holds barred. This version of the events harked back to his 1924 version, yet with new twists, and contradicted his version in *The Russian Revolution*. In this essay, he was refuting Stalin's "official" version which stated that "Lenin implacably fought against the 'constitutional illusions' of Trotsky, who placed the question of the material seizure of power in dependence upon the Congress of the Soviets. The Central Committee, under the leadership of Stalin, supported the position of Lenin, and only thus was the October victory assured" (p. 199).

Now the reason that this new account was the "really real" version is that Trotsky had recovered a "lost speech of Stalin's" of 1920 and had also now decided to include "personal reminiscences" which, out of concern for objective scholarship, he had omitted from *The Russian Revolution*. Stalin's "lost speech" revealed that he too had accused Lenin of "mistakes" in setting the date of the insurrection too early (just as Trotsky himself had). Moreover, he quoted Stalin as saying: "And despite all the demands of Ilyich, we proceeded along the road of reenforcement and came up [?] on October 25

before the picture [?] of the insurrection. Ilyich, smiling, looking at us slyly, said: 'yes, you were right'" (p. 201). [It does strain one's credulity to imagine that in 1920 Stalin would so overtly criticize Lenin, but once again, what do you believe? Also, if Stalin and the CC upheld Lenin's position, why is Lenin saying "Yes, you were right"?]

But, whatever these cryptic words ascribed to Stalin meant, Trotsky also admitted to these views. He gloated as if he had trapped Stalin: "it follows, on the contrary, that upon this question the CC supported Trotsky against Lenin" (p. 201). In other words, Trotsky admitted that he and Stalin had held the same views, i.e., the Congress before the Insurrection.

As the clincher, Trotsky again quoted his private conversation with Lenin: "Lenin, when he arrived at the Smolny on the night of the 25th, said to me: 'Well, well -- it can be done that way too. Just take the power.' In other words, here Trotsky portrayed Lenin as validating his position, not on the non-conspiratorial form of the insurrection, but on the simultaneity of the Insurrection and the Congress (but actually the Congress before the Insurrection because the insurrection was not by any means finished).

I rather think that Lenin, seeing how events had fallen out, was simply saying, "Let's deal with the situation and proceed."

Now once again Trotsky denied the sharpness of the divergence between the CC and Lenin, after having written literally pages in *The Russian Revolution* naming names and incidents. He

insisted that what Stalin described as the plan of the CC -- "convene the congress. launch the insurrection and proclaim the Congress...as the organ of state power" -- had never been the plan of the CC, because "this constitutes, after all, that very same mechanistic scheme which was not unjustifiably stigmatized by Lenin because of its constitutional illusions" (p. 202).

What was Trotsky saying? That Lenin's fear of "constitutional illusions" lay somewhere else? That the opposition and waverings of the CC up to the moment of insurrection had nothing to do with "constitutional illusions?" This makes no sense at all, unless one realizes that what Trotsky was really doing was attributing the "constitutional illusions" to Stalin and exonerating himself. He asked rhetorically, "Were not Lenin's fears a result of one of his meetings with Stalin?" (p. 202). And what about Kamenev and Zinoviev? They had no "illusions"?

Moreover, he completely turned Lenin on his head by quoting his views as: "To call in advance the Congress of the Soviets in order only later to summon the insurrection would have meant to facilitate for our opponents the opportunity for dealing a blow at the Congress of the Soviets before the insurrection," (p. 202).

I believe Lenin feared that it would allow the opponents an opportunity to deal a blow at the Revolution! Many a time he had stormed, "Forget the Congress!"

So, according to Trotsky, in the end, "As a matter of fact, the plan conducted and realized by me

in action consisted in this: that in the process of mobilizing the masses under the slogan of the Congress of the Soviets as the supreme organ in the country, and under the cover of this legal campaign, we prepare the insurrection and strike the blow at a propitious moment, proximate to the congress of the Soviets but by no means necessarily after the opening of the Congress" (p. 202).

If this sounds like gobbledygook, this is what happens when the pot calls the kettle black. First, both Trotsky and Stalin had accused each other of the same things: lying, "constitutional illusions," and Menshevism. Both had maintained that each lined up with the CC against the other. Both had "proved" that while their positions differed from Lenin's, their positions were validated by Lenin. Yet, eventually both maintained that they did not differ in principle from Lenin. According to Trotsky, later Stalin crudely changed his story -- "The CC, under the leadership of Stalin, supported the position of Lenin, and only thus was the October victory assured" (p. 199). Trotsky was more subtle -- "It can be done that way too" [i.e., I was right and Lenin was also right]. "It was a question of a tactical disagreement with Lenin on which the subsequent course of events confirmed the correctness of my own position" (p. 202).

Now, how can you have it both ways? Because of the fortuitous or unfortuitous conjunction of the Insurrection and the Congress, both Trotsky and Stalin were, in effect, "let off the hook." It turns out that both maintained that their positions were

exactly (and pretty much accidentally) what happened: Stalin: "came up on October 25 before the picture of the insurrection." Trotsky: "proximate to the Congress of the Soviets but by no means necessarily after the opening of the Congress." And this vague, amorphous nonsense turns out to have been ok with Lenin -- just what he would arrived at himself if he hadn't made all those little "mistakes" and had been as clear-sighted as Trotsky, Stalin -- and the Central Committee!

Was Trotsky's position really that events should happen simultaneously the way they fell out, i.e., "proximate to...but by no means necessarily after"? If so, that was quite a tactical feat! It certainly would confirm that he had mastered the "art of insurrection" and had, almost single-handedly, masterminded a world-shaking event! Moreover, was he further covering himself by issuing a premature statement of victory before the Congress convened?

Or does the truth lie in the fact that Bolshevik Revolution succeeded because Lenin ceaseless and frantically urged on the insurrection at full speed not only because "There is only bread for one day!" but because, if he hadn't, the insurrection might not have happened at all? Or would have ended in a half-way mess? And did not, in fact, the manipulations of others, including Trotsky and Stalin, not only put the insurrection in jeopardy, but even actually enable the Government to amass enough forces to prolong the struggle, brief though it was?

So what was Trotsky's position? Trotsky's position turned out to be what it so often

turned out to be: if all was well that ended well, that was Trotsky's position; if it didn't, then that was not Trotsky's position. As usual, what became lost in deliberately-created confusion were Trotsky's real politics. Opportunism of the worst sort...but slick.

NOTES

1. From *My Life* (1930): "...the errors which I have committed, however important they may have been -- and some of them were of extreme importance -- always referred to questions that were not fundamental or strategic, but dealt rather with such derivative matters as organization and policy. In all conscientiousness, I cannot, in the appreciation of the political situation as a whole and of its revolutionary perspectives, accuse myself of any serious errors of judgment" (p. 185).

2. See *My Life* for Trotsky's distorted self-serving version of Brest-Litovsk, as well as his other disputes with Lenin. Here also he modified his contention that Lenin "came around" to the idea of "permanent revolution." Rather, Lenin "arrived" at the same conclusion after he gave up arithmetic for algebra!

3. Basically, Trotsky insisted that his "error" lay in taking too much the "economic" approach, whereas Lenin's "error" lay in taking the "political" approach. [See following article for discussion of trade union dispute and Bolshevik/Menshevik split; "permanent revolution" will be

discussed in Luxemburg-Trotsky, Pt. II.

4. This is merely a general outline of events. The period from April to October involved an immensely complicated and fast-changing shift of social forces, as well as changing of minds. See Carr, Vol. I, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923* for a fairly objective account. [It perhaps relies a bit too much on Trotsky's accounts.]

5. There evolved two "defencist" positions -- the bourgeois position: continue the "defence of the nation" against Germany as the worse imperialist; and later the "left-wing" Bolshevik position which came up around Brest-Litovsk: "defence of the Revolution," e.g., Bukharin.

6. There is also evidence that, losing their control over the soviets, the Mensheviks and Srs were trying to subvert and eventually do away with them.

7. His anti-Party stance is discussed in the following article.

8. Trotsky was referring to the former centrist group, the Unity or International Group (*Mezhraiontsy*) of which he was the head, and which he brought into the Party in July. Previously, Trotsky had refused to join the Bolsheviks, accusing them of having "de-Bolsheviked" themselves, and had demanded an amalgamation of the two groups on equal terms, under a new name (Carr, p. 89).

(continued on p. 12)

Luxemburg, "Semi-Anarchism" -- And Trotsky

Part I

Barb, Chicago

"In the beginning was 'the act'," Luxemburg,⁹

"Give me a formula for action!" Trotsky¹⁰

In "Luxemburg and the Fourth International" (1935), Trotsky stated:

We can, with full justification, place our work for the Fourth International under the sign of the 'three' L's, that is, under the sign not only of Lenin, but also of Luxemburg and Liebknecht (*Writings*, p. 32).

Was this just a tribute to the courageous and dedicated German revolutionary martyrs all the early Bolsheviks admired? Was Trotsky merely defending Luxemburg from what he regarded as the slanders of Stalin?¹¹ No, I think there is something more to it.

Trotsky had always termed his Left Opposition, the Bolshevik-Leninist view. In *The Stalin School of Falsification* (1937), Trotsky maintained:

My differences with Bolshevism were never greater than those of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht upon those questions on which they also differed from Bolshevism. Let anyone dare assert that they were Mensheviks! (p. 151).

This is a revealing statement because the questions upon which

Luxemburg differed with Bolshevism were significant, as were the questions upon which Trotsky differed and, moreover, many were the same questions.

Luxemburg and Trotsky had an undeniable affinity, although they had in reality no close relationship.¹² Before the Revolution, Trotsky had contributed articles to Luxemburg's journals. They had supported each other's positions at conferences and congresses. When Trotsky finally joined the Bolsheviks, however, Luxemburg associated Trotsky with Lenin and took them equally to task for what she saw as the mistakes of the Bolshevik Party and its revolutionary policies.

Luxemburg was murdered not long after the Revolution (January 15, 1919),¹³ and the Bolshevik consensus was that, by this point, she had altered most of her negative views.¹⁴ However, what is indicated to me is that her views logically progressed in the direction of Trotsky's. It is clear that both Luxemburg and Trotsky shared many positions which were essentially un-Leninist and, therefore, I believe, un-Marxist. This discussion will deal only with Trotsky's positions during the years more or less concurrent with Rosa Luxemburg, at any rate, during the

lifetime of Lenin.

Marxist historians have had a difficult time classifying both Luxemburg and Trotsky. Luxemburg has been generally regarded as a "left Communist".¹⁵ Many of Trotsky's positions have also been viewed as "left" deviations; yet his essential "rightism" or Menshevism (social democracy) is undeniable. But in this discussion, I proceed not from the perspective of Menshevism, but rather from the perspective of anarchism. As I hope will be apparent, there is an obvious connection between the two outlooks in that both represent petty-bourgeois stances toward revolution and toward the goal of communism.

There is a point where anarchism can deteriorate into (or perhaps, more accurately, reveal itself as) "social democracy." There is a point where social reformers can become disillusioned and end up in the camp of the terrorist-anarchists, in Lenin's words, "the petty bourgeois who has despaired of his salvation" (CW, 1968, Vol. 18, "In Memory of Herzen," p. 27).

I want to begin from the standpoint of Lenin's characterization of some of Luxemburg's tendencies as "semi-

anarchist"¹⁶ and to compare these positions with certain of Trotsky's stands which Lenin also characterized as vacillating toward anarchism.

First, however, on what grounds did Lenin highly value Luxemburg, whom he called the "eagle" of the revolution?¹⁷ He admired her trenchant and highly courageous exposure of the revisionism and outright reactionary social-chauvinism of the pillars of the German SD Party. As a new and very young member of the Sds, she fearlessly attacked Bernstein, even Bebel, and formed an early and essentially correct assessment of Karl Kautsky. Lenin delighted in quoting her assessment of German Social Democracy as a "stinking corpse!"¹⁸ He valued her as an ally in her implacable enmity toward the bourgeoisie and her firm belief in proletarian leadership. She supported him in his stance against the First Imperialist War (although he saw problems in her rationale). He encouraged the break with German "social democracy" led by Luxemburg, Leibknecht and Franz Mehring and their determination to turn the *Spartakusbund* into a genuine Communist fighting organization.¹⁹ And he recognized Luxemburg's gifts as a revolutionary theorist, though he found fault with her conclusions on Marx (Part II). He asserted that her complete works "will serve as useful manuals for training many generations of Communists all over the world."²⁰ But ultimately, Lenin classified many of the stands of Luxemburg as "semi-anarchist" and her approach to theory as "half-dialectical."

Anarchism

To review the tenets of anarchism ("contrary to authority"): "to establish justice, equality and fraternity in society by eliminating all state and social means of coercion."²¹ Early manifestations of anarchism came from French and English currents of bourgeois social utopianism, which proposed various vague versions of this "just society" to be somehow achieved without revolution. The revolutionary current of anarchism came from Russia through Bakunin and Kropotkin, who realized the necessity of overthrowing the capitalist state.

Philosophical anarchism had actually been weak in Germany since Marx and Engels had theoretically demolished the bourgeois anarchist-utopianists, such as Fourier and especially Proudhon,²² in establishing the foundations of scientific socialism. They viewed social utopianism, which proposed a cooperativist society of "the people," as the schemes of pre-proletarian socialists living in the era of the petit-bourgeois revolutionary movements.²³

Due to the spread of scientific socialist ideas, the influence of Marx and Engels' German Workingmen's Association and later the 1st Internationale, anarchist-utopianism gradually assumed a more "worker," as opposed to "people" character, a "communistic" cast, and a revolutionary basis. Its chief Russian ideologues were Bakunin - who advocated a society of free agricultural and industrial associations, voluntary, collective labor within the framework of

society, but without the notion of the state (ecclesiastic, bureaucratic, military and economic institutions); and Kropotkin -- who also advocated a system of voluntary associations of working people, and who first expressed the notion of the distribution of goods according to need rather than work done. Bakunists operated through secret revolutionary "free associations" made up of "outstanding individuals" which were to direct popular revolts of the peasantry and workers. A chief weapon was the mass or general strike. Although the Bakunists had been allies against the Proudhonists, later they were forcibly expelled from the First Internationale.

Anarchism remained a stronger current in Russia. The repressive conditions of Tsarist Russia, which forbade political organization, strengthened its appeal there for its basis was the loosely-connected network of small, conspiratorial circles. Anarchism manifested itself in *Narodism*, such as Land and Freedom (*Zemla i Volya*), a populist movement which envisioned the peasantry as the revolutionary force which could bypass capitalism and create a new system based on the old peasant commune. Disillusion with the peasantry spawned such terrorist-assassination offshoots as People's Will (*Narodnaya Volya*). This tragic episode soon played itself out, and terrorist-anarchist circles became discredited among the masses. Populist anarchism resurged, however, with the Social Revolutionaries, a corrupted refinement of the earlier *Narodnik* movement.²⁴ The SRs alternated between bourgeois reformism and

acts of individual terror. The right-wing SRs deteriorated into outright counter-revolution, while the left-wing SRs entered into a short-lived alliance with the Bolsheviks.

As a more definite proletarian basis to left-anarchism became established, a central flaw became clarified. Thus, Lenin's explicit definition:

Anarchism denies the need for a state and state power in the period of transition from the rule of the bourgeoisie to the rule of the proletariat (*CW*, 1964, Vol. 24, "Letters on Tactics," p. 49).²⁵

Within the Social Democratic (communist) movement, especially around 1902-03, anarchistic tendencies emerged as "left-wing communism."²⁶ This remained a constant threat to party unity, even after the Revolution. It was chiefly manifested in "anarcho-syndicalism," or trade unionism, which in its emphasis on economic struggle attempted to substitute the "masses" for party leadership. But it also manifested itself in various "utopian" political theories on how to get from capitalism to communism. A defining characteristic of anarcho-communism is its inability to reconcile the economic with the political.

What communism and left-wing anarchism share, of course, is the ultimate goal of a stateless condition and an adamant hostility to capitalism. But there is the quality of the "leap" to anarchism: a leap over necessary stages to achieve its ultimate goal -- a free and equal (stateless) society, an association of voluntary workers. Because it is "anti-state," anarchism

is essentially anti-organizational (more specifically, anti-centralized). Therefore, in essence, anarchism denies the necessity for a militant vanguard party whose aim, of course, is to create the proletarian state. In other words, it skips over the necessary stage of the creation of socialism under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Anarchism proposes to put workers in control of their fate by a kind of a magic "leap." It holds an idealized concept of the "proletariat" (in older anarchism, the "people"), and betrays a confusion between "class" and "party."

Despite the "proletarian" aims of anarcho-communism, it inevitably betrays, by its methods, its essential petty-bourgeois, "utopian" origins. When one makes this false theoretical "leap" and inevitably fails, one can easily fall back into reformism, parliamentarism, or unionization, perhaps colored by "Menshevik"-style "pseudo-revolutionary" rhetoric, or social democracy, on the one hand. Or if one follows up on this disillusion with desperate action ("driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism"),²⁷ into imprisonment, exile, nihilism or death, on the other hand. So that "left-wing" positions can fall back into "right-wing" (or pro-capitalist) positions.

Either way anarchism goes, the possibility of achieving the "utopia" or "communism" rests somewhat magically on the masses. The masses are conceived of as possessing innate "goodness," "reason" or "desire for socialism or communism" -- or within the Marxist movement, innate propensities to dialectical thinking, even dialectical materialist

thinking! As if people do not need to be taught to develop these qualities. This lends, therefore, a decided "moralistic" basis to anarchism. Whether the masses struggle along to better their lot with "guidance" or "education" from the more enlightened, or are counted on to rise up spontaneously by the examples of small bands of activists, anarchism believes that the masses will magically "find the way" to the final goal.

It is in these areas of the anarchistic "leap" that Luxemburg and Trotsky share definite similarities.

Lenin's basis for characterizing Luxemburg as "semi-anarchist" rested on these specifics: He maintained that Luxemburg "erred" in her appraisal of Menshevism in 1903 at the time of the Bolshevik/Menshevik split and in her advocacy of unity between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1914; over the national question (in relation to Polish independence); and in her evaluation of the Revolutionary Party and Bolshevik Revolution in her prison writings of 1918. He thought that she too often lapsed into a reliance on the revolutionary "spontaneity" of the masses, and he criticized her theory of the party as "organization as process." This amounts to what he saw as her wrong conception of the relationship of the vanguard party to the masses.

I wish to compare the views of Luxemburg and Trotsky on the following issues: the nature of the revolutionary party and the problem of "democracy" (Part I), nationalism vs. internationalism (Part II), and their characterization

of the Bolshevik Revolution (Part II).

The Revolutionary Party

Luxemburg's position was that the revolutionary party must be a mass-based party, and must have the support of the majority of the workers before a proletarian revolution can take place. The party must express the will of the masses. Speaking from her experience in the huge and long-established German Social Democratic Party, she viewed the Bolsheviks, and continued to view them, as ultra-radical (Jacobean), ultra-centralist and dictatorial. Her criticisms of Lenin and the Bolsheviks were precisely the same as Trotsky's -- before he joined the Party. But neither's views on the nature of the party essentially changed.

To understand the basis of their views, one must go all the way back to the Bolshevik/Menshevik split in 1903.

In "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" (1904), Lenin gave a detailed account of the split at the Party Congress of 1903 which was held to declare a strong, tightly organized party with a Marxist program. In doing so, he unmistakably delineated Trotsky's position. Lenin regarded the Menshevik faction as both opportunist and anarchistic ("aristocratic anarchists" no less) on the basis on their conception of the party which basically proposed that one could call oneself a "member" of the party without "joining" the party!²⁸ In other words, the Mensheviks proposed a loose, decentralized organization which Lenin considered an

extension of the old anarchistic "party circles," over which the Party had no real control. The chief purpose of this kind of party was agitational and it would embrace anyone who called him/herself a "socialist", with leeway for individualistic excursions. This Lenin regarded as a definite "confusion of class and party" (CW, 1974, Vol. 7, p. 265).

Trotsky's position at the Congress was as a "centrist". He was for continued unity of both sides, at times spoke both for and against both sides. Where Lenin quoted Trotsky's support of the Mensheviks, he called his remarks "opportunist" and full of "high-sounding phrases."

As a junior editor, Trotsky had been a major contributor to Lenin's paper *Iskra*, which was now undergoing a struggle for control of the editorial board. He had been proposed as a candidate for the *Iskra* Central Committee by both factions in this struggle (ultimately, the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks). In one devastating passage, Lenin implied that Trotsky's "centrism" betrayed his real (careerist) concern about his own position on *Iskra*, as he descended into bathos, the realm of "pity and injured feelings, and pure "philistinism" in his plea for unity (p. 312).

Now Lenin admitted that during the Congress it was very difficult to see the difference between the factions clearly, but maintained that soon afterwards, when the Mensheviks gained control of *Iskra*, they immediately disclosed their reformist views. Repeated attempts to cooperate with the Mensheviks after 1905 ultimately proved futile, yet

Trotsky continued to hold on to his centrist position and did not join the Bolsheviks until July, 1917.

This also occasioned the first time Luxemburg ran head to head with Lenin. While not a Congress delegate, her position on the split was also very much "centrist". Like Trotsky, she upheld the Bolshevik theory of the hegemony of the proletariat and the necessity for some kind of centralized organization, but she too regarded the Bolshevik/Menshevik struggle merely as a peculiar "Asian" struggle over "organizational form." She seemed to regard the whole matter as a tempest in a Russian samovar.

At the London Congress of 1907 (where the two factions were attempting unity), Trotsky stated:

I can testify with pleasure that the point of view that Luxemburg developed in the name of the Polish delegation is very close to mine which I have defended and continue to defend. If between us, there is a difference, it's a difference of shade, and not of political direction. Our thought moves in one and the same materialistic analysis (Dun., "Minutes of the Fifth Congress, p. 10).

Both Trotsky and Luxemburg supported Lenin on the question of the relationship of the revolutionary party to the bourgeois parties. But once again, Trotsky assumed a "centrist" position, supporting the Menshevik opposition to Lenin's proposal that they put on the agenda the "character of the present moment of the revolution."

Trotsky considered this a mere

abstract theoretical resolution:

What I want to say is that the Congress, from beginning to end should be political, that it has to be a meeting of the representatives of revolutionary parties and not a discussion club...I need political directives and not philosophic discussions about the character of the present moment of our revolution...Give me a formula for action! (Dun. "Minutes," p. 8).

In short, Trotsky was evading the burning question of whether the revolution was ultimately to be reformist or revolutionary, bourgeois or socialist, Menshevik or Bolshevik -- despite his theory of the Permanent Revolution concocted in 1905!

Luxemburg too straddled the fence by taking issue with the Bolsheviks as well as with the Mensheviks. Again, like Trotsky, she failed to see the class basis behind the two groups and mainly regarded their differences as tactical:

True genuine Marxism is very far from a one-sided over-estimation of parliamentarianism as well as from a mechanistic view of revolution and over-estimation of the so-called armed uprising. On this point my Polish comrades and I differ from the views of the Bolshevik comrades (Dun, p. 11).

It is not surprising that she was applauded by the Mensheviks, although she tried to correct the impression she had given. Similarly, the Mensheviks continued to regard Trotsky as one of their own, despite his continual expressions of surprise and dismay!

Essentially, what is common in Luxemburg and Trotsky's views at this time is that they both conceived of a mass party which could accommodate views other than scientific socialism.

Luxemburg replied to Lenin's "One Step Forward" with her article "Organizational Questions in Russian Social Democracy" (1904) (also called "Marxism or Leninism"). In it her conception of the "party" was clearly set forth. She regarded the Bolshevik proposal as "ultra-centralism," as "conspiratorial centralism," as "Blanquism."²⁹ She saw Lenin's conception as "sterile and domineering:" it exploited the masses as mere tools, robots, a continuation of their role under capitalism; it demanded "blind obedience" and "mechanical subordination." She feared that the central committee would become "the only active element of the party, and all the other organizations simply... the tools which implement its decisions" (*SW*, p. 287). In short, the Party would separate itself from the masses; it would merely "dictate" to the proletariat:

The ultra-centralism advocated by Lenin seems to us...to be sustained not by a positive creative spirit but by a sterile night-watchman spirit. The drift of his thought is mainly directed at the control of party activity rather than its fructification, at its constriction rather than its development, and at the harassment rather than the unity of the movement (Frolich, p. 86).

As she saw it, the character of

social-democratic centralism should be essentially different from that of "Blanquist centralism," not the authoritative concentration of the will of the enlightened and militant vanguard of the working class as against its separate groups and individuals.

How similar this is to Trotsky's famous evaluation in "Our Political Tasks" (also in 1904):

Lenin's methods lead to this: the party organization [the caucus] at first substitutes itself for the party as a whole; then the CC substitutes itself for the organization; and finally a single 'dictator' substitutes himself for the CC (*RLS*, pp. 23-24).³⁰

So what then were Luxemburg's views of the nature of the Social Democratic Party? She conceived of SD as the first political movement in history to reckon on the "organization and independent action of the masses" (*SW*, p. 188). "Social Democratic centralism has most of all a coordinating, synthetic character, and not a regulative and exclusive one" (p. 295). Instead she proposed a "self-centralism" of the leading stratum of the proletariat: "it is the rule of the majority within its own party organization" (p. 290).

She had already almost gotten the "cart before the horse," but actually went even further:

Social Democracy is the representative of the class interests of the proletariat but that it is at the same time the representative of all the progressive interests of society and of all oppressed victims

of bourgeois society...Social Democracy, as a political party, gradually becomes the haven of the different dissatisfied elements of society [including "declassé and petty-bourgeois recruits"!], becoming a party of the people opposed to a tiny minority of capitalist rulers (p. 303).

Luxemburg believed the Russians had fallen into their "Blanquist error" because of the special conditions under autocratic Tsarism and because of the immaturity of the Russian proletariat, the fact that it had not gained class consciousness under advanced capitalism. In fact, she accused Lenin of trying to conjure up a proletariat "out of thin air."

The failure to see the extent of capitalism in Russia was definitely an error on her part. And because of this error, her conclusion was then that the Russian Party could not serve as a "model" for European parties where the proletariat was much more "advanced." Her reasoning was that Russia had yet to have its bourgeois revolution, which would establish the conditions of capitalism and democratic freedom under which the proletariat could develop its consciousness. She seemed not to envision the key role the proletariat, led by the SD party, would play in the bourgeois revolution, nor the consciousness-raising which would take place through this process. Thus, she posed a false alternative:

It is a mistake to believe that it is possible to substitute provisionally the "transferred absolute power" of the central committee of the party for the yet

unrealizable majority rule of the enlightened working class within its own organization; and it is a mistake to believe the lack of open control by the working masses over the action and conduct of the party organs could be replaced by the opposite: control by the central committee over the activity of the revolutionary working class (p. 292).

Moreover, she attempted to refute Lenin's contention that centralism was a weapon against opportunism or petty-bourgeois influence, and ridiculed the statutes of the constitution which set the standards for admission to the party. Instead, she attributed "opportunism" to the immaturity of the proletarian movement in Russia, and so concluded that:

The preferred organizational tendency of opportunist intellectuals in conditions where the revolutionary part of the working masses in still disorganized and movement itself is groping...is precisely rigid, despotic centralism (p. 301).

Still, Luxemburg basically believed that all organizational leadership inevitably tended to be conservative, and that (as she conceived it) an all-powerful central committee was a danger to the development of the struggle.³¹ She insisted that "every new form of struggle had not been 'invented' by leaders, but had arisen from the creative initiative of the masses" -- "in the beginning was 'the act'" (p. 293):

All fruitful tactical developments during the last

decade have not been 'invented' by several leaders of the movement, and even less by any directional organizations. In each case, they were the spontaneous product of the movement in action (p. 292).

The nimble acrobat [Lenin] fails to see that the true subject to whom this role of director falls is the collective ego of the working class, which insists on its right to make its own mistakes and to learn the historical dialectic by itself...errors made by a really revolutionary labor movement are historically infinitely more fruitful and more valuable than the infallibility of the best of all possible "central committees (SPW, p. 306).

In brief, it was "the process of the struggle, which creates the organization" (p. 289). Taken to its extreme logical (or illogical) conclusions, this implied that Social Democracy would never reach a point where it concretized its organization into a real "party!"

Luxemburg also failed to see at this time that the Revolution in Russia could ever pass beyond the stage of bourgeois revolution. Because she did not visualize a socialist revolution, she also overlooked the importance of the soviets established during the 1905 revolution, as the structure of the socialist government.

In Lenin's reply to her article, he rather gently pointed out that she highly exaggerated the degree of centralization intended, and that she had completely overlooked the important role of the Party Congresses and the actual facts of the party struggle. Later,

however, he labeled Luxemburg's views as "not-to-be-taken-seriously nonsense of organization and tactics as process" (RLS, p. 22). What her views amounted to was a confusion between the masses and the vanguard party, and an anarchistic overestimation of the inborn "socialism" of the masses, their ability to attain social-democratic theory on their own. It also amounted to a concept of the party as educator and propagandist, but not as the organizer of the class struggle and not as an organization of militant combat.

That Luxemburg's views on the Party did not essentially change can be verified by all her later writings: "The Russian Revolution" (1917), "What Does the Spartacus League Want?" (1918), and "Our Program and the Political Situation," the founding thesis of the KPD (virtually identical) (1918-19).

In "The Russian Revolution," she reiterated her previous conception of the Russian Party and criticized its lack of democracy. She believed there should be an unlimited amount of freedom to criticize all the higher organs of the party, and an unlimited freedom of the masses to experiment. She basically reiterated her pre-revolutionary position (Part II).

In contrast, she set forth the program of the new German Communist movement:

The Spartacus League will never take over governmental power except in response to the clear, unambiguous will of the great majority of the proletarian mass of all of Germany, never except by the proletariat's

conscious affirmation of the views, aims, and methods of struggle of the Spartacus League (SPW, p. 376).

How then will socialism be achieved? She had by then recognized the importance of the soviets, which indeed were being established in Germany, although under control of the revisionist SDs. So, along with the strike movement, the position of the Spartacists must be fought for in the soviets, and then through their growth: "we shall progressively occupy all the positions of the capitalist state and defend them tooth and nail" (SPW, p. 405-06). The concept of the overthrow of the government by the Communist Party was completely left out. This came close to the "growing over into power" thesis of the Mensheviks in the Bolshevik Revolution and, in fact, in this expression, the revolutionary party itself almost disappeared.

Luxemburg had also been against the concept of the illegal party or the party that was both legal and illegal at the same time. One can see some of this disregard for illegality also in Trotsky, for example, in the fact that he helped to broadcast preparations for the Bolshevik insurrection while Lenin was desperately trying to keep things secret. One can't help feeling that if the concept of illegality, i.e., going underground, had been put into practice by the Spartacists, the wholesale massacre of its members, including Luxemburg and Leibknecht, might have been avoided.

This had a lot to do with Luxemburg's over-valuation of the mass basis of the party. The

Spartakusbund was originally fashioned as a "left opposition" fraction of the SD Party. From all accounts, she was reluctant to break with the SD Party, despite her exposure of the revisionism of its leaders. When Kautsky's Independent Social Democratic Party (ISDPG) split off, the *Spartakusbund* attempted unity. Only when this was impossible was the KPD (Communist Party of Germany) formed in Dec. 1918-Jan. 1919, against Luxemburg's judgment. There is also evidence that she was more or less swept away by the events of the German Revolution into a more revolutionary stance than she had thought wise. And what could possibly demonstrate this "anarchistic leap" better than Karl Leibknecht's proclamation of the "Socialist Republic" two hours after the German Republic had been declared -- a bourgeois republic governed by a reactionary, pseudo-social democratic party?

One might sum up Luxemburg by saying that her overemphasis on the creative masses, as against the party, brought her dangerously close to substituting the proletariat for the party. At the same time, and somewhat contradictory, it was important to her to stay within party norms and accept party decisions, but try to turn the party leftwards.

The opposite tendency can be seen in Trotsky, who rarely accepted the decisions of the Party, but continually went off in his own individualistic direction, i.e., the Bolshevik revolution, Brest-Litovsk, certain irresponsible actions as Red Army commander in the Civil War, his factionalism

around the trade union dispute, etc.³² Trotsky had considerable disdain for party norms and constantly substituted his own (ultra-left) judgments, in addition to appealing to non-party sources for support for his positions.

These two variations on anti-party "anarchism" are apparent in their concepts of the trade unions.

Luxemburg's "The Mass Strike, the Party, and the Trade Unions" (1906) and Trotsky's "The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions" (1920-21)

The problems Luxemburg had with the relation of the party to the masses are very apparent in her theory of the mass strike. Her essay is a defense of the mass or general strike (based on her observations of the Russian Revolution of 1905) against the conservativeness of both the SD party and the trade union bureaucrats, who considered the mass strike viable only as a (peaceful) defensive measure to protect workers' rights, an adjunct of parliamentarianism, and who were horrified at anything more militant. It is at the same time a criticism of the anarchist concept of the general strike as "the lever which will be used to introduce the social revolution" (p. 223). Her critique was based on Engels' "The Bakuninists at Work" (1873), in which he portrayed the anarchist conception of the general strike as "starving out the possessing classes, who strike back at the workers, who thereby would be entitled to make an armed uprising," in Luxemburg's colorful phrase, "a first blow...in the naked

pitchfork sense" (pp. 223-25).

Highly impressed by the efficacy of the general strike in Russia in 1905 and, to her surprise, the degree of consciousness and organization of the workers, Luxemburg now saw the mass strike in a new way and felt Russia had something to teach Germany:

The mass strike, as shown to us in the Russian Revolution, is not a cleverly concocted method for the purpose of heightening the effect of the proletarian struggle, but the way in which the proletarian masses move, the form taken on by the proletarian struggle in the actual revolution (Frolich, p. 135).

After surveying strike history in Russia, she concluded that the mass (or "fighting") strike was a new phenomenon, the "true bearer of proletarian action." She had four major points. (1) The mass strike is "the totality-concept of a whole period of the class struggle lasting for years, perhaps decades" (p. 237). It is "a historical phenomenon which at a certain moment follows with historical necessity from the social relations" (p. 231). (2) "The economic and the political moments cannot be separated from each other" (p. 240). (3) "The mass strike is inseparable from the revolution" (p. 242). And (4) The mass strike is spontaneous, the creation of the masses of the revolutionary form.

Luxemburg's theory was directed at the idea that the Party could "call" a mass strike, thereby exercising "dictatorship" over the masses. She termed this a form of "anarchism" and accused the German SDs of this trait.

However, her theory got her into difficulties in several areas. First, she drew a general theory from the specific events of the 1905 Revolution and, in doing so, she confused the bourgeois and the socialist revolutionary situations. Second, also drawing conclusions from Russia's history, she separated the economic from the political strike, seeing them as two distinct phenomenon. Most important, she failed to see the relation of the Party to the striking masses and, in effect, diminished the role of the Party in the revolutionary process.

She had observed from the events of 1905 that the "political" demonstration (Bloody Sunday) had preceded the "economic" demonstrations, and it is obvious that she felt that was not quite right as a general theory of revolution! She then gave a very convoluted analysis in which she tried to demonstrate that the economic and political struggles were different, but reciprocal, phases of the long revolutionary process:

The economic struggle is that which leads the political struggle from one nodal point to another; the political struggle is that which periodically fertilizes the soil for the economic struggle (p. 241).

Her conclusion was that the revolutionary situation brings these two struggles magically together in the mass strike. But in refuting the anarchists, she mechanically turned their formula on its head: "It is not the mass strike which produces the revolution, but the revolution which produces the mass strike" (p. 135).

In her confusion of the bourgeois revolution (the revolution against the tsar) with the socialist revolution (the revolution against the bourgeois), she generalized that "the mass strike is inseparable from the revolution. The history of the Russian mass strike is the history of the Russian evolution" (p. 242). The impression inevitably given is that the mass strike is the form of the revolution, but what kind of revolution? Yes, the spontaneous mass strike would prove to be very effective in toppling the tsar in the 1917 bourgeois stage of the revolution, but would it have sufficed as the means to appropriate the capitalists in the proletarian stage of the revolution?

If the mass strike is the revolution, who has made the revolution? The trade unionist strikers.

The element of spontaneity plays a great role in all the Russian mass strikes, without exception, either as driving force or restraining influence...In short, the element of spontaneity plays such a prominent role in the mass strikes in Russia not because the Russian proletariat is 'unschooled' but because revolutions allow no one to play schoolmaster to them (p. 245).

In separating the economic from the political struggle, Luxemburg assigned the role of conducting economic struggles to the trade unions and political struggles to the Party. The Revolution will magically bring it all together:

In a revolutionary mass action, the political and economic struggles are one, and the artificial barriers between the unions and social democracy which make them two separate, totally independent forms of the labour movement will simply be washed away (p. 240).

When Luxemburg applied her theory to Germany, her errors became even more apparent, for "the goal of a period of mass strikes in Germany can only be the dictatorship of the proletariat because Germany has already had its bourgeois period" (p. 250). [This actually wasn't quite true since the Germans had yet to establish a republic.] Yet previously she had assigned the role of "antiabsolutist" to the political struggle and "anti-capitalist" to the economic struggle (p. 250). So how was she able to make this "leap" to the socialist revolution.

I feel part of Luxemburg's confusion lay in the fact that the German trade unions had been mainly established by the SD Party, so that she regarded the "Party and trade union [as] in fact *one*; both are nothing but different forms of the *Social Democratic* struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat" (p. 268). She considered the German trade unions as "red unions," although she admitted that it was a rare worker who had the energy to have dual membership in the union and the party. That is why their differences would be "washed away" in the revolutionary situation.

So, much as the reactionary trade union bureaucrats were her implacable foes, this led her to deprecate the class struggle

between trade union members and leadership. It also led her to assign to the masses a social-democratic consciousness simply because the unions were semi-organs of the SD Party. When the Revolution occurred, the members would simply supersede the masters. And moreover, her overestimation of the mass strike as the revolutionary weapon led her to equate the unions with the Party, try as she did to insist that they did not have "equal authority." According to Luxemburg, here is how the class-consciousness of the workers evolves:

"The class consciousness which is implanted in the enlightened German worker by Social Democracy is a *theoretical, latent one*," which cannot express itself during the period of parliamentary actions and isolated economic struggle. "In the revolution, where the masses themselves appear on the political stage, class consciousness becomes *practical, active*" (p. 249).

So what is the role of the Party? Previous to the Revolution, the Party "implants" consciousness in the workers. The Party only takes over "political leadership" in the actual period of Revolution: Then, "The Social Democracy never fall[s] below the level of the actual relation of forces but rather rise[s] above it -- that is the most important tasks of the 'leadership' in the period of the mass strike" (p. 247). But then this "political leadership" really changes into "technical leadership". The Party

[gives] the struggle a watchword, a direction; to arrange the tactics of the political struggle in such a way that at every moment of the

struggle the totality of the available, unleashed and active power of the proletariat can be applied and expressed in the militant attitude of the party, and that social-democratic tactics, in line with their resoluteness and incisiveness, never sink below the level of the actual relation of forces, but rather forge ahead of them – this is the most important task of the 'leadership' in the period of mass strikes (p. 137).

Against German SD's theory that masses had to be thoroughly organized before the SDs "called" a mass strike, she went overboard the other way:

The leadership [must be] in complete agreement with the masses: it march[es] as the head and [is] in full agreement with the movement precisely because it [feels] close to the pulse-beat of the masses, adapt[s] itself to them, and [is] nothing but their mouthpiece, the conscious expression of their feelings and striving (p. 142).

The task of Social Democracy and its leaders is not to be dragged along by events, but to be consciously ahead of them, to have an overall view of the trend of events, to shorten the period of development by conscious action, and to accelerate its progress (p. 143).

And finally:

A truly great leader adjusts his tactic not in accordance with the momentary mood of the masses, but in accordance with the iron laws of historical development (p. 144).

Luxemburg simply could not resolve the dilemma between the Party as "dictatorial" or the Party as "tailist." Her revolutionary party in "Mass Strike" is very flabby. It assumes different functions at different points in the historically necessitated revolutionary process - at times, educator, propagandist, technical advisor, tactician, guide, cheerleader. But the one thing the revolutionary party is not for Luxemburg is the organizer of the class struggle, an essential defining characteristic which is not dependent on specific points in the revolutionary process.

So in the end, despite her argument against the Bakuninist theory of the general strike, she ended in a semi-anarchistic position herself:

The masses will be the active chorus and the leaders only the "speaking parts," the interpreters of the will of the masses (p. 270).

Trotsky himself put his finger on an obvious weakness of Luxemburg's argument:

The revolutionary general strike...became for Rosa Luxemburg synonymous with the proletarian revolution. However...the general strike does not settle the problem of power; it only poses it. To seize power, it is necessary while relying on the general strike to organize an insurrection. The whole of Rosa Luxemburg's evolution...was going in that direction. But when she was snatched from the struggle, she

had not yet spoken her last word.... ("Problems of Civil War," 1924 in *RLS*, p. 21).

The real point, however, which Trotsky omitted, was that it is the Party which organizes the insurrection. The previous article has discussed how Trotsky gave the impression that it was (he and) the Petrograd soviet which really "organized" the Bolshevik revolution, and not Lenin and the waffling CC.

So, the question is: did Trotsky really alter his view of the nature of the Party after he joined the Bolsheviks? I believe the answer is "no." This can be seen in the controversy over the role and function of the trade unions which caused a major crisis in the Party in 1920, as the Bolsheviks were making a transition from the Civil War economy to NEP. Ultimately there were nine different groupings which got involved in this, each with a slightly different perspective. It ended with the 10th Congress banning factions in the Party.

The controversy seemingly centered around the key question: who was to run the economy, the trade unions or the state (under the control of the Party). But it was not really an economic or planning problem; it was a question of the authority and principles of the Marxist proletarian Party against a petty-bourgeois anarchist-syndicalist revisionism which would take political power out of the hands of the Party. Lenin said this deviation was due to: 1.) the influx into the Party of former Mensheviks, and also of workers and peasants who have not fully

assimilated the communist world outlook, and 2.) the influence on the Party of the petty-bourgeois element...which inevitably engenders vacillation towards anarchism" (CW, 1973, Vol. 32, "Preliminary Draft Resolution," p. 245).

The "most theoretically complete and clearly defined expression of this anarchist-syndicalism deviation" was the Workers' Opposition whose platform read: "The organisation of the management of the national economy is the function of an All-Russia Congress of Producers organised in industrial unions which shall elect a central body to run the whole of the national economy of the Republic" (p. 245). Lenin regarded this as a "complete break with Marxism and communism...which can only lead to the triumph of the bourgeois counter-revolution" (pp. 246-247). So, this was a very serious matter.

Now where did Trotsky stand on this matter? First, he sided with the Leninists and spoke against the WO. Then, in his typical fashion, he concocted a "centrist" position which seemingly stood between the WO and the Leninists. Specifically, Trotsky proposed that only a certain percentage of the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions and a certain percentage of the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council (the state economic planning agency) should serve on each other's bodies -- with the twist that Trotsky (and a few others) would appoint ("from above") new trade union functionaries to replace the old "corrupt" ones!

As Lenin painstakingly

demonstrated (about half of one volume of his works is devoted to battling this deviation!), Trotsky's position was merely a long-winded, confusedly-worded and theoretically-muddled version of the WO position. It was "un-Marxist," "reactionary," "bureaucratic," and Lenin used exactly the same arguments to refute Trotsky as he did to refute the WO.

I won't even attempt to go into all the byzantine twists and turns of Trotsky's proposals; even Lenin got a headache plowing through them and highly resented the fact that it took up weeks and months of precious time to sort them out when the priority was to get the economy up and going! Basically, Trotsky proposed a false "crisis in the trade unions," based on the false premise of the workers crying out for more "industrial" or "worker democracy," in order to turn over the management of industry to the trade unions -- or rather, to the trade union bureaucrats.

Lenin answered that "industrial democracy" was a meaningless concept, since if there continued to be no economy, there would be no kind of "democracy" anywhere and, moreover, to establish socialism was to create "democracy." Note that Trotsky's solution for more trade union "democracy" was to appoint better bureaucrats!

Trotsky also proposed a false dichotomy between economics and politics, ignoring the basic Marxian premise that "politics is the most concentrated expression of economics." He disregarded the fact that if economic control were taken away from the state, the state would

forfeit political control.

Trotsky fell into a similar error as Luxemburg. In common parlance, he viewed the unions as "red unions" when, in fact, they were no such thing. In essence he wanted to view them as an arm of the proletarian state. Here is his reasoning: The state is a "workers' state," the unions are workers' organizations; therefore, they should run the economy. This is really a reiteration of his old theoretical "leap" -- "No tsar but a workers' government." More unforgivable than that was his analytical "leap:" "Having lost the old basis of their existence, the class economic struggle, the trade unions no longer have to face the *class* economic struggle but the *non-class* 'economic struggle'" (CW, 19973, Vol. 32, "Once Again," p. 100). There are no classes in the transition to socialism? asked Lenin. The "bureaucratic distortions" in the government are not remnants of the bourgeois "class?"

Here is the essence of Lenin's counter-argument. The state is not really a "workers'" state; that is an abstraction, the way we often in our speeches refer to it because it has a proletarian government which wants to build socialism. It is in reality:

a workers' state, with this peculiarity, firstly, that it is not the working class but the peasant population that predominates in the country, and secondly, that it is a workers' state with bureaucratic distortions (CW, CW, 1973, Vol. 32, "The Party Crisis", p. 48).³³

The unions are mass organizations of the ruling, governmental class,

but they are not state organs. The trade unions do not "coerce," i.e., exercise the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Rather, "The Party absorbs the vanguard of the proletariat, and this vanguard exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat" (CW, 1973, Vol. 32, "On the Trade Unions," p. 20).

Trotsky's had semantically confused the issue of whether "workers' state" meant the government (as the state) or the composition of the society (as the state). Trotsky proceeded as if the SU were ALREADY a workers' state, but in actuality, as Lenin reminded him, the "proletariat constitutes a small minority of this population" (CW, 1973, Vol. 32, "Once Again", p. 75).

Trotsky's second "leap" was to assume that some kind of "socialism" prevailed in the country (perhaps a left-over from the "War Communism"). Lenin answered that this was also a mistake:

The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised through an organisation embracing the whole of that class because in all capitalist countries (and not only over here in one of the most backward) the proletariat is still so divided, so degraded, and so corrupted in parts... ("On the Trade Unions" p. 21).

In any capitalist country, including the SU, one had a "proletariat, a non-proletarian mass of working people, a petty bourgeoisie and a bourgeoisie" (p. 23) -- not a homogenous society of "workers." Not to mention the reality that most of the more advanced industrial proletarians had been killed in the War, and so factory

composition was heavily new peasant recruits!

Lenin regarded Trotsky's proposal as a plan to "dismantle" the state apparatus and transfer it to the trade unions. It represented "a clean break with communism and a transition to syndicalism...in essence, a repetition of Shlyapnikov's (WO) 'unionise the state'...thereby making the Party superfluous" ("Party Crisis," pp. 49-50). "Why have a Party" Lenin asked, "if industrial management is to be appointed...by the trade unions, nine-tenths of whose members are non-Party workers?" (p. 51).

So what should be the role and functions of the trade unions in this period of transition from capitalism to socialism? The trade unions should function as "transmission belts" for the transmission of communism to the non-proletarian masses and for the transmission of worker input into the state. This represents the proper relationship of the Party to the class. In the period of the transition from capitalism to socialism, the trade unions must function both "to protect the workers from their state, and to get them to protect our state" ("On the Trade Unions," p. 25). In addition, the trade unions should perform the most vital function of training and preparing the workers to eventually take over the management of the society.

Trotsky's "left leap" rested on his (willful?) misinterpretation of the Party Programme which stated: "The trade unions should eventually arrive at a *de facto* concentration in their hands of the whole administration of the whole national economy as a single economic entity." Lenin explained that Trotsky ignored the word

eventually, that the programme meant the fully organized masses, and that the economy meant industry plus agriculture ("Party Crisis," p. 50). Furthermore, Lenin stated, until "the petty producers both in industry and agriculture account for less than one-half of the population and the national economy," trade union management of the economy was a pipedream ("Once Again," p. 101). Moreover, the Programme actually read, "making possible the establishment of popular -- that is, workers' and peasants', and not just purely proletarian -- control" (p. 102).

The "anarcho-syndical deviationists"³⁴ also tried to appeal to Engels for authority but, as Lenin pointed out, Engels was speaking of an "association of producers" under a classless communist society (CW, 1973, Vol. 32, "Tenth Congress," p. 250). Instead, the present reality was that the SU at that moment was basically a capitalist country

with a mass of peasants, with workers in a minority and a proletarian vanguard bleeding and in a state of prostration (p. 254).

The "dictatorship of the proletariat" was still in the process of being built, and could not be realized unless the Party maintained a correct relationship with the masses, through the trade unions performing their proper function as a "school of communism," a "school of management" and a "transmission belt" running between the state, the Party and the masses to support the dictatorship.

Lenin was optimistic: "There will be a dictatorship of the proletariat. Then will come the classless society" ("Tenth Congress," p. 251).

With Luxemburg, in the revolutionary situation, the trade union masses pull the trade union leaders behind them and keep the Party in step beside them, confined to its "political" role. With Trotsky, in the post-revolutionary situation, the trade union leaders act in the name of the masses and sidestep the Party, which is likewise confined to its "political" role. Two variations on the anti-party stance. Two variations which somehow ignore the class struggle which must be undergone in order to achieve a correct relationship between the Party and the proletariat.

Some Manifestations of Luxemburg and Trotsky Today

The influence of Luxemburg's and Trotsky's "anti-party" stance has resulted in a c o n f l u e n c e of Menshevism/Anarchism in the present-day world. The organization which most regards Luxemburg as a revolutionary "alternative" is *News and Letters*, which is usually regarded as anarchist/syndicalist, but which regards itself as "Marxist." Under the philosophy of Raya Dunayevskaya, Trotsky's former secretary in exile,³⁵ it was set up in the 1950s as, and still remains, a loose system of "committees of correspondence." The name comes from the first (pre)-organizational form which Marx and Engels

established around 1848, the International Communist Correspondence Committees (and perhaps also from Luxemburg's *Sozialdemokratische Korrespondenz*, the forerunner of the *Spartacus Letters*).

Dunayevskaya's premise was: "The philosophic concept of leadership became correctly, with us, the projection of Marx's Humanism. That is to say, philosophy of revolution rather than the vanguardist party...the committee-form against the "party-to-lead" (Dun., p. xxxi).³⁶ Dunayevskaya believed that she had gone back to the "essential," "humanistic" Marx to find a new basis for revolution, and that everyone from Engels³⁷ on had been a revisionist of Marx! Her contention that Lenin and the Bolsheviks had "dehumanized" Marx through the form and actions of the Bolshevik Party was also Luxemburg's essential view.³⁸ [She also believed Lenin led directly to Stalin.]

Dunayevskaya's position was that the struggles of oppressed groups, Blacks, other minorities, women, gays, etc., in addition to unionized and non-unionized workers, will create new revolutionary forms (Luxemburg's "collective ego"). Somehow, out of their (often unrelated) struggles, a revolution and the creation of socialism will occur. Forty years later, N&L is still waiting for the "spontaneity of the masses" to throw up a new kind of revolutionary organizational form.

While most Trotskyite groups associated with the 4th International rather quickly lost their revolutionary coloring and

deteriorated into blatant reformism, submerging into Communist parties, trade unionism, educational/agitational societies usually run by university intellectuals, or anarcho/syndicalism, there are cases where Trotskyite parties have "degenerated" into outright anarchism. A recent example which comes to mind is that of the Trotskyite Revolutionary Socialist League, which has now become "Love and Rage."

What is less well documented is that branch of Trotskyism which deteriorated into "activist" anarchism -- often mindless action for action's sake, the old "revolution by the deed." This can be traced from the various guerilla groups of Central and South America, including Che Guevara, to the student uprising of 1968 in France, to the various "liberation armies" in the U.S. which professed "communist" goals such as the Weathermen, to the European terrorist groups of the 1970s and 80s, a number of which vowed allegiance to the "4th Internationale" (whatever that really meant by that time).³⁹ One can trace this strain all the way back to Trotsky's position at the 1903 Congress where, impatient at ideological struggle and actual party building, he called for "action!"

In these manifestations, one sees the tragedy of the "anarchistic leap" -- the failure to "magically" rouse the proletariat to revolution. This can also be traced back to Trotsky's vain attempts to get the international proletariat to "rise up." And in this light, can also be seen the tragic fate of the Spartacist uprising, led by a gallant little band of revolutionaries who

hoped that, by their example, the masses would rise up and follow their lead to create the real "socialist" republic.

Part II will cover: Nationalism vs. Internationalism (self-determination of nations, "permanent revolution"); The Bolshevik Revolution (problem of the peasantry); and Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital* (her revision of Marx).

NOTES

1. Our Program and the Political Situation," SPW, p. 407

2. "Minutes of the 5th Congress," Dun., p. 8.

3. Stalin, in "On Some Questions in the History of Bolshevism," accused Luxemburg (along with Parvus) of devising the "utopian and semi-Menshevik scheme" [permanent revolution] which was taken up by Trotsky, who used "this semi-Menshevik hotchpotch ... as a weapon in the struggle against Leninism." He also accused her of "centrism," i.e., of not breaking with Kautsky (Works, Vol. 13, pp. 94-95).

For Trotsky's defense of Luxemburg against Stalin, see "Hands Off Rosa Luxemburg," RLS, pp. 441-450.

4. Trotsky remarked, "My relationships with Rosa were not marked by any personal friendship" (My Life, p. 203). On the other hand, one of Luxemburg's biographers, Bronner, maintained that personally she despised Trotsky (p. 68).

5. After the Social Democratic Party had taken power in the German Revolution, they turned on the Spartacists. Luxemburg and Leibknecht were murdered by pre-fascist thugs but, it is generally agreed, with the tacit consent of the SD government.

6. Lenin believed she had corrected "most of these mistakes" (as set forth in "The Russian Revolution," 1917) when released from prison in 1918. He based his optimism on the testimony of Clara Zetkin who, in turn, had received her information from Jogiches. Zetkin wrote a biography of Luxemburg stating her "revised" views (not available in Eng. trans.). However, there is nothing in writing from Luxemburg to confirm this.

7. In 1923, the German Communist Party (KPD) made the accusation against Luxemburg of "right deviations!"

8. Luxemburg's life-long collaborator Leo Jogiches very definitely came out of anarchist circles, having had ties to the Lithuanian "People's Will" and also to the Jewish Bund. Ettinger maintains Jogiches only joined Plekanov's Marxist party, The Liberation of Labor, out of "opportunism" (Chpts. 4 and 5). There is evidence that Jogiches gave Luxemburg many ideas and that she proceeded to write them up (see her Letters). There was strong enmity between Lenin and Jogiches because of his continued anarchistic views and methods. This was brought to a head by his unethical withholding of funds, which Lenin regarded as blackmail

to force unity between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1910 (Ett., p. 178). Jogiches was head of the Polish SD Party, later the head of *Spartakusbund* and then of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). He was murdered shortly after Luxemburg while investigating her death.

9. CW, Vol. 33, 1966, "Notes of a Publicist," p. 210. In "Contribution to History of Dictatorship Question," Lenin also wrote: "Such outstanding representatives of the revolutionary proletariat and of the unfalsified Marxism as Rosa Luxemburg..." (CW, 1966, Vol. 31, p. 342).

10. CW, 1964, Vol. 24, "Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," p. 78. For Luxemburg's controversies with Bernstein: see "Reform or Revolution" (1899); with Bebel: see controversy over "The Morocco Incident" and Speech at the Jena Congress (1905); with Kautsky: see *Theory and Practice* (1910).

11. Lenin viewed the Spartacus League, the Internationale group, as "representative...of the new, and genuine, proletarian International," SW, 1964, Vol. 24, "Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," pp. 77-78.

12. CW, 1966, Vol. 33, "Notes of a Publicist," p. 210.

13. In this discussion, I am only dealing with "left-wing" anarchism, i.e., that which proposes the overthrow of the capitalist state and the establishment of a collectivist society. There is also "right-wing" anarchism which proposes a "union

of egoists" (e.g., Max Stirner), which is essentially pro-capitalist, pro-private property, only without the "state," e.g., libertarianism. Nor am I considering its variants, such as "christian" anarchism, e.g., Tolstoyan, which oppose the state with a vague platform of love, charity or passivism, and which advocate withdrawal from society to form isolated small "utopias," e.g., hippie communes, but which also do not alter the capitalist foundations of society. A famous anarchist of the "right-wing" type was the Ukrainian Nestor Makhno, whose partisan forces allied with the Bolsheviks against the imperialists and White Guards, but later turned against the Bolsheviks.

14. Fourierism was a bourgeois concept which proposed cooperativist agricultural communities. Proudhonism was a petty-bourgeois trend that reflected the ideology of the ruined petty proprietor -- "property is theft." Proudhon believed that the ethical progress of man (which entailed far-reaching economic reforms) would make government unnecessary. Proudhon is credited with first giving anarchism an ideology: The highest perfection of society is found in the union or order and anarchy, i.e., federalism. Marx attacked Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy*. It is interesting that the very last passages of Trotsky's autobiography, *My Life*, close with a tribute to Rosa Luxemburg and Proudhon.

15. That was by no means the end of anarchism per se in Germany. In 1891, an anarchist group, Junge,

was expelled from the SD Party. Moreover, in 1920, an anarchist wing of Luxemburg's KPD split off and subsequently disintegrated, and the tendency continues.

16. Lenin found much to admire in the original *Narodnik* movement, whose views sprung from the fact that at that time it was not so easy to see the development of capitalist relations in the countryside. Whereas, their successors, culminating in the SRs, blatantly denied the realities of capitalism. [See his early writings on peasant economics in CW, Vol. 1.]

17. Lenin's *State and Revolution* most clearly sets forth the difference between the anarchist concept of arriving at communism from the scientific socialist concept.

18. See CW, 1966, Vol. 31, "'Left Wing' Communism --, An Infantile Disorder."

19. "'Left Wing' Communism," p. 32.

20. The Bolshevik proposal. "A member of the Party is one who accepts its programme and who supports the Party both financially and by personal participation in one of the Party organizations.

The Menshevik proposal: "A member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is one who accepts its programme, supports the Party financially, and renders it regular personal assistance under the direction of one of its organisations."

Lenin described this as

unity merely on an ideological basis which, in effect, left out organization (and therefore an actual Party) entirely: "non-Party organisations belonging to the Party!...the Party --1) organisations of revolutionaries, +2) workers' organisations recognised as Party organisations, +3) workers' organisations not recognised as party organisations (consisting principally of 'independents'), +4) individuals performing various functions -- professors, high-school students, etc., +5) 'every striker'" (CW, 1974, Vol. 7, "One Step Forward," p. 269).

21. "Blanquist adventurism" was synonymous with a form of anarchism. Louis Blanc was the leader of a group of Communards whose manifesto read: "because we want to attain our goal without stopping at intermediate stations, without any compromises, which only postpone the day of victory and prolong the period of slavery" (CW, 1966, Vol. 31, "'Left Wing' Communism," pp. 67-68). Therefore, the term meant "the seizure of power by a minority" doomed to fail.

Engels had defined "Blanquism" as "childish naivete, citing impatience as a theoretically convincing argument" (SPW, p. 205). Lenin defined the tendency as "would-be 'socialist' phraseology, but in reality tending to strengthen the influence of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat," and he regarded the international centrist trend of Kautsky and the right-wing of the Bolshevik Party as present-day representations of "Blanquism" (CW, 1964, Vol. 24, "Blancism," p. 34).

The term was thrown around wildly. Bernstein had accused Marx and Engels of "Blanquism" in the demands of the Communist League in 1848. Both Trotsky and Luxemburg accused Lenin and the Bolsheviks of "Blanquism," whereas Lenin quite rightly accused Trotsky of "Blanquism" in his support for the slogan, "No czar but a workers' government" because it left out the stage of the Democratic Revolution.

In this sense, the Spartacus action of 1918 may also be considered "Blanquist," since it failed to win the workers to its position, yet declared the "Socialist Republic." On the other hand, the Bolshevik insurrection was obviously not "Blanquist" since it had the support of the majority of the workers and peasants.

22. After the Revolution, Trotsky did admit, however: "All subsequent experience demonstrated to me that Lenin was correct in this question as against Rosa Luxemburg and me" (RLS, pp. 23-24).

23. Coming from the bureaucratically-structured German SD Party whose leaders were deteriorating into reformism, it is understandable why she had these views.

24. Trotsky's refusal to accept party decisions under Stalin is to take matters to a different level.

25. Re Lenin's correction from "workers' and peasants' state:"

"This correction makes no difference to my reasoning or conclusions" (CW, 1973, Vol. 32, "The Party Crisis," p. 48).

26. For a summary of Lenin's views, see CW, 1973, Vol. 32, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B): "On the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party."

27. Dunayevskaya said she split with Trotsky over the Stalin-Hitler Pact in 1939 and over his defense of the SU as a "workers' state." It could be said she went from semi-anarchism into anarchism.

28. She based this on the discovery of some of Marx's early writings, *Economic-Philosophic Mss.* (1844), and last writings, *Ethnological Notebooks* (1881-82).

29. She contended that Engels misinterpreted or "mechanized" Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* (1881-82) which laid the basis for Engels' *Origins of the Family*. Her real point was that Engels avoided the fact that there was exploitation of women (when leaders and followers first appeared) during the matriarchal era, and that it did not just begin under the patriarchy. The upshot is that gender precedes class, and the bourgeois feminists have caught that ball and run with it.

30. Dunayevskaya rested her position on the fact that "Marx said that the First International was but a form or organization suited to the time, and that the creativity of the masses would discover another form" (p. 155).

31. For a history of this, see, e.g., Pierre Frank, *The Fourth*

International: The Long March of the Trotskyists. London: Ink Links, 1979, and Claire Sterling, *The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism*. NY: Berkley Books, 1981.

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(continued on p.12)

WORKPLACE AND COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

John Sweeney's Union is Warned Over Kirkland Stew

N. C., LA

In late October, right before Halloween, the AFL/CIO bureaucracy will choose a new president. In this "democracy" the rank and file have no vote at all! Only high officials of member unions vote. The two official candidates are Thomas Donahue, who was Lane Kirkland's official replacement choice, and John Sweeney, president of the SEIU (Service Employees International Union).

Both Donahue and Sweeney were loyal servants of the Kirkland dynasty for over 16 years. Their current differences are mainly over turf and the huge spoils of office. They both are concerned about the huge loss of dues-paying members mainly due to their own class collaborationist policies. They want to be a bit more aggressive about "organizing", not to defend workers' interests against capital but merely to get more dues monies in their coffers. They also want to assure the capitalist bosses that their services of "business unionism" for the purpose of policing the workers in the interests of the ruling class and their state still can be relied on. The success of 20 years of capitals' huge attacks on workers have exposed the utter bankruptcy of the pro-capitalist politics and tactics of the AFL/CIO.

Donahue is the closest thing to being a Kirkland clone. Sweeney, on the other hand,

postures a bit for show about some new militancy and revitalizing the decaying labor federation. In Los Angeles, the *LA Workers' Voice* has carried out some research and talked with a few longtime members of SEIU Local 99, The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) classified employee union with 25,000 dues payers. These workers are the bus drivers, Teaching Assistants (TAs), cafeteria workers, janitors and clerical workers.

So let's see what Sweeney's track record here is like.

Local 99 had a somewhat militant beginning a few decades back, but today it is a thoroughly tamed instrument for the status-quo. Its present misleadership is headed by Walter Backstrom. This Sweeney crony usually just signs off on whatever rotten contract he is handed by the LA School Board and the District Administration -- very few or no questions asked! This has been especially true since 1981 when the Howard Friedman regime was installed with SEIU President Sweeney's blessing. Friedman and his gang were tyrants over the ranks. They vigorously stifled any rank and file initiatives. Friedman ruled by whim and caprice. The regime.

1) Changed union by-laws unconstitutionally without a membership vote.

2) Ruled no resolutions from the floor of membership meetings could be passed.

(3) Held special closed union meetings for officials only

(4) Rigged elections.

In 1983, after a rigged vote, Friedman and Co. first physically threatened and then called the LAPD on rank and filers who had seized fraudulent ballots for evidence. The dissident rank and filers went to the PERB (Public Employee Relations Board) with the evidence. Friedman allied with the School District Administration to set up the whistle blowers and get them written up and fired.

Friedman and Co. were disgraced, and Sweeney replaced them with the Bill Price regime in 1984. Price continued in the Friedman/Sweeney tradition, and more rigged elections followed. In addition, Price forbade the members from any united mass meetings that would unite all the bargaining units in Local 99. This was a big fear of both the union officialdom and the District bosses who worked in cahoots to keep the membership weak and disunited.

As workers began to get upset and angry over rotten contracts and lack of democracy, Sweeney decided to remove Price in 1987 and take direct control, ruling from the SEIU International. By 1988, Local 99 was officially in "trusteeship" run directly by Sweeney. According to the Local 99 rank and file dissident "Local 99 Members for Union Democracy" (MFUD) group,

Sweeney ran the union like it was his personal private property, like a feudal lord. In 1988-90, Sweeney groomed his local whiphand Walter Backstrom.

Typical of the Sweeney-Backstrom tactics was the scabbing that they ordered during the May, 1989 LA teachers' strike. When significant numbers of district school bus drivers honored the teacher picket lines and even joined in a few, Sweeney and Backstrom collaborated with the District Administration, headed by Superintendent Leonard Britton, and ordered the drivers to scab under threat of written disciplinary action and possible termination. These scab-herding actions are one more despicable example of the depths of Sweeney/Kirkland AFL/CIO pro-capitalist business unionism. This is the same Sweeney who today postures as some kind of "born-again" labor militant -- at election time of course.

During the same period, local leaders headed by Backstrom continued the policy of forbidding any joint bargaining unit meeting where union dissidents and others could unite their forces to build a class struggle alternative. In addition, Sweeney as president slapped Local 99 with a \$180,000.00 "debt" owed to the International for alleged arrears in dues payments by Local 99. This gave Sweeney the excuse to maintain the trusteeship and run roughshod over Local 99 members.

The dissidents in the MFUD became more organized and began their own campaign against the corruption and bureaucratism of the Sweeney-Backstrom group. The MFUD were mainly Black, Latino and Asian bus driver members of Local 99. Sweeney-

Backstrom again worked in cahoots with the administration bosses to get MFUD activists written up and fired. A handful of activists were, in fact, fired due to this collusion.

The case of Afro-American driver John Scates is typical. John was fired for organizing in MFUD during their campaign to stop the contracting out of bus driver jobs to unorganized private bus companies like Laidlaw, Mark IV, Cardinal, and others. When District Drivers organized for job actions, a number of militants were blacklisted, including John Scates, in a sweetheart deal between the School Board, the District bosses and the Sweeney-Backstrom leadership of Local 99.

In 1991, the MFUD tried to pull the drivers out of Local 99 and form a new independent union based on the rank and file (1). Of course, the School Board and the Local 99 leaders worked in concert to pull out all the stops and prevent a new militant rebel union from emerging. In this, they had the help of the state PERB who are more concerned about maintaining relative class peace for the rulers and the corporations than they are about just demands for elementary workers' democracy and a bit of social justice for working people. The MFUD even got the required number of driver signatures required for a severance, but the case was unfairly quashed by the state bureaucrats in PERB.

By the end of 1991, MFUD had changed its name to Bus Drivers Association for Unity (BAFU) and continued the fight for a driver severance from Local 99. At around this same time, Sweeney undemocratically appointed Backstrom as the Secretary-Treasurer and leader of Local 99, along with his minions in other

leadership posts.

1991-92 was the period of deep financial crisis in the LA schools and a social crisis in LA which would explode with the LA rebellion/riot of April 29-May 3, 1992. BAFU was also active with other workers and community groups in fighting for more funding for schools and building up a movement to make the rich pay for their capitalist crisis. These drivers and other activists organized a protest march and rally to take place at LA City Hall on Saturday, May 9, 1992.

Since the speakers would include Local 99 and UTLA teacher dissidents, as well as others, Sweeney and Backstrom waged a campaign of slander and calumny against the endorsers and organizers of this actions. They suddenly and deliberately arranged their own separate rally at the School Board offices with the support of the LAUSD bosses, the Board, and the Democratic Party.

The activities of these forces may also shed light on the distinct possibility that they might well have worked in tandem through the Democratic (and Republican) Parties and the cops and national guard to eventually get their desired banning order against the BAFU-supported march and rally on the morning of May 9th. On this day, the LAPD and the national guard dispersed over 200 people who had come to march, as well as arresting over 25 who demanded their constitutional rights. A handful of activists were also dispersed at bayonet point from the City Hall rally site.

The 1991-94 Local 99 contracts, as well as those of teachers in UTLA, were a disaster. Over 200 janitors (and a few hundred others) were laid off --

PROPOSALS FOR A "LABOR PARTY" AND THE STALEY WORKERS' STRUGGLE

Oleg, Chicago

One of the issues coming up among workers and activists involved in the Staley struggle is whether or not to work for the formation of a Labor Party. There is considerable sentiment that workers need a party to oppose the Democrats and Republicans. Mostly people are just thinking of a party that would represent "labor" to run in elections against the Republicans and Democrats.

If such a party were formed, it would undoubtedly get involved in or become an issue in the mass struggles of workers and the poor, such as the Staley struggle, the Caterpillar strike, and the Detroit newspaper strike. Most likely it would also take part in struggles for immigrants' rights and against racial discrimination. Whether this would have a good effect or a bad effect, depends on what kind of party this labor party really is.

Forming a labor party could conceivably help push forward the development of a militant and independent workers movement or it could turn out to be another obstacle for workers to overcome. Thus a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist would not automatically support or oppose forming a labor party. I want to look at a couple of specific ways that discussion about forming a labor party comes up in relation to the Staley workers' struggle. However, I believe the issues are actually much broader than just the Staley struggle.

The Staley Workers Hold On

Despite being locked out for over two years the Staley workers are continuing their struggle. In July 1995 they voted down the horrible concessions contract offered by Tate and Lyle, the British multinational which owns Staley. The workers voted this down in spite of the capitalists' attempt to split their ranks by offering thousands of dollars in severance pay to workers willing to never go back. The fact that the Staley workers are still fighting is a real tribute to the courage and the determination of the rank and file. It shows the special dedication of the activists among the rank and file Staley workers who have kept the struggle going at great personal sacrifice since before the original expiration of the contract in the fall of 1992. Credit is also due to the political activists and union activists from around the Midwest and the country who have made sacrifices to contribute a lot of energy and money to supporting the Staley workers.

The Staley workers have always had the idea that perhaps their determined struggle could help to revitalize the workers' movement in this country. Many of the Staley worker activists feel that the present leadership of the trade unions in this country is sold-out and bankrupt. Since the existing unions do not represent us these worker activists have also concluded that workers need a new political party. This vision that they are fighting for the cause of the whole class, not just the

particular issues with Staley, has also increased their determination.

In the Staley struggle controversies over issues of tactics have existed for a long time and still create tension. (See, for example, the *Chicago Workers' Voice* of July 1994.) Roughly speaking, the issue boils down to whether the Staley workers should risk following tactics that might offend, for example, the mainstream (i.e. conservative) trade union leaders who are or who might give some financial or verbal support to the Staley workers.

Since the big confrontation at the Staley gates on June 24, 1994, where Staley workers and their supporters were pepper gassed, there have been no mass concentrations at the Staley gates to try to stop scabs or scab product. Every few months a mass rally is held in Decatur. The latest one was June 25, 1995, on the second anniversary of the lockout. The main continuing mass tactic has been boycott campaigns. Last summer and fall a successful campaign forced Miller Beer to stop buying scab product from Staley. This year's campaign against Pepsi has yet to force Pepsi to take similar action.

Within the Pepsi boycott campaign there is tension regarding tactics. The international leadership of the UPIU (Paperworkers) instructs activists to limit themselves to legal leafleting with no picket signs and no mass demonstrations. (They say they are worried about being charged with organizing a "secondary boycott".) However, activists such as members of the Chicago solidarity

committee feel that more militant tactics are necessary to step up the pressure on Pepsi and Staley. Thus the civil disobedience action Aug. 27 at Navy Pier in Chicago. This demonstration got the attention of thousands of people directly as they entered Navy Pier, and it also broke through (for one day) the media blackout of news about the Staley struggle.

On the issue of tactics I would like to state my view once again that the workers' struggle can not be limited by the rules set by our enemy: the capitalist class and its state apparatus. It is a weakness of the Staley workers' struggle that the leadership of the local union has never wanted to focus the struggle directly at the factory location. For this whole period the company has been operating with scabs and freely shipping raw materials in and product out. It is also a weakness that big efforts have been made by the local and international leadership to avoid any tactics which might cause a contradiction with the police or local government.

In fairness I should also point out that the Staley workers' struggle has some strengths which have enabled the workers to hold out for so long. One thing has been the relatively high level of rank and file participation in discussion of policies and tactics. I'm not saying that the local is a perfect democracy, but compared even to other locals involved in struggles, the Staley rank and file has more active participation. Another strong point is that the Staley workers accept support from the left and other activists generally. Anyone who wants to do the work is welcome to participate. This is quite different from a number of other struggles

which are tightly controlled by conservative trade union hacks. The typical union misleader presents this as anti-communist opposition to "outside agitators." In fact, it is directed against anything that goes in the direction of building a mass struggle. It's one thing to let Jesse Jackson speak at a rally controlled by the right-wing hacks, it's another thing to help the rank and file organize actions or pass out leaflets.

The Idea of a Labor Party

The day before the mass mobilization of June 25, 1995, the Staley local hosted a conference on building the labor movement. Activists from Decatur and across the Midwest attended. From reports that I have heard, there was a lot of discussion of Labor Party Advocates. Some big names from LPA had held a dinner with speeches that evening. I don't know all the details of what was discussed, but it is clear that a number of workers and trade union activists involved in the Staley struggle like the general idea of Labor Party Advocates.

We also need to pay attention to posturing by Jesse Jackson. He spoke at the June 17th rally of two thousand workers in Chicago. A week later he gave the final speech at the Decatur rally of several thousand workers. Jesse has been showing up at a lot of workers' actions lately, including marches and rallies in Los Angeles and San Francisco. He is not running for president in 1996 and he is certainly not committing himself to join or organize a third party. However, he is trying to create an image of himself as the spokesman for workers who are in struggle. He jabs at both the

Republicans and the Democrats, although a lot more at the Republicans. I don't remember his exact words, but at Decatur, he said something along the lines of, "The wealthy have two lines on the ballot, the workers should have *one*." He drew an enthusiastic response for this line.

It is easy to see why workers involved in struggle would be receptive to rhetoric against the twin capitalist parties of the U.S. The Republicans are openly hostile even to the sold-out hacks who run the major unions. The Democrats sometimes make pretty promises to workers, but then they collaborate with the Republicans in attacking workers further. Of course, many workers are still attracted to certain Democratic Party politicians who posture more strongly as "pro-labor". But a lot of workers are so disgusted with all of the betrayals they have suffered at the hands of the Democrats that they want nothing to do with anyone associated with the Democrats.

Will a Labor Party Bring Class Independence for Workers?

The question is how does this motion towards a "labor party" relate to the goal of building a workers' movement which is genuinely independent of the capitalist political parties, the labor lieutenants of the capitalists, and all their hangers-on?

Let me explain that for me the question is not to support or oppose a labor party but to organize the working class as a class for itself. The Marxist-Leninist Party fought hard to break the working class from the influence of the capitalist parties. Without an independent political movement the workers' struggles

are always hamstrung from within. If the working class is to play a major role on the political stage, let alone form a worker's state or construct a socialist society, then the working class must establish its political independence from the capitalists and the petty-bourgeoisie.

Thus my attitude towards proposals for a "labor party" depends on how such a party would promote or retard the political independence of working people. This in turn depends on how this "labor party" is built.

You might think that forming a "labor party" will help to break workers away from capitalist politics. However, most of the countries of western Europe have so-called "labor" parties or "socialist" parties which large numbers of workers vote for. Those "labor" or "socialist" parties are in fact parties of the capitalists and are obstacles to the real independent movement of the working class in those countries. We have to look at who is building this party, what their politics are, and who do they want to join this party. I think the evidence is clear that neither Jesse Jackson nor Labor Party Advocates will build the kind of labor party that would advance the class independence of the proletariat.

Jesse Just Wants a Government Job

Jesse Jackson wants to control the struggles of the discontented and divert them into channels that are harmless to the system but which advance Jesse Jackson the politician. For decades Jesse Jackson has played the role of firefighter in relation to struggles of the masses. Jesse Jackson's increased activity in

speaking to labor rallies is certainly significant, but I don't take this as evidence that Jesse Jackson has changed his political role. I do think it indicates that there are significant stirrings of discontent among the workers and Jackson is playing to this. From Jesse's point of view he can accomplish two things: secure a base among voters and convince the bourgeoisie that he can keep things under control, that he really is an effective firefighter.

Thus, even if Jesse Jackson were to form a third party, the purpose would be to promote the same liberal-labor politics he has always supported. In fact Jesse would be trying more to pressure the Democrats into certain concessions than to break with them. Thus working to build a Jesse Jackson-type party wouldn't help break workers away from capitalist politics.

Of course, if Jesse did form a third party and if it did become significant, revolutionaries would have to deal with it. This would mean doing political work among workers who would join it to expose the real politics of Jesse Jackson and the Democratic Party while at the same time promoting and organizing mass actions and class struggle.

Keep in mind that no serious attempt to form a labor party will take place without a lot of fights going on. The American bourgeoisie has a big stake in it's 2-party plutocracy and does not take kindly to changes in its electoral system. Thus forming a viable third party -- even one that is totally electoral -- will draw heavy fire. Such a party is not likely to draw mass participation without a large number of workers already in motion.

Finally, the attitude of a "labor party" toward the struggles going on will certainly be a key test of its true class interests and will also be the major factor in its popularity with militant workers. That is why revolutionaries working among the membership of third parties (whether from inside or outside the third party) should concentrate on promoting and organizing support for whatever mass fights are going on.

Labor Party Advocates

As its name implies, Labor Party Advocates (LPA) is much more serious about forming a "labor party" than Jesse. It has spent years discussing this. It was formed by a section of trade union leaders dissatisfied with the Democratic Party. The leader is Tony Mazzocchi, a former head of OCAW (the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union).

The Staley local has formally endorsed LPA, although by no means are all the Staley workers consolidated on this position. A number of them consider LPA to be just the personal preference of the local president, Dave Watts.

From the standpoint of building a truly independent workers' movement, LPA leaves much to be desired. For one thing, considering the years they have been discussing when to form this labor party, it seems as if the leaders of LPA were using their influence with activist workers to hold back the motion to form a labor party for as long as they could. Now however, the LPA has announced that it will hold a convention to found their labor party in June of 1996 in Cleveland.

The activity of the LPA

varies a lot in different cities. In Chicago the LPA has not been very active, so from here it is hard to tell how strong of a national trend it is. LPA reports a lot of activity out in California, getting endorsements from a number of unions and labor leaders.

There are a lot of obvious weaknesses in the way LPA is organized and the politics it puts forward. To join LPA a person has to be a member of a trade union. This leaves out a most of the working class. In particular it leaves out the most oppressed and exploited workers, those who toil under horrible conditions for low pay in non-union jobs. It leaves out the unemployed. In general LPA focuses much too narrowly on the existing trade union structure. LPA's big focus is on trying to get support from the bigger trade union bureaucrats.

So far LPA does not have clearly defined stands on many of the most important issues facing working people. The LPA leaders say that their plan is to hold off taking specific stands until they form their party. But how can they urge working people to support their efforts if they don't take a firm public stand against attacks on immigrants, for example? What about a stand against the attacks on affirmative action? If this "labor party" is not founded on a firm stand against attacks on all sections of the working class, it gives up its right to such a name.

All the evidence is that LPA wants to base itself on the layer of militant-talking trade union officials, and is not interested in mobilizing the whole class. In particular, it seems to be quite disinterested in mobilizing the millions of the most downtrodden lower levels of the working class.

However, to build a workers' movement that has a chance of really changing things in this country, we need a movement of exactly these workers. We need the rebellious black youth in the ghettos, we need the miserably paid and abused immigrant workers, we need the rebellious youth of all nationalities who have little prospect of getting a "good job" in the factories, as well as the unionized workers who are fighting for their survival.

A labor party that wanted to bring together the various currents of opposition to the rule of big money would have to take a firm stand against U.S. imperialism's military adventures around the world. It would have to oppose such wars as the U.S.-led war in the Persian Gulf. I am not aware of any statements by LPA on foreign affairs. I can say for sure that they have not made their presence felt in the movements against imperialist aggression.

A labor party that really represented labor would have to oppose all attempts to set American workers against the workers of other countries. It would have to oppose the "Buy American" campaigns that the U.S. capitalists and their trade union collaborators try to promote among American workers.

A labor party that was genuine would have to take a stand against the current wave of attacks against immigrant workers and stand for full rights for all immigrants. Anyone who works is entitled to protection from the bosses and deserving of solidarity from workers with papers. The only stand which benefits the working class is to demand full and equal rights for all immigrants regardless of their legal status.

A real labor party would have a strong stand against racism. In today's political climate it would have to fight tooth and nail against the racist campaign to wipe out affirmative action.

I think LPA tiptoes around such issues because they don't want to risk offending the trade union officials that they are hoping to get at least verbal support from. More importantly, I think they will not take such stands, even when they have formed their labor party because what they are about is maintaining the present-day trade union structure. The capitalist offensive has hurt the capitalist unions quite a bit but the most of the union hacks aren't putting up much of a fight. While the Democrats stab them in the back or abandon them, some of the union bosses want to establish a political force that can push some of the Reaganism out of the way, just enough for them to continue breathing. As far as advancing the cause of the working class, that would be strictly incidental.

If one actually wants to challenge the rich (even in a purely parliamentary way) then one would certainly want to inspire the millions of working people who are the very bottom of society to take hope and rise up in a political movement. The stands that scare the union hacks will attract the poor. Wishy-washy stands on major political issues are of no use in building a militant fighting movement.

For a serious labor party to be established in the U.S., a large section of the masses will have to be involved in mass struggles: strikes, street demonstrations, etc. With the relative weakness of the mass movement in the U.S., I think that people who form a labor party

are going to form a weak-kneed pressure group constantly looking towards the Democratic Party. I think a labor party formed on a militant and independent basis and oriented towards mobilizing the masses of workers in struggle against capital could very well be a step forward for the workers' struggle. I don't see the prospects for such a party being formed any time in the near future.

Whenever someone forms what they call a labor party, those of us who consider ourselves proletarian revolutionaries will have to evaluate this party. We will have to analyze who is in this party, what the political stand of the party is, who is influenced by this party. It is, of course, not sufficient to decide that the political stands of this party fall short of calling for socialist revolution. We have to decide if there are worthwhile people in such a party that we want to influence. Then we need to decide how to go about this. The general approach developed by the MLP seems appropriate here. We can neither get sucked into just being hardworking foot soldiers for opportunists, nor can we stand on the sidelines and just criticize. It is possible to sympathize with workers' desire to break with the Republicans and Democrats without endorsing efforts to form a pro-capitalist "labor party".

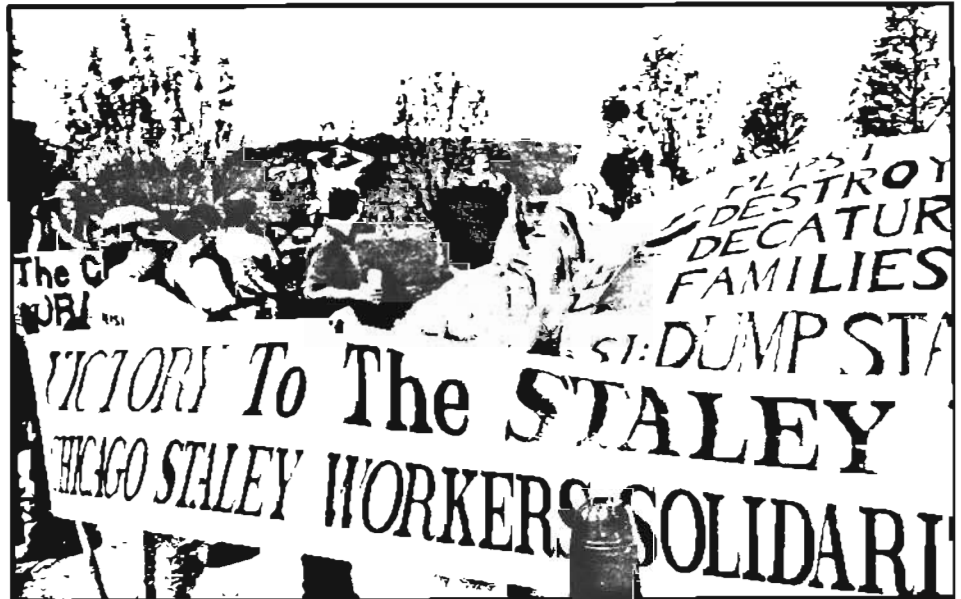
To repeat my main points, I think that —

1. Neither Jesse Jackson nor Labor Party Advocates are going to form the kind of labor party that is really needed to advance the working class struggle in the U.S.

2. A labor party worthy of the working class. It would have to have a broad and militant program against all aspects of oppression and exploitation, against racism, against anti-immigrant attacks, against imperialism and especially against the imperialist war machine, against all the economic and political attacks on working people and in solidarity with workers of all countries.

(Sweeney, cont. from p. 47)

Footnote (1): *LA Workers' Voice* conducted interviews with a handful of members and ex-members of Local MFUD and BAFU, and we also used copies of the leaflets of agitation and information that these two rank and file groups issued between 1989-1993 as back-up for this article. Copies of leaflets are available on request from *LA Workers' Voice*, Box 57483, Los Angeles, CA 90057.



From Baba to Tovarishch: the Bolshevik Revolution and Soviet Women's Struggle for Liberation

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Support the strike!

Newspaper workers fight on!

The following article is from *Detroit Workers' Voice* #7, Sept. 21, 1995, put out by the **Detroit Marxist-Leninist Study Group, PO Box 13261 Detroit, MI 48213-0261.**

The struggle of the newspaper workers presses on. In early September, rank-and-file workers showed what they can do when they dare to stand up to the billionaire newspaper giants. They showed the strength of thousands of workers united for a militant struggle by twice shutting down the Sterling Heights newspaper production plant. They showed how to defend their mass pickets against the strikebreaking police and company goons. The strikers showed what power they have when they go beyond the timid policy of the union officials. The workers are still facing a tough situation, though. Court injunctions to ban strong picket lines have been handed down and police attacks on striking workers mount. Union officials have begun to abandon mass picketing and continue collaborating with the police. The media of the rich tries to undercut support for the strike with hysteria about "violence" when the strikers defend themselves. But when the Detroit Newspaper Agency tries to destroy hundreds of workers' livelihoods, there's no talk about violence, it's just a business decision.

The newspaper strike is an important class battle. The newspaper bosses have the forces of capitalist "law and order" on their side. They have tons of money to spend on crushing the workers. On the other side are the strikers. Their struggle depends on building a powerful mass struggle and the solidarity they receive from their class brothers and sisters. **Now is the time for workers of all occupations to rally to the side of the striking newspaper employees!**

Workers show power of mass struggle

The events of the last couple of weeks have shown the power of mass struggle. On September 2, about 3,000 strikers and other workers shut the Sterling Heights plant down for the entire evening and most of the morning. This crippled distribution of the Sunday newspaper, a big profit-maker for the newspaper bosses. A key point in the struggle that day occurred about 5:00 p.m. when police suddenly made a charge against a couple of hundred picketers who were blockading the main gate of the plant. Rather than give way to the police as the union leadership had been advising, the workers held their ground. The police had riot gear, batons and pepper gas. But the workers fended them off and drove them back, using placard sticks to jab at the police. Two weeks earlier, police had brutally beaten several strikers. But when they got a taste of their own medicine they beat a hasty retreat from the picket line.

A few minutes after the initial confrontation on September 2, over 1,000 workers marched from a union hall up the street to the plant. More reinforcements arrived throughout the night. For their part the police bolstered their ranks with cops from twenty nearby towns as well as state police and Wayne County sheriffs. But with the strikers outnumbering the police by over 10 to 1, and with the strikers fired up, the police didn't dare mess with the picket line that night.

The strikers waged another important battle on the evening of September 4. Around 300 workers made a determined stand at the main gate of the Sterling Heights plant, holding off a 50-strong police contingent for several hours. Police tried to charge the line with batons and pepper gas. Strikers defended their line by swinging the picket sticks at the charging cops and pelting them with rocks and small pieces of metal. The police beat a hasty retreat. Then tear gas was thrown at the strikers. But picketers continued to battle on. When the confrontation finally ended, over 20 picketers had been arrested and several cops injured.

The next big event in the strike struggle occurred on Saturday, September 9. By early evening, about 150 workers had gathered at the main gate. At this time, trade union officials helped police herd workers from the gate to allow scab trucks to enter the plant. But throughout the evening, more and more workers, primarily from local auto plants, began to arrive. By mid-evening, a couple of thousand

workers bolstered the picket lines. Their general sentiment was "the scabs got in, but the paper won't get out!". A large section of workers came prepared for battle, with gas masks for tear gas and wooden poles for the police.

It became clear to the cops and the union leaders alike that nothing they did would stop the strikers and they watched as the strikers shut the plant down tight. Management was forced to use helicopters to get the Sunday edition out of the plant, a costly proposition that cut into their profit-margins.

Going beyond the trade union officials

The struggle would have never taken a militant turn had not the rank-and-file gone beyond the policy of the trade union officials. Since the beginning of the strike, these bureaucrats have been trying to keep the struggle under wraps. True, after a month-and-a-half of token measures, the AFL-CIO decided to mobilize a large number of workers to attend plant actions on September 2 and 9. But even then, the bureaucrats opposed militant defense of plant gate picket lines. A couple of days earlier, union leaders made an agreement with the Sterling Heights police to help them clear the gates. Then, on September 2, they wanted a few designated people to kneel in front of the cops and be peacefully carted off, enabling the police to escort scabs in and out of the plant. Fortunately, the workers did not play along.

On September 13, when a judge's injunction limited picketing at the Sterling Heights plant, the union officials immediately began caving in. The mass mobilizations

that had led to shutting down the Sterling Heights plant was abandoned the next weekend. This was despite the fact that the injunction still allowed unlimited picketing on the sidewalks near the plant. Thousands of workers, who had already shown themselves ready and able to shut down the plant, could have gathered near plant gates and moved in to block them whenever they decided. But given this golden opportunity to defy the injunction, the union misleaders chose to bow to capitalist "law and order" rather than unleash the power of thousands of angry workers.

Workers need independent class organization

The lesson is clear. The more the workers can break out of the limits imposed on them by the union officials, the stronger their struggle will be. Even if occasionally the labor misleaders turn out the workers in large numbers, there is a question of how the workers are oriented. The official AFL-CIO policy is class collaborationist. It is based on the myth that the workers can both protect their livelihoods and make the profit-hungry corporations happy. It holds that a powerful workers' movement can be built without standing up to the capitalist courts, laws and police. It preaches that American democracy is designed for the working class as well as the rich, and if we're good boys and girls some Democratic Party politician, some government agency, some court or some police agency will be won over to our side. And the more this is preached, the more the workers get driven down.

The rank-and-file orientation

should be one of class struggle. This orientation relies on developing militant mass action. It does not expect salvation from the capitalist labor boards, politicians or courts, but prepares the workers to battle them. On this basis, workers can begin to organize themselves for struggle independent of the bureaucrats.

Solidarity!

The struggle of the newspaper workers has gone through many twists and turns. Workers have shown what they can do when their fighting sentiments are unleashed. But just when the struggle was gaining momentum, the union bureaucrats began to dismantle it. Let's all get behind the rank-and-file! Whenever mass pickets are held, join them! The more workers on the picket lines, the harder it is for the police and the union officials to suppress militancy. When you see strikers, express support for their militant plant shut-downs. No matter what the outcome of the strike, workers everywhere owe the striking newspaper workers a debt of gratitude. They have given us a glimpse of the powerful blows workers can deliver to the capitalist slave-drivers when the rank-and-file begins to take matters into their own hands.

* * *

No struggle = nothing NALC contract

The brave struggle of the newspaper workers stands in stark contrast to the miserable no struggle policy of the postal union leaders. During a year of contract negotiations, three postal unions combined to organize one whole day of scattered informational pickets in some cities (and nothing in Detroit).

For postal union officials, there are only two options on the contract: beg management not to wreck our wages, benefits and working conditions too quickly, or, beg a rich bureaucrat in Washington to side with the workers against management. Both options suck. And the later option means workers don't even get to vote on their contract.

The policy of no struggle has produced the nothing contract.

Just look at the recent NALC settlement. While the USPS was swimming in \$1.5 billion in net income last year, letter carriers got a pathetic base wage increase of 0.6% per year for the four year contract. Two additional lump sum payments add another \$300 per year on average, but these payments are not rolled in to base rates on which overtime, retirement funds, etc. are based. And COLA was eliminated for the first year of the contract.

Major issues are not even covered by contracts anymore, but are simply settled in back-room deals behind the workers' backs. The rotten 1992 labor-management agreement on DPS mail, which raises workloads and allows unsafe conditions was done this way. Likewise raising workers' health

insurance costs in the last contract. Now that DPS automation is being implemented, there should have been contract restrictions to help prevent the harmful effects of this system on letter carriers. But from the information released so far, it appears the whole issue has been postponed by the arbitrator.

While management keep sticking the knife in the workers, the NALC leadership keeps preaching that one day, labor-management cooperation will turn the bosses into worker-friendly lambs. but just because the union leaders do nothing does not mean the rank and file cannot organize itself to resist management attacks.



Let's Stand Up for Mass Struggle Again!

Educate, Organize and Fight Back!

1995 marks the 25th anniversary of the Chicano Moratorium. 25 years ago tens of thousands of determined protestors rallied to fight against the dirty US imperialist war on the Vietnamese people as well as the stepped up racist exploitation and oppression here at home. This event showed the power of the organizing of a popular mass movement which was able to win some gains.

Today the mass shootings and aerial bombardments of the Vietnamese people are over. But US capitalism still robs and exploits the working people the world over. It has also stepped up its racist attacks and is scapegoating people of color. World capitalism is in a big crisis today. It must suck more and more profits from the workers and poor in order to compete with its rivals the world over. It needs badly to divide the working class majority. It wants to boost profits fast so it sweats the workers more. The corporations fire workers and speed up the rest. They use state influence to gut out the social services so the profitable ones like health will be 'privatized' and the rich can make more money. They get their Democrats and Republicans to lower their taxes while swamping the working people with more expenses, higher tuitions and fees, etc.

Look at LA County today! 6,000 more workers will soon be booted into the streets. 67% of these workers are oppressed nationalites. 30 health clinics will close. The Democrats and Republicans say there is no money. But this is transparent lie - yet another one backed up by the corporate owned media. The county Board of Supervisors just got done making \$382 million in interest payments to the rich bond holders—all tax free!! They have already said they will pay \$429 million next year as well. Instead of seeing our communities ravaged, thousands of workers fired, health and recreation services cut, we must build a movement and demand that No county social service workers be fired or services cut back or privatized. We must demand stiff tax hikes on the rich and the corporations plus CUTTING OFF INTEREST PAYMENTS TO THE BANKERS, and stopping the attacks on the workers!

On the job and in the colleges affirmative action is under assault. This attack is yet one more way to divide different groups of workers/students. The capitalist economy is also "downsizing" for certain skilled professions and the schools and colleges are geared to the capitalist job market place. That affirmative action in jobs and schooling is considered one of the main 'expendables' by the rich and their political state proves the inherently racist nature of this whole system. Also the campaign against immigrants is closely tied to these scapegoating policies. By again uniting as working people and students across racial barriers and building a powerful mass movement of struggle against the rich ruling class and their political machine, we can force the capitalists' offensive back.

**FIGHT FOR GOOD JOBS, EDUCATION AND HOUSING FOR ALL!
ORGANIZE COMMUNITY MEETINGS TO PLAN HOW TO FIGHT BACK!
STOP CUTS IN HEALTH CARE AND ATTACKS ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION!**

Los Angeles Workers' Voice, Box 57483, Los Angeles, CA 90057 Aug. 17, 1995

"AMERICA MEANS PRISON!"

Malcolm X, 1963

If one were to take the tabloid "news" media (NBC, CBS, ABC, KCAL, et al.) at their word (we hope no one does), one would have to conclude that this country is experiencing an unprecedented explosion of violent street crime. But the facts say otherwise, if we can believe the Department of Justice's own statistics which show the incidence of violent crime to be down! (May/June '94 issue of Extra! p 11) If this is the case, then why all the media hype about crime?

Being the mouthpieces for the rich that they are, the big business media have been on a binge whipping up people's fear and loathing for street crime to a fever pitch while consciously obscuring the corporate crimes and growing inequalities that continue to ravage the working class. A big part of this media fear mongering campaign is their habitually racist portrayal of people of color as either dysfunctional (e.g., welfare recipients, drug addicts, homeless, and school dropouts) or violence-prone criminals who have supposedly just been caught in the act (whatever happened to innocent until proven guilty?).

This despicable manipulation of people's emotions and perceptions, as was the case with Proposition 187 immigrant bashing, represents the continuing efforts by the rich, with the aid of their servants in the media and government, to keep workers divided, fighting among themselves, and blaming each other for all of society's ills. The fact is that this Capitalist economy is in a crisis, has removed its gloves and is now using the bare knuckles approach as it delivers one body blow after another to workers. It realizes that it can no longer maintain even the illusion of providing a decent job and living standard for many in the working class. Large sections of workers have once again taken it on the chin and find themselves dumped onto the scrap heap of American capitalism as it scurries around the globe looking to super-exploit the desperately poor people of other countries.

But it's not that there isn't plenty of work to be done in this country, along with the people willing to do it. There exists in the U.S. a vast reservoir of unmet social needs, like housing, health care, restoration of the environment or rebuilding the cities that will continue to fester solely because of the capitalist systems inherent drive for the maximization of profit. The only solution that USA, Inc. has for the growing army of unemployed, i.e., surplus workers, is more cops, more prisons and more repression!

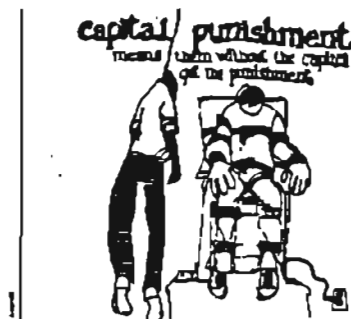
Did you know that:

- In the U.S. today, more than 1.5 million people are incarcerated. In five years, at the present rate of incarceration, about 7.5 million people will be in prison and about 4 million will be African-American.
- California's rate of imprisonment has grown by over 600% in the past 20 years. The state prison system in 1979 held 19,000 inmates while today there are 132,000. With passage of the state budget on August 3rd, California will spend more money on prisons every year than on education.
- Blacks are about 12% of the population nationwide, but make up more than 48% of prisoners. The incarceration rate for Blacks is more than six times the rate for whites.
- Nearly one of every four Black men between the ages of 20 and 29 is either in jail, prison, on probation or on parole. There are more young Black men in the criminal justice system than the total number of Black men of all ages enrolled in college.

Obviously, the plantation has been replaced by the penitentiary. The way forward out of this morass includes the building of united multi-racial working class struggle in opposition to the political chicanery offered up by the Democrats of the Property Party.

Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, Geronimo Pratt, Leonard Peltier!
Freedom for Silvia Baraldini, Susan Rosenberg, Alejandrina Torres!
Freedom for all Class War Political Prisoners!
For International Socialist Revolution!

Leaflet written and printed by L.A. Workers' Voice
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