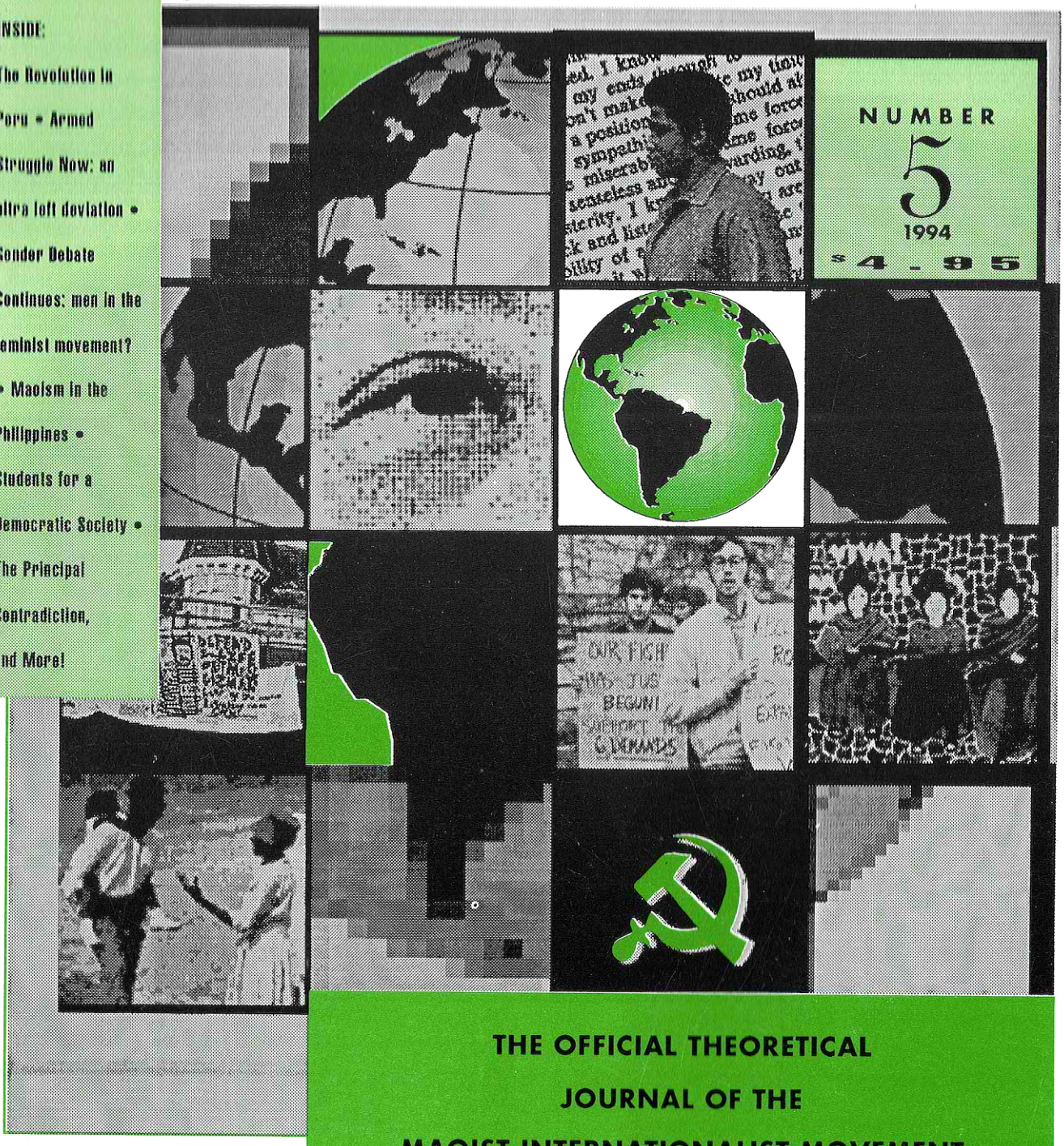
Letters | Peru | Armed Struggle | Feminism | Line Strategy & Tactics | SDS

MIM THEORY

Diet for a Small Red Planet

INSIDE:

The Revolution in Peru • Armed Struggle Now: an ultra left deviation • Gender Debate Continues: men in the feminist movement? • Maoism in the Philippines • Students for a Democratic Society • The Principal Contradiction, and More!



THE OFFICIAL THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE MAOIST INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT

MIM THEORY
1994
Number 5
Vol. 2

MAOIST INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT

Editor: MC5
Assistant Editor: MC86 MC44
Production: MC99, MC53

Maoism is very deep thought. It requires study, struggles and arguments, arguments, arguments. The imperialists print millions of pages a day telling their side of the story. MIM has as many thoughts as the imperialists, but not as much paper, especially the green kind.

Struggle with MIM—in person, by computer, by mail: just do it somehow because the imperialists are already struggling with you by television, newspapers and radio. No one can advance their own thinking and the cause of revolution by themselves. The most progress is brought about in the challenge of a revolutionary collective—a vanguard party.

MIM theory is the official theoretical journal of the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM). Subscriptions are $10 per year/four issues. Overseas airmail is $20 per year.

MIM also publishes MIM Notes, the party's official voice on current news. Subscriptions are $12 per year or $1 an issue.

MIM is an underground party that does not publish the names of its comrades in order to avoid state surveillance and repression that has been historically directed at communist parties and anti-imperialist movements.

"MC" in a byline means "MIM comrade" or a party member; "MA" means "MIM associate."

To send money to MIM for any purpose, send cash or a check payable to "ABS."

MIM
P.O. Box 3576
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576

What is MIM?

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) is a revolutionary communist party that upholds Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought. MIM is an internationalist organization that works from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat, thus, its members are not Amerikans, but world citizens.

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

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

MIM differs from other communist parties on three main questions: (1) MIM holds that after the proletariat seizes power in socialist revolution, the potential exists for capitalist restoration under the leadership of a new bourgeoisie within the communist party itself. In the case of the USSR, the bourgeoisie seized power after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China, it was after Mao's death and the overthrow of the Gang of Four in 1976. (2) MIM upholds the Chinese Cultural Revolution as the farthest advance of communism in human history. (3) MIM believes the North Amerikan white-working class is primarily a non-revolutionary worker-elite at this time; thus, it is not the principal vehicle to advance Maoism in this country.

MIM accepts people as members who agree on these basic principles and accept democratic centralism, the system of majority rule, on other questions of party line.

The theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is universally applicable. We should regard it not as a dogma, but as a guide to action. Studying it is not merely a matter of learning terms and phrases but of learning Marxism-Leninism as the science of revolution.

—Mao Zedong, Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 208.

CORRECTION

In MIM Theory 2/3, p. 67, the ed. note states in error that an article on Hill/Thomas entitled "To Tell the Truth" was rejected by the party majority. It was accepted.

MIM THEORY

Number 5 1994

Diet for a Small Red Planet

Table of Contents

Table of Contents continued

Introduction to this issue

MIM Theory #5 (MT5) appears at a crucial time in the international communist movement. It is a period of upsurge of the Maoist forces, even in the imperialist countries.

The impetus for this development is not hard to see. The development and advance of the People's War in Peru has attracted the attention of all genuine communists and those inspired by the struggles of the oppressed generally. Likewise, the internal rectification of the Communist Party of the Philippines makes it quite clear that there is an alternative to old-style Soviet revisionism, social-democracy, Trotskyism and anarchism.

As always in the creation of new genuine communist forces, the question of line, strategy and tactics arises in the process of achieving political seasoning and maturity. If the genuine communist forces are to amount to anything more than sloganeering cheerleaders, we must undertake serious materialist analyses and understand the dialectical stages and phases through which the struggle passes.

Some comrades have leapt to questions of strategy and tactics on very difficult questions, before they have undertaken the basics of "who are our enemies and who are our friends?" Through its publication of MT1 and MT2/3, MIM has demonstrated disagreement with this approach. Genuine forces are emerging from an understanding of the strategic bankruptcy of revisionism and opportunism. Many comrades of MIM came to Maoist conclusions based on an observation of the strategy and tactics resulting from revisionist and social-democratic political lines. Strategy and tactics are a reflection of political line—and political line is always decisive.

Some forces observe what MIM observes and proceed directly to ultraleft conclusions. To avoid this we must carefully steer between "left" and right mistakes. MIM describes this process here so that many new communists will understand how to distinguish between "left" and right errors.

In upcoming issues, MIM will treat the national question in greater detail; the historical role of Stalin; and MIM line on the question of the united front. Without a scientific analysis of the labor aristocracy, the national question, gender contradictions and the united front, there can be no advance to the next stage of struggle in the imperialist countries. For example, the ultraleftists in the imperialist countries sometimes jump into armed struggle before they have undertaken a serious analysis of these contradictions. Since war is nothing but politics by other means, these ultraleftists guarantee an especially early defeat for themselves and the international communist movement.

The chapters on Peru and the Philippines demonstrate in a living way the urgent necessity of comprehending how tactics flow from strategies—which flow from political line. Confusion between the separate natures of these three interlocked elements of communist theory and practice has resulted in defeats and near-defeats in the past. Today we strive for clarity on this question as a vital part of preparing for the day when the imperialists can be driven into the boiling seas.

Chapter 1
Gender Debate Continues... men in the feminist movement?

INTRO TO THIS SECTION

Men in the feminist movement?

A coincidental theme of most of this issues's chapter on gender and revolution is the role of men in the movement to eradicate patriarchy. Before we get into that issue, we would like to say we are grateful to have received a letter from the Redstockings, discussed in issue 2/3 of MIM Theory.

Next we received a letter from someone who started with great doubts about MIM and "Stalinism" and concluded that he had improperly "dissed" MIM for our position that men as a group benefit from oppression. In this case of argument with an anarchist, MIM pointed to slavery and pointed out how that had to be abolished by force, because the slave-holders would not give it up. We challenged our anarchist-feminist friend to disagree that the dictatorship exercised over the slave-holders was a bad thing.

Next, in the case of Time-Warner feminism, MIM shows that like it or not even the so-called "leaders" of the feminist movement have male backing. In this case, MIM believes the backing is co-opting the women's movement and is not revolutionary.

In another case, MIM deals with the touchy situation where women outside MIM have criticisms of men inside MIM. All women "front" for men at some point in their lives, if they have a bank account, shop at grocery stores or do anything else other than die. There is no way around participating in the patriarchal system. Yet, MIM has noticed that often revolutionary men come under more consistent criticism from feminist-minded women than the institutions that the critics partake in. The case of the woman who will voice political criticisms of MIM men, waver between political support and opposition to MIM and then proceed to "gross" male/female interactions herself is an example of why we have to think past the individual behavior level and get a consistent position on the system before we can make a single step forward. This particular article is also relevant to the issue of how the ultraleft leads to the right, a subject for our "line, strategy and tactics" theme of this issue of MT.

Finally, we have an article from MC45 about Foucault, who reminds us of all the ways power (in this case, male power) can express itself. Foucault can help us think about power itself as a system, something so versatile that it cannot be defeated with piecemeal action. The lifestyles with which Liberals want to replace old behaviors are as oppressive as the ones that preceded the latest fad in supposedly non-oppressive lifestyles.

Redstockings live!

Dear MIM:

Greetings! Enclosed please find some materials from the Redstockings Women's Liberation

Archives. We in Redstockings thought you should have these, after only recently having read your mention of Redstockings and review of Feminist Revolution in your MIM Theory 2/3, 1992.

It appeared you did not have any updated information about Redstockings since 1975, so we're sending you some, and request that when you cite Redstockings as a reference or in a bibliography, that you also give this information about the Archives, including our address and how your readers can get a catalog, so that those who want more information about Redstockings' other past work and actions by Redstockings after *Feminist Revolution* can contact us directly.

You will notice that we are working on a major NEW research "project." We hope to be able to make public the new work still this year (1993), and raise funds to further expand the archives' offerings as "history for activist use."

Do you have an updated MIM literature list? I am ordering the above from your 1991 list that was at the back of the MIM Theory Summer & Fall 1992 issue.

We look forward to receiving the above materials as soon as possible, and from now onward, to corresponding with MIM Theory, as we can, once our new work is completed. We will continue reading your materials with great interest, and I will continue ordering from your MIM Literature List as I can afford.

For women's and all oppressed people's liberation,

—Redstockings' Secretary-Treasurer
The Redstockings' new address is:
P.O. Box 744, Stuyvesant Station
New York, NY 10009

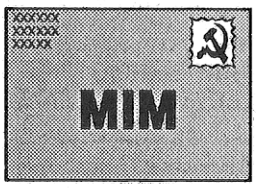
MC5 replies:

MIM was not aware that the Redstockings still existed. Apparently we have some catching up to do. Stay tuned.

Anarchist feminist male writes MIM

Dear Maoist Feminist folks:

Do you really want to speak to ANYBODY who has strong opinions about the most thoroughly revolutionary form of feminism? Your tag-line says you folks are Maoists, and Marxist types tend to think (by default or by theoretical derivation) that oppression really does benefit the oppressors, which would make my input highly problematic since I am male.



I don't think patriarchal oppression benefits anyone; I think radical feminism is centrally necessary to any meaningful understanding of anyone's oppression PERIOD, and I understand myself to have a vividly personal/political stake in getting rid of patriarchy and replacing it with a completely different way of being human in this world.

"Archy" is fundamentally patriarchal; and therefore capitalism, and state rule, and other forms of domination over the Other, are all understandable (and fixable) only via radical feminist viewpoint.

—July, 1992

MIM responds:

MIM believes that First World people are generally sexually privileged (See MIM Theory 2/3) and do benefit from oppression, particularly in the short-run. Overall, in the long-run, because of the many wars, environmental disasters and so on that the system brings, young people in the First World have the most to gain from destroying the imperialism. Older people are more likely to live with their short-run privileges and be at peace with the system since they won't be as likely to pay the consequences.

As for the ability to understand and do something about oppression, that ability is not confined to the oppressed. Individual oppressor group people can also fight oppression, even while most people from their social backgrounds will not. That includes Euro-Amerikans and men. It is subjectivism to say that individual oppressors can't understand. Politically correct subjectivists thereby give whites and men excuses for political inaction or outright political reaction. This position of ours is already explained in "Substituting Identity for Analysis," in MIM Theory 2/3.

It is especially absurd for heterosexual feminists to argue that it is impossible for men to be feminists. To the extent that it is not possible for the oppressed to communicate their oppression, there is no point for women to be living with men, unless they are economically dependent. Many confused ultraleft pseudo-feminists start with the assumption that men cannot be feminists and then wonder why men don't behave as well as they'd like.

Lesbian feminists who assume that feminism is an identity have a more consistent position. In response to all people fixated on identity rather than analysis, MIM points to the results of strategies and movements and asks the readers to compare. However, the hard-core subjectivist and identity-worshipper will likely find nothing valid in the real world relevant to his or her internal experience—emotions, "personality" and subjective impressions: such people may contradict themselves frequently, but there is no point in communicating with them, because they have assumed it is impossible.

Time-Warner "feminism"

by MC5
March 2, 1992

In early March 1992 Time magazine featured large-scale, bald-faced corporate intervention in the women's movement.(1) The cover story is on the backlash against feminism with Gloria Steinem and Susan Faludi photographed alone in the corner of a room. Time-Warner published a book by Steinem and then used Time magazine to promote the book with a cover story on Steinem.

In the early 1970s, Time decided Gloria Steinem was *the* spokeswoman for feminism. Considering Steinem's incredible background in heavyweight political journals such as Redbook, Vogue, Ladies Home Journal and House and Gardens, Time decided to devote a page to Steinem in 1969—who was "one of the best dates to take."(2) The same article mentioned her political ideas and her intellectual pursuits with Ted Sorenson, J. K. Galbraith and Saul Bellow. As such she earned the label "Thinking Man's Shrimpton," which meant that she was an intellectual version of the woman who was the highest paid model of the time.

Since that time, Steinem has been on the up-and-up—a critic who could not be faulted for sour grapes for men, someone long-described as having the longest "list of more impressive men wanting to marry her"(3), a critic stunning enough so that Playboy chose her as a bunny and yet a critic ready to show all her oppressed sisters how they could do it all too, in several easy steps as her magazine and book articles would always demonstrate.

Now apparently Susan Faludi is it too, a spokesperson for the 1990s the way Steinem is still the spokesperson for the 1970s. Faludi gained some journalistic experience working in Steinem's Ms. magazine. She went on to work for the Wall Street Journal.

Readers should recall that according to the Yippies' newspaper Overthrow, the same corporate sponsors that moved Time to name Steinem the women's movement's great leader gave Steinem the money to found Ms. Furthermore, according to an early revolutionary feminist group called the Redstockings, Steinem has not denied being a CIA agent at international women's conventions of communists and socialists. To this day, Steinem has refused to say anything about related charges that she is just coopting the feminist movement for the government.

The new generation Time magazine feminist, Faludi plays a crucial role in buttressing Steinem. Faludi reinterprets the decline of Ms. magazine as occurring after 1987, curiously when "Anne Summers took over from Steinem in 1987."(4)

The fall of Ms. magazine from a feminist magazine into just another beauty-advice magazine was widely known. As a result, the leaders of co-optation decided they were losing their credibility as spokespersons against oppression. They brought in Robin Morgan to work on Ms. and they cut out all the slick cosmetics ads. Faludi's role is to back up existing pseudo-feminism by showing that a new generation of women does agree with Steinem.

MIM does not mean to say that the Steinem clique—bolstered by Faludi's book promoters Barbara Ehrenreich, Alice Walker and NOW president Eleanor Smeal—is wrong just because Faludi's book is now promoted by the Time-Warner $18-billion giant.(5) Rather, the pseudo-feminism represented by the likes of Steinem receives a big push from corporate sponsors.

Forever seeking ways to promote the individualism of the oppressed so that the oppressed never unite in a disciplined way and so the powerful can stay powerful, Time-Warner and other capitalists could hardly ask for better from Steinem. Here is an anti-revolutionary, anti-communist whose recent book is called *Revolution From Within* —published by Time-Warner(6)—hence promoting the illusion once again that women's problems are psychological or emotional, rather than structural. The subtitle of the book exalts "self-esteem."

Not all feminists were asleep at the wheel while pseudo-feminists like Steinem moved in for the kill in the women's movement. Two authors from the 1970s who MIM distributes, the Redstockings and Joreen, came to realize from the Steinem experience that structured organizations with accountable leaders are better than having structurelessness and no leaders. Otherwise, opportunists like Steinem would claim credit for work done by the leaderless masses. It's quite easy when the same capitalists giving you money to make you a feminist leader are the same people publishing your book and the same people then

promoting your book by putting you on the cover of their magazine. "Leaders" with such backing easily move in to fill the vacuum left by individualist organizers.

Notes:
1. Time 3/9/92.
2. Time 1/3/69.
3. Newsweek 5/10/65.
4. Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (NY: Crown Publishers, 1991), p. 109.
5. New York Times 3/5/89.
6. Books in Print.

The following is an article on very typical heterosexual pseudo-feminism that MIM finds on college campuses. This particular case is interesting for its honesty of expression and the many gaps or silences that lead to miscues in revolutionary work.

Contradictions and coherence in sexual practice: men in the movement and the issue of sexual privilege

by a comrade
December 27, 1992

Comrades in the Maoist Internationalist Movement have often confronted a deafening silence on gender issues. How we are to interpret silence is a subject of many vague interpretations of resistance to patriarchy.

"Silence=Death" reads a common slogan promoted by activists concerned with AIDS. "Silence is complicity" is another. Adrienne Rich promotes her ideas on feminism through a book titled *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence.*

Yet, where MIM is concerned, we occasionally hear that silence and lies are acts of resistance to patriarchy. In history we can conjure up the acts of the heroic underground in France combatting Nazi occupation during World War II. Within gender issues, we often hear that men must be lied to or evaded in order to avoid their repressive wrath. This approach interprets silence as an indicator of resistance.

MIM has come to the conclusion that in the past it was too apt to see feminist resistance embedded in silence. This resulted in a naive approach to gender struggles, one that also impeded recruitment to the party. The party should instead struggle to understand evidence of complicity with oppression that it receives.

An example is a young woman—we will refer to with a fictitious name Lucy—that the party tried to recruit over a period of time from 1988 to 1990. We choose this example, almost for its trivialness, but its main components are repeated again and again in party practice. Often times women outside the party have read an article or engaged us in a struggle that they felt hit them personally. In the case reviewed here, doubtless more than one will wonder if she is Lucy. The reason is simple: Lucy is an individual with a common structural position of young women in the First World in relation to Maoism.

In this case, Lucy had made strong criticisms of the sexual practice of an individual male in the party; although she never did so officially, she did do so directly to the face of party comrades. At the same time, this was an apparently tormented individual who was unwilling to go into detail or principle on the nature of her criticism, which was likely made on behalf of someone else.

Perhaps she was unaware of the party status of the male she was criticizing. It is also possible she was unaware of his self-criticism and the party line on the question.

In any case, she agreed to several meetings for a political discussion with the party. In each case, she begged off with some apolitical excuse or at best saying she didn't know enough about China or Russia and that she did not necessarily disagree with MIM, but that she was studying the matters in order to hold a conversation with the party. Despite party efforts to struggle against this sort of "experts" line which holds back political practice, Lucy kept making appointments with the party and not showing up.

MIM expected in this case that a worked out feminist line was responsible for the difficulties. For this reason, the recruiter was apt to keep an open ear, as all communists should. Could it be that a radical feminist line held MIM biological men in suspicion and that Lucy was working on issues on her own because she did not view MIM as radical enough on women's issues?

It turns out there was nothing to hear from Lucy; although our recruiter did not realize it at the time. Lucy went on to work for a single-issue group dealing with gender issues and as far as we know, burned out soon thereafter without committing to any movement or politics.

In the midst of all the tension between Maoists and budding feminists, Lucy managed to blurt out a couple things in passing that should have been taken more seriously. Lucy explained to us that she had been going to really "gross" and "stupid" fraternity parties on Saturdays. She also made a point of saying another woman in party circles also went. This other woman was also rumored much later to be a feminist critic of MIM men.

This is exactly what the system needs—millions of people ... who have doubts about themselves ... instead of the system.

As people in political circles on college campuses know, when feminists criticize "gross" and "stupid" fraternity parties, they are referring to the ultimate in sex-role playing. Fraternity parties are a bastion of traditional sex roles and women attending them, especially feminists, will be found to dress up and wear makeup that they ordinarily would not. It is also the expectation that people will go to these parties, get drunk and have sex in various states of consciousness that makes the parties infamous, especially amongst those budding feminists waging the fight against date rape.

For MIM's part, MIM does not care to emphasize that fraternity men are any more disgusting than other men, because we seek revolution to end the patriarchy that makes all sex rape. However, within the mindset of those who disagree with us like Lucy and who seek to reform individual behavior, fraternities have a special place.

Before Lucy told MIM about her own practice, MIM had already criticized in principle the line that Lucy was associating herself with—Christian ultraleftism. By Christian, we mean any ideology that places its central emphasis on scrutinizing individual behaviors and finding them lacking relative to some dogma. By "ultraleft" in this case, we refer to those cases where MIM critics claim to be doing a more thorough job fighting oppression than MIM by scrutinizing every detail of individual behavior.

Whereas Lucy found it difficult to hold principled discussions with MIM, MIM should have recognized the comment about fraternities as a statement of inner-contradiction. In particular, we had no name for this inner-contradiction at the time, but we should have said that Lucy was struggling with the issue of her own sexual privilege. Lucy had put forward ferocious if undetailed criticism of a MIM biological man. At the same time, she was making a point of admitting something she saw as a flaw in her own individual behavior.

Lucy had criticized the biological male in her circles who was the most outspoken on class, nation and gender oppression. At the same time, she may have wondered herself if she had any basis for making such criticisms of individual behavior, given her own. She doubted the people making a bold attack on the system as just another group of power-grabbers and she doubted herself.

This is exactly what the system needs—millions of people like Lucy who have doubts about themselves and the individuals around them instead of the system. Many prisoners may read MIM Notes, but feel they aren't good enough to be revolutionaries, because the society told them their individual behaviors were no good. In this case, Lucy can't find it in her to struggle through an issue, because she sees so many contradictions in her own behavior and that of others. What silence means here is the paralysis of contradiction that benefits the status quo, and as long as people go on scrutinizing individual behaviors instead of systems, there will never be a united movement to abolish those oppressive systems.

MIM missed an opportunity here because of remnants of a paternalist line. MIM held on desperately to the notion that Lucy and many like her had a radical feminist line that she was unable to express. It was simply the flipside of the error of

seeing women as incapable of politics. In this case, we had to protect ourselves and Lucy from the notion that maybe Lucy really was compromising with the patriarchy. We did not think women could be wrong, so we invented excuses for them.

When it comes down to committing to fighting oppression, even just gender oppression by itself, many budding feminists in Amerika give up the cause in pursuit of sexual privilege. Many others that remain verbally committed to feminism nonetheless pursue sexual privilege. [MC5: MIM did not hold that there was a sexual aristocracy and enemy group created by sexual privilege until about the time the struggle detailed in this article was over.]

The thrill of fraternity parties to campus feminists is an effort to have everything both ways. On the one hand, criticize individual patriarchal behaviors. On the other hand, seek the benefits of being seen as conventionally attractive, popular and fun. Ex-Playboy bunny (a pornographic model) and feminist leader Gloria Steinem embodies this game quite well. Like Steinem who dated the country's pillars of society, some budding feminists want to criticize MIM biological men but go to the rich, white boys' parties. They want political correctness, but they love the Rolling Stones. It cannot be otherwise, because we all live in a system where it is impossible to be untainted.

The honest amongst these Christians will burn out in seething inner-turmoil. The hypocrites will do extensive damage wherever they go. In contrast, MIM does not believe it is useful to make individual behavior the focus of one's efforts to change the world. Instead, we must understand the social causes of behavior and seek to alter those social factors in order to create better behavior.

The repression of the patriarchy will fall hardest on those most committed to changing it. MIM does not think it is an accident that outspoken, revolutionary and feminist biological men are punished for not playing the proper roles accorded them by the patriarchy. Hence, we are not surprised by the patriarchy's white old-boy network of rumors, lies and half-truths propagated by pseudo-feminists including Lucy. Nor is it an accident that the most politically committed biological women are seen as engaging in "male" politics and "fronting" for men. The case of the Redstockings before us only shows that those with the clearest and most radical political practices face the greatest evasion, silence and smearing.

What is MIM?

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) is a revolutionary communist party that upholds Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought. MIM is an internationalist organization that works from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat; thus, its members are not Amerikans, but world citizens.

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

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

MIM differs from other communist parties on three main questions: (1) MIM holds that after the proletariat seizes power in socialist revolution, the potential exists for capitalist restoration under the leadership of a new bourgeoisie within the communist party itself. In the case of the USSR, the bourgeoisie seized power after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China, it was after Mao's death and the overthrow of the Gang of Four in 1976. (2) MIM upholds the Chinese Cultural Revolution as the farthest advance of communism in human history. (3) MIM believes the North Amerikan white-working class is primarily a non-revolutionary worker-elite at this time; thus, it is not the principal vehicle to advance Maoism in this country.

MIM accepts people as members who agree on these basic principles and accept democratic centralism, the system of majority rule, on other questions of party line.

The theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is universally applicable. We should regard it not as a dogma, but as a guide to action. Studying it is not merely a matter of learning terms and phrases but of learning Marxism-Leninism as the science of revolution.

—Mao Zedong, Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 208.

A comparison of the political practices of the people doing the Christian accusing and the people being accused is usually enough to prove this point. Ultimately though, we must look at the results of the respective practices. The dead give-away for hypocritical pseudo-feminists is their failure to even attempt to answer the question: "what works historically and internationally to abolish patriarchy?" The Christian pseudo-feminists and lifestyle anarchists have no answer, only a lot of dogmas and contradictory practices. MIM says, "Men cannot be reformed, only revolutionized." Let's get on with destroying the system.

BOOK REVIEW

The History of Sexuality

Volume I: An Introduction (Parts I & II), by Michel Foucault

by MC45
Spring, 1991

"Pleasure and power ... seek out, overlap, and reinforce one another. They are linked together by complex mechanisms and devices of excitation and incitement." —Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* Volume I: An Introduction

Foucault traces the relationship between sex and power through the explosion of discourse on sexuality since the early eighteenth-century.

He argues that the supposed repression of sexuality in the Victorian era (when it became a subject unfit for open conversation) created the necessity for discourse: to uncover the mysteries of, and thereby eradicate the enticement of, deviant sexualities. Heterosexual monogamy became the only framework within which sexuality could be admitted, and "the legitimate couple, with its regular sexuality, had a right to more discretion."(p.38) Once this norm had been acknowledged and set aside, "it was time for all these figures [of other sexualities], scarcely noticed in the past, to step forward and speak."(p. 39) Thus repression became the means of allowing sexuality to develop "in the very space and means of [power's] exercise."(p. 32)

The discourse itself (medical, psychoanalytic, economic) required subjects of study so that "the growth of perversions [those forms which fall outside of heterosexual monogamy] is the real product of the encroachment of a type of power on bodies and their pleasures."(p. 48) Inspected and ostracized though they were, these "perversions" were allowed and expected to flourish.

According to Foucault, while varied sexualities are not themselves products of bourgeois society, fascination with them is both a product of and a sustaining force for "the countless economic interests which, with the help of medicine, psychiatry, prostitution, and pornography, have tapped into both this analytical multiplication of pleasure and this optimization of the power that controls it."(p. 48)

In her essay "Sexuality," Catharine MacKinnon criticizes Foucault (and other theorists on sexuality) because "Allowed/not allowed is this sexuality's basic ideological axis." (Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State,* p. 132) According to her, "whatever is called sex is attributed [in Foucault's theory] a normatively positive valence ... sex as such (whatever it is) is good—natural, healthy, positive, appropriate, pleasurable, wholesome, fine, one's own, and to be approved and expressed."(Ibid.)

In delivering this criticism, MacKinnon aims to discredit theory "characterized as 'sex-positive,' [which] is, rather obviously, a value judgment". (Ibid.) MIM wholly supports this aspect of her work.

As she points out in "Sexuality," it is exactly this kind of "sex-positive" theorizing which has allowed other scholars to "trivialize even most of those cases of rape and child sexual abuse they discern as such, decry women's sexual refusal as sexual inhibition, and repeatedly interpret women's sexual disinclination as 'restrictions' on men's natural sexual activity."(Ibid.)

These research biases clearly serve to further subordinate women and their sexuality and to perpetuate the violence against both. It is important to point out, however, that her attack on Foucault misses the point of his theory.

MIM finds Foucault's analysis of the development of sexuality useful as a basis for understanding how sexual expression is dictated. But his failure to address capitalism directly is a limitation of his theory. While he refers to "economic

interests" and "power," he does not recognize the most basic reason that the "simplest" of pleasures are obscured by the illusion of mystery, placed there for the economic convenience of unravelling it. This mystery has long been the only advertisement capitalists need to provide a market for various sex industries.

These research biases clearly serve to further subordinate women and their sexuality and to perpetuate the violence against both.

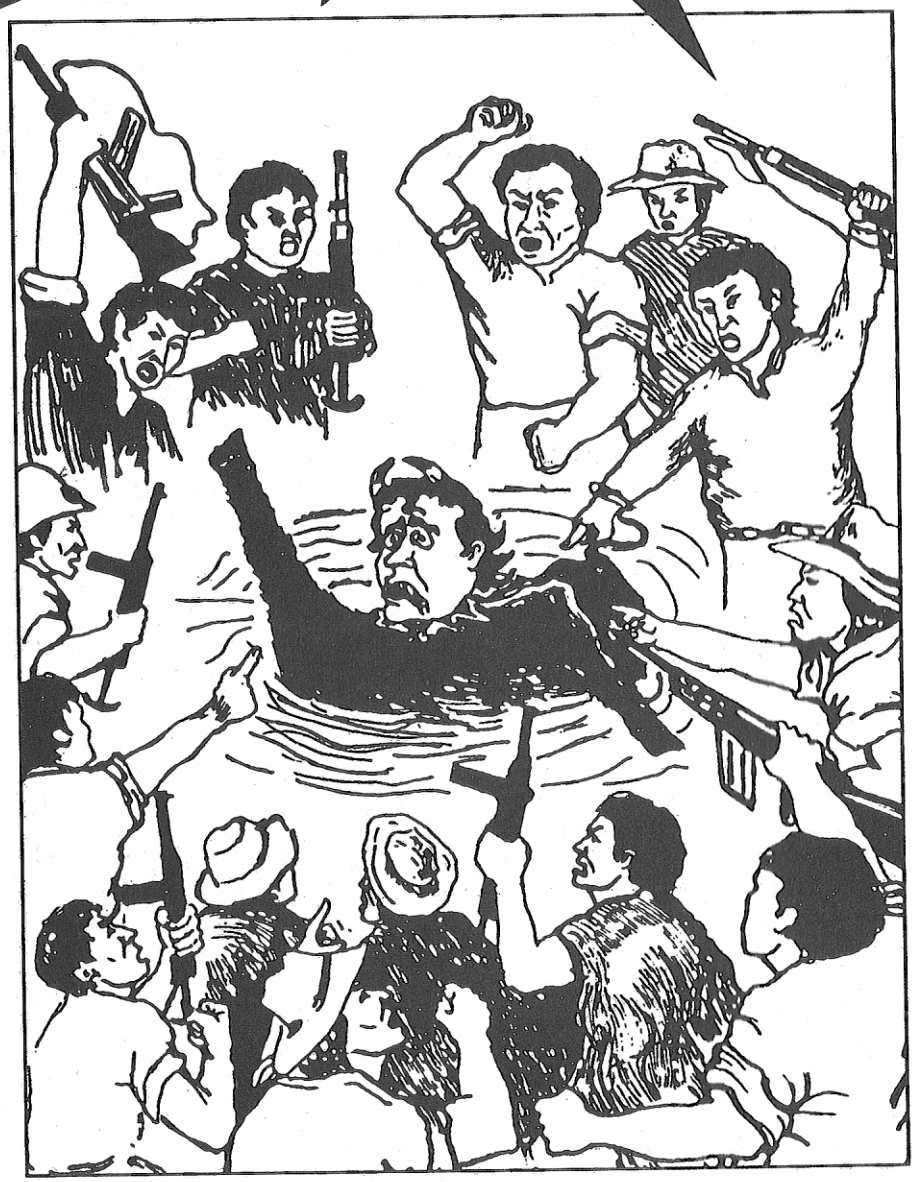
Foucault's analysis is particularly relevant to the romanticization of sexual "sub-cultures." These cultures are idealized (both by people who participate and people who cling to the fantasy image of free love) as existing in the face of (and independent of) the tyranny of heterosexual monogamy. This vision is a lie.

Consider lesbian "counter-culture." As everyone knows, all lesbians have been socialized into heterosexual monogamy. This socialization is not decisively altered by or during their coming out. Many lesbians will acknowledge their heterosexist socialization while insisting that their sexual practice is a means of breaking down that same socialization. (The same is true for bisexual women who claim that by the "free" expression of all of their sexual desires they can eradicate all of their own heterosexist notions and become sexually "free.") People who support this argument have bought the myth that they have the power to reclaim their sexuality under capitalism. This is simply not true. No one can decide to live in a revolutionary manner within existing state structures; wishing will not make it so.

MIM believes that it is important to understand how people who believe in this myth serve the capitalists and offer their sexuality for the profit of the pigs. As Foucault points out, "the machinery of power ... did not aim to suppress [deviant sexualities], but rather gave [them] an analytical, visible, and permanent reality ... [they were] made into a principle of classification and intelligibility, established as a raison d'etre and a natural order of disorder."(p. 44)

In other words, the state, capital and the patriarchy allowed a discourse and a "culture" of variant sexuality to flourish for their own purposes. Along with this development came the illusion of freedom or the possibility of freedom.

Chapter 2
Peru



Letters about Peru

WRITER HATES PCP

Dear MIM:

All progressive and working class activists must oppose this further assault on the people of Peru by the U.S. supported Peruvian government. Yet it is ironic that the self-appointed little Stalins of "Gonzalo Thought" shoot and behead more people on the political Left than the Right!

Workers and peasants who oppose the Shining Path are ROUTINELY targeted for abuse by the followers of Professor Gonzalo. The most militant and progressive trade unions in Peru have denounced this Pol Potist movement and its reactionary tactics of terrorism against the workers movement. The Maoists' terrorism dovetails nicely with the government's terrorism. The revolutionary movement in Peru rejects the Shining Path and fights the gov'ts attempt to use the Shining Path as an excuse to suppress the real workers movement. Wherever the peasants and workers have been able to organize against the government the support for Shining Path has dwindled to almost nothing.

MIM replies:

This letter needs some facts straightened out. First of all, the Communist Party of Peru (PCP also known as Shining Path) does not shoot more people on the left than on the right. There is no evidence for such a ludicrous claim unless the writer considers Fujimori's government and its police, military and snitches to be "left." This is a hollow accusation that is not even backed up by imperialist reports. The reality is that the government is responsible for the vast majority of the deaths in Peru.(1)

Secondly, the writer makes claims about broad and militant movements that oppose the PCP. Yet no where does s/he offer us any evidence of these groups. There are, in fact, a number of so-called left groups that oppose the PCP. The United Left is probably the largest, and they work openly with the Fujimori government.

Finally, the last statement is also untrue. Wherever the revolutionary peasants and workers have effectively organized against the Peruvian government it has been through the PCP and in support of the PCP. The base town of Ayacucho is a good example of this work and support. The PCP would not be able to control at least one-third of the countryside and defend their base areas without the active participation of the people. While Fujimori takes money and arms from the United States, the PCP receives nothing from any government. The PCP forces survive, grow and are able to seize power because the PCP carries out the will of the majority of Peruvians.

Notes: El Pais 9/20/92.

WRITER HATES PCP AND POL POT

Dear MIM:

According to you, "MIM knows both sides of the story." You acknowledge to have a direct line to Sendero Luminoso which places you in a very important position. From that privileged location, and able to inspect both sides ... lo and behold ... you discover the value of their claims and means to obtain them: you possess the true truth, you are enlightened, you must also enlighten others. (NOTE: Sendero Luminoso could also be translated as Enlightened Path). Sendero Luminoso is right, you say. Do not believe their opponents, you add. Then, MIM justifies, with numbers and so-called facts, that objectivity.

Well, let us just say Sendero Luminoso takes over Peru. What would they do from the outset? What would their first actions be? The answer was already witnessed by a horrified world after the fall of the Khmer Rouge and the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia some years back. Some of us do not forget. None of us could apologize for such horror. Only a sick mind would ever promote it.

This is the nightmare Peru will experience should Sendero Luminoso take over. This is the part of Sendero Luminoso's political philosophy that their spokesmen/women would not mention. This is at the foundation of Abimael Guzman's thoughts (Sendero Luminoso's leader, now in jail). This is not wild imagination but documented and published fact.

Those of you would be sympathizers of Sendero Luminoso may disagree. Congratulate yourself, disagreement would not be possible in their type of regime.

—From Latin America
January, 1992

MIM replies:

This is another letter lacking any factual basis. The author makes the common mistake of equating the PCP with Pol Pot in spite of the PCP's clear Maoist line. There are muddleheads on the left who believe that Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge represented Maoism because Pol Pot claimed to be a Maoist after Mao died. This was just posturing on the part of Pol Pot, and neither MIM nor the PCP uphold the Khmer Rouge as an example of Maoism or a good model for how to implement Maoism in a country after the revolution. Likewise, the Khmer Rouge has condemned the political line of both MIM and the PCP.

There are muddleheads on the left who believe that Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge represented Maoism because Pol Pot claimed to be a Maoist after Mao died.

As an aside, MIM will note that Kampuchea did better under the Khmer Rouge than they were doing under the imperialists. To that extent MIM recognizes them as an advance over the U.S. puppet-regime that preceded them. (See MIM Notes #41 for more on this question).

This author criticizes MIM for biased reporting, but MIM has never claimed to be unbiased. We openly support the PCP, and, while MIM has no "direct line" to the PCP, we back up this support with facts for people to argue with if they disagree. The writer, on the other hand, conceals who s/he supports, and offers no facts for the reader to evaluate—only name-calling criticisms. The writer forgot to note that peaceful disagreement with Fujimori is currently illegal in Peru. Criticisms of Fujimori's anti-democratic regime are meaningless unless backed by the power of the armed masses.

Ms. magazine trashes PCP in the name of "feminism"

by MC31

In the name of power for women, the July/August issue of Ms. magazine blasts the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), specificallydenouncing the killing of Maria Elena Moyano.

The article explains that even some of Peru's poorest women are helping others by providing local food and Glass of Milk programs "to a population abandoned by the government."(1) Ms. recognizes that the Peruvian state is one of the most brutal in the world today, but Ms. speaks highly of those who refused to "take to the streets" during the economic crisis in Peru, and went to eat in a local soup kitchen instead.

One reformist "community organizer" quoted in the article said that women "want progress. They aren't exactly clear how to get there, but they know they're going. They're betting on something that they're making up along the way."

PCP members practice the science of Maoism and do know where they are going and how to get there. Ms. prefers the vague analysis and illusory goals of reformists to hard-hitting Maoist ideology and its revolutionary practice. The article refers to polls supposedly showing that Fujimori's government has 70-80% support among the people. If that's so, what are Fujimori and his military men so worried about? How is it that the PCP (referred to as the "Shining Path" in Ms. and elsewhere) controls so much liberated territory and has so much popular support?

Ms. spouts the bourgeois media lie that the PCP attacks mostly civilians, but doesn't mention that the guerillas target lackeys of the fascist state (who do not all wear uniforms), enemies in a people's war. Ms. conveniently fails to mention that 24,000 of the 27,000 people killed in action since 1980 have been civilians slaughtered by the Peruvian state!

Ms. goes on to claim—with no substantiation—that the PCP is a patriarchal movement suppressing

its women members. While the PCP takes just credit for executing Moyano—an enemy collaborator in a time of war—Ms. spends an entire article discussing the death of *one* woman and barely touches on the Fujimori dictatorship's murder of *thousands* of female PCP cadres and civilians. According to Ms., First World, Ms-.reading, white women are capable of sifting through assorted facts and deciding their own fates; but poor, illiterate Peruvian women are just stupid and helpless followers of a male oppressor.

Ms. offers zero evidence of the suppression of PCP women. Nor did Ms. interview women cadres to learn what they think about the strategy of organizing soup kitchens versus the strategy of fighting a revolution to end starvation in Peru. The Glass of Milk poverty pimps are glorified by Ms. because they are women; and the revolutionary women are vilified for picking up the gun to end poverty.

Ms.'s "multi-cultural" international section exposes Ms.'s profound anti-feminism as it trashes Third World revolutionary movements working to liberate the majority of women in the world—who do not read Ms.

Notes: "Peru: The Government, the Rebels, And the Women in Between" Ms. July/August 1992, p. 14-15.

Maria Elena Moyano: pseudo-feminist role model

by a comrade

The assassination of Maria Elena Moyano, "Mother Courage," has called forth condemnation from leaders of the military regime in Peru and so-called democratic socialists from Peru to Amerika. This reminds MIM of Stalin's characterization of social democrats on the eve of World War Two as "figleafs" for Hitler's fascism and "wolves in sheep's clothing." Democratic socialists would have done better to have been embarrassed by Fujimori's open military coup in April, 1992. After all, it is the democratic socialists who have been repeating *ad nauseam* that there has been "democracy" in Peru, and that the ballot box can replace the bullet.

The assassination of Moyano provided phony leftists the world over with a cover for the fact that the democracy they have been praising in Peru has been stone-dead for years. They latched onto Moyano's death as drowning men trample women and children in the rush for the last life-boat. When President Alberto Fujimori imposed country-wide martial law the democratic socialists did not even blush for having utterly failed the people.

Democratic socialists had been insisting for years that democracy was alive in Peru despite the real threat of military coups. Maria Elena Moyano participated in this lie to the people with good reason: she was a vice-mayor and a capitalist; a functionary of the state instrument of repression and a profit-seeker.

People ask MIM: why do the Senderos use force instead of persuasion? The Senderos *did* try to persuade Moyano and her followers to stop attacking the people. Arguments against capitalism fall on deaf ears when addressed to capitalists. The vice-mayor's interests were entrenched in opposition to the interests of the people. One might as well ask: why is war necessary to free slaves from slave-owners?

The important historical example of the U.S.-backed military coup against Allende, democratic socialist President of Chile, in the early 1970s, demonstrated the abject failure of the democratic socialist electoral road to power. Without the armed support of the people, elected democratic socialists who deviate even slightly from imperialism's instructions are easily toppled.

"Mother Courage's" promoters bid for the support of the Amerikan left by sanctifying the biological accident that Moyano was born a woman. Thousands of peasants die at the hands of a supposedly "democratic" regime, and the Amerikan left doesn't even glance up from its political nintendo games. Let one bourgeois woman die—and the Amerikan "Left" senses that women are suddenly falling off the pseudo-feminist pedestal. Let one Moyano be corrected—and the Amerikan left's knees start jerking with the righteous indignation befitting a group of people steeped in class, nation and gender privileges.

Moyano's friends in Peru disarm us all with the shameless lie that women "naturally" eschew political violence. They say that the Senderos are trying to control women through assassination of women. Who is *really* controlling women in capitalist and patriarchal interests by flaunting the big lie that

women are incapable of bearing arms and using a revolutionary ideology to take power?

Moyano organized acts of political violence against women as she worked with government-sponsored para-military groups, "rondas." This counterrevolutionary activity was no secret to the ultra-right media in Peru. Moyano's eulogists have neglected to inform Amerikan pseudo-feminists that the majority of PCP cadre are women. This *fact* is a powerful counterargument to the "biology is destiny" line the Moyano-mourners spread.

At all levels of power in China, a higher proportion of top-ranking women were to be found in 1975 than in the United States, or China's comparative counterparts in Taiwan, southern Korea or industrially advanced Japan.

Then they weep about Moyano's "charitable works." This really pulls on the patriarchy's heartstrings. The democratic socialist patriarches think: "How lovely! Women don't want power to organize and feed themselves. They just want to leave the landlords and capitalists in power and beg for a glass of milk. What perfect women these are! How much more feminine than those manly Maoist women who patrol their own base areas and land, guns (shudder) in hand."

The Amerikan "Left" ate it all up: what a feminist model of perfection! Applaud this woman who did charity work in the midst of mass starvation and military repression. Revere this woman who was respected (and paid) by fascist generals and patriarchal politicians. How perfect, these pseudo-feminists reason: a woman smart enough to curry favors through her individual access to men in power; and brave enough to collaborate with the state in actions against power-hungry women who use military force, oh dear!, to fight for women's interests.

The shameless democratic socialists grant "Mother Courage" the honorific of "feminist." In a fitting irony of democratic socialist ignorance, Mother Courage is the famous name of a cowardly, petty-bourgeois character in Berthold Brecht's communist play, "Mother Courage." Brecht's Mother Courage is an unreformable capitalist merchant who follows the camps of warring armies, selling trinkets—along with her soul. Her armed and dangerous daughter, Katrina, is the proletarian hero of the play—not Mother Courage, herself, who is sarcastically named for that quality she does not possess.

MIM advises Amerikan democratic socialists who—unlike the PCP—have never led even a relatively successful movement for women's liberation—to keep their mouths shut. These democratic socialists can refer to no history of success when they speak of feminism: only craven capitulations, like Moyano's life. It is the Marxist-Leninist-Maoists who have made possible the fastest progress in the liberation of women worldwide.

Reformism vs. revolutionary feminism

Compare the false feminist movement in Amerika to the revolutionary feminist movement in China under the rule of revolutionary communists.

On October 25, 1991 the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), founded by the democratic socialist-leaning Betty Friedan, a feminist icon of the Amerikan "Left," ran this advertisement, excerpted below, in national Amerikan newspapers:

"What if 14 women, instead of 14 men, had sat on the Senate Judiciary Committee during the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas? ... As long as men make up 98% of the U.S. Senate and 93% of the U.S. House of Representatives, women's voices can be ignored, their experiences and concerns trivialized."

Why did a group like the NWPC waste its time futilely lobbying an imperialist Senate of 98% men? The truth is: NWPC's concerns were not ignored. They were put on television for days. Rarely does any real struggle of the oppressed get such attention. The NWPC tactics failed because they were designed to fail. The goals were vaguely conceived and the strategy underlying the goals is absolutely useless in a truly feminist struggle.

What if groups like NWPC worked for a Maoist revolution instead? In the generation before capitalism (1949-1974), China changed from a society that allowed the buying and selling of women as slaves to a society electing 22.6% women to its highest government body of 2885 members.(1) This is the rough equivalent of the top 700 Congressional, military and business leaders in the United States. (The United States has one quarter the population of China.)

In 1975 women composed 25% of the members

of the Standing Committee, the highest rank in China's top governing body. At all levels of power in China, a higher proportion of top-ranking women were to be found in 1975 than in the United States, or China's comparative counterparts in Taiwan, southern Korea or industrially advanced Japan. Since U.S. women would not start from a position of semi-feudalism, as in China, a Maoist revolution in the United States will initially bring much more than 22.6% women into the leading bodies.

In 1992, with the statistically-evident failure of generations of NWPC-type strategy, the success of even white women's liberation in the United States remains far behind the China of 1974. Additionally, the 1949 infant infant mortality rate in Shanghai was 150 deaths per 1000 births. In 1972 it was down to 12.6, lower than the infant mortality rate of 18.1 for New York City whites in the same year.(2)

The infant mortality rate directly reflects on the status of women's health. Chinese women were healthier than Amerikan women despite the fact that the United States was much wealthier than China. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, China abolished the use of women's bodies in advertising, not to mention more blatant pornography. All this and much more was accomplished in only 27 years.

Before capitalism was able to roar back into China in 1976, it first was forced to militarily defeat forces led by Jiang Qing, a communist woman who held a top position in the government. The restoration of capitalism in China has meant the return of pornography, sexist ads, paid prostitution, cosmetics, skyrocketing rape/assault rates, female infanticide and a decline in rural health care coverage along with a precipitous decline in the percentage of women in government.

Moyano knew very well that the Communist Party of Peru upholds Mao's China as a model of feminist revolution, but she could not bear to see workers, peasants and women liberate themselves the way they had in China. What was Moyano opposing when she opposed the Maoist Senderos? She was opposing revolutionary feminism, real feminism with a track record of real change.

Notes:
1. See China Social Statistics, 1986, William T. Liu ed.
2. China: Science Walks on Two Legs, Science for the People, Discus Books, 1974 and Serve the People, Victor and Ruth Sidel, Macy Foundation, 1973.

Debate sharpens

MIM CRITIC REPLIES TO THE ABOVE MIM ESSAY:

The gist of this article is that because the right and "bourgeoisie" in Lima took advantage of Maria Elena Moyano's death and funeral to weep crocodile tears, she herself was a capitalist. Since when do we judge people by the opportunists who take advantage of anyone and everyone around them? This is a very complex issue.

The Peruvians I have spoken to from the NGO community tell me that Sendero has no programme to meet the immediate needs of the people such as food, health care, employment, etc. I have yet to see a manifesto or programme of what Sendero will do once in power. Nor have I seen anything that indicates how they think the masses should eat and fend off cholera while they await the revolution.

Their attacks on any and all who try to respond to these very urgent short-term needs, even those with unquestionable commitment to the poor and a clear anti-imperialist history, makes me wonder how this narrow sectarianism is going to move us forward. How does this differ from "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" approach of the U.S. to the Kymer Rouge? I'd be grateful for any enlightenment. Until I hear otherwise, I'm afraid I'll continue to see Sendero as terrorists and not an alternative.

NEW YORK TRANSFER (NOT AFFILIATED WITH MIM) REPLIES TO THE CRITIC:

The use of the term "terrorist" to describe the "Sendero" forces shows the ideological bias of the previous [letter]. ALL successful left wing movements risk being labelled terrorist, violent, inhuman, cannibalistic, etc. if they come close to challenging the status quo. The New York Times carried lurid stories of Bolshevik cannibalism, baby-murdering and what-have-you in 1917, 1918 and later. Similarly all national struggles in China, Africa or even the United States (war of independence) were characterized as fights between civilized, humane imperial powers and bloodthirsty maniacs in the imperial press. We should be slow to follow the Bush line on these things.

The people who told tales of Bolshevik cannibalism are the same kind of people who claimed the Viet Cong were "terrorists," too. They said they didn't support the Viet Cong, or the NVA, or Ho Chi Minh or the dictators in South Vietnam. They sup-

ported the "pro-democracy forces" in South Vietnam <snort!>

One MIM critic says s/he knows the Sendero Luminoso are terrorists, because Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International say so. You remember them—they're the groups that were peddling the story last year of the Kuwaiti babies ripped from incubators by savage Iraqi conscripts.

The Sendero Luminoso happen to be a major force in Peru—whether loveable and cuddly or not, they happen to be winning the war against the government, and they happen to have the support of many Peruvians.

CRITIC REPLIES TO NEW YORK TRANSFER:

I didn't use the word "terrorist" lightly or without knowing what I said. Sendero sets off phosphorus bombs in working class Lima cinemas and does not take care in placing its bombs to ensure only the state or "bourgeois" targets are damaged, with the result that innocent civilians from the working class that they profess to support get killed. They have a political position? Then what is it beyond taking power? I asked for information about their programme to see if it could justify the objective results of their military action. I've yet to hear anything but attacks on myself for questioning this way. Just because the establishment doesn't like Sendero doesn't mean anyone on the left has to like them does it?

MIM REPLIES TO THE CRITIC:

The critic missed the gist of the article if s/he thinks it said that we oppose Moyano because the government took advantage of her. The government correctly supported an ally—as is shown by the work Moyano did.

MIM refers this person to writings on Maoism to begin to understand the program of the PCP. As Maoists-in-power, the PCP intends to develop socialist economics in Peru in order to meet the needs of the Peruvian people and to hold up a new model of development to the majority people in the world.

In addition to studying the fundamental principles of Maoism, people curious about the PCP can read the many books and pamphlets produced by the PCP detailing their views on theory and practice. It is irresponsible to say that you have no information about the PCP's program without investigating even the basics of Maoism or what the PCP has written. For people truly interested in learning about the PCP and Maoism, MIM offers an extensive reading list of books and essays.

Shinning Path debate: MIM vs. Americas Watch

America's Watch Women's Rights Project: In a report released today [Jan 8, 1993], Americas Watch and the Women's Rights Project, both divisions of Human Rights Watch, charge both the government of Peru and the insurgent Shining Path with the blatant and illegal use of violence against female non-combatants [including Maria Elena Moyano] as a form of tactical warfare. The 62 page report, entitled "Untold Terror: Violence Against Women in Peru's Armed Conflict," documents more than 40 cases of rape of female non-combatants during interrogation or in the emergency zones, and many others that occurred during security force sweeps or massacres. It also details the Shining Path's systematic political assassination of at least 10 women community leaders since 1985 and the guerrilla group's routine use of such violence, or its threat, to terrorize women-led groups and feminist organizations.

MIM replies: MIM has no reason to dispute that the Communist Party of Peru (whom you call "Shining Path") might have killed 10 non-combatant women in 7 years of armed struggle. We would like to see any comparison to revolutions or non-revolutions elsewhere in which 10 civilian women were not killed in seven years.

Women in the United States would be fortunate to fare so well. Typically in any major city in the United States several times more women will be killed by men in just one year.

Based on the murder of 10 women in a country that has seen 27,000 killed, MIM finds it opportunist of Americas Watch to say the PCP "targets" women, especially when those women are government officials.

If revolution struck England and someone killed Thatcher, Americas Watch is free to interpret that as "an attack on women." And if someone knocks off the hypocrite gay in the Pentagon who was explaining why the military doesn't accept gays, opportunists could say the assassination was

"an attack on gays."

MIM is left wondering how systematic terror against women produced a PCP that is half women. It might never occur to Americas Watch that it is actually defending a vastly male-dominated fascist regime by treating it "equally" with the PCP, which is one of the best shots women have at equal governance in the world.

There is very little by way of factual dispute between Americas Watch and MIM. There is a dispute over interpretation and, ultimately, a choice of value systems—the idealist one that criticizes all violence everywhere without regard for degree or context and the materialist approach which puts primacy on real world forces and choices.

Then there are the facts in the face of which supporters of Americas Watch simply fall SILENT. There's no dispute. But just in case there is a factual dispute, we give them the following facts about Maria Elena Moyano, whose execution by the PCP is on America's Watch list as "violence against women:"

1. Moyano was a vice-mayor of Villa El Salvador.

2. She ran government programs for a fascist military regime, including the glass of milk program.

3. Moyano was a member of Movement for Socialist Affirmation (MAS) which supported Fujimori in elections and took portfolios in this fascist's cabinet.

4. The army and the political parties running the regime used the glass of milk programs to have food distributed food by soldiers and politicians seeking good will (votes in required elections).

5. The government-run newspaper Caretas reported that Moyano was in fact organizing "patrols" to "confront Sendero" and that Moyano was a "national civic heroine."

6. Such "patrols" killed 222 "presumed subversives" in 1990 alone according to official figures. The Army runs at least 526 "patrols."

7. The far right newspapers, generals and politicians lauded her before and after her death.

8. Moyano said her goal was to "defeat" the PCP.

9. When PCP-supporters won an election in her own town of Villa El Salvador. Moyano denounced the victors as "Senderistas," a commonly used signal to death-squads to round up the people so accused and kill them.

10. MAS called for "an agreement among all the political parties in order to develop the urban patrols as a form of self-defense."

11. The political coalition she belonged to arranged for the legalization of such patrols in February 1992.

If the Americas Watch wants to say "reliably" that Moyano was a "non-combatant," sure, no problem we say. After all Weinberger and Cheney were "non-combatants" too.

Americas Watch: Americas Watch and the Women's Rights Project defend the right of all people to a fair and prompt trial and oppose torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment without reservation. We have repeatedly urged the Peruvian government to end "disappearing" Peruvians who may have had ties to this insurgency.

The Shining Path, its leader, Abimael Guzman (known by his "war name," President Gonzalo) and its international apologists celebrate violence—murder, torture and terror—as a means to further their quest for power. Issues of justice, fair trial and human rights are, for them, "bourgeois" concerns, irrelevant beside the cause of revolution. Political enemies, even those who simply refuse to join, are by definition enemies. To kill—or in the Shining Path argot, "selective annihilation," "behead," "liquidate"—is not seen as a crime but rather a revolutionary duty.

The following represents a random sampling of sayings and quotes by the Shining Path. I post them for information purposes and as a response to this message. The Shining Path has not just killed 10 women. It has killed thousands. The ten detailed in "Untold Terror: Violence Against Women in Peru's Armed Conflict" were highlighted because we believe they were hunted down and murdered largely because they were women and active in opposing the Shining Path's cynical brutality.

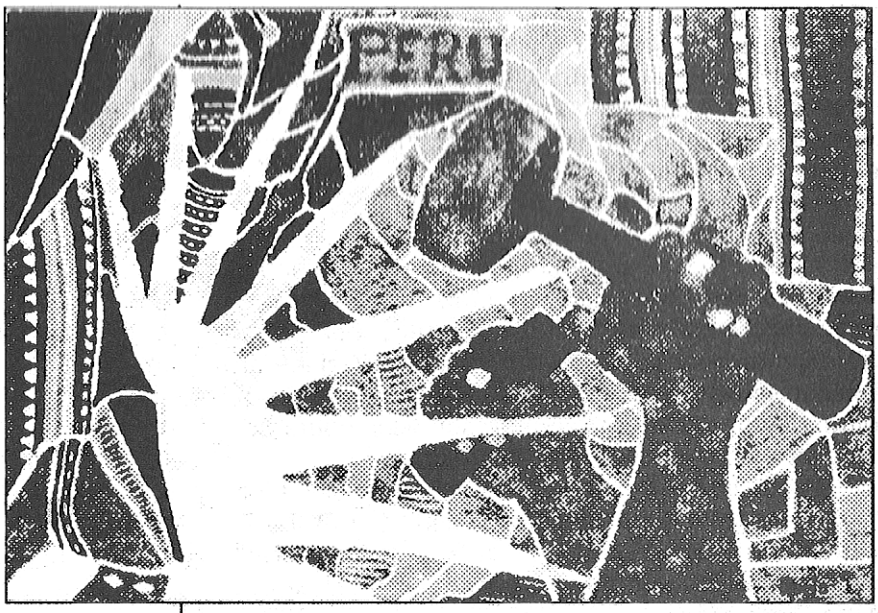
MIM replies: The above by Americas Watch is an admission of sorts. MIM believes the original Americas Watch press release was muddled, because it could not decide if it was talking about oppression of women generally or what Americas Watch considers "feminist" in the context of Peru. We argued that it was absurd to claim—based on ten cases of women killed—that the PCP systematically kills "female civilian non-combatants."

In the above we learn that Americas Watch does in fact take political sides in Peru. It admits its press release focussed on women resisting the PCP.

Here and elsewhere it also takes the liberty of interpreting what the PCP "intends"—an inherently political act.

Americas Watch continued: Not once has the Shining Path or its fans delivered one single solitary shred of evidence linking Maria Elena Moyano to any illegal activities while she led FEPOMUVES or served as vice-mayor. To the contrary, the work of this woman was inspirational and exemplary.

MIM replies: MIM never claimed Moyano did anything "illegal." In fact, MIM went to great lengths to show that her party had a hand in writing the very "laws" of the military regime in Peru. We remind the readers that Moyano's party in particular joined the cabinet of the Fujimori regime after supporting Fujimori in the elections.



Americas Watch continues: Born in poverty, Moyano fought to get an education and help her community, the people of Villa El Salvador. She was a radical feminist, a brilliant, articulate woman who believed in peace. Yes, she supported the formation of local self-defense groups, though never at the behest of the Armed Forces. That is a lie and a calculated misrepresentation. Her plan was to have self-generated, self-organized groups to protect people from the Shining Path murder squads as well as common thieves, rapists and gangs.

MIM replies: The above again contains some valuable admissions—especially for the readers without the time to do research. Americas Watch has now conceded some key points we made in our criticism:

1. Moyano was a government official.

2. She was involved in armed struggle against the PCP, albeit not necessarily as a combatant herself. Neither of these two points were made in the original press release. MIM asks the reader how much it trusts a "human-rights" group that a) takes sides politically and uses judgmental terms like "popular" and "feminist" the way political activists do; b) omits to mention that Moyano was a government official and organizer of armed "patrols;" and c) admits as much only under public pressure and in a backhanded way?

In contrast, MIM does not try to hide behind neutral-sounding blather about "human-rights." We tell our readers straightaway our values and what bourgeois sources we use to contradict bourgeois propaganda.

Finally, MIM would like to point out the consistent lack of standards used by our critics. In the early 1980s, many of us including MIM's founders were able to see through the lie that death squads in El Salvador were not connected to the government. We were not so naive and neither was most of the world's "human-rights" community.

But when it comes to Peru and the armed patrols THAT ARE OPENLY ORGANIZED BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN A GOVERNMENT SUPPOSEDLY GUILTY OF SYSTEMATIC HUMAN-RIGHTS ABUSES, then Americas Watch believes the propaganda that the "patrols" operate on their own! While conceding that Moyano was a government official organizing armed struggle against the PCP, Americas Watch doesn't think this is the same as working for the army!

Just as the United Left used to claim it was independent of the regime (until it actually supported Fujimori and took cabinet position as did Moyano's party in the United Left), now the Americas Watch continues to act as if government officials organizing "patrols" are somehow independent of the regime. Americas Watch should just come out and endorse the United Left and be honest about it.

Americas Watch continues: Whether such a plan would work is an open question. But that's not really why the Shining Path killed her. They killed her because she stood up to them and was very

effective in marshalling opposition to their campaign of terror. No slander, especially from parlor revolutionaries like MIM, changes that. Guzman—that old white middle-class philosophy professor—told them that killing a poor black woman in front of her children was a revolutionary deed.

Welcome to the Shining Path "utopia."

MIM replies: Americas Watch again obscures the whole social character of the revolution in Peru. Perhaps it would care to deny that the indigenous people composing the PCP majority are pitted against a predominantly white ruling class? Does Americas Watch deny that the PCP is 40-50% women? Americas Watch fails to examine the aggregate social fabric; it only selectively analyzes individuals.

The confusion of Americas Watch, Amnesty International and others relates to their lack of a principled conception of "human-rights." As mainly middle-class organizations based in the imperialist countries, these activists only care about what seems to threaten them; hence, they do not count starvation, homelessness, or lack of health care as human-rights violations. In contrast, MIM agrees with President Gonzalo of the PCP that a lot more than political violence counts as "human-rights" violations.

Americas Watch and Amnesty International believe it is a "human-rights" violation to shoot someone who denies you and others food, shelter and the ability to survive. Americas Watch and Amnesty International encourage opposition to the PCP when it uses violence to secure land and shelter for the oppressed. MIM does not believe that property owners have the right to deny shelter to the homeless or food to the starving. We do not believe there is a "right" to resist efforts to abolish starvation.

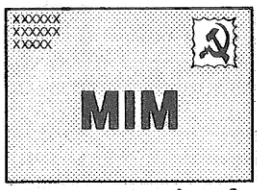
If the landlords gave up their land to the starving and the homeless, there would be no armed struggle. People like Americas Watch believe property-holders have the "right" to live free from violence, even if that "right" deprives others of life itself.

MIM disagrees, because MIM has a more thoroughly humane conception of "human-rights." As Comrade Gonzalo has pointed out, a lot more Peruvian children die from starvation and related diseases in ONE YEAR than the 27,000 killed in 13 years of civil war. But Americas Watch doesn't count the starving. It only cares about what the middle-class can sees and fears—armed struggle against the perpetrators of such injustices.

Keep up the good work, MIM

To MIM:

If it had not been for the fact that I am Peruvian and have recently lived near the Castro-Castro prison, I would have been more skeptical of MIM thought and ideas. The horrors of the genocide committed by Fujimori's fascist government upon the party [PCP] people is repulsive. Having met many of these young comrades, I can say that they are true examples of bravery and creative spirit. Inside the prison, they are meticulously clean, organized, etc.; outside, the same.



In all, I praise MIM for its creative spirit and socialist faith in putting forth their point of view. I will nevertheless criticize your commercial "adventurism" in the pricing of your material. As you are aware, the people that are uplifted by your paper are people of limited resources, working class (many). Keep the cost reasonable.

Remember what happens to people who commerce with the poverty and suffering of the people. Keep up the good work.

—a friend in the East

P.S. Try to put out more articles from El Diario. They were hard to come by in Peru. I am delighted you have access to them.

MIM responds:

We thank the comrade for taking the time to write to MIM. It is inspirational when we get letters from the masses in support of the PCP, and state their repulsion of the fascist Fujimori regime. Through our articles on the PCP, MIM builds public opinion to support our Maoist comrades in their fight against fascism and imperialism. As for the prices of our materials, we barely get any profits from our sales, and with a few materials we actually lose money. We take our comrade's suggestions at heart, and will investigate our prices.

New York Times assails Shining Path women

by MC5

The capture of a number of women leaders of the Shining Path with Comrade Gonzalo has the bourgeoisie reaching for its usual weapons to keep women away from radical politics—psychiatry and other emotional smears. According to the bourgeois media there is just no way that women can rationally decide to take up revolution. Acknowledging that 40 percent or more of the Shining Path is women, the New York Times nonetheless found it necessary to label these women as crazy. Dr. Matilde Ureta de Caplansky is a psychoanalyst and major source for the New York Times article.

In reference to Sendero women, this psychiatrist "noted a seeming division in their personalities. ... When discussing concepts that had to do with the teaching of Mr. Guzman, 'they suddenly become almost like robots,' Dr. Ureta said. 'They give back to you ideas they are programmed with. But when you switch to other subjects, they return to becoming mostly normal people.'" As usual the bourgeoisie implies that women could not possibly be revolutionaries and, if they are part of Sendero, they must be brainwashed.

Another Sendero detractor says that Sendero women "can be quite coquettish at times. ... This leads many to conclude that though the women play a dominant role, the overriding presence of the patriarchal figure of Mr. Guzman and his ever-present teaching still keep them submissive." In an effort to split the Peruvian Communist Party along gender lines the New York Times is saying that these women comrades cannot be truly independent until they break free of Comrade Gonzalo. MIM believes that such a strategy might work in the United States where a majority of people are middle-class, but not in Peru—where the situation of women is more serious than the patriarchal New York Times can comprehend.

The New York Times is so steeped in individualism and its form of pseudo-feminism that it expects such smears to work as a matter of course. At the end of the article, the New York Times thinks it has scored big points by quoting the psychiatrist: "The role of the male has been one of a drunk who is lazy and dominates the woman by beating her up. It is not that much different in Shining Path. ... Those who have studied the role of women in Shining Path say that such statistics do not necessarily mean they are better treated than women in the rest of Peruvian society, or that Latin machismo has been superseded by a sexless Shining Path."

How impossible it is for a bourgeois mouthpiece to comprehend revolution! So impossible that the mouthpiece unwittingly makes the best argument for revolution possible: the Senderos never said that women can change society by changing the attitudes of their men and reforming them now under a rotten system of capitalist patriarchy. If it is true that Sendero men are no better than other men, they have only proved once again how impossible reform is! True attitudinal change in men must come after the hard work required by structural change.

MIM says the New York Times should keep its mouth shut while the United States has a Congressional membership less than 10% women, never mind 40%. Whatever the supposed failings of Sendero men, at least they work with women who appear to dominate the upper echelons of the party! Meanwhile, at the New York Times, we notice that only two out of the top 20 management positions are held by women. That's 10%.

Notes: New York Times, Nathaniel C. Nash, "Shining Path Women: So Many and So Ferocious," p. a4; p. a26 staff box.

Does Bush oppose Peru's fascism?

by MC49
April 16, 1992

Some progressives ask why Bush is whining about Peru's open-fascism. The bourgeois press answers this question:

"Fujimori's action, taken in the name of 'stability,' is a potentially fatal mistake. It will further

alienate the Indians of the Andean valleys, the impoverished masses in the coastal slums, and the middle class as well. Many will be driven into the arms of the insurgency Fujimori fears."(1)

"By whatever name, [Fujimori's coup] achieves the perverse political feat of converting the Shining Path, until now a fringe assailant of the constitutional order, into its defender. President Fujimori has carelessly endangered his legitimacy."(2)

"Fujimori's action may even play into Shining Path's hands. The rebels have long sought to provoke the government to reveal its true 'fascist' character and thus legitimize armed struggle."(3)

"When he seized extraconstitutional powers for himself last week, Peru's President Alberto Fujimori may have succeeded only in moving the Shining Path rebels a step closer to victory."(4)

Bush is whining because he considers open-fascism to be tactically incorrect for Peru at this time.

There is an alternative reading, which is less likely but worth noting. The U.S. government wants open-fascism, but doesn't want any flak for not publicly opposing it. The circumstantial evidence for this theory is that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Bernard W. Aronson was in Peru on April 5th, 1992. Fujimori's announcement of open-fascism occured that night.

Notes:
1. Boston Globe 4/7/92.
2. Washington Post 4/8/92, p A22.
3. Newsweek 4/20/92, p. 44.
4. U.S. News & World Report 4/20/92, p. 49.

The following essay was written in the context of a political struggle within the United States.

Pacifism and "human-rights," costly illusions

by a comrade

It appears that the main objection many people who believe in human-rights have to Maoism centers around the use of violence. A number of people say the Sendero Luminoso (PCP) in Peru should not use violence to achieve its goals.

In the reasoning of many pacifists and "human-rights" activists, there exists some unspecified middle ground between the oppressive status quo in Third World countries and revolution. One recent critic told us s/he criticizes "both" the Peruvian regime and the Sendero Luminoso—just like Amnesty International.

These critics of the People's War in Peru are afflicted by middle-class illusions. They point to the capitalist and the feudal ruling class's violence in mock disgust and then object when the oppressed move to stop the violence waged against the poor. "Both sides are wrong!," reasons the middle-class activist.

Pacifists and "human-rights" activists believe that the Peruvian people are not smart enough to try "compromise" and "negotiation." Middle-class activists and phony leftists call for the Maoists to adopt the so-called superior moral reasoning of "human-rights."

These perpetual negotiators claim that the right to food, shelter, clothing and medical care is somehow negotiable. They are only correct to the extent that dead people do not complain about loss of food and shelter—much less "free speech." Such "negotiation" is, in fact, murderous delay and cooperation with genocide. It finally resolves conflict in the same way Hitler's "final solution" resolved the "Jewish Question." When the inevitable Warsaw Ghetto uprisings occur, the pacifists and human-rights activists condemn the oppressed for using violence against the oppressor. Fighting back seems to them to be a kind of "new" violence, because they have always overlooked and collaborated with the much greater *traditional* violence of the capitalist system. Peaceniks can accept the existence of prisons and murders sanctified by the laws—which in most countries are laws upholding gun-backed "rights" to own private property, but not the right to eat.

Amnesty International and the like have never shown anyone a country in the modern industrial world where human-rights exist in reality. Amnesty International does not give the oppressed the actual option of LIVING somewhere that has real human-rights. Even those blind to the actions of history's most violent group—U.S. imperialism—do not offer the Third World masses a chance to live inside that fabled paradise of "freedom"—Amerika. Amnesty International even speaks an occasional kind word for a few selected political prisoners in the United

States—while accepting the fact that the "democratic" U.S. has captured the highest per capita number of prisoners in the world.

The Third World masses are not stupid. Although they continually revolt in Peru, Bolivia, the Philippines, Azania, Eritrea, Palestine, etc., the oppressed will gladly quit the revolution and walk right into the kingdom of human-rights the day it actually exists anywhere but in the minds of the fence-sitting, well-fed middle-classes. Set up an Amnesty International human-rights zone in Peru, and the masses will walk right in. There is no question that the oppressed want to live in a world free from political repression and violence.

The pacifists and human-rights activists have no real-world connection to human-rights nor can they name an actual society run on non-violent principles. They are apologists for the violence of imperialism. For the victims of imperialist violence there is no rational choice between violence and non-violence. The only rational choice is between starving and bleeding to death or fighting to live.

At MIM we believe that the pacifists and so-called human-rights activists have no business telling the oppressed not to defend themselves when they are starving to death or dying from preventable diseases. In a world in which 40,000 Third World children die every day from starvation and preventable diseases,(1) *self-defense* is the most basic human-right.

The World Bank recognizes that in Peru food available on the capitalist market could only feed 90% of the population *if* it was distributed to the people. Revolutionary China fed its people with a much smaller per capita economy than Peru. Once the Maoist revolution in Peru succeeds, Peru will also be able to feed all its people.

But the friends of imperialism at Amnesty International do not even consider the relationship between the "human-right" to eat and the endemic starvation engineered throughout the world by capitalism. If the pacifists and "human-rights" activists want to preach, let them preach the following:

1. Third World landlords: surrender your land peacefully in land reform. The human-right to eat is not negotiable.

2. Imperialists: withdraw your military aid to landlords and bureaucrat capitalists around the world. Withdraw your occupation forces in Korea, the Philippines, etc. The right to self-determination and freedom from military violence is not negotiable.

3. Multinational companies: surrender your operations to the oppressed peoples. The food, drugs and clothing production you control suppress the inviolable right of the people to live. When the oppressors violently negate the human-rights of the oppressed, a violent response is justified. When the middle-class preaches non-violence to the oppressed, the ruling class is pleased. The ruling class knows that as long as it alone can monopolize the use of force, pacifism is a good thing. "Let everyone else be a pacifist and human-rights preacher as long as the ruling-class stays in power," reasons the bourgeoisie—which from time to time gives an award to these middle-class puritans.

Notes: New York Times 9/17/92, p. 24.

Related readings:

Ask MIM for articles on Mao and Gandhi, the Great Leap Forward, and violence in the Third World. Also see Christopher Caudwell, *Studies and Further Studies in a Dying Culture.*

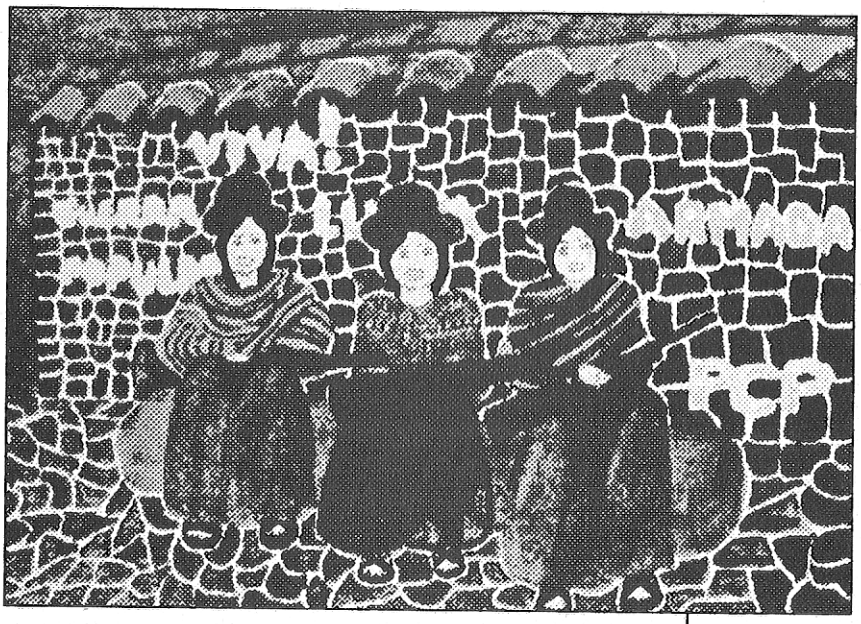
Comrade Gonzalo and the "Personality Cult"

by MC5

Since the arrest of Comrade Gonzalo in Peru, there has been an international discussion of his particular role in communist history. An episode of "Dispatches," televised on British Channel 4 , featured the people of the Sendero Luminoso. MIM shows this documentary to audiences across the USA.

In it, we learn that the revolutionary masses revere Comrade Gonzalo. The degree of this reverence causes us to think about the difference between how we view revolutionary leaders in imperialist countries and how the masses look at them in Peru.

In a newspaper interview before his arrest, Comrade Gonzalo said he opposed the revisionist thesis of the "personality cult," because in 1956 the Russian leader Khruschev used it to attack Soviet leader J. Stalin's legacy from 1924-1953. Khruschev denounced the "Stalin cult of personality" in a famous 1956 speech in which Khruschev made it



clear that the Soviet Union was charting a new state capitalist course far removed from Stalin's socialist path.

In this historical example, Maoists must side with Comrade Gonzalo and oppose Khruschev's sell-out of Marxism. In an odd way, Khruschev catered to individualism by comparing an historical leader and fundamental policies of the dictatorship of the proletariat to Stalin's individual behaviors. If personality cults are examples of reactionary ruling class ideologies, it is also true that overemphasizing the negative aspects of personality cults is a backhanded way of making the individual of supreme importance. People who believe individual leaders are saviors and people who believe certain leaders are all-powerful devils share the underlying assumption of individualism.

Bourgeois historians evaluate history as a parade of leading personalities complete with individual merits and faults. These scholars fail to understand the role of the masses throughout human history and the existence of deep, inexorable social forces that shape all human behavior. Most historians adjust to the conditions of bourgeois dictatorship and write history as if it were one triumphant march of the bourgeois elite—some rulers being more successful than others.

We communists do not attach overwhelming importance to the question of the personality cult. We seek to avoid personality cults for reasons Marx and Mao explained, but we would not divide a vanguard party on that basis. If we were in Gonzalo's party, we certainly would not quit on the basis of the existence of a personality cult. Quite the contrary, there are many issues to explore in understanding the role Comrade Gonzalo plays in the Peruvian Revolution. Furthermore, it stands to reason that those most active in promoting and leading revolution will always be singled out for vilification by the bourgeoisie. The proletariat is aware that if we do not defend our genuine and unflinching communist leaders, we will have no leadership. We also understand that the unity of proletarian forces is not to be dispensed with lightly.

Elsewhere, MIM has written on what Mao said about Lin Biao's coup attempt and its connection to the issue of the personality cult. We are disappointed not to have any material where Comrade Gonzalo addresses this precious historical lesson from the Chinese Cultural Revolution. In his remarks on the subject, Mao said we teach people to revere the truth; hence, it is natural for some people to revere some people more than others.

For example, we communists revere Lenin, in part, because he went against the whole Bolshevik Central Committee on the eve of World War One when he called on international communists to support the defeat of their "own" imperialists. We revere Lenin, in part, because he pushed for the October insurrection when the Central Committee dragged its feet.

While the masses make history and the international proletariat is the vehicle of revolution, the superstructural reflection and expression of the way forward into socialism is not randomly or equally distributed among all the people. We are materialists and realize there is a learnable science of revolution. This science is not simply common sense, anymore than the science of species evolution is common sense.

The science of revolution dictates that we use our rational abilities to study the actual conditions of the international proletariat. From scientific study we derive findings, theories and recommended courses of action. Many times in Peru's history the majority of people calling themselves revolutionaries have been wrong. People calling themselves revolutionary scientists and even Maoists did not recognize the truth that Comrade Gonzalo best represent-

ed in Peru. Consequently, the collective efforts of many supposed vanguard parties ended up in revisionism. For this reason it is necessary to revere Comrade Gonzalo, not for his lifestyle, but for the scientific advances he has made in theory and in practice.

In the West, we attribute too much importance to the efforts of individual scientists like Newton and Einstein. Scientific accomplishments should be viewed as a product of many people's labors. That is not the same thing as saying that we can do without Einstein's advances in physics. The revolutionary class needs a vanguard party to perform scientific analysis and spread that analysis.

This is an arduous burden of the party and making revolution is not the same thing as wishful thinking. We seek the most effective road forward. The burden of critical thought applies even to the party itself. There have been many times when we communists have had to evaluate quite frankly whether the party is right or a particular leader is right. Who represents the best road forward? Not because the leader is nice. Not because the party is fun. We just want to know what's the fastest road out of oppression.

The recognition extended to individuals making revolution should be both more than and less than the recognition extended to natural scientists. It should be less in the sense that we accord a greater role to the masses than the bourgeoisie does and it should be more in the sense that we communists teach people to revere the truth more than the bourgeoisie—which is constantly trying to pass off idealist claptrap and superstitions as reality.

If we do not recognize Einstein's contributions in physics because we dislike Einstein's personality, or because we don't recognize physics as a science, we are certainly fools playing into the hands of ignorance and superstition. There is an unfortunate coincidence between the truth and the individuals chosen by History to speak that truth. The truth does not come ready-made separate from individuals. We must train ourselves to recognize the truth. In practice, that will mean recognizing when one individual or organization is correct.

In Stalin's Communist Party it was often said that there is no way to be correct apart from the party. This is where our sense of democratic centralism comes from, but blindly upholding democratic centralism is not always correct when it comes to fundamental issues.

Even democratic centralism is subject to scientific analysis. When to unite and when to split are not subjects with ready-made answers. When struggling through these questions the role of the individual leader may be ignored only at great peril. Would one attend a physics conference and ignore Einstein? What an Einstein says about physics is not automatically correct, but those of us not well-informed on physics know who we are going to bet on, given the choice between a non-physicist and Einstein.

We may have forgotten that Lenin's Bolsheviks used to call themselves Social Democrats. Somewhere along the line, people decided a split in Social Democratic ranks was necessary to move Russia forward. The Bolsheviks listened to Lenin and they listened to the Menshevik leaders and decided Lenin was more correct. The Bolsheviks decided it was realistic to be more radical than less radical. The split with the Mensheviks and the subsequent application of internationalism during an imperialist war arose because key individuals formulated a scientific analysis and convinced the party to break with the majority of European "socialists" who were calling for their own workers to "defend the fatherland." During World War One, there was no reason to unite people calling themselves socialists simply for the sake of uniting socialists—anymore than there is a reason to assume that any individual is always magically right. The duty to shake up a collectively held but incorrect line always falls first on individuals.

An equally earth-shattering historical event comparable to World War One was the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. Once again, people had a choice. Was Mao right or was the party leadership in China and the Soviet CP right? As much as we wish the Soviet Union had not been on the capitalist-road, it is now abundantly clear to anyone with any sense of reality that the Soviet Union was on the capitalist-road and has in fact returned to full-blown Western-style capitalism. Once again Mao was right; and the so-called Marxists who argued that restoration was impossible were wrong.

As a great revolutionary scientist, Mao accumulated evidence and developed theories explaining the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Mao took action based on this correct analysis thirty years ago. Without Mao's truthful analysis of the Soviet situation, and without the fundamental political consequences of the analysis being put into action, there probably would never have been a Cultural

Revolution in China.

Instead of wasting 30 years, we Maoists have been able to work hard on finding and studying new strategies to fight capitalist-restoration. In contrast, many elderly American so-called communists are only now waking up to smell the coffee. They paid no attention to Mao. Maybe they believed the party was always right. In contrast, Mao understood that collective struggle is the best way to advance, and that is not the same thing as saying the party is always correct.

In Peru we have an example of the same problem. Comrade Gonzalo's legacy from the 1960s is truly remarkable. Compared with the group, Comrade Gonzalo does stand out as an individual. While other communist parties in the world went pro-Soviet, Gonzalo kept alive the anti-revisionist pole in Latin America. When every stripe of revisionism, except pro-Cuban revisionism, was represented in Peru's parliament, Gonzalo led people away from the parliamentary road. Above all, he led the outbreak of armed struggle.

There is nothing inherent in a group of communists that forces the group to always make correct decisions. Sometimes fundamental actions have to be taken that involve bucking the trend or going against the majority or popular opinion. Luckily, Lenin was able to resist the popular pull of revisionist thinking and to convince his comrades of World War One's reactionary imperialist nature and the need for October's urban insurrection.

In the "Dispatches" videotape of the Sendero Luminoso we witness elaborate and emotional praise of Comrade Gonzalo. Some people ask if the praise of Comrade Gonzalo is too flowery and demeaning to the masses' role. In France, the Partisan treats this issue; and some of our Canadian comrades have made it clear that they do not regard Comrade Gonzalo as "their" leader. At another extreme, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai rebuked certain Indian comrades and organizations in the 1970s for proclaiming that Mao Zedong was the leader of India's revolutionary struggle! So high was their regard for Mao Zedong, that the Indian comrades referred to Mao as the Indian vanguard's "chairman" and "helmsman." For its part, MIM is happy to make clear that it regards the Peruvian Communist Party led by Comrade Gonzalo and the Communist Party of the Philippines, founded by Jose Maria Sison, as the most advanced communist parties in the world. As far as individual leaders go, we point to the imprisoned comrades of the Chinese Communist Party—known as the Gang of Four—as possibly being on the same plane as Comrade Gonzalo. In particular, the late Jiang Qing springs to mind.

The Gang of Four upheld the best lessons of revolutionary communism learned throughout the stages of armed struggle and socialist construction. MIM upholds the Gang of Four and Chairperson Gonzalo because it is the duty of communist scientists to take clear positions on the major questions of communist history and to recognize progress when it is made. In Peru, great progress has been made by the Maoist movement and it is idealist-nihilism to fail to accord Comrade Gonzalo and the PCP its proper place.

The masses in Peru have a variety of choices for political leadership. So-called Marxists have been elected officials of Peru's biggest city, Lima; social-democrats have run the national government with the aid of the military; pro-Cuban guerrillas occasionally launch isolated military attacks. It is not unreasonable to form a great emotional attachment to a leader who has been instrumental in finding the road heading out of starvation and fascism in Peru. Gonzalo's success has had life-and-death consequences for the people—the masses appreciate this.

Comrade Gonzalo stands out in Peru's history. One had a choice in the 1960s between following Gonzalo's road or the revisionist road of the majority of people calling themselves communists in supposedly communist parties. MIM likes to think we would have lined up with Gonzalo. We hope we would have struggled through the issues and listened to all the evidence and chosen Gonzalo's approach, because Gonzalo's political line has proven to be quite cor-

rect. The Soviet Union was on the capitalist-road; Cuba's road was not a successful one for Latin America; Deng Xiaoping was and is revisionist; many people in Peru calling themselves Maoists and revolutionaries are not Maoists and there is no way to have a revolutionary party in Peru without armed struggle. When people said he was crazy, messianic, bloodthirsty and so-on, we hope we would have stuck with Comrade Gonzalo.

When scientists first argued that the earth orbits the sun and not the reverse, the Catholic Church opposed them with theoretical arguments for its side—as well as ridicule and murder. We like to think that we would have been astute enough—and brave enough—to have sided with the advanced scientists against the Church.

When we look back on the late 1800s and early 1900s, we hope we would have sided with Ida B. Wells after the U.S. Civil War. She was a very unpopular person among Amerikans at the time because she organized an effective campaign against lynching and for Black rights. Today we see that she was very clearly correct, as the struggle of the Black masses has brought forth certain gains in the fight against lynching.

The truth is rarely instantly popular, even among the oppressed masses, who, as Marx remarked, adjust themselves to the oppressor's domination in ordinary times. The same is true in Peru. Comrade Gonzalo stood up again and again to lead with proletarian science instead of blowing with the winds of opportunism. This is the reason that he is leading what even bourgeois scholars call the most radical revolution in the Western Hemisphere in over 150 years. The obvious success of the Sendero Luminoso is more than enough practical proof of what once were unpopular theories.

The masses in Peru and everywhere are interested in practice. Sure, talk about theory, but can it be put into practice? On this point the masses are astute. They love the truth exposed by the revolutionary scientific method—the truth that "practice is principal." They know that the "Left" in Peru has published many theories and held many government positions and achieved no success in liberating the oppressed. The Peruvian masses are right to revere Comrade Gonzalo even more than physicists revere Einstein. The consequences of Gonzalo Thought are more important to human society and human peace than the miserable applications to which Einstein's theories have been put.

Correct political lines in history are first expressed by individuals. The sooner we recognize the truth as expressed by individuals, the better off we are as a revolutionary movement. Equating Comrade Gonzalo with just any other party leader is to equate revisionism and failure with communism and success. Most of the so-called Marxists in Peru went the wrong way after the death of Stalin. If we don't recognize that truth, and if we don't recognize that Comrade Gonzalo's scientific line has been proven to be right, then we might as well equate Charles Darwin with the biologists who say that Christian creationist theory is as good as the theory of evolution.

Same problem in China

In China, the problem of recognizing the contributions of Mao Zedong is similar—except on a bigger scale. We must recognize the particularities of Chinese culture and the role Mao Zedong played in bringing scientific education to the masses, especially the peasants. There is a sense in which aspects of Mao Zedong Thought are inviolable. This is a true fact, even if it grates on the ears of intellectuals. Mao taught hundreds of millions of people what science is for the first time. In a country where hundreds of millions of people believed in gods, spirits and ancestor worship, it would be wrong not to stand up for Mao Zedong Thought in an absolutist way.

For example, Mao Zedong taught people that "practice is principal" and "seek truth from facts." He also taught millions how to categorize perceptual knowledge and arrive at higher levels of rational knowledge. During the Cultural Revolution, he led the masses in evaluating the disparate theories offered by different factions of the party. For historical and cultural reasons, Mao Zedong Thought includes the scientific method itself and not just the specific theories produced by that method. Most Chinese peasants' first contact with scientific method came from contact with Mao Zedong Thought. In China, the masses were lucky to have such an instruction in practical science.

The overall technical level of the masses in the imperialist countries is higher than that of the masses in China or Peru. The material conditions in the West are more advanced. Despite this, there are parents and pseudo-educators in the imperialist USA who block training for children in sex and other public health subjects for religious reasons. The supposedly more advanced imperialist countries also entertain many pseudo-sciences like psychology and psy-

chiatry, not to mention various pseudo-scientific theories of race and intelligence.

In the United States many educated people have been influenced by progressive scientific thinkers from the general history of Europe history, eg. Newton, Darwin, even Karl Marx. But in Amerika there is no one person with whom the masses associate a scientific method. Americans defend science and technology outright as forces for universal good independently of any single individual's contributions; rather, Amerikans glorify all scientists as an elite group.

In China, science by and for the elites thrived for thousands of years. Universal education was not extended to peasants until after Mao Zedong and the CCP came to power. Throwing out Mao Zedong Thought is not a good idea for the advancement of science in China. In the minds of the Chinese masses, who make science, Mao Zedong Thought includes both the scientific method and excellent samples of scientific work.

Superstitions in Peru

In Peru, the peasants are also subject to superstition. Like Mao Zedong Thought, Gonzalo Thought includes scientific method and is hence malleable and nothing for the laboring classes to fear. To insist on Gonzalo Thought is to recognize scientific method and accept the most advanced interpretation of recent Peruvian history as the work of that method.

How is one to explain to the peasants the history of communism in Peru? How can we say that "practice is principal" and then not recognize that it was Gonzalo who led an effective movement against all odds since the 1960s? How can we say the party is always right—instead of Gonzalo has always been right—when we know the history of Peru and the Soviet and Chinese Communist Parties? If we wish to teach people the scientific method and not just teach them to obey individuals or the party, we must review history and the evidence for and against various theories. When we do so, Gonzalo stands out as a practicing scientist. Scientific practice is also an actual practice within society. If we can't practice scientific method, then we don't really have a scientific method. Practice is principal even in science.

It's too bad that the scientific method itself has to be a part of Gonzalo or Mao Zedong Thought. We would prefer that Gonzalo and Mao Zedong simply contribute theories for consideration, but the bourgeoisie has an interest in squelching science and supporting superstitions and religion. One need only listen to Moyano's supporters in Peru to know that science itself is still controversial among the middle classes. According to these friends of Moyano, women are rooted in the earth and biologically predisposed to avoid political violence.

When we specifically support Gonzalo Thought, we are also supporting the creative scientific method itself and the best products of its activity in Peru. We are supporting a method which has been empirically shown to be flexible and anti-dogmatic.

In Peruvian and Chinese practice, the scientific method itself was first expressed as an idea by an individual and then as an activity engaged in by the *masses*. To accept that the earth revolves around the sun requires two steps—one is to accept scientific method and two is to apply that method correctly. It's a struggle. And the same is true of Gonzalo Thought. A failure to recognize and elevate Gonzalo Thought as it exists in Peru is the failure of scientific reasoning itself. Even if the PCP fails to seize state power, the PCP and Comrade Gonzalo will still have been the most successful revolutionary movement in the history of South America. In the United States, MIM upholds the Black Panther Party's legacy from the 1960s, not because the Black Panthers seized state power and initiated socialism but because the Panthers took the U.S. movement further than it had gone before.

The same is even more true of the struggle Comrade Gonzalo has led. If Comrade Gonzalo's overall line remains correct, the proletariat will come into state power in Peru.

For further reading:

MIM essays on the "Personality Cults" and the "Red Book." For a point of view in French, send checks to Voie Prolétarienne, BP no 95, 93803 Epinay/Seine cedex for literature. Send $5 for "Questions sur le 'Sentier Lumineux.'" or $5 for an issue of the monthly news magazine "Partisan." For a Canadian view, try "Mobilisation," number 1. Send MIM $5 for a copy.

China buys into Peruvian fascism

The People's Republic of China led by social-fascist Deng Xiaoping has become the second largest investor in Peru. China's Capital Steel Corporation bought a state-owned iron company from Peru for $312 million.

To make the purchase, China outbid a consortium of Mexican, Japanese and Chilean investors. The only investor in Peru larger than China is the United States with its copper investments.(1)

When the news of the Chinese purchase was announced, the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), led by President Gonzalo, staged dog hangings in Peru to criticize Deng Xiaoping. The PCP (also known as the Sendero Luminoso) believes, as MIM does, that China is a state-capitalist country and not socialist. The PCP and MIM agree that Deng Xiaoping was a leading agent of capitalist counterrevolution in China after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976.

Deng Xiaoping imprisoned or killed those leading comrades in China that strove to advance Maoism. China's investment in Peru amounts to a bet against the Maoist guerrillas waging war against the fascist regime in Peru. Consequently, MIM is sure that the Chinese investment will pose an inviting target to the Shining Path and we look forward to the day that the PCP nationalizes it.

Despite Deng Xiaoping's real history of opposing Maoism and despite the current conflict between Deng Xiaoping and the Sendero Luminoso, some bourgeois propagandists continue to spread the falsehoods that the PCP and MIM have some connection to Deng Xiaoping's Beijing massacre of June 4th, 1989.

On the contrary, the alliance of investors in Peru makes it all the clearer that it is the U.S. government that has more to do with the Beijing massacre than the Maoists. It is the U.S. government that has enjoyed military agreements with Deng Xiaoping's regime and it is the U.S. government aiding the fight against Sendero Luminoso in Peru.

In 1974 at a speech in the UN in which he acted under democratic centralism and voiced the line of Mao Zedong's party, Deng Xiaoping said: "If one day China should change her color [from revolutionary white to counterrevolutionary white—ed.] and turn into a superpower, if she too should play the tyrant in the world, and everywhere subject others to her bullying, aggression and exploitation, the people of the world should identify her as social-imperialism, expose it, oppose it and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it."(2) The party of Mao Zedong made Deng Xiaoping say this to the United Nations, precisely because it knew he had harbored such plans of becoming a social-imperialist.

...some bourgeois propagandists continue to spread the falsehoods that the PCP and MIM have some connection to Deng Xiaoping's Beijing massacre of June 4th, 1989.

Today, we see Deng Xiaoping succeeding in ever greater ways as a social-imperialist. One example of "success" is the sale of a Chinese company on the New York Stock Exchange on October 9th, 1992. The minivan company, Brilliance China Automotive, sold for $80 million on the stock exchange.(1)

On the other hand, China is also buying many U.S. assets. Whereas the U.S. and Japanese demand for steel is decreasing, Chinese demand is booming. China bought a Delaware steel mill, a Los Angeles steel mill from California Steel and two steel furnaces from USX in Pennsylvania in recent years.

China has also forayed into buying a timber company in Seattle and an aluminum smelter in Australia. In fact, confounding fanciful "human-rights" activists who like to argue that it is impossible to grow economically without adopting nowhere existing moral codes, China is the fastest growing economy in the developing world. For example, Capital Steel Corporation has $500 million a year in profits and hence is in a good position to simply buy what it needs for economic growth.(1) Its choice of helping to economically prop up a shaky regime in Peru gains China brownie points with the U.S. imperialists, and various regimes similar to Peru's, while simultaneously filling a need to export

capital. Fortunately, the vain wishes of the Chinese capitalist class to become partners with U.S. imperialism will only speed up the demise of Chinese social-imperialism at the hands of the exploited toilers of China and Peru.

Notes:
1. International Herald and Tribune 12/31/92-1/1/93, p. 9, 11.
2. Teng Hsiao-ping, "Speech at Special Session of U.N. General Assembly," April 10, 1974 in Raymond Lotta ed., And Mao Makes Five (Chicago: Banner Press, 1978), p. 499.

U.S. Trotskyists and Peru

by a comrade

A Spart [member of the Spartacist League—MC5] asked me what I thought of their latest paper. I told them that I thought it was strange that it had no mention of Peru. Their response was that they've written about Peru before. Furthermore, they said, the PCP [Communist Party of Peru-MC5] is "an anti-working class movement," because their base is among the peasants (and because PCP is terrorist, loves Khmer Rouge, etc., etc.) I guess these pugnacious Trots don't think that peasants work.

SWP, meanwhile, described PCP in their paper as "reactionary national socialists." SWP should know about National Socialism (Nazism): they recently bragged about their recruiting work at a rally for David Duke!(1)(2)

Oh, and at a forum with visiting Cuban exchange students, a Spart asked the students whether there was any interest in Trotskyism in Cuba (tee hee). The answer, predictably, was no. But the Cuban student answering did add that he had seen other Trotskyists in his travels in the U.S.

Notes:
1. Workers Vanguard 4/17/92, p.6.
2. The Militant 4/3/92.

BOOK REVIEW

The Washington Papers: Sendero Luminoso and the Threat of Narcoterrorism

by Gabriela Tarazona-Sevillano with John B. Reuter
Praeger Publishers with The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)1990

by MC45

This book is "intended to meet the need for an authoritative, yet prompt, public appraisal of the major developments in world affairs." From the Foreword: "... with the recent disengagement of the Soviet Union, Senderistas are convinced that they have become the vanguard for world Communist Revolution.

"It is Sendero's links to the international drug trade, however, rather than its radical Maoist doctrine that make it a major source of concern to the United States. ...

"Professor Tarazona-Sevillano is supremely qualified to write about Sendero Luminoso. ... Her intimate understanding of Peruvian society and politics and her objective, dispassionate analysis makes this an invaluable study for students of low-intensity conflict, the drug war, and Latin America, as well as for all Americans concerned about armed conflict in a changing international system."(p. ix; by David E. Long, U.S. Coast Guard Academy)

For the most part, the *Washington Papers'* public appraisal of the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP) is an accurate description of the party, its program, strategy and tactics and relations with the masses—interspersed with baseless ideological obfuscation. MIM calls it baseless because it has no grounding in the facts. The mission of the book—to prove that the U.S. is fighting a war on drugs in Peru, and that the PCP is a power in the international drug trade worthy of such an effort—is unfulfilled.

What can you do when the evidence just isn't there to be found?

Fortunately, no reader has to look further than this book to find the facts that disprove the imperialist dogma. Tarazona-Sevillano has done all the work for us—providing the history to disprove her own analysis—and we're grateful. *Sendero Luminoso and the Threat of Narcoterrorism* is a quick, easy read on why the PCP has such support from the Peruvian people, and why the imperialists are ultimately paper tigers in the face of the masses' strength.

Bureaucrats or revolutionaries?

The book has seven sections: History, Ideology and Goals, Strategy, Organization, Government Response, Narcoterrorism and a Conclusion. Tarazona-Sevillano introduces the section on organization calling the PCP "an intellectually-based, hierarchical insurgency."(p. 54) Two pages later, she notes that "the Sendero leadership has wisely recognized that local people are better able ... to assess potential targets ... than members of the national leadership, who may or may not have visited the area. Hence, the National Central Committee allows the regional commanders a considerable sphere of autonomy."(pp. 56-58) In other words, enemies like to claim that the PCP is authoritarian, isolated from the masses and Peruvian politics. But in reality the PCP has a more flexible, resilient structure which makes it a difficult enemy for the "sluggish ... top-heavy command structure" of the Peruvian military to find and destroy.(p. 58)

On the question of gender oppression, Tarazona-Sevillano can only document the work of the PCP in eliminating sex-based differences in party and military work—e.g., the important posts women hold in the party, and the fact that the PCP consistently works to recruit more women and put them in positions of power—and hope that the fact that this work happens in the context of such an evil movement as the PCP's will discredit it. (pp. 76-78)

Whoa, that ain't communism

The section on PCP ideology is difficult to get through. Tarazona-Sevillano attacks the PCP in the typical fashion of reactionaries: she tries to explain how Gonzalo Thought stands out as an evolution of Marxism, but she does not have a clear understanding of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought (MLMZT). She refers to communism and socialism as the same thing throughout the book, which is probably the source of her statement that Gonzalo Thought calls for a direct leap into communism without an intermediary stage.

Communists since Marx have recognized the need for socialism as the historical stage which follows capitalism and precedes communism. Mao developed the theory that socialism is the stage in which a new bourgeoisie—gaining strength out of its direct access to the means of production through state power—will attempt to seize power from the masses. This struggle, between the masses and the genuine communists who are the servants of the masses, is the Cultural Revolution. Maoists (like Gonzalo) recognize the importance of eliminating all remnants and new forms of capitalism before true communism (statelessness, propertylessness, the end of all power of groups over groups) can be realized. Gonzalo and the PCP do call for New Democratic Republics—base areas which are self-sufficient, building socialism, and ready to defend themselves against the imperialists.

Real terrorists and parasite junkies

Terazona-Sevillano's analysis of the struggle between the Peruvian government and the PCP includes both a measure of the violence ("for every member of the government forces killed in 1983, an average of 37 civilian deaths occurred ... indicative of the government forces' heavy reliance on violent tactics,") and a comparative study of how to organize an effective peasant fighting force.(p. 91) The anti-terrorist laws in Peru (the first of which was enacted in 1981) made it legal for the government forces to arrest, imprison and kill anyone outside the circle of government officials and active supporters.

In addition to using the anti-terrorist laws in its attempt to dismantle the PCP, the government has worked on establishing its own local units in the countryside. It does this by taking apart local structures and relocating, mixing and matching defense committee members from different villages. Peasants are forced to work with people they don't know and may or may not be able to trust politically. The PCP builds on local political organizations, helping peasants to organize for self-sufficiency within established structures, and with the people with whom they have been working all their lives.

After trotting out the standard fare about the PCP being in bed with the Medellin family and the tremendous brutality the party inflicts on the people for the sake of a few drug dollars, Tarazona-Sevillano admits that there is one alliance the PCP holds in the drug trade: protecting the small farmers

from traffickers. She claims that the PCP protects the traffickers, by "disciplining" the growers and protecting trade routes. Yet these two tactics are directly contradictory—either the PCP is protecting the growers from the traffickers or it is oppressing the growers for the benefit of the traffickers—eenie, meenie ...

Tarazona-Sevillano appeals to the mistaken idea that the PCP would throw away its self-reliance and ideology while engaging wholeheartedly in the narco-trade to "contribute to the corrosion and demoralization of the 'Yankee imperialists.'"(p. 118) To do this she ignores the depth of the PCP ideology she has described and its manifestations in practice.

BOOK REVIEW

The Rise of Popular Feminism in Peru: When Women Rebel

by Carol Andreas (Lawrence Hill & Company, Westport Connecticut, 1985)

by MC17 and MC86

When Women Rebel is an excellent sociological study of women's struggles in Peru and one of the best revolutionary feminist books available in Amerika. Andreas is one of the very few scholars who recognizes the advances made by the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) in the revolutionary feminist movement; and the need for communist revolution to overthrow patriarchy—as well as imperialism.

When Women Rebel extensively describes the recent history of the feminist movement in Peru. Andreas dispenses with mainstream bourgeois feminism and demonstrates how what MIM calls *pseudofeminism* is contrary to the political interests and economic needs of the oppressed masses of Peru.

Andreas points out that bourgeois feminists often use the existence of truly oppressed women to further their own upper-class interests—which are antithetical to the interests of exploited females.

When Women Rebel shows how international imperialism has driven Peruvian women out of waged labor and into family subsistence work as single parents. The dilemma of women in Peru is the dilemma of women everywhere in the Third World.

This fact-filled book stresses the role of woman as a vanguard force in revolutionary organizing. In regard to union organizing in the late 1970s, Andreas uncovers the fact that the "formal leadership was male, but the vanguard organizing force was female."(1) She does a fine job of describing the conditions which have propelled women into the top leadership ranks of the PCP. It is true that the PCP's "outstanding military commanders have been women."(2) Andreas is clear in her support for this armed struggle.

MIM would liked to have seen more about the PCP in the book. One gets a sense that the author was being overly neutral and cautious. Rarely is the PCP mentioned by name; instead the phrase "guerrillas" is used to refer to the Party and its forces. This might be confusing to readers who are aware of the "guerrilla" Tupac Amaru—who Andreas never mentions.

As a sociological study, the book also shies away from communist theory. The author takes a clear stand in support of revolutionary feminism, but fails to analyze why the PCP-led revolution is succeeding. Andreas does stress that "reforms" have failed to "work," and that the PCP acts in the actual interests of oppressed women, the peasantry, and urban proletariat. But the reader is left wondering why the PCP is more successful than other revolutionary groups.

In addition, Andreas barely mentions Maoism. For a thorough understanding of the historical basis of PCP-style revolutionary feminist success one must examine the theoretical foundations of the PCP practice. Without such an analysis one is left wondering why the Tupac Amaru or the United Left, for examples, are not equally successful in seizing and building power.

Revolutionaries inside the imperialist countries must take a clear stand in strong support of the objectively *most advanced* revolutionary war in the world today. We must be clear that revolutionaries in the first world *are* in a position to judge—when presented with true information—*which* group struggles are objectively advancing the conditions of the oppressed.

Andreas begins this task with her valuable and informative contribution on revolutionary feminism in the Third world and her support for the contributions of the PCP and the Peruvian people. We must

take this a step further—as Andreas does in her public speeches and other writings—and exert leadership; while making clear our support for the revolutionary feminism of the PCP and its vanguard organizations.

Notes:
1. When Women Rebel . . ., p. 101.
2. Ibid., p. 2.

Chapter 3
Interview with a Chinese Worker

Have you read "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship over the Bourgeoisie" by Zhang Chunqiao?

Zhong: Yes, but it was shooting at the phantom enemy. The real problem was the systematic lack of the supervision of the mass over the officials, not just the individual officials. What Zhang's people did in Shanghai wasn't too much different from Liu Shaoqi's people had done; what Zhang's people did in other cities (e.g., Tianjin, the second largest city in China) was simply stupid (replacing old officials with the new ones from the same breed, promoting Tang Dynasty style dress for women upon Jiang's recommendation).

Summing up strategy and tactics in China since 1966: MIM interview with veteran Chinese industrial worker

In 1992, a veteran Chinese industrial worker noticed MIM's work on questions concerning China and communism. He stepped forward to engage us in a discussion which lasted several weeks. We will refer to him as Zhong—for "middle."

From the beginning, Zhong made it clear that he thought China was capitalist now and that the human species may not deserve communism. A mixture of cynicism and communist ideas continued throughout the whole discussion and Zhong finally concludes that China should have been made into a parliamentary democracy in the 1949 Revolution.

We learn that this worker was at one time more or less a communist and that he definitely engaged in the political struggles in China in the 1960s and 1970s. Zhong shared with MIM a concern about the "bourgeoisie in the party." At times, he sounded ultraleft to MIM by naming Jiang Qing, Wang Hungwen, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan—the Gang of Four (GOF)—as part of the bourgeoisie in the party. Typically, the ultraleft is not happy with anyone and attacks everywhere at once. In the United States, a group of ultraleftists called the Progressive Labor Party also says that the GOF was bourgeois. On the other hand, at other times, Zhong sounded more "right," as when he defended the "Old Guard" in the party and the early Deng Xiaoping years of the late 1970s.

In the end, Zhong concluded that communism could go no further in China. Naturally, that meant that he came to different strategic conclusions than MIM did. What is most interesting is the extent to which Zhong and MIM share some of the same goals. Faced with capitalist restoration in China, what did Zhong conclude? He concluded that socialism cannot keep itself going; hence there is a futility to strategic discussion. One cannot make long-term plans for struggles for socialism if socialism is not possible.

Ultimately, Zhong doubts the dictatorship of the proletariat and calls for parliamentary democracy in China. The way political and bureaucratic leaders in China "grabbed for power" seems to have disturbed Zhong enough to make parliamentary democracy look good to him. No doubt many democratic socialists would be happy to hear about Zhong, but we don't believe that Zhong, who lived in a society with a much lower level of relative corruption, has a good sense of the corruption, money and military struggles that are hidden beneath the surface of parliamentary—or Amerikan—democracy.

... even in the unusual case of Zhong, once one doubts the dictatorship of the proletariat strategy, it seems likely that one will doubt communism entirely.

On the one hand, the dictatorship of the proletariat is only a strategy to reach communism. On the other hand, even in the unusual case of Zhong, once one doubts the dictatorship of the proletariat strategy, it seems likely that one will doubt communism entirely.

This example raises an interesting relationship between ideological line and strategy. Zhong doubts the reality of the dictatorship of the proletariat and then doubts the possibility of communism for the human species. In this one individual we see what frequently happens on a larger scale—the ultraleft leading to the right. First, Zhong doubts the GOF from the ultra-left, mainly for their alleged lifestyle and power-grabbing. Then since even the GOF is not "pure" enough, Zhong ends up swinging back right and seeking parliamentary democracy for China.

Perhaps more interesting to MIM is the issue of the extreme unpopularity of the Gang of Four in China. Did Jiang Qing attack too broadly and wreck the movement? As MIM pointed out in MIM Theory 2/3, she correctly attacked Deng Xiaoping, Yang Shangkun and Hua Guofeng—the first two being the main props of the current dictatorship and the latter

being either a fool or conscious rightist.

However, while Jiang Qing caught these creatures who were later to prove their capitalist nature, did she also net some people who were useful allies of the communist movement? The question of how broadly to cast the net is a strategic one. It's a question of priorities and who are friends and enemies within the overall struggle for communism.

Here we only raise the issue to give the reader a question to ponder for the outcome of the most glorious revolutionary struggle in history so far—the Cultural Revolution. No doubt our discussion would benefit from having Zhang Chunqiao, the late Jiang Qing and many others from the Cultural Revolution here to inform us. We will have to do the best we can by piecing together the substantial documentation and human experience that we do have for reference.

THE PLACE OF MAO AND THE "GANG OF FOUR" IN HISTORY

Zhong: Probably we were actually talking about the GOF as it was perceived. As our sources are quite different, I'm not surprised that we don't see eye to eye. All I want to point out is that the ordinary Chinese view the GOF as a pure destructive force, neither socialist nor capitalist.

If you go to China and support Mao, you'll have millions follow you; if you advocate socialism, a lot of people will listen; but if you praise the GOF, you'll be alienating yourself from the masses (and from the former Red Guards, for that matter). Well, don't take my words, ask some other Chinese who were active in the Cultural Revolution years (not the twentysomething youngsters).

MIM: Certainly you are right. This party has talked to thousands of Chinese of all ages, both here and in China and GOF is not very popular. Maybe we U.S. communists are too callous, because we are used to being a minority of 10,000 to 1. It does not bother us that the masses in China oppose GOF 100 to 1. Maybe it should bother us more because the Chinese people are much less corrupt than Amerikan people, not being bought off.

What extent do you think the people in the countryside actually have extensive political views of GOF? Don't you think it makes more sense to talk about their interests? That means talk about program, theory. I know if I talk to Chinese peasants or workers, 99% oppose GOF. But if I talk about policies and programs of the GOF, then the [support] rises quickly.

Another point is that from an international perspective, we have to judge China and GOF in comparison with other movements. You say socialism can't keep itself going, but actually China's revolution lasted a remarkably long time if you think historically. There were innumerable slave revolts that failed in days. But today 95% of the world is free of slavery. In 1850, people made a lot of justifications why slavery would continue in the U.S. South forever and how it was even good for Black people. But now we look back on it and think how horribly primitive to have had slavery! No one dares say anymore that slavery will last forever and that it is good for the slaves.

We will learn from the revolts of the peasants and wage-workers. That's what is so important about GOF, especially "On Exercising All-round Dictatorship over the Bourgeoisie" and "The Social Basis of the Lin Biao Clique." This is something the whole world learned from the Chinese revolutionary masses. Maybe this socialist revolt was only a few decades, but we will learn and come up with better revolts. Enver Hoxha, Fidel Castro, Kim Il Sung, Khruschev—none of these leaders really helped us to understand how capitalism came back in the socialist countries. Mao and the GOF did. Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping have no theory of "bourgeois right" and where the class struggle comes from. It was ridiculous! Deng said there was class struggle, severe class struggle in 1989! He talked endlessly about "bourgeois liberalization" right in the party Politburo (referring to Zhao Ziyang etc.) But you can't have bourgeois liberalization that serious within a party unless there is a bourgeoisie! Class struggle against what?! GOF was clear on this point. That's the only reason we say that they made the most advanced historical contribution to the communist movement. You may be right about a lot of their flaws, but we simply cannot proceed in the communist movement without addressing capitalist-restoration.

Have you read "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship over the Bourgeoisie" by Zhang Chunqiao?

Zhong: Yes, but it was shooting at the phantom enemy. The real problem was the systematic lack of the supervision of the mass over the officials, not just the individual officials. What Zhang's people did in Shanghai wasn't too much different from Liu Shaoqi's people had done; what Zhang's people did in other cities (e.g., Tianjin, the second largest city in China) was simply stupid (replacing old officials with the new ones from the same breed, promoting Tang Dynasty style dress for women upon Jiang's recommendation).

MIM: They [The Gang of Four] were accused of wanting to implement 1967-style Shanghai communes everywhere. (Accused by Hua Guofeng/Deng Xiaoping in 1976-78.)

Zhong: The farmers were not ready for the Commune; even Mao noticed that.

Unfortunately, the Shanghai Commune was not the same as the 1871 Paris Commune. Paris, the ordinary people crashed the old state machine; in Shanghai, it was power to the political nouveau riches. [The Paris Commune actually *failed* to "crush" the machinery of the bourgeois state —MC86] After the power was transferred from the old government to the new revolutionary committees, it became practically impossible for an ordinary worker to be heard, just the same as when the old government was in power. No, the workers didn't have power in the Shanghai Commune. Just look at the leaders of the Commune: Zhang and Yao were from the old government, so was Ma Tianshui (the third ranked official). Wang was a petty official before the Cultural Revolution years.

MIM: Basically, who else but GOF could have ruled China and led a struggle against the bourgeoisie in the party?

Zhong: Mao's idea was to put the officials in touch with people and under the supervision of the people; the GOF was replacing unsupervised old officials with equally unsupervised new officials (mostly from the old government). In the Chinese eyes, Mao wanted to clean up, while the Gang wanted to replace one dynasty with another (of the same nature). The basic point here is that the Gang didn't practice what it preached, and what it preached was the same as what had been preached in the old 17 years. For example, about the privileges the officials enjoyed: in 1965, Mao criticized the excessive use of the chauffeured cars by the government officials (as well as using the cars for private purposes), among other things he found inconsistent with the nature of the Party. He launched the "Office Revolution" movement (literally, revolutionize the offices), which aimed at putting the officials in touch with the ordinary people (e.g., the government officials spent every Thursday working in factories). In the summer of 1966, the masses were more angry with the officials' luxurious life style than with their political standing (few of them were actually on the capitalist road, anyway). Now look at the leaders of the Shanghai Commune: they inherited from the ousted officials their houses, cars, and servants; they raised their salaries to match their new positions; ... .

MIM: Hua arrested them [the GOF] and after that there was no longer any hope for a real struggle against the bourgeoisie in the party.

However, while Jiang Qing caught these creatures who were later to prove their capitalist nature, did she also net some people who were useful allies of the communist movement?

Zhong: Hua wasn't a popular guy in Beijing, but most people in Beijing simply hated the GOF ... In October 1976, people in Beijing were happy and felt ready to continue the process of building socialism in China, which they thought was interrupted by the Cultural Revolution. The ideal at that time was "back to the golden year of 1965." Unfortunately, the "restitution corps" in 1977 was not the same as the one in 1975.

This time, they were mostly power-hungry guys who wanted to make up for what they thought they had lost during the Cultural Revolution years when they were out of power. The socialist moral standard wasn't rebuilt. Then we saw the large scale corruption, reform, mammonism ... .

Many Chinese would prefer the "old style socialism" as they saw in the pre-Cultural Revolution years, when "the books" said that power was to the people and the officials should behave. With today's "socialism with Chinese characteristics," one is praised for exploiting other people.

Many Chinese think that many officials deserved the Cultural Revolution, but still few would welcome the GOF, who represented the destructive, anti-socialist, force in the eyes of ordinary Chinese (a typical saying was that the Gang had accomplished what the Guomindang had failed: destroying the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) old guards, along with the CCP's reputation). Many of my Chinese friends view Mao (and Zhou Enlai) as true believers of socialism, Deng as state-capitalist, and the GOF as merely power-grabbers.

The problem was that the masses in China didn't seize power in the Cultural Revolution years. The Red Guards were victimized in the power struggle between the factions of the CCP. It might be relatively easier to empower the masses at the local levels, via some kind of New England town meetings, but when it comes to the central government in China, people could only keep their fingers crossed and wish that the leaders were still caring revolutionaries. Mao saw the problem, but he thought the solution was to put the leaders in touch with the people. He would let people speak out, but wouldn't let people rule directly (he was probably practically right, as no country was/is directly run by people).

Many Chinese would prefer the "old style socialism" as they saw in the pre-Cultural Revolution years, when "the books" said that power was to the people and the officials should behave.

MIM: By the way, you more than most Chinese in the United States sound a lot like GOF to me.

Zhong: It seems to me that the distinction between Mao and the GOF should be emphasized.

MIM: Enver Hoxha, Kim Il Sung, Khruschev—none of these leaders really helped us to understand how capitalism came back in the socialist countries. Mao and the GOF did.

Zhong: The theory of the continuing revolution was Mao's, not the GOF's. The Gang was using the theory to push its own agenda, which was to grab the power. Wang and Jiang were part of the newly-born bourgeoisie (Zhang and Yao might be just some zealous puritans).

MIM: The GOF was clear on this point. That's the only reason we say that they made the most advanced historical contribution to the communist movement.

Zhong: I would credit Mao for that, not the GOF. The farthest I can go is (to) credit Zhang and Yao, as individuals, for accepting Mao's theory. The Gang as a whole deserved blame (for failing Mao's cause) rather than credit (for advancing the cause, either in theory or in practice).

MIM: The issue has to do with the masses and materialism. Some of our critics say how come the masses didn't support the vanguard if they were really vanguard?

Zhong: If the masses supported the vanguard whole-heartedly, there'd be little making one a vanguard. Leninists believe that the party should lead the masses, while good Marxists don't set out for a goal too remote.

MIM: Our critics say China is still socialist today, as if the masses don't make mistakes.

Zhong: The masses don't have the power in China, but they are not as desperate as they were in the 1930s and 1940s.

MIM: But if you say the GOF is ultraleft, then I just ask who was "Left"?

Zhong: The state capitalists (the uncorrupted ones) in China (a.k.a. CCP). They opposed the private ownership of the means of production; they limited the income gap; they worked to reduce the "three major differences." If they had had their days and allowed for mass participation in politics, the state would be run more directly by the people, not just their proxies (self-appointed, uncontrolled).

MIM: I think you go too far in saying that the workers and peasants didn't produce any socialist leaders.

Zhong: Not in China. Even the worker members of the Revolutionary Committees didn't have much power, let alone the showcase worker members of the People's Congress of today.

EVALUATING JIANG QING'S ROLE IN THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

This is Zhong's reaction to our citation of Jiang Qing's accomplishments in the performing arts.

Zhong: Unfortunately, most sources cited were official publications in the Cultural Revolution years, which incorrectly credited Jiang. Jiang Qing was bad news in Chinese politics: she was too revengeful. She didn't practice what she preached (e.g., the "bourgeois rights"). The Cultural Revolution to Jiang seemed no more than a means to gain political power.

MIM: Can you tell us more about Jiang Qing and Wang Hungwen that you didn't like? Or is there something we can read about it?

Zhong: Wang Hongwen was just a filler—the CCP needed some workers and farmers sitting in the Politburo, serving as symbols. Chen Yonggui the farmer just sat there, doing nothing harmful, and remained uncorrupted (though his son behaved

badly). Wang Hongwen was even worse than Dan Quayle.

MIM: We've read a lot of crap about Jiang Qing—people just can't get over the fact that she was Mao's wife.

Zhong: Not the Chinese. The CCP officials didn't like Jiang, because Jiang was too eager to purge the old guards. The ordinary people didn't like Jiang, because they didn't like a woman playing an important political role, especially not a former actress (the old Chinese looked down upon performing artists). People close to Mao didn't like Jiang, because she was often hysterical and nagged with Mao from time to time (which caused the separation of the couple, by the way).

I didn't like the GOF, because they didn't have a platform, and they seemed to be overwhelmingly concerned with the power. They argued that the monthly bonus the workers received were "incentives of capitalist nature," and banned it in all places except for Shanghai, where they had built a strong power base. I'm not exactly sure of this, but that was what I was told in the late 60s and in the early 70s.

If the GOF had got the power, they would have restored most of the policies in the "old 17 years" (1949-66, the pre-Cultural Revolution years). Therefore, I think they were only using the Cultural Revolution as their means of getting into the power center. However, the CCP officials on "both sides" of the Cultural Revolution years were roughly the same group of people: all in favor of a more or less equalitarian society.

I'd like to see the Cultural Revolution getting rid of the corrupted ones only. But now Deng and his gang have betrayed the revolution. The problem today is way beyond corruption of some individuals; it's the change of the system. Social injustice (in the distribution of the wealth), along with the social evils (drugs, prostitution, gambling, crime,...). By the way, I myself am quite tolerant with drugs/prostitution/gambling, though I don't get involved with any of them (not even drink/smoke, for that matter). I often want to ask Deng why he should have bothered to join the CCP—he could have let the KMT to achieve all he wants to do today (capitalism).

MIM: People focussed on what is necessary to struggle against the bourgeoisie in the party. Everybody has personal flaws.

Zhong: But Jiang was a member of the bourgeoisie within the party.

MIM: We have even met young People's Republic of China nationals who support GOF (but don't work with us.)

Zhong: All four of them? I really don't know anyone who supported Jiang Qing and Wang Hongwen. When the trial of the GOF was on, I dismissed it as mockery and refused to consider Jiang Qing a criminal. Some leaders in my work unit threatened to fix me, but I reminded them that back in 1975-76, they issued me a similar warning when I criticized the GOF. When I talked to Amnesty International guys, I always asked why they didn't appeal for Jiang Qing, who was a typical "political prisoner."

THE ULTRALEFT IN THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

MIM: What did you think of the 5.16?

Zhong: It was more of a frame-up: the 5.16 people were not closely organized at all. There was one small group named after 5.16, which held a certain position. The fighting factions used the label on whomever they didn't like. As far as I knew, the so-called 5.16 people didn't have a platform, thought they were labelled "ultra-leftists" (some people outside Beijing were labelled 5.16, who had nothing ultra-left). Of all the defeated organizations in the Cultural Revolution years, Lin Biao's "special composite fleet" was the only one I know which had (something close to) a platform. Well, it was not exactly Lin's, but it's too complicated a story, of which I don't know much.

MIM: Have you heard of the Progressive Labor Party in this country?

Zhong: No. Is it related to the PLP in Canada (at least in the 1930s) or to Henry Wallace's PP in 1948?

MIM: In 1969, the Progressive Labor Party broke with Mao after being the official pro-Mao party in the United States. Half the American Maoists took the pro-ultra-left line openly and blamed Mao for ending the mass mobilization phase of the revolution, by shutting down the Red Guards.

Zhong: Mao wanted to shake up the old structure, not shut it down. The Red Guards didn't want to compromise, and had to face what every idealist had to. ... The Chinese had been politically inactive for so many years, it wasn't easy, if still possible, to implement the Paris Commune style of "people ruling" in China in those years. Some argued that the lack of education of the ordinary people was the reason that the bureaucratic system would prevail in China for a long time. ... Well, people can be educated. Mao was pushing too hard on this issue.

There were no fighting factions in the early days, when I considered the Red Guards idealistic revolutionaries. Late 1966 saw some factions fighting for the spotlight; the real conflicts came in early 1967, when the "rebels" (students and non-students) began grabbing power from the local (up to provincial) governments, which I saw as deviation from the original goal of the Cultural Revolution.

MIM: The reason I think there really was a 5.16, and outside of Beijing too, is that I read some of its publications. (The "Sheng-wu-lien" of Hunan published consciously ultraleft documents that are available from the Union Research Service and the book titled *The Revolution Is Dead! Long Live the Revolution!*)

Zhong: There wasn't an umbrella organization called 5.16. There was one organization in Beijing called "The 5.16 Corps," though. The real issue, as I was aware, was that Wang-Kuan-Qi (three "leftists" in the Cultural Revolution Group) encouraged people in 5.16 and other groups to attack Zhou Enlai.

The Red Guards didn't want to compromise, and had to face what every idealist had to.

MIM: I've read Red Guards who wanted to "fry" Jiang Qing. How could there be Red Guard flyers supporting the "adverse current" etc.? I'm afraid our libraries here. ...

Zhong: But people were thrown into jail after they pasted up the anti-GOF posters. With the arbitrary distinction between "revolutionary posters" and "counterrevolutionary posters," the "si da" was empty. [The "si da" were the freedoms of speech and assembly guaranteed to the masses, most notably the freedom to put up big character posters in public. Many have charged that the "si da" were abused in the Cultural Revolution—used for factional and personal battles that wrecked the country—but MIM stands by the "si da" and believes we all must learn to distinguish between personal attacks and real political conflicts over the direction and structure of society. —MC5]

THE "GOLDEN AGE" IN CHINA

MIM: The workers didn't have "much power" relative to what? your ideal?

Zhong: Compared to the bureaucrat members of the Revolution Committees. As a matter of fact, most worker/farmer members didn't hold office: the seat (in the Committee) itself had no power at all.

MIM: You aren't really saying the workers had more control in the Golden Age before 1965, are you?

Zhong: No, I'm not.

MIM: By the way, did you support the Anshan Constitution as Mao supported?

Zhong: I did, though floor workers' participation in the management of the factories was very limited, by nature. The Charter didn't actually let workers participate at the company level; I don't think the workers wanted to, anyway. From my own experience, the workers were basically interested in two kinds of participation: technology related (quota, innovation, ...) and everyday life related (housing, ...). They didn't show much interest in marketing, accounting. ...

MIM: Did you like the way Liu Shaoqi wanted to run the Socialist Education Movement compared with how Mao did?

Zhong: The difference between the "first Ten Resolutions" and the "second Ten Resolutions" was not felt in the cities, where the "Twenty-three" covered all. In the countryside, I believe people welcomed the more lenient tone in the "second Ten." Don't take my words; my memory on this is very shaky. I don't remember reading anything about Mao criticizing Liu on this issue; I did read that Liu thought the majority of the local officials in the countryside shouldn't be too harshly punished. The scale of corruption at that time was trivial compared to what we saw in the early 70s, and especially in the mid-to-late 80s. Stealing $30 didn't make one a class enemy. I think Liu wanted the situation to be

more under control, which Mao didn't oppose. The official line was always "cure the disease and save the person," anyway.

MIM: Another point you raised earlier, about the Great Leap Forward (GLF), Liu Shaoqi became one of the absolutist ultraleft supporters of the GLF.

Zhong: This I don't know. I think he just basically kept his mouth shut. Of course everybody was carried out for a while, but Peng Dehuai had quite some supporters at the 8-2 Meeting (1959, Lushan). From what I heard, Mao was going to tell people to cool down, but then he saw Peng take the lead/spotlight and use harsh language, so he changed his mind and decided that the immediate danger was from the right, not from the left. Mao's speech at Lushan was a good piece of work, but it was at the wrong target (Peng wasn't anti-communist at all). When Mao saw the ultraleftism abounding, he tried to reign it in, well before his self-criticism on GLF. His self-criticism didn't get to the local level. He had to wait till the "7,000-people Meeting" ... to let the local officials know that he was responsible for the errors in the GLF.

THE U.S. SITUATION

The Chinese worker admonished MIM not to carry out armed struggle.

MIM: Mao said the revolutionaries in the imperialist countries should not launch armed struggle until the "imperialists are really helpless."

Zhong: He said it better when he talked to some Japanese guests in the 60s. Actually, he said that the armed struggle wasn't the only form (Yes, he said it right in the wake of the Sino-Soviet debate).

MIM: The Black Panther Party in the 1960s and student movement had millions of followers. The leadership was Maoist.

Zhong: Armed struggle is unlikely to work in the United States, if I follow Mao correctly (from his talk with some Japanese guests, about the form of struggle for socialism in Japan).

MIM: The Panthers used guns in accordance with U.S. law—self-defense. Mao also backed other Black nationalist liberation groups here.

Zhong: Mao believed that the racial/ethnical conflicts were, after all, class struggles. The current Chinese government called the LA riot "racial conflict."

[...]

YOUNG CHINESE TODAY

MIM: Also, I think you overestimate the perfection of bourgeois control of Chinese twentysomethings.

Zhong: For the twentysomething Chinese in the United States, make it 99% capitalism supporters.

MIM: Chinese students get a taste of things that are not so great— invasion of Panama, Rodney King etc.

Zhong: Many Chinese students considered Oliver North a national hero, didn't know what was wrong with the Irangate, supported the U.S. invasion of Panama, hailed for the Gulf War...

PROSPECTS FOR COMMUNISM

MIM: What is the reason underlying why people don't deserve socialism/communism?

Zhong: Many people I see in China and in the United States are happy with the systematic exploitation, as long as they can have a share of the profit ("Screw the less fortunate"). The Chinese in the 1950s and the early 60s had a much higher moral standard. As for the workers in the United States, I'm not sure about their class consciousness. I guess you'd understand what I mean if you'd seen U.S. auto workers visiting auto plants in Mexico.

Mao believed that the racial/ethnical conflicts were, after all, class struggles. The current Chinese government called the LA riot "racial conflict."

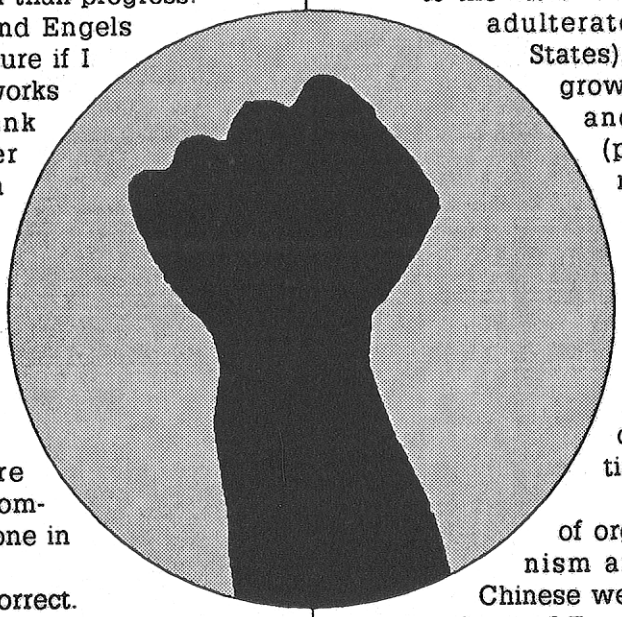
MIM: You know I think you should raise some of this [in public in front of young Chinese intellectuals].

Zhong: I don't see the point talking to a bunch of uninitiative bourgeoisie. [Zhong may have meant "uninitiated" or "passive."]

MIM: [MIM responded to the charge that we are a dying breed.] Believers in continuous revolution are rare, but we're probably not an endangered species.

Zhong: Don't count me in: I think Mao's continuous revolution theory has some inherent flaws. It doesn't make sense to first create (yes, a split infini-

tive) a new bureaucratic bourgeoisie class and then fight it at the cost of the ordinary people. "Classes in a socialist society" sounds almost an oxymoron.If the society has not offered a high productivity and a high level of education (of the ordinary people), it's not time for communism yet. Nothing but an "elitist rule" system (or its variations) has been able to deliver progress (in preparation of communism, either people want it or not). The state-capitalism in some former "socialist" countries didn't seem too much different from the "welfare capitalism" in some other countries. Only better-educated (it doesn't mean good schooling) people can appreciate the value of social justice. Millennium in the modern days can be nothing else but communism. Before people are educated in Marxism, continuous revolution may bring more confusion than progress. The last time I read Marx and Engels was in the 70s, and I'm not sure if I remember/understand their works correctly. However, I think socialism will have a better chance in a society with a well-developed, and better implemented, parliamentary democracy. I know I haven't made myself clear on this basic issue, but just look at you revolutionaries here: How many of them are not college educated?



MIM: Young people are constantly being told that communism is dead and that no one in China even believes in it.

Zhong: It's statistically correct.

MIM: You say there are a lot of people supporting Mao, socialism and Zhou.

Zhong: They'd prefer material prosperity *with* social justice to the ill-distribution of the wealth. However, those in power today are too selfish, and are certainly out of touch with people.

The Chinese in the United States are among the privileged few. In the 1930s, many Chinese from the privileged families joined the revolution (There might be also some privileged families that joined the revolution. There might be also some such examples in the United States: the leftists in the 30s through the early 50s?). But I don't expect to see similar thing happen in today's China.

MIM: Mao and the theory of continuous revolution are the only thing we have that can explain how socialism went down the drain in the USSR and China.

Zhong: Because a new class of bureaucrats was formed within the ruling party, which grabbed the power from the people. The two "S" in "USSR" was empty promise. Revolution died. Long live the revolution! I guess I'm stealing the words from some Frenchman in the 18th century. ... Next time, we'll know better and do better—now I'm stealing the words from an American whom I met at Harvard campus (we talked about the anti-War days in the late 60s and early 70s).

As far as the 1.2 billion Chinese are concerned, I don't think they are ready for communism. What the communists should have done in China is deliver the political power to the people (in a form closer to the literal meaning of democracy than the adulterated version in the United States), open the door to economic growth along with social justice, and let the masses grow up (politically) at a more natural rate—and let the society evolve into communism. Of course that was the CCP once meant to do, but the Party failed, as it formed a new "class enemy," which the Cultural Revolution failed to eliminate—(honestly, I don't know if there's any solution at all).

MIM: [MIM raised the idea of organizing Chinese for communism and mentioned some young Chinese we know who support Mao and the Gang of Four. This was the response from our cynical Chinese worker friend.]

Zhong: Must be a miracle.

MIM POSTSCRIPT:

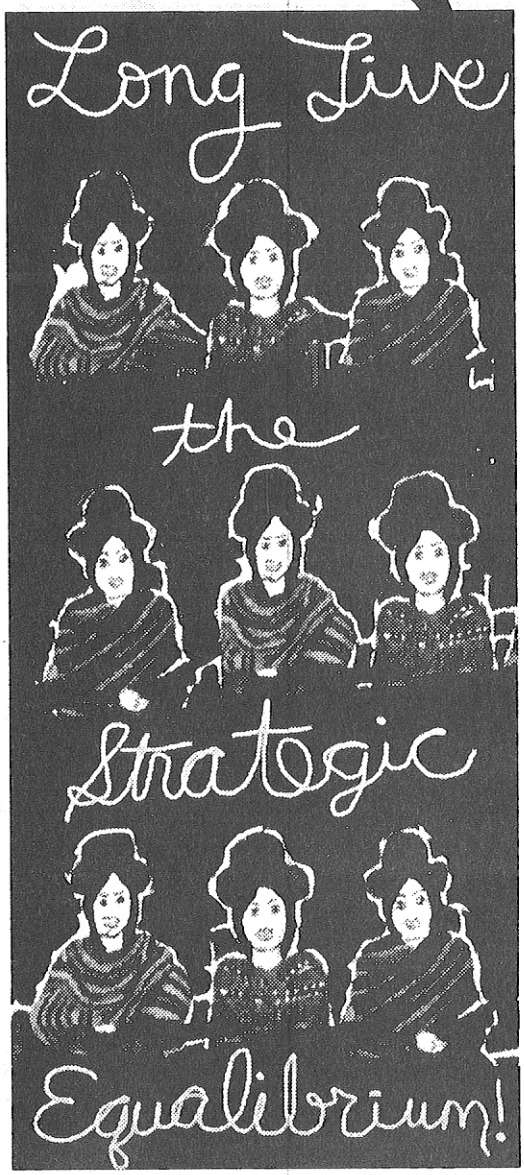
We learn several things from this advanced political discussion with an older generation Chinese industrial worker. Probably most important is the nature of the support for Mao Zedong in China today. Our Chinese friend is more articulate than most in this regard. He longs for China's "Golden Age" of socialism before 1965.

Sometime in the Deng Xiaoping era (1978-), something went wrong and China went to capitalism, Zhong says, but he can't pinpoint any particular historical struggle that could have prevented this.

He refuses to name the power struggle between the Gang of Four and Deng Xiaoping as decisive, because he still believes the Gang of Four were a bourgeoisie in the party themselves.

Our friend Zhong would have us believe that Mao himself would have been a good candidate for political leader had he not made political mistakes. He also speaks well of Zhou Enlai and the "Old Guard" generally; although, he believes Deng Xiaoping and his "Old Guard" went too far by betraying the revolution.

Chapter 4
Line, Strategy and Tactics



INTRODUCTION TO THIS SECTION

Line, strategy and tactics

In this chapter, we examine the relationship between line, strategy and tactics in a general way. We do not seek to elaborate all of MIM's lines, strategies and tactics in this chapter, because that would be impossible. Instead, we encourage a general way of looking at line, strategy and tactics.

Here we define line, strategy and tactics and their interrelations. Briefly put, ideological line is our goals, including a world of peace without group relations of power of people over people. Strategy is our long-term plans to get to various goals on the way to communism. For every stage in the revolutionary struggle, there is a strategy. Finally, tactics are short-term plans, some of which may be used again and again in slightly different circumstances. Tactics differ from strategy in their flexibility and specific nature. Strategy is relatively unchanging while tactics are infinitely mutable and should be designed to bring about victories in individual battles which may be as short as a few seconds.

A consistent "ultraleftist" is someone who has simple moralistic beliefs and has no realistic plans—strategy or tactics. Ultraleftists will tend to judge real-world revolutionaries in the light of principles that only a Jesus/Moses/Mohammed type figure could implement. Ultraleftism thus smacks of religion—idealism. Ultraleftism is called ultraleftism because it is "left" in appearance only.

A "rightist" tends to make everything a matter of tactics. "Rightists" don't care anything about goals or long-term plans.

It is important to separate this kind of "rightist" from right-wingers generally. Here we are talking about "rightists" and "ultraleftists," only because they claim to be communists or something similar. It is important to "steer" between the "ultraleft" and the "right," because nothing about calling oneself a "communist" makes one an automatic communist. Anarchist, Trotskyist and Democratic Party ideas are all ideas that make their influence felt, even within MIM, whether MIM likes it or not (and MIM ideas also make themselves felt whether the bourgeoisie likes it or not.)

"Strategic confidence" is the belief that the proletarian forces will win based on a concrete analysis of society. At this time, MIM has strategic confidence, because it does not believe imperialism can go on forever. Imperialism has its own decay and destruction built right in. If MIM were wrong that imperialism will die, then MIM would be wrong to have "strategic confidence."

Mao said:

"Over a long period we have developed this concept for the struggle against the enemy: strategically we should despise all our enemies, but tactically we should take them all seriously. This also means that we must despise the enemy with respect to the whole, but that we must take him seriously with respect to each and every concrete question. If we do not despise the enemy with respect to the whole, we shall be committing the error of opportunism. Marx and Engels were only two individuals, and yet in those early days they already declared that capitalism would be overthrown throughout the world. But in dealing with concrete problems and particular enemies we shall be committing the error of adventurism unless we take them seriously. In war, battles can only be fought one by one and the enemy forces can only be destroyed one by one. Factories can only be built one by one. The peasants can only plow the land plot by plot. The same is even true of eating a meal. Strategically, we take the eating of a meal lightly—we know we can finish it. But actually we eat it mouthful by mouthful. It is impossible to swallow an entire banquet in one gulp. This is known as piecemeal solution. In military parlance, it is called wiping out the enemy forces one by one." (*Quotations from Chairman Mao*, Beijing, 1972, pp. 79-80)

"Our tactics are 'pit ten against one.'"

(*The Political Thought of Mao Tse Tung*, Stuart Schram ed., p. 281)

Having just told readers that victory is inevitable, MIM will now take it back. In some situations, the meaning of long-term victory or even the destruction of imperialism has no meaning. The Mohawks decided to defend their land at Oka, but

what if they had lost? Would we have said they were wrong to fight? Or perhaps it would have been victory to fight and lose if the alternative was a paring down of Mohawk lands. We treat this issue next.

Losing battles

by MC5
July 26, 1990

There are some situations when no matter what you do, you will lose your battle.

The Attica prison rebellion is a case in point. You can't go on increasingly repressed by fascism forever. You can also get killed for a non-violent prison takeover.

The Mohawks at Oka are another case where despite organization and great political timing and high unity, there is likely to be a high cost, the kind that a dying nation can't afford. [Since the time this was written, the Mohawks have won a pretty clear-cut victory, though the police forces of reaction still circle the Mohawk territory, waiting for a chance to avenge themselves—ed.]

The PLO in Beirut was in a no-win situation too when Israel came in to kick them out. Should they fight Israel or depart on Amerikan boats for dispersal into Arab countries? That was the question.

So what to do in these situations? Well although Attica was repressed and the place is still a hell-hole, that losing struggle did have an incredible impact.

The Mohawks also stand to leave their mark by taking up armed struggle. And they also stand to die through assimilation without armed struggle.

Prison conditions and the situation of genocide are difficult to work into a strategy of winning battles—there are complications to the Maoist strategy of digging imperialism's grave. Strategic confidence means different things in different places. Imperialism is going to die, but will it be gone before the First Nations are gone or broken as a people? The First Nations must decide this question every day when making strategic and tactical decisions.

It would be hard but not impossible to argue that internationalist strategic confidence should mean that the First Nations don't wage armed struggle until the ground has been cleared in the realm of North Amerikan public opinion. If the First Nations can go out amongst other communities and "create public opinion to seize power," they can do so as part of an internationalist community that respects their struggle to exist. On the other hand, the Mohawk Warriors feel a threat to their identity if they work in tandem with internationalists from other countries to the extent of using the same strategies. Would long-term work with internationalists using a public opinion oriented strategy be better for the Mohawk nation or would waging armed struggle and possibly getting killed be better? In both cases internationalists will always work with the First Nations, but it will not always be correct for communists in the First Nations to have the same strategy as the communists in Euro-Amerika or other nations.

The Mohawk Warriors are thinking about this when they say they can't all be killed and that the women hold the culture and check on the men, who do the battle. (This has an interesting implication here for armed struggle; you don't want women in the armed struggle because with them dead, your nation dies off sooner. Men are relatively expendable.)

1993 Postscript:

In the end, the question is whether or not the imperialists can remove all traces of a people. A related question is the difficulty of interpreting losing battles. There are many situations where a stout but losing battle is better than none at all. At the same time, we would be ultraleftists to advise everyone to go into battle all the time full-speed ahead without any concern for the consequences. The answers to these difficult questions should be learned in practice, including practices in other countries and from other times in history. What is success and what is failure depends on the situation. MIM believes that Cuba's revolution and Nicaragua's revolution were less successful than Albania's. All three were small countries with small populations and small economies faced with major imperialist powers. Within countries, some movements are also more successful than others. By making such materialist comparisons, we can better interpret the universally valid sense in which all communists have strategic confidence.

The principal contradiction

In 1991-1992, MIM had a series of votes on the principal contradiction and related questions of the united front. So far MIM has decided the following: 1) The principal contradiction on the world scale is between imperialism and the oppressed nations. 2) Within the North America region the contradiction above is the principal contradiction. 3) Within the Euro-Amerikan nation of North Amerika, the contradiction between young and old is the principal contradiction. MIM has developed the first two theses elsewhere. Here MIM will develop the third.

MIM explicitly rejected the notion that class contradiction is the principal contradiction in the Euro-Amerikan nation. There is no antagonistic class contradiction in the Euro-Amerikan nation, because there are no fundamentally opposed classes in the Euro-Amerikan nations. There are bought-off working classes and other middle classes, but their conflicts with the imperialists, like those of the U.S. imperialists with each other, may be nasty at times, but most often they resolve themselves through friendly negotiation. We should stress that such friendly negotiation is relative. Even imperialists must fight with each other, but we can still see the same underlying class interest in the imperialist camp.

The youth of Euro-Amerika are the social force closest to the interests of the international proletariat within the Euro-Amerikan nation. The reason is that the youth have the most to lose from militarism. While the whole Euro-Amerikan nation benefits from imperialism, the youth also lose from imperialism's product, militarism. It is the youth who are drafted to fight and it is the youth who have the most to lose in a war— a long life they would have had ahead of them.

It is also the youth that have the most to lose from environmental destruction that the anarchy of capitalist production brings about. The destruction of the environment gets worse and worse and can conceivably leave the youth a planet not fit for human life.

Finally, it is the youth who have the most to lose in this difficult period of sex role change. Many conditions for women have changed, but many customs have not. While First World people enjoy short term benefits of sexual privilege, the First World youth would see some benefits in terms of less divorce and less lover-homicide if it could only see to a new, more progressive order for women's liberation.

The principal contradiction is the highest priority contradiction which the communists must seize with all their might for a relatively long period of time—a strategic period. Resolving the principal contradiction in a victory for the internationally oppressed is what does the most to advance the overall struggle toward communism. Next MIM talks about some often misunderstood insights of Mao's in regard to the principal contradiction.

The role of the principal contradiction

The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) and other sects often confuse the difference between fundamental and principal contradictions. This distinction started to gain meaning under Stalin and it was elaborated masterfully by Mao. The profundity and historical vindication of Mao's theory is still not clear to manyt calling themselves Maoists.

This distinction is one of our main weapons in the fight against economism and reductionism. Prior to Mao's formulation, Marxism was often held in a straight-jacket, especially for the simple-minded.

The fundamental contradiction is always the bourgeoisie vs. the proletariat on a world-scale during the domination of the capitalist mode of production on a world-scale. PLP and others tend to make two narrow mistakes in interpreting this: 1) They leave out the international element and then simply equate the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat as the fundamental and principal contradiction in a country. 2) The struggle to resolve this fundamental contradiction is then tied to wage struggles as the foremost expression of class struggle by the PLP and other economists and chauvinists.

What was so radical about Mao's theory is that it recognized that class struggle does not always manifest itself so directly that the Trotskyists can call for 30 for 40 and bring down the system with white workers uniting. No, the principal contradiction is only a manifestation of the fundamental contradiction, a partial expression of the fundamental contradiction.

On the other hand, though being only partially expressive of the fundamental contradiction, the principal contradiction is the most important to resolve and unravel for the international proletariat. Its unraveling does the most to advance the resolution of the fundamental contradiction, which can only be done with the completion of communism. Of course, you seek to unravel as many contradictions as you can, but when there are choices to be made in how to apply the proletarian balance of forces, you must have made the correct choice of principal contradiction.

For almost all practical purposes concerning theory and practice, the principal contradiction is more important than the fundamental contradiction. The war between imperialists could very well be more important to class struggle than the direct class antagonism expressed on picket-lines. Being able to say that, being able to see class struggle as going on in realms that do not involve direct worker to employer conflict—this was radical and has been proven correct with time. It proved that we needed to distinguish between the principal contradiction and the fundamental contradiction.

Those that have stuck to a narrow interpretation of what class struggle is and how the fundamental contradiction manifests itself—these Trotskyists and other simpletons have failed to advance the struggle one iota. Mao on the other hand, recognized at times that the national contradiction in China was principal, and hence was able to defeat successive colonialists. Mao was able to see for instance that the land reform question, the question of direct struggle between peasants and landlords, would have to take a back seat to national struggle at times. This was blasphemy to the Trots, but it turned out to be true.

Mao identified four areas of contradiction that were expressions of the fundamental contradiction and the only way to validate that choice of four was through an examination of history. For example, the internal class struggle of oppressed countries was not a fifth candidate for principal contradiction according to Mao. However, to know that Mao was correct would require an examination of how the communist struggle advanced later. Maybe that fifth one should have been included or one of the original four thrown out.

Of the four candidates for principal contradiction, all involve imperialism in one way or another. The four areas selected by Mao all concern the pressures that imperialism faces from one angle or another. In a way, we can say that ridding the world of imperialism is itself a principal task on the way to ridding the world of capitalism.

MT2/3 argued that while imperialism exists, gender will not be the principal contradiction. However, it may become so at some day in the not-too-distant future. We are hence in line with what Mao said while at the same time leaving the door open to change once imperialism is dead.

Excluding gender as a candidate for principal contradiction is an interesting thing we did as communists. It needs to be thought through. What it means for gender as vaguely defined by Catharine MacKinnon and more precisely defined by MIM is that we cannot see the sexual balance of forces as ever being the key in the imperialist era. Such are the analytical choices that picking a principal contradiction entails.

Morality now

1990
by MC5

The following article is about ultraleft and rightist views of morality.

I would like to generalize about some of the issues we've had in this party. Basically it boils down to a view of the conduct of comrades within capitalist, patriarchal imperialist society in the here and now.

The issue comes up in the monogamy debate, the debate about marriage, children, prisoners, etc. There is a contradiction between our analysis that social problems cannot be resolved within this system and without revolution on the one hand—and party-building and moral/ideologically influenced conduct on the other hand.

It is two largely different things, the party and society at-large. The party must advocate for itself and the masses at large certain moral conducts.

Now does that mean bourgeois morals? Yes and no. It means that the masses should not have reason to dislike our ethical conduct. They should never feel cheated or scammed on by us. If we can *imagine* their feeling this way about our conduct (not our political analysis), then we should do something to avoid that to whatever extent possible.

For example, a university teaching assistant should not go out with his/her students or vice-versa; even though, logically speaking, analytically speaking, there is no difference between that and most of the eroticization of power in society. People don't like grades-for-sex exchanges, so unless that changes, we shouldn't do it.

It is only when people see society falling apart all around and they see the communists as the only way to have any justice at all that we are going to have a revolution. We are not going to achieve that if we allow whatever passes in society to be what we advocate for the masses or allow in the party.

There are two errors in this regard, the ultra-left/Judeo-Christian line especially potent in Amerika and the Liberal line seen everywhere. The ultraleft wants the all correct behavior of perfect communist society now. Accordingly, the ultraleft/Christians set back the struggle for an unrealistic view and end up dragging everybody lower than they would have been if they had pursued realistic goals in stages. The Liberals on the other hand tolerate things that should not be tolerated even in the short-run.

We want to make neither error and do the best of what is possible. We put it this way some time ago: "MIM comrades struggle for the highest degree of equality possible within the capitalist context. ... MIM comrades will also carry out the most advanced practices that are demonstrated possible under capitalism.... MIM will support any reform within capitalism that might possibly mitigate inequality.... MIM cadres will uphold the most advanced laws that exist in the United States in their personal practices."(1)

In his day, Mao adopted a code of conduct for the CCP members. It included things like not taking liberties with women, not stealing a needle or a thread from the masses, etc. The Black Panthers adopted it with a handful of word changes to apply to North American circumstances.

Comrades should not spout ultraleft/Christian nonsense, and they should be viewed in the community as the most scrupulously upright, generous and fair people because of their practice. Our practices should also be seen as most scrupulously serving the international proletariat and its allies. We must solicit and accept criticism from the masses, especially when we do mess up.

We have nothing against robbing banks, but we don't do it. We have something against marriage as an institution, but we do not go out and tell men to dissolve their marriages.

In the first case we risk losing against the enemy. In the second case we avoid spouting hypocrisy.

There is nothing wrong with robbing a bank. The bank is an enemy institution. From a strictly moralistic point of view, we can steal from them.

Currently what is wrong with robbing banks is that it sets back the revolution. The bank-robbing strategy comes from a view that lacks strategic confidence. Instead of working on winnable but mundane battles, revolutionary bank-robbers take a chance on throwing away a lot of troops in one battle. To only have a stomach for spectacular battles and not mundane details is a sign of Liberalism, a lack of revolutionary will.

One does have a 90% chance of getting away with a petty burglary/theft. It's not really worth it though, even with that high a success rate. We're talking small change, compared with a comrade's priceless contributions in other winnable battles and there are already enough people organizing within prisons. After a few thefts, the probabilities do go way up against you. Police detect patterns and you get sloppy.

Stalin robbed banks in Russia, which was a much more ungovernable place than we are living in. It was so corrupt that the party just bought off some police chiefs and interior ministry people. MIM defends Stalin's bank-robbing, because the conditions there were different than they are here.

Stalin's enemies tried to make a big moralistic stink about robbing banks and decades later they also made a stink about his other personal behaviors. In a paragraph in the middle of an anti-Stalin history book strewn with half-truths and historical errors, there is an assertion that Tsarist police charged Stalin with raping a teenager while he was in exile just before the 1917 revolution. There are no details, but the book claims Stalin made payments to the woman for the rest of his life.

Suppose this were true, what should we say? What should the party have done? And what if Stalin were really central in the practice of the revolution? What should his role have been afterwards?

1993 postscript:

Heated questions like this are the type where you may start to see a division between ultraleft and right. The ultraleft will find rapists, child-molesters, ax-murderers and so on under every bed. The right won't care about any issues. The ultraleft can sustain no unity, because it fixates on individual behavior and can find none that it tolerates. The right glosses over issues of principle only to have those issues blow up at unstrategic moments.

Notes: MIM Notes 37, April 1989.

The relationship between line, strategy and tactics

April 20, 1993
by MC5

If comrades are not clear on strategy because they are not clear on line, then there is going to be confusion and breakdowns in the "chain of command" so to speak. The problem is then one of line, not one of inadequate summing up of tactical struggles.

So far in MIM's history, all the major advances have been through advancing around a line. It has been done and continues to be done by thrashing out line questions. The quantity and quality of those questions has advanced.

One can't just take a new party and expect line questions to be all clear. People aren't born Maoists, so there has to be a line struggle to make them so in every aspect of politics. It's a difficult struggle, but there's no way out of it, and every year there are new people who start from the beginning and experienced comrades who forget some of what they used to know.

The upward spiral from practice to theory is not lost when we don't sum up for strategy on a day-to-day basis, because each comrade brings h/h practical experience to the line struggles. Examples of how rational knowledge determined our answers to strategy questions are endless. Should we devote our resources to organizing for labor aristocracy economic demands? Did we answer that through summing up the party's tactical practice? No.

Should we join most of the other self-labeled Maoists in North America in the Jesse Jackson Rainbow Coalition? If we had listened to the masses or even the majority of "Maoists" on a tactical basis and summed that up for strategy, guess where we would be right now?

Should we work inside mass organizations that we did not set up? Here again the large scale lessons were learned from the largest experiences, like PL's. MIM's own practice could have gone in any direction on single-issue-organizing, but it was the summation of broad U.S. history that allowed the party to pick one direction and go with it. There are always strategic and tactical justifications/reasons for going one way or another in everyday experience. One has to relate to history and theory if one is really going to have a rudder.

Another example is armed struggle. Should we have a long period of armed struggle now? Some dizzy Weatherpeople did try to sum up their own practices and they ended up justifying the drug culture to support their armed struggle. For our party to undertake some tactical armed struggle just to sum it up for strategy would be foolish. The lessons have been learned already and paid for with blood and prison—both here and abroad where there are industrialized regions that have had armed struggle. We are not the first kids on the block to want communism and armed struggle; hence, we must take history and a theoretical analysis of it extremely seriously.

All these strategy questions—what classes to organize, where to organize, to use what arms—all these are broad strategic questions that we must answer principally from the rational knowledge side, not our own practice. (It may appear otherwise because questions typically arise in non-theoretical practice.) Typically we ask history where is the beef for the communists and, prodded with the science of Maoism, it answers. There is no strategy question that this does not apply to.

Our understanding of strategy comes from Stalin and Mao. Strategy is a plan that holds for a relatively long historical period of time. We don't need to sum it up on a day-to-day basis—unless of course the real purpose is to change the strategy on a day-to-day basis and implement those changes in tactics—i.e. micro management and pragmatism negate the role of theory and rational knowledge.

Once Gonzalo was arrested, there was an immediate struggle within the PCP to stick to

Gonzalo's specific strategic plan created for this period and not take up opportunism by changing the strategy just because Gonzalo was captured. Furthermore, the masses marched chanting "Long live the strategic equilibrium!" Everybody in the PCP—including the newest peasant ally—is informed of the basics of the plans. That is only possible because they do not change on a day-to-day basis. The tactics change.

There really is no substitute for getting a hold of the "general line." If the goals and strategy are clear in comrades' minds, then tactical flexibility will only be a great plus. If we are forming a position, because our very strategy is at question—that is a recipe for pragmatism. It's a recipe for opportunism when there is no active relationship between theory and strategy.

In pragmatist thought, theory at best looks like something you deposit in a history book after you've completed your tactical and strategic summations. In reality, strategy must be a manifestation of theory—not the other way around.

Our strategy cannot be formed principally by summing up the party's tactical practice. An analysis of the international proletariat's history has greater weight, especially combined with theory. This is especially true given that we have to work our way through the mass line on an international level, thanks to our bought-off labor aristocracy and gender aristocracy. There are things to be learned from the tactical struggles of our party, but they are not principal in strategy or line questions. They are principal in tactical questions, however. This understanding involves looking closely at what Mao said about empiricism and dogmatism, while also looking carefully at what he said about strategy and tactics.

Now let us handle the possible objection that the dominance of rational knowledge in strategic questions leads to dogmatism: That is only true if your rational knowledge has not accounted for the broad trends of history. In other words, if we were sitting here like the Trots and reading *Capital* and the "Communist Manifesto" and then looking around to pigeonhole everything into quotes from Marx, we would be dogmatists. However, Lenin summed up history broadly and came up with his pamphlet *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. He was no dogmatist and since that time one strategy in the First World has remained unchanged: We don't take sides in purely inter-imperialist wars, and we look for a chance to have a civil war against our bourgeoisie instead. That is a plan that should not be altered or reformed because it is strategic and a matter of ideological line. (The question is different when it comes to inter-imperialist rivalry where a socialist government or movement is at stake.)

OK, don't kill yourself if you asked the question: all good communists ask questions and even keep the bad ones in mind, but that question is very dangerous and lends itself to opportunism.

We have done a lot to sum up our history by looking at Sakai, Edwards, Redstockings, SDS and the Panthers. We are learning lessons from history adequate for changing strategy—another indication we are not dogmatists. Ironically, wasting time summing up the party's tactical practices for strategic purposes on a day-to-day basis can lead to a denial of the importance of studying history and theory. (Our tactical experiences are currently summed up for strategy purposes in the process of line struggle because certain lines will reflect more fully the tactical experiences of comrades overall than other lines.) The result of tactical-fetishism will be both dogmatism and pragmatism. The reason is that our party is too sophisticated to have no theory, so it will pick up bits and pieces dogmatically from the classics without understanding history. Those bits and pieces will be thrown in from time to time while we change courses on tactical questions blindly—both dogmatism and pragmatism.

If a whole Central America solidarity mass organization joins our party somewhere and creates our largest branch, that does not mean we should join such groups or change our newspaper mix of articles for them. These phenomena are all too small to directly impact on our strategy. They should be taken as tactical victories, not as mandates to change a strategy. When the party is much larger and covering much more ground, then its patterns of tactical victories will mean more. Today, the patterns in our tactical victories won't help us with the type of questions most typically raised with MIM.

The minute you ask yourself "which social base should I aim at given my tactical experience," you have hurt yourself and the party. The reason you have hurt the party is that you threw out the role of rational knowledge. Don't try to pick the party's social base in tactical practice! You don't have the right to do so! It has already been chosen for you!

OK, don't kill yourself if you asked the question: all good communists ask questions and even keep the bad ones in mind, but that question is very dangerous and lends itself to opportunism.

So there can be confusion of our tactical knowledge with what we know to be strategically correct. That is one point.

Our most important decisions and advances have been made with reference to recent North Amerikan history. Did we sum up the impact of past MIM Notes domestic articles and international articles before rearranging overall priorities? No. Did we have experience in organizing all the indigenous peoples we have visited and struggled with? No. These decisions to do work are all correct because of rational knowledge, not because of a summation of party tactical practices.

One thing that rational knowledge allows you to do is gauge the development of your party relative to international historical standards, instead of just immediate tactical standards. In point of fact, international articles were very important in recruiting for the party at its early stages, because a comrade gets his/her bearings as a communist from knowing about struggle internationally. When we had enough people with bearings on the international communist movement to come out with a monthly newspaper, we changed our articles to have more and more domestic content, but not because we summed up that domestic articles are more effective relative to international.

To fill that domestic content and do so in line with our strategy we found expanding the prison page quite useful. It was tactically easy, relative to other areas of work to expand. One reason is that the prisoners were attracted to our work at a very conscious level. We did not have to write much more than the basics of our line for the prison masses to flock to us and prod us onward. We did not start as prison organizers and then sum up that tactically this was better work than other work for strategic purposes. The prison masses were drawn to rational knowledge like desert-crawlers for water. That's why MIM is the most important prison organizer in North Amerika.

More on line, strategy and tactics

April 28, 1993
by MC5

U.S.A. 1993: Where do correct ideas come from?
Somewhere else.

The tactical knowledge summed up by Mao Zedong or today by the PCP is a valid source of rational knowledge; although, even in China at the beginning, Lenin's book *Imperialism*, itself based on books and information available to bourgeois economists, took things a long way before China's own communist tactical practices served as useful blocks of information to sum up. Essays like *Imperialism* from other countries are something relatively equally accessible to revolutionary parties of all countries. The Chinese and Peruvian revolutions advanced sufficiently that a summation of tactical practices could occur on a large-scale and contribute greatly to rational knowledge. Tactical practices that are small cannot contribute as much.

The tactical information MIM needs summarized is from the international proletariat as a whole because of our duty to bring down U.S. imperialism. It does not stem principally from our bought off masses. We need to listen to the advanced in South Africa, Peru, Philippines, China and so on for a sense of bearings. We do not have a valid role as the principal summer-uppers out there when it comes to perceptual/tactical knowledge. Being a party in a large country with many local branches, I think we can rest assured that tactical knowledge and experience enters into our line; the point is to consciously restrict it to a secondary role. That is the opposite of the case in countries where the revolutionary movement has developed further.

Another point I would like to make at the risk of sounding like a Chinese nationalist, is that we on the outside of China should recognize the relative weight of historical pieces of information. Due to modesty, the Chinese communists did not always do so.

Part of why all the romanticism and the ephemeral nature of change that is Cuba can't be pinned down and implemented as strategy is that Cuba was a small country where a few hundred peo-

ple in the right place and time made a big difference. Trying to generalize from the Cuban experience to the Latin American experience has been fatal to tens of thousands of masses and still the lesson hasn't been learned.

In China, thousands of operations the scale of the Cuban Revolution were carried out. In Albania, another one was carried out with larger scale fighting, one that was more radical than the Cuban Revolution. In Peru, the Revoluition has gone further in military scale than any previous supposedly communist movement in Latin America; hence, from Latin America's relative perspective (i.e. materialist perspective), Peru would have to be counted as a success even if the revolution died right now.

Ultimately, we must all make a choice, consciously or not. Either your immediate tactical knowledge is principal in deriving strategy or rational knowledge is principal. We must stop with the stuff about theory "being too abstract." For that matter, maybe we should yank that quote "theory without practice ain't shit" given that communists argue over this within their own ranks. We could just as easily say theory-less "practice" is worth less than shit because it sets back the revolution. Fear of theory is one of the bourgeoisie's favorite ways to disempower women and youth. It is also at root a part of bourgeois philosophy—pragmatism.

If the Peruvian Revolution puts a greater emphasis on the active role of rational knowledge than we do, even though the problem of bought-off masses is not much of a problem there comparatively speaking, then I think we can acknowledge that our tactical experience is too limited to be the principal influence on strategy. In practice, as argued in the last few articles, the party already does take rational knowledge as principal and that has been a correct choice as countless struggles with opportunists prove. For that to change would require us to be way beyond this stage of development.

We have to remember what practice is. A practice that is past us is called history. 99% of practices are now history. Summing up practices is summing up history.

Dogmatism

The dogmatist mistake is either to freeze rational knowledge in one historical and cultural context for eternity or to deny the existence of tactical struggle independent of strategy. In this latter form of the dogmatist deviation, every tactical decision is examined for national political ramifications. In the time that the tactic is flogged to death politically, three tests of a tactic could have been completed in practice.

As is inevitable, the party has some of this problem of flogging tactics for political correctness. One reason is the accumulated shock from past theoretical practices that bring people into this party. There is a certain amount of shock to thinking about theory and tactics. Of course the tactic of entering a white union for the benefit of taking it over is politically incorrect. The reason is that we don't have a strategy of leading mass organizations or of being the leaders for white worker economic demands. It's not that the tactic is inherently wrong: if you had the strategy of organizing chauvinist demands it might not be.

The realization that the white women's movement didn't hook up productively with the oppressed is also a shock in practice. Unfortunately, once we realize that everything is controversial, we start to examine every tactic for political malfeasance and end up in dogmatism.

Wherever line and strategy struggles come up that is great. They should be tackled aggressively with reference to pre-existing rational knowledge and we should move forward with rational knowledge, a slow process relatively speaking. If we confuse that with tactics though and try to decide at a tactical level (pragmatism and empiricism) or try to decide everything from a strategic or line level (dogmatism), we have made a mistake. How you get things done is principally a tactical question and should be summed up at that level. What you should get done is strategic.

Strategy is a relative priority thing, a grasping of principal contradictions. It cannot be just a tactical thing. To decide priorities simply by summing up the daily MIM party practice would be a vulgar empiricist approach.

Some comrades a while back suggested that we should not dedicate as much energy to the Peru issue as we do. That is a strategic question.

Comrade X said there is a bad line on Peru in the party because there is not enough energy put into it; hence, the Peru campaign idea is rife with strategy questions for at least some comrades on both sides of the question. There is no answer written in stone about how much time should be devoted to work on the Peru issue, and hence the question is open to strategic debate—what is the relationship amongst the Peruvian and North American revolutionary movements?

It could be that this party really has no reason on a strategic level to choose between a Peru, Mohawk or South Central Los Angeles campaign. Maybe it should be left to the ministries and volunteers. On the other hand, if we decided to emphasize one issue over another, we could make that a strategic decision as well.

The African People's Socialist Party (APSP) has a solution to all this: the road to socialism is painted Black; unite the Black masses here and in Africa. That leaves pretty clearly which project is more important between Peru and the Black nation project.

We don't agree with the Africa-centric approach, but it is a clear approach strategically. Where APSP has its Africa-centric approach, MIM has the official line that the principal contradiction is oppressor vs. oppressed nations. Conceivably, another alternative would be to argue that the principal contradiction in the world today is between the Peruvian socialist revolution and the imperialists. That would be a different candidate for principal contradiction, one that perhaps some comrades around the world have in their minds implicitly.

When people avoid choosing a principal contradiction to work on as strategy, sometimes they make the mistake of thinking we should sum up all our tactical practices and choose which are the best. Is it possible to make such a comparison that is strictly tactical? What would it be? Say you collect up this information. What about it is going to leap out and say "Hi, I'm the tactical answer to choose between radically different projects"? There won't be any tactical answer, because tactical answers can only arise within tactics on tactical questions which only occur in specific and limited circumstances. One cannot learn the best way to distribute *MIM Notes* from *MIM Theory*, much less from the international correspondence ministry. Certainly there is some overlap and mutual inspiration, but we don't need to raise finding that overlap to a strategic or structural level.

"Rational knowledge" is not the opposite of "irrational knowledge." Rational knowledge is concentrated knowledge stripped of perceptual dross. See Mao's Five Essays on Philosophy. Actually, X already has the rational knowledge to "vote about something" in this case: it's a question of strategy. (Comrade X raised the question of what practices should be prioritized among MIM's many projects.) If X doesn't have the rational knowledge necessary, X does not show it because X mistakes tactical knowledge for strategic knowledge and does not address anything strategic.

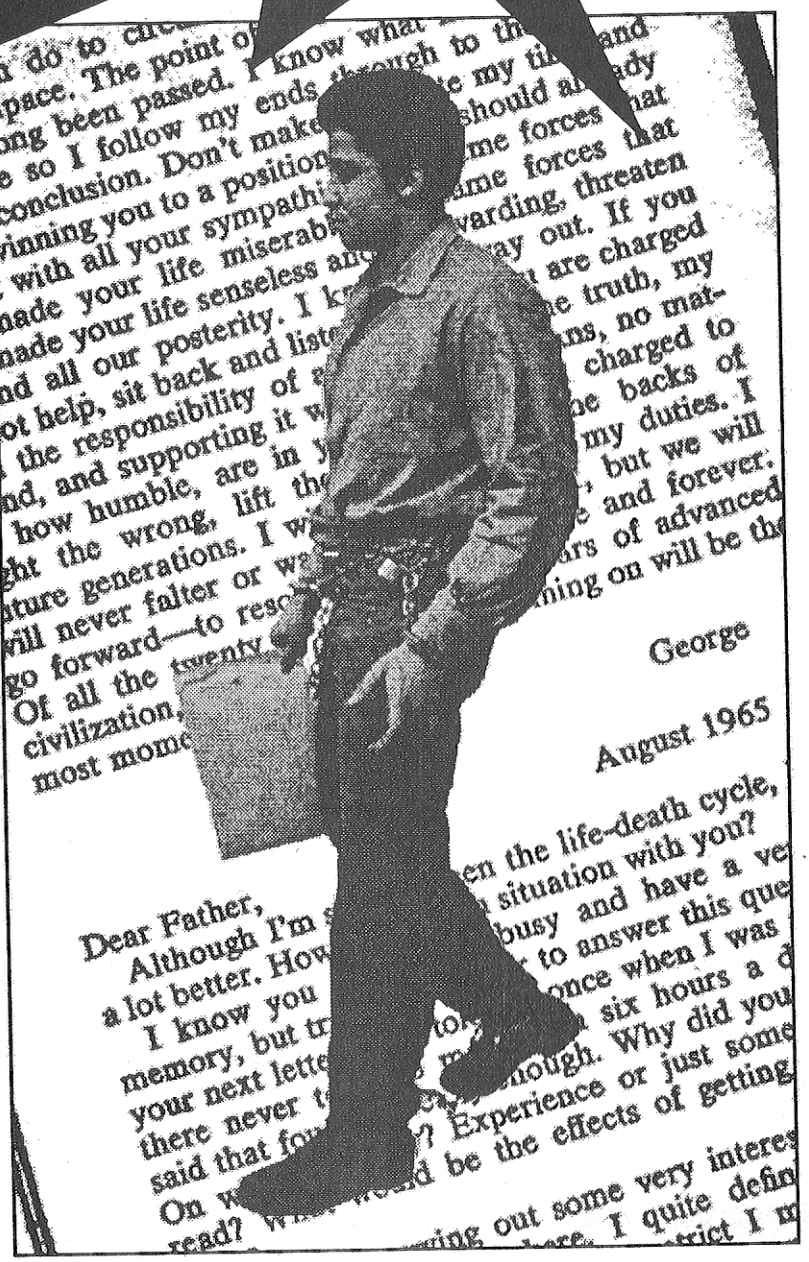
This is a serious problem, because someone looking for tactical knowledge to solve strategic questions will be frustrated for a long time. We have to recognize when something is strategic and when tactical.

If we had developed to having a people's army, we'd see differently because our tactical practice would have to be summed up on a national level so that we would know when it was time to move on to the next strategic stage. Or, if we had the equivalent of a billion dollars, which is about what Lenin's party had given inflation, we'd see things differently.

When there is strategic unity, the comrades function well and are at ease because they know their comrades will approve their tactical decisions. When we don't know what our comrades think in general, we can't unite with our comrades, never mind the oppressed masses.

Chapter 5

Armed Struggle Now: an ultra left deviation



George

August 1965

Dear Father,

INTRODUCTION TO THIS SECTION

Armed struggle

One of the most important strategic questions for revolutionaries in the imperialist countries is armed struggle. In fact, many critics of MIM say that the single most important issue is initiating armed struggle in the imperialist countries. MIM believes its critics are mostly wishful thinkers without a shred of scientific evidence for their arguments.

In contrast with the section on rightist errors in political organizing, this section concerns errors mostly ultraleft in nature—an exception being the Revolutionary Communist Party—on armed struggle. Those advocating immediate armed struggle in the imperialist countries usually do so without any review of the history of armed struggle and its gains and losses. MIM goes so far as to distribute writings from the opposing view that are exceptions to the contrary for internal use. Even in the best of these arguments, emotion is usually the crux of the argument. Typically, ultraleftists get ahead of material conditions and contribute to the defeats suffered by the international proletariat in battle.

If it were a matter of moral principle that communists must wage armed struggle at all times and in all places or not be communists, then we would say the question of armed struggle is one of "ideological line." This would be to signify that there is a fundamental question of vision or ethical principle.

Armed struggle as conceived by Maoists is a strategy. It's something done for a long period of time toward a goal—the next stage of strategy called the dictatorship of the proletariat. For Maoists, armed struggle is part of a plan of action to achieve goals dictated by ideological line.

Often times, strategic questions become line questions. One way that strategic questions become line questions is that ideological mistakes may prevent people from realizing the correct strategy. No radical or revolutionary can deny reality. Facing reality squarely and then seeking to transform it is part of being radical. Pacifism is an ideological line that may prevent someone from adopting a realistic strategy for change. Democratic socialism is another ideological line with the same consequence. Pacifists and democratic socialists may profess the same goals that we communists have, but in the end they are willing to throw out the goals in order to avoid the reality that systems don't change without violence.

To start this section, we will quote at length from Mao Zedong, because many who agree with us on the importance of Mao Zedong's teachings do not agree with what Mao Zedong said about armed struggle in the imperialist countries. Some of our critics go so far as to claim they are the real Maoists because they wage armed struggle in the First World; yet, the direct opposite is true.

For Mao, armed struggle is something communists do to win. It is not something they engage in to feel good about themselves. In the imperialist countries, Mao warns against setting back the movement by engaging in armed struggle prematurely.

Mao on armed struggle in imperialist countries

"Problems of War and Strategy," Nov. 6, 1938 *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 2, 1975, pp. 219-20

I. China's Characteristics and Revolutionary War

The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for China and for all other countries.

But while the principle remains the same, its application by the party of the proletariat finds expression in varying ways according to the varying conditions. Internally, capitalist countries practice bourgeois democracy (not feudalism) when they are not fascist or not at war; in their external relations, they are not oppressed by, but themselves oppress, other nations. Because of these characteristics, it is the task of the party of the proletariat in the capitalist countries to educate the workers and build up strength through a long period of legal struggle, and thus prepare for the final overthrow of capitalism. In these countries, the question is one of a long legal struggle, of utilizing parliament as a platform, of economic and political strikes, of organizing trade unions and educating the workers. There the form of

organization is legal and the form of struggle bloodless (non-military). On the issue of war, the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries oppose the imperialist wars waged by their own countries; if such wars occur, the policy of these Parties is to bring about the defeat of the reactionary governments of their own countries. The one war they want to fight is the civil war for which they are preparing. But this insurrection and war should not be launched until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless, until the majority of the proletariat are determined to rise in arms and fight, and until the rural masses are giving willing help to the proletariat. And when the time comes to launch such an insurrection and war, the first step will be to seize the cities, and then advance into the countryside, and not the other way about. All this has been done by Communist Parties in capitalist countries, and it has been proved correct by the October Revolution in Russia."

MC5 adds:

The greatest socialist revolutions have had the advantage of having the ruling class's state smashed in world war—e.g. Russia, China, Albania. The world wars cleared the ground so to speak to leave the bourgeoisie "really helpless." In China the reasons for that helplessness are addressed by Mao in his *Selected Works*.

Korea saw the ground cleared in a special war between the East and West. The Vietnamese also benefited to some extent from WWII and precisely because the imperialists were not so "helpless," their revolution involved intense suffering at the hands of U.S. imperialism. Other long-drawn out protracted wars have gone on in Eritrea, the Philippines and Peru. Such is possible in the oppressed countries for reasons Mao explains. Yet, even in the oppressed countries, intra-bourgeois and inter-imperialist wars speed up the victory of revolution.

Focoism

The following article is from MIM Theory 12, 1988 (before the new MIM Theory journal started)

MIM readers consistently ask about various proponents of focoism, a political line which MIM has yet to address. There is a good reason to review the question at this time. According to a newspaper in Mexico City there was recently a splinter expelled from the Sendero Luminoso for Castroite deviations from Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought.

Certain supporters of the Shining Path were supposedly expelled for indiscriminately distributing weapons. Furthermore, according to the bourgeois press, and there is no confirmation from the Senderos, the Maoists have used armed struggle against the pro-Cuban Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement.(1) In any case, there are two distinct armed struggles going on in Peru right now. One is led by Maoists, the other by Castroites/focoists.

It appears that so far the Maoist struggle is more successful, but it would be difficult to say that therefore Maoism is better than focoism, especially since no one has brought the Peruvian revolution to complete victory yet. [In 1993, we can safely say that Maoism has proved itself more successful than focoism in the case of Peru as well, because the focoists have disbanded in a total capitulation to the state. The focoists didn't even have the good sense to surrender to the PCP instead of Fujimori. There is now no political trend in Peru that has not belonged to the government or capitulated to the government except the Maoist PCP—MC5, 1993]

Furthermore, the bourgeoisie seems to vilify both movements in the mass media. As for the Amerikan "left," one might expect that it will converge in support of the Castroites if possible. [This also turned out to be a correct prediction. Some "Left" organizations like Solidarity even tailed after parliamentary groups in Peru that supported Fujimori in the elections and subsequently joined his cabinet—MC5, 1993] The Guardian has already run an article sympathetic to the Castroites and critical of the Maoists. [Given mistakes like that, it is not surprising that the Guardian has since folded—MC5, 1993]

If it is true that the Senderos expelled Castroites from its party, it is not necessarily true that the Senderos were guilty of liberalism, as Hoxhaites might contend. As every ideological stripe of reformism and revisionism in the world is involved in parliamentary cretinism in Peru, the social base in favor of armed struggle appears to have backed up the Senderos. It is perhaps inevitable in Latin America that part of that social base finds itself attracted to focoism.

What is perhaps more worthy of serious analy-

sis is the influence of focoism on the Sendero line, if any. In a previous issue, MIM comrades discussed the Sendero line in favor of "militarization of the party."

The Senderos appear to claim that this is part of their original summation of Chinese experience including the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand, readers of Régis Debray and other focoists would notice his stress on military action as the highest form of propaganda.(2) Debray is also explicit on the relationship of the army to the party: "To subordinate the guerrilla group strategically and tactically to a party that has not radically changed its peacetime organization, or to treat it as one more ramification of party activity brings in its wake a series of fatal military errors."(3) For this reason, Debray opposes the Maoist conception that the party should command the army because he believes that military action is at the center and should not be separated from political experience.(4) In Cuba, it was the army that created the party.(5) Likewise, the Senderos' call for "militarization of the party" implies that the party is not already militarized, and is not already directing the revolutionary armed forces.

Furthermore, spectacular acts of urban sabotage performed by the Senderos if stressed at the expense of rural base-building also seem to indicate a focoist influence. Nonetheless, MIM currently has no definitive information or analyses of possible focoist influences on the Senderos. [MIM has since received much deeper information about the Shining Path and distributes all Shining Path literature available on this and other questions—MC5, 1993]

The debate in the United States today

In the United States, the line between focoism and Maoism is more blurred. This is not surprising given the fact that after Khruschev denounced armed struggle as the path to revolution, revolutionary-minded people in the United States lumped together all Third World revolutionaries in order to discredit the reformist Communist Party, USA.

This kind of thinking has its place. It is still worthwhile to ponder the failure of Trotskyism and reformism in the Third World.

On the other hand, there are concrete differences in how Maoists and focoists organize in the United States.

George and Jonathan Jackson and the Black Panther Party often mentioned Ché and Mao in the same breath. The Weatherman and other descendants of the Revolutionary Youth Movement did the same. For example, in the present, people such as J. Sakai, author of a history book on the United States from a proletarian perspective (*Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*), and E. Tani and K. Sera cite Mao to support focoism.

These Castroites are different than the mere servants of Soviet revisionism in that they see success in Cuba, but do not necessarily uphold the Communist Party in the USA or USSR.

George and Jonathan Jackson summed up the focoist position in the United States well by saying that "we cannot raise consciousness another millimeter" without armed struggle.(6) Focoists believe that small cells of armed revolutionaries can create the conditions of revolution through their actions. Good examples set by foco units will be copied by the masses, according to the focoists.

Ultimately, the focoist is scornful of analysis of concrete conditions except those of military struggle. "Conditions will never be altogether right for a broadly based revolutionary war unless the fascists are stricken by an uncharacteristic fit of total madness.... Should we wait for something that is not likely to occur at least for decades? The conditions that are not present must be manufactured."(7)

George Jackson gives the example of the 1930s as a case where conditions for revolution were present in Amerika, but "the vanguard elements betrayed the people of the nation and the world as a result of their failure to seize the time. The consequences were a catastrophic war and a new round of imperialist expansion."(7) Therefore, the C.P. of the 1930s bears responsibility for the enormous crimes of U.S. imperialism committed since the 1930s, according to Jackson.

There are two levels at which revolutionaries must deal with this argument. First, is it factually correct that revolutionary conditions will not appear for decades to come unless the bourgeoisie makes an uncharacteristic mistake? According to MIM's founding documents, especially on the international situation, this is not the case. Even according to the Weatherman in 1969, this was not the case: "Winning state power in the US will occur as a result of the military forces of the US overextending themselves around the world and being defeated piecemeal; struggle within the US will be a vital part of this process, but when the revolution triumphs in the US it will have been made by the people of the whole world."(8) The pressures of Third World liberation struggles are supplemented by

U.S.-Soviet contention, which has become more of a factor since the time that the Weatherman spoke of the principal contradiction, which was undoubtedly between U.S. imperialism and the Third World at the time. [Obviously this aspect of U.S. militarism has since changed with the near collapse of Russian empire—MC5, 1993]

Secondly, George Jackson, RYM I and J. Sakai all point to the alliance between the bourgeoisified workers and the imperialists as one of the main reasons for the failure of revolution in the United States. Thus, there is a scientific analysis of why the masses in the United States will not support revolution, but no scientific rationale for the course of action supported by Jackson, Sakai, E. Tani, Kaé Sera, et. al. They explain why there are no conditions for mass armed struggle, but then proceed to engage in armed struggle.

The focoists have two replies to this argument. One is an argument with suspiciously Judeo-Christian overtones. Basically, it says the masses of the United States are part of the enemy. They will never support revolution or at least not until the revolutionaries force the state to bring down repression on everybody. All that revolutionaries in the United States can do is serve as an isolated detachment of the Vietnamese, Filipino, Salvadoran, Filippino, etc. proletarian revolutions. Individual revolutionaries will fail in the United States but they will take some of the repressive forces/enemy with them and thus make some contribution to the success of revolutions elsewhere.

This argument smacks of Judeo-Christian ethics because it basically says do what is morally pure even if the real world impact is slight. This is a particularly vicious disease (Judeo-Christian individual conscience-salving, guilt-tripping and existentialism) in the United States where the relatively free market economy provides a material basis for individualistic thinking as opposed to class consciousness.

Additional evidence that Judeo-Christian ideology is at work in the focoist line in the United States comes from Tani and Sera. While Tani and Sera claim to uphold Mao faithfully, along with Ché, Ho, etc., they are quite blunt about Maoist movements in the United States: "We are not going to discuss the 'M-L Party-Building' tendency, since it was always a rightward trend of Bourgeois Marxism imitating the old CPUSA. To us the development of revolutionary forces within the U.S. oppressor nation rested with the efforts and decisions of the overall Anti-imperialist tendency."(9) Sakai, Tani and Sera carefully document their argument against lame pro-Soviet revisionism, reformism and the "Left" generally, but when it comes to what they admit was the largest trend in SDS, they snicker and guffaw without explanation.

The lack of explanation of why armed struggle tactics are appropriate now in the United States, contrary to what Mao and Lin Biao [when Lin Biao was still correct] said, is itself powerful evidence that there is no explanation, only ideological presupposition. These people initiate armed struggle, not because they think that armed struggle offers the best chance of success now, but because they as individuals can feel morally correct for making the greatest sacrifices to fight imperialism now. Such people remind one of the Catholic activists who advised all the workers at a factory to quit their jobs because their production was military-related. These people are not much different than those who leave the United States to demonstrate moral distaste for U.S. policies or to join Third World revolutionary movements to which they can make no contribution. People like these who do not employ the science of Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought in order to win state power for the international proletariat actually endanger the revolution for their own selfish, moralistic ends.

The other rejoinder that focoists have is that subjective conditions create the material conditions for revolution. According to the focoists, the mere example of seeing one bullet down a helicopter will shatter the invincibility of the enemy. Those who believe that it is impossible to defeat the technologically advanced U.S. military will see otherwise in practice: "How would they have felt [the pigs and the people] if the nameless, faceless, lightening-swift soldier of the people could have reached up, twisted the tail of their $200,000 death bird, and hurled it into the streets, broken, ablaze!! I think that sort of thing has more to do with consciousness than anything else I can think of."(10)

Secondly, the focoists say that the bourgeoisie will necessarily wreak repression on the masses in order to attack the revolutionaries.

The Maoist reply to these two arguments is two-fold. First, by ignoring material conditions, the focoists will not demonstrate the weakness of the imperialist state, but instead make themselves Christian martyrs who are useful to the imperialists in search of public proof of their invincibility. That is to say the focoists will unintentionally convince the

masses more than ever before of the myth that the imperialists cannot be defeated—by losing decisively to the imperialists.

Secondly, the imperialists will not have to impose heavy repression to oppose a failed revolution of martyrs/superheroes/media stars. Where it does impose repression, the ruling class may gain the popular support of the bourgeoisified workers in favor of "law and order."

The crux of the issue is this: Do conditions exist for successful armed struggle in Amerika? If not, starting the armed struggle too soon will only taint armed struggle in the minds of those who would otherwise favor armed struggle when conditions are conducive. Premature armed struggle sets back the onset of successful armed struggle. At this stage in history, even setting back the armed struggle a few days may result in a nuclear catastrophe for humanity.

Therefore, Maoists do not regard focoism with a liberal eye.

Lin Biao, second-in-command to Mao at the time, put it this way in 1965:

"If they are to defeat a formidable enemy, revolutionary armed forces should not fight with a reckless disregard for the consequences when there is a great disparity between their own strength and the enemy's. If they do, they will suffer serious losses and bring heavy setbacks to the revolution."(11)

A favorite Mao quote of George Jackson is "When revolution fails. . . it is the fault of the vanguard party."(12) However, this quote can be interpreted to mean that revolution may fail if the vanguard party starts armed struggle too soon or too late. But the real Mao quote that focoists need to come to terms with is as follows:

"Internally, capitalist countries practise bourgeois democracy (not feudalism) when they are not fascist nor at war; in their external relations, they are not opposed by, but themselves oppress other nations. Because of these characteristics.... In these countries, the question is one of long legal struggle ... and the form of struggle bloodless (non-military) ... the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries oppose the imperialist wars waged by their own countries if such wars occur, the policy of these countries is to bring about the defeat of reactionary governments of their own countries. The one war they want to fight is the civil war for which they are preparing. But this ... should not be launched until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless."

Mao continued to uphold this basic line 30 years later, as evidenced in the Lin Biao article of 1965:

"Taking the entire globe, if North America and Western Europe can be called "the cities of the world," then Asia, Africa and Latin America constitute "the rural areas of the world." Since World War II, the proletarian revolutionary movement has for various reasons been temporarily held back in the North American and West European capitalist countries, while the people's revolutionary movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America has been growing vigorously. In a sense, the contemporary world revolution also presents a picture of the encirclement of cities by the rural areas. In the final analysis, the whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority of the world's population."(13)

Grounds of unity: the RYM I line on the Euro-Amerikan masses

Although Maoists need to demarcate from the focoists' military line, the focoists' class analysis of the United States is often right on target. There is nothing in the RYM I class analysis that corresponds to its military line. Rather, the Weatherman's class analysis of 1969 (and Sakai's class analysis today) demonstrate why armed struggle is out of the question at the moment:

"As a whole, the long-range interests of the non-colonial sections of the working class lie with overthrowing imperialism.... However, virtually all of the white working class also has short-range privileges from imperialism, which are not false privileges but very real ones which give them an edge of vested interest and tie them to a certain extent to the imperialists, especially when the latter are in a relatively prosperous phase."(14)

Since the RYM class analysis does not correspond to its military tactics, it is possible for MIM to adopt the RYM class analysis wholesale.

How clearly Jackson formulates the question of the middle classes in the United States compared with Bob Avakian's statement in "Charting..." While Avakian claims to break new ground by re-emphasizing Lenin's formulations on economism, Jackson's explanations were short and easy to understand already by 1971: "A new pig-oriented class has been created at the bottom of our society from which the ruling class will be always able to draw some support."(15) Jackson adds that with victory in World War II, the bourgeoisie was able to offer Euro-Amerikan workers "the flea market that

muted the workers' more genuine demands.... The controlling elites have co-opted large portions of the lowly working class."(16)

There is a difference between someone like Avakian, who tries to form the most revolutionary pole to divert workers' movements and someone like Sakai, who sees white workers allied with the imperialists. Avakian focuses on the history of "economism" in communist efforts in the United States and implies that a correct approach to workers would produce better results. Avakian thus shares with P.L. [Progressive Labor Party] the conviction that incorrect organizing has damaged revolutionary movements among Amerikan workers. On the other hand, RYM I types including Sakai focus on the "alliance" of white workers that "tie them to a certain extent to the imperialists." (Despite the difference of emphasis in "economism" vs. "alliance," neither school of thought necessarily holds that there has been a revolutionary opportunity in the United States since 1929.)

MIM should wish Avakian well with the Revolutionary Communist Party's (RCP) effort to fight "economism" in efforts to organize the bourgeoisified working class. Of the groups that do not see the white working class allied with imperialism in the short run, the RCP is the best. It emphasizes the decisiveness of the Black masses as of Avakian's most recent interview in Revolution magazine. The RCP also emphasizes the other oppressed nationalities and immigrants in the United States while falling short of saying that there is no Euro-Amerikan working class.

Nonetheless, MIM has been moving toward an acceptance of RYM I/Weatherman class analysis of the United States. (See MIM Theory issues 9-11; a political economy for this analysis was developed in new MT1 in 1992.)

Other questions and pro-RYM arguments

There is another possible reason to support RYM military tactics. Perhaps they work, but the public does not know it. When the bourgeoisie wins, as in the Brinks case, everyone hears about it. Yet, the people who are part of the Revolutionary Armed Task Force (RATF) are very capable people, often millionaires in their own right.

This is not to put them down for being capable and resourceful people. In particular the common scorn for the Weatherman as a bunch of rich white kids is incorrect. If they are doing the best thing for the revolution of the international proletariat, then it does not matter who they are.

The question is whether covert gains of the RATF outweigh its public losses. Are there covert gains that the various focoists of the RATF and BLA have won worth the public losses to the revolution?

Undoubtedly there are some successes that the public does not hear about. On the other hand, the Weatherman typically released communiques to publicize its victories.

If the BLA, RATF, etc. cannot publicize their gains, then that in itself is reason to oppose their military tactics. The operation of Mao's mass line depends on the summation of information of the whole movements' successes and failures. Both in terms of propaganda and internal organizational life, communication is necessary.

It is the author's impression that there are focoists cells in operation in the United States. These cells stay separate for security reasons.

On the other hand, on behalf of the focoists, there is perhaps no reason for the labor aristocracy, which is most of the white people in the United States, to hear about victories in armed struggle. Propagandizing among the oppressed masses would be good enough. Between the opportunist strategy of grabbing bourgeois media time and the anarchist approach of influencing only those one meets in day-to-day life, there is a lot of room. However, it has always been a hallmark of focoism to seize the greatest amount of publicity possible and thus spark the prairie fire. It seems unlikely that there are tremendous secret focoist successes.

Tani and Sera describe the anti-imperialists this way: "In late 1969, SDS, the mass national organization of student radicalism and protest, split into two political tendencies. The first was the Anti-imperialist tendency, most visibly led by the Weather Underground Organization.... The second, opposing school of thought was the 'Marxist-Leninist party-building' tendency, initially led by the Progressive Labor Party's 'Worker-Student Alliance' and the Revolutionary Youth Movement 2 student bloc (whose elements became the October League, Revolutionary Communist Party, etc.). This tendency viewed the struggle as a classic, European-style worker vs. capitalist workplace conflict, and advocated using trade union reform campaigns to build a party like the 1930s Old Left. China was seen as the only world vanguard by them."

Ultimately, for Régis Debray and Tani and Sera, the failure of a reputedly revolutionary organization to take up armed struggle immediately defines that

organization as bourgeois. For this reason, Tani and Sera skip over any polemic with Maoism in the United States. Nowhere in the book by Tani and Sera is there any argument why failure to take up armed struggle is bourgeois. Hence, the argument must be gleaned from Jackson and Debray and others.

Notes:
1. Ann Arbor News 1/17/88, p. B1.
2. Debray, Régis. 1967. *Revolution in the Revolution?* NY: Grove Press, p. 56.
3. Ibid., 67-8.
4. Ibid., 88-91.
5. Ibid., 108.
6. George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye*, Bantam Books, 1971, p. 10.
7. Ibid., p. 14.
8. Harold Jacobs, ed. "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows", p. 53
9. Tani, E. & Sera, Kaé. 1985. *False Nationalism False Internationalism: Class Contradictions in the Armed Struggle.* A Seeds Beneath the Snow Publication, p. 133.
10. Jonathan Jackson in George Jackson, Ibid., p. 19.
11. K. Fan, ed. "Long Live the Victory of People's War!" in Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao: Post Revolutionary Writings, p. 383.
12. George Jackson, op cit., p. 27.
13. Fan, op. cit., p. 396.
14. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 65.
15. Ibid., p. 49.
16. Ibid., p. 102.

Letter from Revolutionary Correspondence in Europe

Dear MIM:

We'd like to make a few comments and corrections, without which you couldn't have an accurate and complete idea of what we really are.

Correspondences Révolutionnaires (Revolutionary Correspondence) is a committee aiming to publicize the texts of the communist organizations which acknowledge the necessity to lead armed struggle, today, as well in the capitalist countries as in the dominated ones. To do so, Correspondences Révolutionnaires uses, as a propaganda tool, a review, aiming to impulse theoretical debate in the revolutionary movement.

Correspondences Révolutionnaires was founded in the last months of 1988, just after the arrest and the trial of 4 militants/fighters of the Cellules Communistes Combattantes (CCC/Fighting Communist Cells); that organization led armed struggle in Belgium in 1984 and 1985, attacking with explosives:

- imperialist U.S. targets: Honeywell, Litton, MAN, NATO, Motorola
- political and economic targets, part of the Belgian (or foreign) bourgeoisie oppression and exploitation apparatus: bourgeois political parties, army, "industry bosses federation," Belgian or foreign banks (like the Bank of America).

While they were active, the CCC got support from a public propaganda committee called "Ligne Rouge" (Red Line), that collapsed soon after the arrests in 1986. "Ligne rouge" publicized the texts by the CCC, and, in particular, their conception of the armed struggle for communism, considered as used (in its first stage of development) as a means of (armed) propaganda. Two texts summarize this thesis "about armed struggle" by the CCC and "Armed struggle, strategic and tactical need of the struggle for Revolution," by the revolutionary militant F. Oriach.

This political line is distinct from the Guevarist "foco" theory, since it is based on the analysis of a dialectical process of combined development of class consciousness and the Fighting Communist Party, through both armed and public propaganda.

Moreover, you over-simplified our conception of "being or not being a party"; we think that the "dialectical jump" that can transform a communist organization into the Communist Party is both a qualitative and quantitative one: it is most importantly determined by the degree of class consciousness, both in the vanguards and in the masses. This is more significant, according to us, than the question of "proletarian support and membership," though these matters are clearly linked.

We publish texts by the Spanish PCE(r)/GRAPO, by the Red Brigades ("Brigate Rosse" to settle a little misunderstanding in the previous discussion) and their political heirs in Italy, by the Communist Party of Peru, and by other genuine Marxist-Leninist organizations.

We criticize and condemn the subjectivist line inside the armed European revolutionary movement (Rote Armee Fraktion, BR/PCC, Action Directe), as well as all revisionist organizations (like the PTB, in Belgium).

We are historically linked with the APAPC (Association des Parents et Amis des Prisonniers Communistes/Association of the Communist Prisoners' Parents and Friends), born after the arrest of the 4 CCC comrades: that organization tries to develop solidarity with the communist prisoners in the whole world. It has led several campaigns to support the struggling prisoners from the CCC, the PCEr-GRAPO, the PCP.

Correspondences Révolutionnaires expresses its political ideas through the review, through tracts and posters linked to the social and political present situation (against imperialist wars—like the Gulf War—and against petit-bourgeois pacifism, against the bourgeois plans to impoverish the workers more and more, against the factories' restructuring, always victimizing the workers/ and FOR the armed struggle for communism.)

—In revolutionary solidarity
Correspondences Révolutionnaires
1993

MC5 replies:

Not everyone who advocates armed struggle now in the industrialized countries is a practicing focoist. However, MIM is not aware of anyone who advocates armed struggle now in the First World who believes that the First World bourgeoisie is "really helpless." Most are either moralistic simpletons who could just as easily commit suicide as a matter of principle or they believe that conditions must be prepared for armed struggle through armed struggle. Those arguing the latter have no examples in history that they can point to of success except in the Third World, especially Cuba. Examples of revolution in Europe occurred during or in the aftermath of war. The closest counterexample was the near revolution in Paris in 1968, which failed.

The question remains, with so many examples of bloody sacrifices made in urbanized and industrialized settings in situations where the state was not "really helpless," why do some continue to advocate changing the conditions for armed struggle through armed struggle? Our armed-struggle-now critics know how to counter our theories with other theories, but they have no evidence to substantiate their own. The reason is that these critics are also essentially subjectivists, like the more simple-minded moralists who want to engage in armed struggle now to assuage a guilt complex, no matter what the price to the international proletariat.

Since the analysis of the focoists and other adventurists is repeatedly non-existent or wrong, one must wonder, why does this point of view persist? The answer to this question is separate from what is wrong with the adventurist analysis.

When comrades refuse analysis out of moralistic purity, they commit an ideological mistake. In the case of the armed-struggle-now phenomenon, the problem is the ideological unwillingness to do relatively boring, repetitive and mundane work over decades of time, if necessary. The ultraleft can be excited through armed struggle, but it is unwilling to engage in painstaking struggle. They're with us if there is Hollywood-type excitement, but not if there is not. No wonder the Weather Underground in the United States explicitly justified its drug culture and had a combative free love period of communal sex. For these people, armed struggle, drugs and sex are all just stimulants. To be sure, MIM seeks a proletarian culture to sustain revolutionary commitments, but it will not base its strategy on the moralistic concerns and needs for stimulants that the anti-analysis crowd wants.

There is not much difference between the kind of idealism represented by the armed-struggle-now crowd and Trotskyist idealism which holds that socialism in one country is unrealistic and that all existing revolutions must be criticized. In the end, reality matters to neither camp. They don't make comparisons about what works, when and under what conditions. They are perfectly content to waste their own revolutionary lives and those of others for the excitement of it all. (On this score, we give the focoists more credit than the Trotskyists, because the focoists at least get their excitement from something in the real world—sex, drugs or armed struggle—while the Trotskyists get their excitement from criticizing revolutionary movements based on strictly mental categories.)

We look forward to receiving literature from Correspondences Révolutionnaires that proves us wrong about the history of armed struggle in industrialized settings.

The Foco theory and its relevance to the New Afrikan Liberation Movement

Dear MIM,

The New Afrikan liberation movement at this juncture has reached an impasse, stalemate and breakdown in continuity. Most notably in terms of not pushing a line that's fundamentally correct and consistent with achieving the objectives of liberation and socialism. This paper will explore the contradiction and resolve in brief.

The foco theory, speaking strictly in the military sense, is a nucleus of armed men: soldiers following a political and military line. The New Afrikan contradiction, i.e. our National oppression here in america is very complex and unique, due to elaborate levels of scientific fascism, as shown via Cointelpro, concessions and quasi democracy. Our method of addressing this contradiction in our National oppression must be the result of a concrete analysis of our situation. The gist of the matter is not foco vs. party, or as to which one will be the vanguard since focos cannot be built in isolation. We must keep in mind the objective is to build an infrastructure capable of fielding a people's army to fight for our liberation and socialism.

We are an oppressed people and if we are to seriously challenge our oppression, our political parties are going to have to stop dichotomizing the line, expounding the political, yet negating the military, national liberation, national renaissance and restoration of Nationhood to the people. Whatever may be the headings used in the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon, as correctly pointed out by Fanon. As aforementioned, focos are not built in isolation since a period of preparation is needed for protracted struggle. We must have simultaneous building of the political and military apparatus.

An objective analysis within the context of the New Afrikan liberation movement points to our falling short in the crystallizing of the subjective and objective contradiction that's needed to move the masses to the cognizance of armed resistance. This falling short is the consequence of an incorrect line pushed by our political parties that's more reformist than revolutionary, either out of fear, expediency, or dubious consciousness. "If revolution fails, (doesn't materialize) it's the fault of the vanguard," as pointed out by comrade George Jackson.

Preparation does not mean rhetoric or inaction; it presupposes the antipodes, action and protracted struggle relevant to the caches of arms, retaliatory strikes against the state, liberation of comrades from prisons, building self-defense units that transcend narrow reform and engendering the conditions that will induce the masses to partake in their own liberation. Focos, if correctly applied to our unique situation, can be the spark that jump-starts and directs the New Afrikan liberation movement back on the right track, with or without our so-called progressive political parties. It's patently clear that demonstrations and remonstrations without its concomitant of armed resistance are not effective and defunct. The theory of non-violence applied within the context of american society is a false idea.

Can we expect a reprobate people to concede to an appeal of moral conscience, or attain our liberation by entering a voter's box? NO! Black elected officials number in the thousands, yet our communities are still inundated with hostile pigs, drugs, debauchery and wretchedness.... New Afrikan social reality is mirrored on T.V. screens, newsspeaks and periodicals. For example, Eleanor Bumpurs was murdered by a gang of white pigs; Yusuf Hawkins was beaten and shot to death by a mob of white males; 16 year old Phillip Pannell was shot in the back and killed by a white pig; little Latasha Harlins was murdered upon being shot in the back of the head over a bottle of orange juice, and the murderer was only sentenced to 5 years probation. Then we have Rodney King, who was beaten half to death by a gang of white pigs, who merely received a pat on the back and a not guilty verdict. These are just a few flagrant acts committed against New Afrikan people.

My point is this: social reality in american society makes it imperative that we isolate our enemy, secure arms, learn to use them and defend ourselves. We must collectively struggle on all fronts to achieve the objectives of Liberation and Socialism. This task requires an army working in conjunction

with the purely political head. So in the words of our beloved sister in struggle, Assata Shakur—"There is, and there always will be, until every Black man, woman and child is free, a Black Liberation Army." We are our own army! In turn, we must act accordingly.

It is this writer's hope that this paper will spark progressive thought, conference and action in building an infrastructure capable of fielding a people's army—as the dialectics dictate in one's mind.

(WHEN FREEDOM IS OUTLAWED, ONLY THE OUTLAW WILL BE FREE!)

BUILD TO WIN!

—Prisoner from the Northeast
3/31/93

Note:

The foco theory grew out of the Cuban Revolution and refers to the more or less slow building up through guerrilla warfare of a mobile strategic force which would be the nucleus of a people's army and a future socialist state. (Regis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution*)

MIM'S REPLY:

Build to win!

by MC49

Before discussing MIM's disagreements with the focoist prisoner's essay, MIM would like to point out its agreements. For starters, the focoist says, "Our method ... must be the result of a concrete analysis of our situation." Here, MIM is in complete agreement. MIM finds, however, that a concrete, materialist analysis does not lend support to focoist theory. Secondly, the focoist signs off with the Black Liberation Army (BLA) slogan, "BUILD TO WIN!" MIM agrees with this slogan that we should build the correct line, structures, strategy and tactics necessary to win state power, socialism and ultimately communism. Again, MIM does not see the focoist strategy as a winning one.

MIM's final agreement with the focoist's essay is that "The theory of non-violence applied within the context of american society is a false idea." MIM agrees that pacifist ideology is a dead end. That doesn't mean, however, that the time is right for armed struggle now.

The focoist cites a favorite Mao quote of George Jackson's: "If revolution fails ... it's the fault of the vanguard." But this quote can be interpreted to mean that revolution may fail if the vanguard party starts armed struggle too soon or too late.

Indeed, the breakdown in continuity described by the prisoner in the Black liberation movement was preceded by the Black Panther Party's state-backed disintegration into reformism on the one hand and focoism on the other. The BLA put focoist theory into practice, leading to the killing and jailing of many comrades, and thus to the movement's failure to maintain continuity. If the BLA was not smashed into nonexistence, it has at least been smashed into invisibility, hence the impasse.

MIM does not dichotomize political and military line.

The repression of the BLA could be seen as a tactical setback. But the repeated failure of focoist armed struggle over a period of years since the 1960s and 1970s clearly indicates a problem with the strategy. Focoist strategy has also brought tremendous losses throughout Latin America. Cuba is the only place where focoists succeeded in seizing state power. And there, the focoists' failure to implement the mass line enabled Cuba's current state-capitalist status.(1)

The prisoner from a state in the Northeast says, "The gist of the matter is not foco vs. party, or as to which one will be the vanguard since focos cannot be built in isolation." MIM replies that focoists do not always deny the need for a party, but focoist ideology inherently denies or downplays the decisive role that a vanguard party plays, as described ninety years ago in Lenin's "What is to be Done?" and as seen in the practice of the Bolsheviks, the Communist Party of China, and the Communist Party of Peru, to name a few examples. In the case of Peru, the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) has had tremendous success in mobilizing the masses to seize power, while the focoist Tupac Amaru (MRTA) has carried out many dramatic actions, but failed to build a significant base of public support.(2)

Without naming names, the prisoner accuses "our political parties [of] dichotomizing the line, expounding the political, yet negating the mili-

tary...." MIM does not dichotomize political and military line. MIM's political-military line recognizes that armed struggle now is a serious strategic mistake with deadly consequences, and that the most important battles right now are battles for public opinion. The masses can and do win these battles in many ways. One is by working to build MIM Notes and MIM Theory in the areas of content, distribution, and finance.

While the prisoner says that, "Focos, if correctly applied to our unique situation, can be the spark that jump-starts and directs the New Afrikan liberation movement back on the right track, with or without our so-called progressive political parties," history has consistently shown otherwise. Focoists historically have not jump-started mass movements as quickly as they have invited police repression. To bring the masses into revolutionary political work requires the slow but steady work of building public opinion. Lenin made it clear in "What is to be Done?" that it is crucial to build a revolutionary party around a correct political line and around the use of a newspaper as an organizing tool.(3)

Two examples of the decisiveness of political line can be found in the above essay. The focoist says that it is "imperative that we isolate our enemy," and that "We must collectively struggle on all fronts to achieve the objectives of Liberation and Socialism." But to isolate our enemy, we need to know, as Mao said, who are friends are and who are enemies are. And to achieve liberation and socialism, we need some basic agreement about what liberation and socialism are and are not. This requires study, and is most effectively guided by a vanguard party.

DOWN WITH FOCOISM; BUILD TO WIN!

Notes:
1. "The Cuba Question," MIM Theory 4, pp. 41-48. MIM Theory 4 is available from MIM for $5 cash or check to "ABS."
2. "The Focoist Revolution," in MIM's "What is MIM?" pamphlet, available from MIM for $2 cash or check to "ABS."
3. MIM Theory 12/13 (MIM Theory has since been renumbered), "Focus on focoism: From Peru to Amerika's prisons: focoism or Maoism?" in MIM's Bound Volume, available from MIM for $15 cash or check to "ABS."

ISLAMIC FORCES AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM:

Retrospective on the World Trade Center

by MA302

The attack on the World Trade Center is now long enough ago that it can and must be put into historical perspective so that fundamental political issues can be addressed. What was the real historical purpose for the attack, and who was the real target? The attack on the center of imperialism came about two months after the zionist puppets of those same imperialists expelled some 400 Palestinians with militant Islamic roots from their homeland. The connection between the attack in New York and the expulsions in Palestine are clear to anyone willing to look. The Islamic attack at the heart of imperialism was a loud warning: if your agents attack us in our homeland, we'll attack imperialism in its homeland. On March 3, 1993 the New York Times reported that in January the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine had threatened to blow up a New York skyscraper if the deportees were not allowed to return to their homeland.

This is, of course, not the first time that Islamic militants have responded to imperialist repression in Palestine. The Islamic Group (el-Gama'a el-Islamiya) in Cairo resolved Sadat's betrayal of the Palestinian People in 1981, and they call for a similar fate for Egypt's current president, Mubarak, an imperialist puppet and zionist collaborator like his predecessor. This same group under the leadership of Omar Abdel-Rahman has been accused by the imperialists of being behind the World Trade Center blast. In 1983 Hizbullah in Lebanon took out the imperialist's marine barracks in Beirut. And in 1991 the racist Meir Kahane, the founder of the Jewish Defense League, was assassinated in New York. Again, the imperialists blame the Islamic Front. Up until the attack on Kahane the Islamic forces focused their attacks in their homelands and around its periphery. With Kahane the agenda has clearly changed. The focus of attack now is in the imperialists' homeland. As revolutionaries we had better take note of this and decide what the historical implications are.

On the one hand Islamic militants have

launched an effective attack on the center of imperialism, and have acted with clear purpose to punish those who bankroll the zionist occupiers of Palestine for outrages committed against the People. On the other hand these same Islamic forces are reactionary oppressors of women, children, and non-Islamic working class minorities in their homelands. These contradictions must be analyzed and understood if revolutionaries are going to historically utilize this reality. These contradictions are old ones to those who have lived through the struggle over internationalism vs. national chauvinism. At the international level the Islamic militants are making a considerable contribution to OUR struggle, even though they fail to understand the historical implications of their actions. Their contribution must be recognized since it is through the defeat of imperialism that the people of Palestine, Peru, South Africa ... and North America can really be free to build Socialism. Every national struggle which works to weaken imperialism contributes to that process. At the same time the oppressive reactionary elements within each struggle in their respective homelands must be fought through both action and propaganda.

A clear distinction must be made between the historical role of forces like the Islamic militants and reactionary forces within the imperialist center. Racist and oppressor organizations inside the imperialist system support its dominance and exploitation over those outside its center. Nationalist forces, albeit reactionary at home, may for the present serve as an effective weapon against imperialism. For the present stage of history the Islamic forces which attacked the World Trade Center serve just such an international purpose.

Because of the reactionary character of these Islamic militants at the national level we all find difficulty in expressing support for their actions at the international level. This is an error of dialectical reasoning. The process of struggle against imperialism at the international level serves to undermine the reactionary national elements at the same time. History is not a collection of static, disjoint events, but a unified process. In response to the World Trade Center blast the correct response is:

Right on, Comrades! Death to Imperialism and its zionist puppet. Victory to Free Palestine!!!

June, 1993

MC5 replies:

This is an example of straight-line ultraleft moralizing. We are told that what is ethically correct on an international plane is also correct domestically, and hence we must support the World Trade Center action.

Actually, MIM is inclined to agree that strictly on the international vs. domestic question, MA302 is correct. We can raise no objections to national liberation movements' striking blows against imperialism in principle. Nor can we object to acts of war of the oppressed Palestinian people against the U.S. people.

The question of strategy remains. We do not see a coordinated plan of armed struggle. We see a long history of trading armed conflict for negotiations in the Middle East. As we go to press, the PLO and Israel have come to terms of mutual recognition.

Unsystematic armed struggle of this kind is especially isolated and has a different character than armed struggle connected to base areas or their establishment. U.S. police forces have rounded up suspects connected to the bombing. As is often the case of isolated acts of armed struggle, there appears to have been the expectation of tactical losses, and possibly overall tactical defeat. In this instance, the losses inflicted on the World Trade Center were indeed spectacular, but in most cases the gain has not been so large. Most similar acts would not even serve as a news headline bargaining chip at the negotiation table.

MA302 is careful to guard against certain kinds of influence from Islamic militants. However, MIM is also concerned about the bad influence of isolated acts of armed struggle that do not constitute a thorough revolutionary strategy. Those who have sacrificed themselves in such acts do not lack in heroism, but we must learn from their failures or be guilty of the cowardice of avoiding reality. No more revolutionary resources should be lost in carrying out isolated military acts—losing tactical battles. That is something we have learned from the armed struggles that have gone on since the 1960s in North Amerika. We should save our resources for supporting organized armed struggles that can actually get somewhere—in the Philippines, Peru and the Mohawk nations for instance. There are many things we can do for these movements, living in the First World as we do, but not if we are dead. Being in prison also limits one's political activity.

MIM supports freedom for the bombing suspects. If they did commit the bombing, they are certainly nothing less than patriots in the struggle of an oppressed nation. The U.S. imperialists should admit to their evil role in oppressing Palestine and let the bombers go, but of course they won't. On this sub-

ject, when he was still politically sane, Eldridge Cleaver told Mao Zedong to "go ahead and drop a bomb on my head," because bringing down U.S. imperialism would mean peace for many peoples seeking independence.

We wish the pacifists, democratic socialists and Islamic militants luck in their pursuits where their goals are the same as ours, but we don't think their analysis is very realistic. At best the World Trade Center bombing entered the calculus at the Mideast bargaining table, but the negotiation-as-strategy-with-isolated-acts-of-violence-on-the-side approach to national liberation is something that MIM does not understand and does not encourage its followers to partake in.

SECTARIAN REVIEW

Red Action

Issue 59, June/July 1991
BM Box 37, London, WC1N 3XX

reviewed by MC5

This seems to be an honest Marxist publication with anarchist leanings. Red Action has two important principles—support for Irish independence and physical opposition to the fascists in England. As such Red Action organizes within Anti-Fascist Action (A.F.A.).

The publication has numerous stories about how the A.F.A. beats up various fascists of groups like the National Front. Nowhere does the A.F.A. claim to be involved with guns or bombs though. U.S. readers are advised that the situation of gun ownership in England is much more restricted than in the United States.

Red Action pays attention to various international issues and had a correct outlook on the U.S. war against Iraq. "We refused to countenance the slogan advanced by certain other left groups, 'Victory to Iraq,' because this slogan could in the circumstances only mean 'Victory to Saddam and the Republican Guard.' Not only was this a very foolish, not to say meaningless slogan, given that there was not the slightest possibility of a defeat for the United States and its allies. The adoption of such a slogan in these circumstances only reveals the self-obsession of left groups with rhetoric and doctrine to the exclusion of action and reality."

The publication publishes polemics from other groups as well—including one that correctly denounces left-wing moralism. Oddly enough, both Red Action and some of the groups it quotes cite Mao Zedong on various points, but none of the groups with affinities to Red Action are Maoist.

Another good point of the publication is that it exposes the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) for reformism and for opposing the IRA assassination of a British Member of Parliament. Red Action sounds a little like the U.S. focoists though, because it supports the idea of armed struggle within England, thereby ignoring Mao's strategic advice against launching armed struggle within imperialist countries until they are "really helpless."

MIM also has doubts about Red Action's anti-imperialist analysis. While MIM cannot claim to be an expert on the British white working class, RA cheerleads for the anti-poll tax movement, thus raising doubts in MIM about its analysis of the white working class.

Again and again throughout the publication, Red Action notices how the British working class does not support the Irish workers. RA observes how the proliferation of weak leftist groups in England (as in the United States) stems from the failure to seize the key link of opposing imperialism in Ireland. Another group published in Red Action notes this and says that the failure of the leftist groups to influence the British working class just proves how the groups should bang their heads even harder "to build deep roots within the working class." In contrast, MIM believes there is a material reason for the British working class to act in such a bought-off fashion.

Material conditions in England are not the same as in the United States. There is more of a material basis for social-democracy there than here because the white workers there are not quite as well off as they are here. Moreover, the influence of the movements of oppressed nationalities is also weaker there. However, the British working class reaps superprofits appropriated by an imperialist state from the Third World proletariat.

Despite the common silence on the British Left regarding this question, Red Action's existence is heartening. It appears that in England, unlike in the United States, the anti-fascists have the upper-hand organizationally, materially and in the streets.

Notes: Red Action No 59, June/July 1991, p. 3.

BOOK REVIEW

Substituting emotion for analysis

Could We Really Win?
by Bob Avakian, RCP Publications, 1991

by MC99
May 1992

Bob Avakian's book *Could We Really Win?* is intended to convince revolutionaries that the military apparatus of the US government is not an almighty force that can never be squelched. MIM agrees with this basic premise, yet finds Avakian's reasoning detrimental to the challenge of building a force that is capable of eradicating the capitalist state.

Avakian substitutes emotion for class consciousness and fails to acknowledge the importance of a concrete and decisive political line.

Avakian states that he intends to demystify war—yet he actually confuses essential aspects of socialist revolution. The book by-passes the importance of a correct analysis of class, nation, and gender in two ways. One by not putting forth any facts and two by not acknowledging the role that such facts play in determining the correct timing of insurrection.

In addition, Avakian does not acknowledge why it is necessary to utilize political line or where a politically advanced movement comes from. Because Avakian does not conduct a study of where people's interests lie (along class, nation and gender lines) he instead enlightens his audience to obvious facts: e.g., tanks are armored vehicles with weapons mounted on them and people can be resourceful and construct such vehicles. In conjunction with this mechanical statement Avakian states that it is the "mood" of the masses that determines the correct time to start armed struggle. To suggest that mood is a determining factor is to deny political consciousness. Political consciousness comes from studying concrete conditions and class consciousness comes from experience and study. Avakian's fixation on tanks and other mechanical concerns—such as terrain—obscure important issues such as the strength of the vanguard masses and the weakness of the government which are vital to waging an insurrection and civil war.

This is not to say that *Could We Really Win?* does not acknowledge political theory at all, but it's theory is lacking in research and is coupled with subjective and immaterial qualities: "If this proletarian class out look has some real influence in society and if there is a core trained solidly in this kind of worldview, this class-conscious largeness of mind and self sacrificing spirit, *all kinds of miracles will be possible.* (p. 30, emphasis added) The revolution will not be relying on miracles. This kind of statement suggests that it is something other than material factors that determine the success or failure of revolution. Proletarian world view and class outlook are important but the degree to which such qualities are present depends on the theoretical and practical work of the vanguard masses. In other words, such consciousness is in the power of the revolutionary movement and there is nothing mystical or uncertain about it.

The RCP's consistent omission of quantifiable statistics leads to this kind of un-Marxist thinking. Avakian takes this further and says that if a so called, " ... self sacrificing spirit is absent then people will be pulled toward narrow interests and concerns, and look out just for themselves or a narrow group of friends." (p. 30) People become counter revolutionary for specific reasons. Bourgeois ideology is inherent in all people living in an imperialist country and it must be actively combatted. The surfacing of reactionary thoughts and actions are a real threat but their foundation is in the material interests of groups and bourgeois socialization. Concretely acknowledging the existence of reaction and combating it with criticism and self criticism is where its at. Simply being ready to give up one's life does not insure the success of the revolution.

The revolution will not be relying on miracles.

Avakian goes further to mystify the material reality of dialectics by identifying the military elite as "soft" when it comes to hardship and the proletariat as "hard." He implies that the enemy is unable to endure warfare and that exploited people are naturally equipped for battle. This verbiage puts the process of determining ones ability to endure warfare and sustain battle in the realm of how comfortable a person's life has been. Individual realities may or may not contribute to a person's ability to fight but they are not what we must rely on when making judgements about ourselves or our enemies. Concrete analysis is necessary to determine who is

a friend and who is an enemy of the revolution. Making such determinations is an essential aspect of warfare. Avakian does not explain that it is the economic interests of groups that actually propels them into revolutionary or reactionary practice. So to say that the military elite are universally soft because they are not accustomed to hardship implies that they are weak. Well this is not necessarily so: it is their economic standing and political ideology that determines their relation to the current power structure and demarcates them as an enemy. This is true for the masses as well: hardship does not necessarily make an individual revolutionary. Class, nation and gender exploitation make groups objectively revolutionary.

Another sign of Avakian's and the RCP's lack of analysis is their insistence on the importance of the middle class. Avakian ambiguously talks about "waging political battles and creating revolutionary public opinion, not only influencing people but recasting the political terms, realigning the forces so that they are more favorable to the proletariat..." MIM guesses that Avakian is talking about exposing the crimes of the current regime but the statement leads to a less acceptable agenda: "...and building not only influence among the middle class but also organized ties very broadly and deeply as much as possible there: all this is very important." (p. 28)

Organizing ties broadly and deeply among the middle class as a group—other wise known as the labor aristocracy and the petty bourgeoisie—is a not the main task of the moment because the system serves their interests. Influencing this group is useful—nonetheless—because individual members may join the revolution. But the RCP ignores the fact that it is the third world proletariat (both within and outside of U.S. borders) who are truly exploited and in the majority and thus have the most to gain from socialism. The majority of the U.S. population is not exploited and therefore is not objectively revolutionary. Trying to persuade the middle class of the horrors of the system eclipses the reality that imperialism supports them. No amount of persuasion will change this. Material conditions can change and members of the middles class can commit class suicide but as it stands at this time the middle class is not revolutionary. [Write to MIM for "A White Proletariat?" for a complete explanation of the material reality of the white working class in Amerika.] Again, the cause of this bogus agenda is the complete absence of a factual analysis.

The RCP's defects in this area also lead to false assumptions about the revolutionary force of women in Amerika. Because Avakian does not employ any analysis of the intersections of class and gender (or nation) he assumes that as soon as the revolutionary opportunity presents itself women will become revolutionary. "Women would be rising up in arms, everybody would be oriented in a different way ..." (p. 45) "Even in these suburbs there are a lot of women, for example, who are suffering tremendously in all kinds of ways. They go along with the normal routine, maybe even defend it in normal times when its business as usual and through force of habit, but given a radical tearing of the whole social fabric there are tremendous potential reserves among such women." (p. 59)

White women living in suburbia are only relatively oppressed—because of their nation and class status they are actually gendered male in relation to the exploited masses of the world. It is the material reality of this position that explains defense of the established order—attributing this behavior to habit is naive. It is likely that some of the women who are in privileged positions will commit nation, class and gender suicide and become revolutionary. But Avakian's analysis suggests that women have yet to acknowledge their oppression and have not historically started movements and resisted the patriarchy.

Avakian seems to think that the oppressed and exploited are incapable of action and are forced to wait for the final blows to imperialism before speaking up for themselves.

Avakian's reduction of gender and national oppression to simple class oppression creates the RCP mythology that the white working class is the only reliable social base for revolution and that Black people and women just have to be taught to get madder at the capitalists and then they can help further the cause and eventually enjoy socialism too.

The embodiment of this lack of concrete analysis is Avakian's substitution of emotion for a political analysis of social structure. When the interviewer asks Avakian to confirm that the imperialists always underestimate the masses we can really see where the RCP is at. As Avakian attempts to explain why this is so he reveals his own lack of scientific understanding. Here is his response: "They always underestimate the masses, and that's the law: they will always underestimate the masses. No matter how much they anticipate an uprising of some kind, they will not understand the well of deep hatred and also the tremendous and lofty spirit that is potentially there among the masses. And that is exactly what

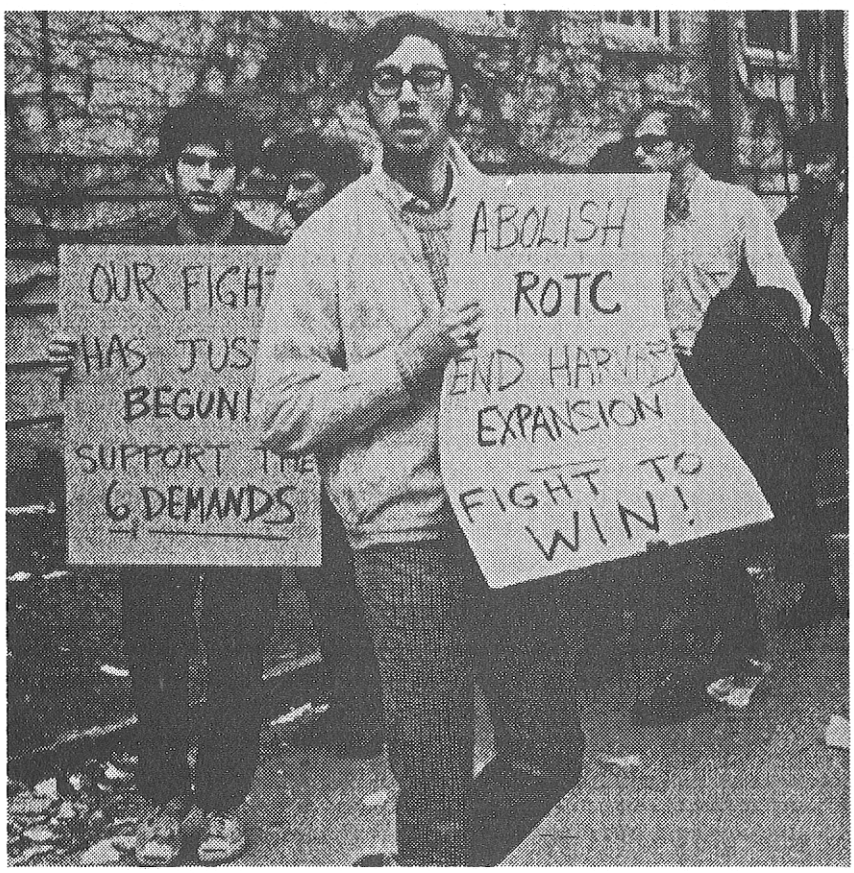
could and would be brought out through the political and ideological work of revolutionaries and then the direct military organization of the revolutionary masses when that was the order of the day." (p. 35).

The RCP uses their ideological and political work to create emotions—hatred and lofty spirit—while downplaying the ability of the masses to make concrete analysis and *absorb* the party leadership unto themselves. The work of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is not about "unleashing" the already intense emotions of the masses. The masses are already more realistic and politically advanced than Avakian and his caricature of Maoist warfare. What needs to take place is training in dialectical thinking *now* and building independent power of the oppressed *now* through the practice of Maoism. The masses learn through political experience—not through *feelings*.

Although the just wrath of the masses is a given in any revolutionary situation, it is not so much the bourgeosie that underestimates the masses—as it is Bob Avakian who underestimates the potential of the revolutionary masses for self-organization and comprehension of the decisiveness of political line.

Could We Really Win? is a useful read in that it gets revolutionaries thinking about what is at stake in waging a mass insurrection and civil war—but its lack of political backbone is so severe that it steers comrades in a backward direction. To get a correct idea of the theoretical and practical basis for insurrection MIM recommends Lenin's *Marxism and Insurrection* and Mao's *Selected Military Writings*.

Chapter 6
Rightism and Strategy



INTRO TO THIS SECTION

Rightism and strategy

In this chapter on rightist errors and opportunism, we start by addressing positions that are as far "right" as MIM can talk about. Much further "right" and there would be so little in common between our critics and ourselves, that we would not be using the same language. The chapter begins with common garden-variety rightist fantasies and proceeds to dismantle the more sophisticated book-length determinisms that underlie the rightist problems of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP).

Again, we remind readers that "rightist" in this context is not the same thing as right-wing. Often we refer to "rightist" errors when speaking of communists who do not intend to be conservative or reactionary. Comrades who are captains of ships may not intend to steer the boat onto the rocks, but steering a boat is not the same thing as having good intentions about a safe voyage. In cases where someone heads for the rocks of capitalism intentionally, we refer to revisionism, or ordinary bourgeois politics.

Usually, rightists don't want to struggle in vanguard parties— because they believe change will be served on the silver platter as long as we don't "alienate" anyone. These criticisms are the most frequent criticisms MIM receives. Even ultraleftists will often voice basic rightist criticisms—not surprising given the common underlying basis for both sets of errors.

Rightist errors, opportunism and outright revisionism are often reinforced by ultraleftism, sometimes within the same person and sometimes as a reaction of one to the other. A rightist who sees the destruction wrought on movements by the ultraleft may incorrectly conclude that politics is impossible or that struggle is useless.

There is no position more realistic than Maoism— if one is in favor of an end to war, starvation, homelessness and hunger. In this chapter, we point out that those making concessions—while claiming the same goals as Maoism—have a record of failure; hence, the rightist concessions are self-defeating.

Form and content: the choice of words debate

July 26, 1990
by MC5

You've all heard the line that revolutionary organizations use alienating language and tone. Everyone remembers a very thorough argument on this when someone claimed to have the same goals but a different tone of voice or expression.

Maoists, however, match the form of an argument to its content. That means style, tone and word choice should match the political analysis. Form is subordinated to content.

Here is a parable for this:

You and your best friend are walking along a plateau in the Grand Canyon having a jolly good bourgeois time.

You start playing a game where your friend walks backward while talking with you face-to-face as you walk forward.

You are walking along and you analyze the situation and you say that,"Well, you know if we keep walking like this, we'll die a mile from here by falling off a cliff." It's a joke.

Then you get a 100 yards from the cliff. You say "and don't forget to watch your step." It's a little more serious.

But if your friend was walking backward two steps away from the cliff, what would you do?

You would grab him/her without asking permission.

If you can't do it by yourself because you can't reach, your eyes flare,your nostrils open wide and you yell "watch out!" or "STOP!" The tone is quite different than in the other situations.

You don't say, "Well, you know, I think you should please stop."

You don't say, "Well what do you think will happen if you take another step backward?"

In this parable, your friend is the masses and the cliff represents the ultimate catastrophe of imperialism, perhaps a species-ending nuclear war and/or environmental disaster. Notice you are not in

a situation of being able to grab your friend before s/he goes over the cliff. You are only a party with no state power.

You also don't take the opportunist approach of only saying things subtly if at all.

You also don't take the Paulo Freire line in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which is anti-Leninist in denying the need for leadership and asserting that teachers should ask the right questions and not assert the correct principles.

Why the argument over tone?

There is a class basis for this argument over tone. The bourgeoisie does not believe we are near the cliff and wouldn't want the proletariat to worry. So the bourgeoisie jokes about it and actually takes proletarian politics and infuses it with lies for pop culture consumption.

People influenced by the bourgeoisie also take a less serious tone.

Then there are the intellectuals, all with a kind of artistic appreciation for ideas, art and style for their own sake. Under capitalism, at least in the United States where they are bought off, these people are guilty of fetishizing form.

According to these intellectuals, only pleasing tones are appropriate. They appreciate how something is said more than what is said!

Finally, there are those with honest intentions of abolishing oppression, those reflecting the existence of the proletariat. These people may still use an inappropriate tone because of an inappropriate analysis of concrete historical circumstances.

People who don't realize that a war is going on and that 14 million children starve to death every year, will use a different tone than people who do realize it and have the guts to use the word "imperialism."

Also on this subject, see *What Is To Be Done?* by Lenin and the MIM Notes essay "On arrogance."

Closely related to the issue of using a tone that matches the independent interests of the international proletariat is the issue of having an independent political organization to speak for those interests, and systematically influence culture on behalf of the proletariat. As we pointed out in MIM Theory 2/3, many in our circles believe that pornography, Hollywood, pop culture and the mass media generally are brainwashing people and influencing people to oppress the already oppressed instead of the oppressor. Unfortunately, many people who understand that point don't conclude the converse—that we must counter the bourgeois influence in the superstructure with our own proletarian influence, including on tone issues. This includes when to be angry, when not to be angry, when to be happy and when to be sad. This unwillingness to stand up and speak truth to power is the hallmark of "right opportunism."

Right opportunists are always trying to figure out how not to "alienate" people. They worry only about numbers of people on one side or another (often in close connection to electoral politics) and hence have the political diseases of "sizeism" and "pragmatism."

Our readers have waited patiently to hear again from Lilac Petal, an open anti-party apologist for revisionism and loyal MIM Notes reader. Here Lilac Petal tells us more on why it is best just to work in single-issue groups and not work in vanguard parties.

This is a perfect example of rightist revisionism—that borders on outright bourgeois opportunism—in that Lilac Petal at times will not claim the mantle of Marx. A revisionist is someone who claims to be Marxist and revises Marx's fundamental principles. A bourgeois opportunist is just someone trying to ride the waves of class struggle without claiming to be Marxist. The following is an argument about Leninist parties in relation to an article from Radical America by Jim O'Brien titled "American Leninism." MIM distributes this article as a negative example of sizeism and pragmatism and to counter-argue that lines of demarcation are essential to the success of revolutionary movements.

Lilac Petal rides again

Dear MIM:

Leninist vanguard parties are irrelevant to politics in the UnitedStates and will remain so, barring a complete breakdown of the national socioeconomic order.

Thanks for the re-affirmation of universalist organizational principles that are good for all time

and places. I will keep them in mind.

Incidentally, when I said that Leninist vanguard parties were irrelevant to the politics of the United States, I did not mean that the individuals in them were irrelevant; many of them have done and will continue to do good and important political work, often in spite of their organizations. That's one of the things I liked about O'Brien's piece—he recognized that. So you could say that the Leninist groups are indirectly relevant, insofar as they influence their members' work for better or worse. It is difficult to say how much and in what direction they do this. Overall, it may be a positive influence in that many of the people in these groups would not have become political, or not sustained a political commitment without the group.

If you think these are key questions for the left in the United States, you're probably wondering why Mao didn't make a "correct" interpretation of the new economic program of USSR history a line of demarcation for the CPC [Communist Party of China]....

—Lilac Petal
September, 1990

MC5 replies:

While Mao struggled to have CPC comrades understand Chinese conditions and not just Russian conditions, Mao also demarcated on questions of principle including the Russian Revolution and Leninism.

A xerox copy of the article by O'Brien is available for $3. Write to MIM, P.O. Box 3576, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576.

SECTARIAN REVIEW

American Leninism in the 1970s

Jim O'Brien
Radical America

by MC5
September 7, 1990

The first thing to point out about this is that it is an historically dated essay because "American Leninism" is now in the Gorbachev era. The pro-Moscow parties across the world are dropping their insistence on upholding Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?*

Still the essay is valuable because to understand where things come from in the United States, you need to know this history. The recent diatribes we wrote against revisionism in the United States and its strangling of internationalism are much related to this past.(1)

We can hope that the Communist Party (CP) will soon dissolve. [Last we knew, it had splintered but it still exists in the United States—ed.]

O'Brien's main objective is to reject the idea of building a real communist party in this country.

The main thing that O'Brien seeks to prove is that the parties that arose out of SDS in the 1960s do not have the size or other kinds of visible success of the Communist Party, which he did not imagine having the kind of problems it has today. Therefore, if you look at these efforts "objectively" in O'Brien's mind, you should give up on revolution. Nothing surpasses the CP.

O'Brien's ideology is what will be labelled "sizeism" and "pragmatism." Really, this is the invidious comparisons game applied on the organizational level.

O'Brien goes through the history of the splinters since SDS. This is the only reason to read his article. It's good sectarian training.

None of this history can really prove the point O'Brien wants to make. At a larger comparative historical level, O'Brien's argument falls apart. O'Brien notices this without addressing it. "Second, the existence of more than a dozen countries governed by Leninist parties offered a prospect of apparent success."(2)

In the United States, he also should have started with the CP in the 1930s. He would have noticed all the actual gains it won with its power.

He should have noticed that the Maoist-inspired Black Panthers (before they were smashed and degenerated) organized more Blacks for revolutionary change than any previous group in post-World War II history. Yet, this gets passed over in the discussion as the essay focuses on other groups. O'Brien clearly does not take the Panthers seriously, while he takes semi-Trotskyist groups like Workers Power or the Socialist Worker Party that dropped its Leninism [Lately it seems to be trying to claim it back—MC5, 1993] more seriously.

Anybody who takes Trotskyism more seriously than the Black Panthers clearly hasn't thought too

much about history. Even by O'Brien's own measuring rod of numbers, the Trotskyists have been a failure, even in this land of the bought-off white working class.

Another point is that the article proceeds without an analysis of goals and talks vaguely about the "left" as most "leftists" do. So for O'Brien, organizing white workers is a success and with that as a measuring rod he not surprisingly concludes that the revolutionaries have been a failure.

Finally, it is this kind of unspecified measuring rod of the movement that leads O'Brien to conclude that party organization itself is a waste of time. "Even at best, a tremendous amount of time, for members of nearly all the Leninist groups, is spent in activities whose chief purpose is to build the organization itself rather than to spur working class activity more directly."(3) This implies that O'Brien thinks that people should dissolve their parties and join the working class. O'Brien points to student Leninists who took up blue-collar work as the best work.(4)

In the closing pages of the article, O'Brien hammers the issue of size and concludes that the plan to build a genuine communist party is a failure. Then he throws in that the SWP degenerated into reformism (no surprise to those who never took the Trotskyists seriously.) For the rest he attacks each group with one anecdote each and thinks that is a serious evaluation of their revolutionary coherence. And while MIM does not agree with any of the groups O'Brien cites, MIM would not use that kind of empiricist method to attack them.

So whenever O'Brien intends to lead people, he ends up taking them into anarchism, sizeism and pragmatism. No where does he take his own measuring rods and examine them from a comparative historical perspective to see if they have any meaning.

Yet, MIM has already done this. Size of an organization says nothing about its eventual historical impact—as the Bolshevik party and the Chinese Communist Party have both already proved.

The best historical example to the contrary is the FSLN (Sandinistas) of Nicaragua, which is pretty mushy although not totally devoid of organization or a line. To a large extent, the FSLN led part of a bourgeois revolution, and much of what is said above does not apply to bourgeois revolutions. Yet even to the extent that the FSLN seemed to be for something more, the FSLN still proves the weaknesses of pluralist approaches in an imperialist-dominated world.

The FSLN took on a battle within the rules of the pluralist game and lost. In the end, the legacy that the FSLN leaves in the struggle toward ending oppression is smaller than that of Albania, another small agricultural country with a population of 3 million. Nicaragua seems "heavier" in many deluded people's minds, but in actuality, the revolution in Albania went further. If the FSLN is to have success in the future, it will be to the degree it ignores its own pluralistic rhetoric and takes up Maoism.

O'Brien's whole problem is the measuring rods of success that he chose. Size, pluralism of views and white working class roots have no proven track record in the battle against oppression. Where steps toward the ending of oppression have been made, these factors were not relevant.

Notes:
1. MIM Notes 42.
2. Jim O'Brien, "American Leninism." Radical America. p. 10.
3. Ibid. p. 33.
4. Ibid. p. 32.

Next MIM takes up the ideology of democratic socialism. In the Third World, communists have always outnumbered democratic socialists, but in the First World, the opposite is true. Here MIM seeks to clarify the difference between the two in a very general way and show why communism is a more realistic approach than democratic socialism.

On democratic socialism: an introduction, part I

October, 1992
by MC5

This article is an introduction to the difference between democratic socialism and genuine communism for those who are interested in democratic socialism. Democratic socialists are generally people who want to nationalize private industries and abolish production for profit by using the ballot box. Strategically, they want reform.

Genuine communists seek to use armed strug-

gle in revolution to accomplish the goal of socialism. In addition, they generally want to go further than most democratic socialists, because genuine communists want to abolish classes, and in the long run, the state.

To listen to the democratic socialists and their friends, the social-democrats, communists are advocating a totalitarian system where freedom of the individual (including the freedom of speech) are repressed. Social-democrats want to keep capitalism by imitating socialism through income distribution measures—a welfare state. The democratic socialists claim that since communists don't want to use the ballot box to accomplish socialism, that must mean we don't trust the people.

Communists understand these criticisms of us and many others since we are bombarded with them every day by the bourgeois press. Here we outline our differences and invite correspondence on the subject.

1. Communists believe the ballot box in the United States is fundamentally corrupted by money. Even Ross Perot and Jerry Brown have noticed this. The ballot power of the oppressed is not greater than the financial power of the capitalists. To participate in this system is to-lose again and again—even liberals such as Humphrey and McGovern lost, not to mention more radical democratic socialists. Given the record of electoral losses and incumbent victories, MIM says that those who preach the ballot box only teach that it is useless to struggle.

2. In the First World, democratic socialists have no relative sense of the world's working classes. Hence, they believe that there is an exploited majority in the First World that can win an electoral struggle if properly organized.

Some supposed communists (Revolutionary Communist Party, Revolutionary Workers League, Spartacist League etc.) also share this belief with the democratic socialists but they disagree with the democratic socialists that the ballot box can succeed. Therefore, we can see that there are only degrees of difference between people who call themselves communists and people who call themselves democratic socialists.

What separates a genuine communist from a supposed communist (and also the democratic socialists) is the examination of the workers' movements from the perspective of the international proletariat as a whole. Unlike the RCP, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and Trotskyists such as the Spartacist League, MIM does not tailor its politics to please the majority of North America. MIM does not believe the majority of those in North America are oppressed. In contrast, our critics are so fixated on numbers that they want a majority even if it means getting a majority of people who are oppressors on the international plane. However, with electoral and numeric obsessions, these pragmatists are guaranteed to cater consciously and unconsciously to white nation chauvinist demands at the expense of the international proletariat.

3. Where democratic socialists DO succeed in coming to power, one of two things happens: a. Nothing. Witness Mitterand in France. Case closed. b. Something—followed by military coup. Legitimate and elected governments attempted to nationalize industries in numerous cases only to have themselves overthrown by U.S. imperialism. Hence, the democratic socialist strategy has proved more unrealistic and deadly than the genuine communist strategy.

In Chile in 1973, an elected socialist was killed by a military coup—possibly by U.S. Green Berets if you believe some of them who brag about it. What followed was the killing of 30,000 people (suspected democratic socialists and communists) rounded up in Chile by the fascists.

In Iran, the democratic government nationalized a British oil company, the only oil company in Iran. The result was that the United States sent military aid and money to military officers who overthrew the government. In 1954, the Shah of Iran (a king) was installed by the U.S. imperialists and the imperialists got "their" oil back.

In 1951, Jacobo Arbenz was elected as president in Guatemala. He called for land reform and union rights. The United Fruit Company and the U.S. government then sponsored one failed coup and then one successful one that occurred after C.I.A. planes conducted bombing runs in Honduras and Guatemala. Arbenz was ousted in 1954 for being "communist."

In 1965, elected Dominican Republic president Juan Bosch attempted a comeback when it appeared that rebel military officers would undo the U.S.-backed coup in that country. Juan Bosch had been president for seven months when military officers overthrew him.

The same general sequence of events of military aid, bribery and threat of U.S. military force occurred to oust two democratically elected presidents of Brazil in the 1960s until the Brazilian "miracle" started in 1964 in a military coup. The ousted

government officials—Goulart and Janio da Silva Quadros—complained of U.S. destabilization efforts including efforts to have them assassinated. Each in their own way gave up rather than embroil the country in the kind of bloodshed that later happened in Chile in 1973.

The record is clear: the ballot box only leads to slaughter of the oppressed when the oppressed dare to express their opinions in this way. Any Third World government seeking to put constraints on what the U.S. imperialists deem "their" private property will be overthrown with great violence. The communists are the only realistic choice because they advocate armed struggle against imperialism.

Since Exxon in 1984 was bigger economically than all but 20 countries economically, the multinational companies based in the United States can afford to bribe government and military officials to carry out their corporate interests. Where sufficient forces can't be bought, the Marines will come in and generally the U.S. government will fill in on behalf of the multinational corporations and provide the military aid and other bribery necessary to overcome "democratic" processes with fascism—"comprador" governments.

Those are the cases in which democratic socialists actually try to do something, something naive that leads to mass slaughter. We are not counting the cases like Peru where social-democrats ingratiate themselves with a military that constantly threatens them and the oppressed. In these cases, social-democrats have been willing to be the figureheads of military-fascist regimes. Here we only examined the best-case scenarios for democratic socialism in the Third World.

Thus it is the democratic socialists who do not trust the people. They don't trust the people to take up arms in their interests. Instead, they trust their ability to persuade fascists to allow democratic socialism to survive.

Source: William Blum, *The CIA: A Forgotten History*. London: Zed Books, 1986.

Democratic socialists have the mistaken belief that ballot power by itself can overcome financial and military power in the hands of the capitalists. As a result, in the Third World the democratic socialists have led the masses to the kind of one-sided slaughters that any responsible friend of the oppressed should seek to avoid. In the First World, the democratic socialists have been in the forefront of the struggle to ensure a share of imperialism's booty for the white working class.

In the United States, there is no major democratic socialist organization, but the liberal wing of the Democratic Party serves as a repository for similar illusions as are found in European countries and urban areas of the Third World. The following is an article MIM published in a publication called Agenda. It directly addresses how even watered down goals pursued by liberal Democrats are not pursued effectively.

Dogmatic reformism

This is in response to []'s article criticizing revolutionaries for not adequately appreciating structural reform struggles. It is true that part of the problem is that reforms lend legitimacy to a fundamentally unjust system, but it is only one factor in why revolutionaries should oppose most reform struggles going on in the United States. The most important reason why those fighting to end oppression of social groups by other social groups should oppose the vast majority of reform struggles is that they simply do not work.

Ironically, it is the reformists who engage in the protest politics that [] correctly cites the limitations of. Of course, protests are necessary, but everyone recognizes that no fundamental change is going to happen until the "Left" starts winning some things—resources of various kinds including, ultimately, state power. [] talks about the revolutionaries as if they were the ones wasting most of the political energy of the "Left" in this country. But was it the revolutionaries working in the McGovern campaign? Is it the revolutionaries saying people can win seats in Congress when people with millions of dollars of effective backing gain re-election at a rate of more than 98%?

It is this tremendous waste of energy that [] should focus his fire on—dogmatic reformism. Many more people waste their time trying to end oppression by expressing themselves in reformist battles than make meaningless revolutionary noise. Dogmatic reformists make a principle out of working within the system and losing.

How many revolutionaries haven't heard that they should vote for a Democrat because not voting

is just apathy? The real issue is what will voting accomplish? What will campaigning for x, y or z candidate who does not have the necessary financial and media backing do? Those singing the praises of the civic duty to vote are stuck in an 18th century idea of the French and American Revolutions.

Humphrey, McGovern, even Carter and now Jackson—left-wing reformists have made a principle out of losing. From mayoral races in Boston to congressional campaigns in Michigan, it is the reformists who need their dogmas straightened out.

This is not to mention that electing some of these liberals would not result in any change. Jesse Jackson endorsed the bombing of Iran and a crackdown on crime like the War on Drugs. Meanwhile the democratic socialists in France increased investment in South Africa and the ones in West Germany supported Cruise and Pershing missile deployments. But this article is not about all the contradictory mush in the reformist left that makes it incapable of moving forward even it had the necessary resources.

This article is about what is effective to do in moving forward toward the end of oppression. Revolutionaries put together their own newspapers and other media outlets; as of yet, the imperialists have not found a way to stop that. Some revolutionaries are involved in creating bookstores. Whereas the mainstream media is not very obliging to anything but two-tone politics, as [] points out, revolutionary newspapers and countless other independent grassroots institutions can and do go forward.

MIM in particular has involved itself in a number of local struggles that involved seizing resources for the "Left"—things [] would call reforms. The point is none of these mundane revolutionary struggles have the excitement or glamor of an election campaign, especially where the stakes are high, but they are unstoppable means of gathering, organizing and seizing resources.

By the way, the two examples [] gives of struggles worth fighting—student loans and campaign reform—are good ideas. [] is certainly correct that people seeking to end oppression need to figure out how to win struggles that will make future struggles easier. He just picks overly large targets that are well within the grasp of the capitalist class. Smaller items like getting student governments to make places on every campus where people can pick up free political literature of all shades is a useful and a more winnable struggle.

What needs further examination is what forces are involved in opposing good ideas like []'s and can they be overcome in the legislative arena? Groups like Common Cause have been working on campaign reform for a long time. Why have they failed so far? Could it have something to do with Big Government and Big Money?

Maybe the reason revolutionaries look at the 19th century figures that [] denigrates is that they see a method of thinking, a realistic method of thinking. Marx for one would have looked at the Big Money and its intertwining with Big Government. He would have noticed that they are hard to beat on their own turf.

Another more recent figure [] disapproves of instructed his followers on how to analyze a situation to win a battle—Mao Zedong. As a result of Mao's efforts, the Chinese communists were able to turn around the most lop-sided strategic situation possible within the largest country in the world and win, one small but winnable battle at a time.

Unfortunately, millions of Americans waste their political energy on losing reformist struggles and become more convinced than ever that politics is a dead-end and that the system can't be beat. For example, the day the environmentalists claimed to have organized 20 million people in a demonstration, what remains of that effort? Can anyone even remember what day it was? What usually gets left behind after a big Jesse Jackson speech?

MIM is not automatically opposed to all "reform." A realistic analysis of capitalism in the United States, however, points to the futility of most of the reformist struggles going on, especially the ones with any meaning in ending oppression.

Frequently, those denying the need for an independent proletarian culture and political organization believe that proletarian activists should simply join single-issue groups and organize for watered-down goals in larger numbers. Here MIM sums up the history of SDS and mass organizations in relationship to vanguard parties since the 1960s.

Lessons single issue organizing: mass organizations and the vanguard party

by MC5 and MC17

In recruiting anti-imperialists, anti-militarists and other activists to the party, MIM encounters a very common set of questions, especially among students. Many ask about the "effectiveness" of putting out MIM's line when by definition only the communist political elite will join the party. Because they do not see work within MIM as effective, often activists will not want to work within MIM when they can work within single-issue groups or other mass organizations.

First, we need a definition of terms. A single-issue group is a political organization that focuses on one issue—e.g. Central America, South Africa or abortion. Sometimes MIM uses the phrase "single-issue group" interchangeably with "mass organization." A mass organization is such a single-issue group or multi-issue group that has a membership of people without a specifically worked out universal ideology, such as "Marxism-Leninism," leading it.

In other words, a mass organization is not a front group for another political organization like a supposedly vanguard party or the Moonie Church. Mass organizations contain a genuine diversity of political views.

Front groups may appear to be like mass organizations, but MIM is not interested in them for obvious reasons. An example of a front-group is INCAR, the International Committee Against Racism. The Progressive Labor Party with its brand of so-called Marxism-Leninism leads INCAR openly.

The terms mass organization and single issue group are used to connote organizations that are part of mass movements. The distinction between organizations and movements is important because, while MIM does not work within mass organizations, it plays an important role in mass movements.

Questions of MIM's role and leadership in mass organizations tend to arise in the context of volunteer mass organizations as well as organizations having professional leadership like NOW or the NAACP. The argument given for working in the latter is usually that radicals will be able to exert pressure on the organization, moving it further to the left. Thus, through the organization, they will be gaining greater concessions from the existing power structure (reforms that will improve the conditions under which people live), while at the same time, by pushing the organization to the left, they hope to slowly radicalize its membership as well. The goal within volunteer mass organizations is similar, but the impetus to join is even stronger since these groups seem to need a lot of help sometimes.

Let's examine the problems with this argument. First, if the goal is to gain greater concessions from the government or power structure, the strategy is usually to build a group with the greatest numbers and most funding possible. Certainly the best way to do this is to create as broad a coalition of people as possible and, just as certainly, radical politics are going to reduce the number of people willing to work for or donate to a given cause. This is not to say that revolutionaries and radicals do not play a significant role in influencing mass movements, but rather to argue that their role should be outside of these more liberal minded organizations.

Some people working in these groups recognize this problem but argue that radical politics put more pressure on the government and so radicals should still stay in the groups. The problem with this argument is that when working within the system for reforms in these organizations a radical voice is not one that gains popular support. Revolutionaries in mass organizations end up consciously and unconsciously watering down their politics. Non-revolutionaries often correctly perceive that their single-issue goals are middle-class in nature and are in fact obstructed by the revolutionaries in the mass organizations. Because our government does respond sometimes to middle class unrest when it feels threatened (usually by a large number of people), what mass organizations need to say on television is not that we need a revolution,

but that the government is not playing nice and it needs to give us this little concession and then things will be OK.

No one is disputing that reforms can and do improve the lives of some people. But by working in these organizations for these reforms, radicals are forced to sacrifice their politics or risk alienation. In making this sacrifice they are supporting, dishonestly, politics they truly do not believe. Telling people to Boycott Folgers [a coffee company once boycotted in connection to the struggle in El Salvador—MC5, 1993] says to people that all you have to do is make this sacrifice and people will stop dying in El Salvador, never even mentioning the larger role imperialism plays. By supporting these principles, they are missing the opportunity to present to people what they feel truly needs to be done to improve the living conditions of all people.

The intimidation of a clique of experienced and knowledgeable leaders drives many away after their first meeting, feeling as though they have nothing to contribute.

Many still argue that these sacrifices are OK because they are necessary in order to radicalize people one step at a time. The idea that people need to be exposed to politics in slowly increasingly radical stages unfortunately holds true for many in this country at this time. But mass organizations will not fall apart without radicals (and many may grow). There will always exist single issue groups with a great diversity of liberal to radical politics. These groups play an important role in developing people's politics, but by joining organizations that only advocate reform to solve the world's problems, revolutionaries are supporting this as a solution. This leaves people without the final step, leading them to accept that reforms are not enough, never being exposed to revolutionary politics.

Mass organizations pop up all the time and involve millions of people. Parties like MIM lag tremendously behind at this point in history, partly because people who should be in MIM dedicate themselves to mass organizations instead. For example, until recently, MIM made no conscious effort to influence the environmental movement. Yet, millions of people have been thrown into political life because of environmental problems. Without organizations like MIM, people in these movements will never receive the challenge to step up to communism as the answer. They will end up in dead-end politics and possibly drop out of politics in despair if not challenged to move on to a more worked out position of how social change is possible.

Another problem with catering to people as if they needed to become revolutionaries in a slow process is that white middle class people may be slow to develop politically, but that is not the problem with all people. Some revolutionary-minded people, particularly from the really oppressed groups, will not take a second look at a group mixed up in dead-end reformist politics. MIM has recruited people who never went through the supposedly required stages of joining a single-issue group, working in charity or working for reform.

Finally it is important to address the issue of the survival of single issue groups with radical or revolutionary members. Because of their more worked out politics and usually greater experience, it is inevitable that these people have leadership roles in these groups. This has severe repercussions for the groups' effectiveness, both in recruiting new members and in allowing these members to develop their politics and leadership abilities. All too often experienced leaders serve to disempower new members. The intimidation of a clique of experienced and knowledgeable leaders drives many away after their first meeting, feeling as though they have nothing to contribute. Those who stay rarely are empowered to take initiative or leadership roles, or even to voice their views in meetings. Often these are the best ways for people to develop their political views, particularly through debate and discussion. And so, rather than helping new members to become radicalized, radicals often stifle the new people, and in doing so, stifle the organizations. Even if they do not actively stifle new members, leaders with worked out radical or revolutionary opinions take up opportunities and time that could be those of the new members.

The most important reason MIM has not worked in leadership roles in mass organizations is its understanding of the historical experience of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) as the most important student organization in the 1960s.

Here we sidestep the question of the Black

Panthers and other oppressed nationality organizations with a tremendous influence on students. The Black Panthers were an all-issue vanguard organization like ours, not a mass organization. The lessons the Black Panthers offer us have more to do with the state's repression of a revolutionary movement.

Composed of hundreds of thousands of white students, SDS offers relevant experiences in the question of mass organizations and their relationships to supposed vanguard parties. Although SDS was a multi-issue organization, it came to focus on the war and had the classic single-issue approach of not insisting on a completely worked out line within its organization. SDS was also vastly more successful in terms of size, energy and radicalism than all the anti-imperialist and anti-militarist organizations of today put together. For all these reasons, it is important to draw conclusions from the experience of SDS. The most important experience of SDS is its collapse into factions.

What was in the early 1960s the vanguard party in the United States, Progressive Labor Party (PL) infiltrated SDS. It was partly a secret process and largely an open process. In any case, PL members became full members of SDS, taking up many of the important leadership roles.

PL offers activists in North America the most important negative experience in the history of relationships between vanguard organizations and mass organizations. PL eventually split and destroyed SDS and then destroyed itself. Today, not even PL follows the negative strategy that destroyed SDS anymore. By pushing its agenda on the group, PL scared off many people and forced those who remained into factional infighting. This effectively kept the group from bringing any more new people into politics while at the same time scaring off or dividing those who were already in.

One fear MIM regularly encounters from radicals is that quitting leadership roles in the mass organizations hurts the mass organizations and the movement. MIM members have quit leadership positions in many mass organizations. None of the mass organizations collapsed afterwards. On the contrary, in some cases it appears that MIM members held back certain mass organizations because sometimes a year or two after the MIM member quit leadership roles, the ideas that MIM originally espoused become much more widely held within the organization and masses at-large. It is very important for radicals and revolutionaries to look out for incipient leaders and to get out of their way.

From this lesson and the lessons of SDS, MIM from its beginning has refused to assume crucial leadership roles in mass organizations. Mass organizations need to exist for all the reasons people both inside and outside of MIM already understand [to bring people into politics; let people explore issues; let people take leadership roles; radicalizing people] but they are more effective in these pursuits without communists working from within. Organizations claiming to have vanguard status should not occupy the time, resources and opportunities of mass organizations except in very special circumstances:

1. When MIM is asked without solicitation to make a presentation on MIM, it might.

2. When MIM sponsors an educational event, demonstration or the like, MIM can go ask for help from a mass organization for that one project taking special care not to eat up too much of the organization's time and making it a point to identify the project as MIM endorsed so that no question of secret infiltration may arise.

3. MIM members may attend mass organization meetings to inform themselves, but not to attempt to exert political leadership within the meeting.

4. MIM members may join mass organizations and exert leadership within carefully specified and time-limited roles when MIM has made the determination that only a communist will be able to detonate a necessary mass movement. In this case, MIM members must make it clear that they are Maoists as they do their work and seek to get out of a leadership role as soon as the mass movement created generates people who could serve the role of mass organization leaders.

5. MIM members may seek to influence members of mass organizations, but not on the time of the mass organization. In other words before or after meetings of mass organizations, MIM may talk to members of mass organizations in order to persuade them of the necessity of Maoism.

6. MIM may create groups, but it may not deceive the masses about its politics.

7. When MIM is in a position to lead a movement, it might. That will mean using the MIM organization to lead a movement without occupying leadership roles in specific mass organizations. Ultimately, MIM hopes to lead a successful revolution that will involve numerous organizations.

Now MIM would like to refute many arguments made against its policy:

Isn't x, y or z single-issue group more effective to work in than MIM?

It is very important to define "effective." MIM members are communists, so "effective" to MIM means achieving steps toward society without classes, patriarchy and nations.

One mistake is to assume that having large numbers of people in political motion is better than having a few people join MIM. It turns out that the size of a movement organization is not very important in the long-run of history. (See MIM's article on Jim O'Brien's "American Leninism.") Vanguard parties have proved the most effective agents of change despite starting small and remaining small compared with the movements they lead.

By quitting mass organizations, MIM members become cut off from mass movements.

If MIM members can only obtain information by going to mass organization meetings, they can. They are just prevented from exerting leadership.

MIM members are also allowed to work on any single issue. Only the means of working on that issue are restricted. Much effective work can be done outside of groups. MIM would ideally have members working on all the issues.

MIM members may attend mass organization meetings to inform themselves, but not to attempt to exert political leadership within the meeting.

On the whole though, MIM members are more connected to mass movements than other people. First, in terms of sheer variety, MIM members become exposed to mass organizations and movements not likely to receive attention anywhere else—Eritrea, East Timor, Mohawk Nation etc. When people say that MIM is isolated, they are definitely not talking about isolated from prisoners or the international proletariat. They are usually talking about isolation from established "leftists." MIM only cares about whether it is isolated from the oppressed masses.

Additionally, the power of an organization like MIM always attracts the attention of other mass organizations and movement individuals. If MIM were only to print a newspaper, people and organizations would be in contact with MIM for that reason alone.

Finally, MIM members work within specific mass movements at various times after considering the overall strategic situation. They just do so without taking leadership roles in those organizations.

I can't be effective on a national level like MIM asks me to be.

Many people do not realize that they could be effective communists on a national level because they have no experience with working in an organized party like MIM, while they do have experience within local mass organizations. As a result, they don't know what they can do.

The socialized disempowerment of young people, students dependent on their parents, and women hits hard at this level. Even the political elite among these groups of people do not seem to realize that they are ready to go up against the imperialists. People are disempowered to work politically at all and additionally taught that they can't be effective on a large scale and have any influence. This is one of the problems with the slogan "Think globally act locally"—problems are global and often it is possible to act globally or at least more globally that we are taught to think. No change is ever going to happen if people believe what the ruling class tells them about their ability to rule.

Why do we need a vanguard party?

Sometimes people criticizing MIM for not working in mass organizations are taking an overly provincial stand, believing that their particular mass organization, issue and locality are more important than any other. These people are not likely to see the importance of exerting national political leadership to go up against the national political leadership of the imperialist patriarchy. If they care about other localities at all, provincialists assume that other localities will have leaders like themselves that will act in concert at the right moments when in actuality many places have no leadership anything like a MIM comrade or sympathizer.

Organizations outside of the system also bring the greatest amount of pressure to bear on the system, creating space for single issue groups and mass organizations to exist. By printing independent newspapers, these groups keep the government controlled papers slightly more honest while refusing to use and therefore legitimize the very system we wish to overthrow.

Additionally, a party serves the important function of keeping people in politics wherever they go,

rather than falling apart like SDS once people graduate from college and are no longer provided with a convenient way to be active.

Finally, it is important to recognize that single issue groups gain reforms that do empower a few traditionally oppressed people in small ways, but this is all they can do because they are working within the system. There will always be people working for these reforms, but a vanguard party has been the only successful way to lead socialist revolution as demonstrated by the experience of other countries.

Anybody building a vanguard party spends too much time building an organization.

Again the issue should be the effectiveness of vanguard actions. Historically, MIM is confident that the Russian and Chinese Revolutions and the experience of the CP in the 1930s and PL and the Black Panthers in the 1960s shows that creating organizations is not a waste of time. Political movements without such organization have not fared as well both within this country, not gaining more than small reforms, and as the leadership of revolutions in other countries. Small concessions won by such organizations are important to empower and improve the living conditions of a small group of people, but these gains won't be won without parties exerting external influence. And these are not the solution, only a communist revolution will do it all.

One of the greatest lessons that SDS offers is what happens after college to a revolutionary activist. SDS was larger than any and all of the mass organizations of today combined. People obsessed with size and demonstrations need only look to SDS to see what they are headed for at best.

Hundreds of thousands of student activists each year in the late 1960s were in SDS. They won a lot of gains on their campuses and to a lesser extent off campus. SDS shows how far a mass organization can go.

But where are those millions of student activists today? What did they leave behind?

They left a spirit behind. They left a history. Some vanguard parties published some newspapers at the time. Some parties that formed out of SDS still exist, such as the Revolutionary Communist Party.

Otherwise, SDS left precious little behind compared to its promise and excitement. The end of the Vietnam War had a lot to do with this; however, when a single-issue movement succeeds, it should not dissipate entirely if single-issue politics are effective compared with revolutionary politics. Influencing the end of the Vietnam War is not enough of a goal for a real communist. People should have moved on to other issues. The fact that they went on to establish themselves as part of the system shows the problem with this type of organizing.

The main reason SDS left so little behind is that it didn't take its own organization seriously enough. It was much better organized than mass organizations of today, but still it wasn't organized enough. Far from being a waste of time, building organizations is essential to sustaining long-term movements. This is not to mention that organization is essential if the oppressed are ever to replace the decaying structure and organization of imperialism with something new and not just a rehash of imperialism.

It's a good thing that SDS split into some supposed vanguard parties because otherwise there would be little trace of SDS today. Some SDS leaders lead mass organizations today too, but for the most part no one can say that the student movement or its descendants maintained any momentum into the mid-1970s.

The main reason SDS left so little behind is that it didn't take its own organization seriously enough.

SDS people gave up. Some became Wall Street brokers. Mostly SDSers just took ordinary positions as cogs in the machine.

SDSers could not maintain their intensity partly because they did not see to organizing their circumstances after graduation. While they were in school, they could rely on classes and the challenge of discussing ideas in liberal arts schools to be the unconscious organization that brought SDS together. They also relied on the imperialists to bring about the issue of the draft for their age group for a set period of years. Once all these things provided by the bourgeoisie were gone, so was the promise of SDS.

The same is true of mass organizations on campus today. They unconsciously rely on bourgeois institutions to organize them.

What happens when people leave the university? What organization makes it easy for people to be political? This is where a vanguard party, a newspaper and other national projects come in.

Building such an organization is empowering and can continue outside of a college town as well

as within. The effort of every individual is magnified through a party which can manage many tasks by taking advantage of a division of labor and a national organization.

Sources:
Black Panthers Speak, SDS, "American Leninism," *Weatherman.*

This is the most difficult piece in this chapter. Since it concerns the RCP, which has many theoretical books published, this difficulty is not surprising. The RCP has its problems with garden-variety rightism, but as we shall see, many problems in the RCP line are much more sophisticated. The reader can view this article as a challenge to step up to, a mountain to climb. Part 1, a review of Raymond Lotta's America in Decline, is published in MT4.

BOOK REVIEW

Unraveling the political economy of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA part 2

Phony Communism Is Dead ...
Long Live Real Communism
by Bob Avakian, RCP Publications, 1992

by MC86
May, 1992

We didn't hear much from the Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, Bob Avakian, for several years after it became clear that the United States and the Soviet Union were more in economic collusion than in political contention. Long ago MIM recognized that World War Three is already here on a daily basis for most of the planet's people. But our hearts went out to the Chairman when his Party's guiding line regarding the absolute inevitability of nuclear war (unless prevented by revolution) between the Soviet and the Amerikan imperialists fell apart in the rain of reality.

Phony Communism Is Dead ... Long Live Real Communism is Chairman Avakian's ninth book in 13 years. Up until book six, in 1986, the Chairman was predicting that an imminent "historical conjuncture" brought about by anarchic rivalry between blocs of imperialist countries would bang open the door to the world revolution—tomorrow.

The people of the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America have few illusions about the kindness of George Bush.

That was yesterday. Where is the Chairman at now? MIM wanted to know, so we spent $5 on the new book.

In the realm of theory, MIM maintains three dividing line questions demarcating practicing Marxist-Leninist-Maoists from revisionists of all stripes.* MIM and the RCP have been in historical agreement on the fact that capitalism was restored in the (now disintegrated) Soviet Union after the death of Stalin in 1953. Although it would now seem, from Avakian's new book, that we disagree on the underlying process informing that restoration.

MIM gives credit where credit is due and applauds the younger RCP's exposure of Deng Xiaoping—and China's state capitalist promotion of profit in command—in 1979. However, despite the RCP's assertions to the contrary, MIM analyzes that the RCP does not, in it's actual theory, uphold the Chinese Cultural Revolution as the furthest advance of communism and people's democracy in human history.

On the question of the North Amerikan white-working class the RCP promotes a basically Trotskyist theory of the productive forces (in partial disguise) and this economist deviation makes it impossible for the RCP to actually uphold the Cultural Revolution in anything except words.

With the Chairman's new book, the RCP marks a theoretical shift from "left" economism back to a variant of the right economism that so heavily influenced its origins.

In his first six books, Avakian rode high politically on the fear of nuclear holocaust. For the RCP, the principal contradiction in the modern world was the inter-imperialist contradiction and the contradiction between world imperialism and the oppressed nations of the world, as well as the class contradiction, were secondary, at best, and liquidated, at worst.

Revolutionary struggles for national liberation were peremptorily dismissed as basically bourgeois and incapable of leading the people forward to defeat imperialism. Consequently, the RCP's organs seldom covered Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, the Philippines, Eritrea, Sri Lanka or any number of revolutionary class struggles and rebellions throughout the world that have dealt objective blows to imperialism.

Interestingly enough, Avakian barely mentions the revolution in Peru in *Dead ... Long Live*. Is it possible that, despite its high-level promotion of the Communist Party of Peru's armed struggle, the RCP remains in fundamental disagreement with the Peruvian Maoists' analysis of imperialism/oppressed nations as the principal contradiction? Is the revolution in Peru too nationalist for Avakian & Co.?

The book

For the record, MIM objects to Avakian's biography, in the back, that says, "Today he heads the only party in the U.S. calling for and seriously working towards the overthrow of U.S. imperialism and its replacement by proletarian rule, socialism." Nor did Avakian "expose" the coup in China "in 1976." The RCP waited nearly two long years after the coup had been exposed by others, in 1977, before going public with such an analysis. (See description of *The Capitalist Roaders Are Still On the Capitalist Road* by Colorado Study Group in MIM's RCP Study Pack.)

This book has been undertaken, according to its author, as an "ideological counteroffensive" against the "international bourgeoisie's" claim that communism is dead. Currently the RCP is concentrating on refuting the empty bourgeois braggadocio that capitalism has triumphed over communism. To this end, Avakian dissects at length statements by such luminaries as George Bush and Zbignew Brezinski. He does this because current anti-communist bourgeois propaganda is "tending to narrow and restrict people's vision to the limits of the new *old* world order."(p. 2)

"But let's get into some of the main arguments made in these times by leaders and spokesmen of the imperialists (and those who tail in their wake) on what they declare to be 'the demise (or death) of communism.'"(p. 40)

MIM knows that although imperialism is strong—it is at risk around the world. Tentative imperialist alliances forcibly directed against Third World peoples are nothing new to the rebellious masses—who are not asses! The people of the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America have few illusions about the kindness of George Bush.

But Avakian holds that, "it is very important to keep in mind the contradiction between what this system promises and what it delivers. This is related to Marx's famous statement that the important thing at any given time is not what the masses understand or are doing but what they will be compelled to do by the workings of the system itself."(p. 6)

Avakian does not cite this "famous" statement by Marx; but MIM knows that Marx didn't waste any time waiting for the masses to "wake up." Rather, Marx supported and learned from the people's struggles, e.g., the doomed Paris Commune. Communists do not tail after either the rulers or the masses. Nor did Marx promise the masses a more efficient "delivery" of the stolen goods.

But Avakian postulates that, "...the masses have been maintained in a state of ignorance concerning the basis of their own condition as well as the means for fundamentally overturning it. ... the masses of people ... [are] deluded as to the actual workings of society, and of reality as a whole."(p. 41)

Of course, the RCP and its Chairman have never been deluded!

World War Three

Despite continued cultivation of his personality cult, the Chairman is fond of claiming that individuals do not make history. Contradictorily, Avakian, faced with the "sudden" collapse of Soviet social-imperialism says that this is due to the peculiar advent of one remarkable individual: Mikhail Gorbachev.

"... world war has been avoided in the present period, largely as a result of the changes associated with the regime of Mikhail Gorbachev (and now increasingly Boris Yeltsin)."(p. 3)

The upshot of the RCP analysis is that things have not really changed that much in the realm of their political economy. Its just that a really strong

leader managed to persuade the principal objective contradiction in the world to temporarily shift.

Despite this temporary shift, "... contradictions among the imperialists themselves ... are likely to become even more pronounced in the period ahead ... The point is not that the threat of world war is now posing itself in the same way—and with the same acuteness and immediacy—that it did in the first half of the 1980s; but conflicts among imperialists are real and bound to make themselves felt."(p. 5) No substantiating data is presented.

The masses

Although Avakian states that, "The Cultural Revolution was in fact the greatest advance so far achieved by the international proletariat,"(p. 37) in this book he completely ignores the main lesson of the Cultural Revolution that leaders within the communist party in power—capitalist-roaders—will inevitably attempt to seize power for capitalism and that they can only be thwarted by group-conscious cultural revolutions waged at all levels of society by the masses themselves.

Despite continued cultivation of his personality cult, the Chairman is fond of claiming that individuals do not make history.

If what Avakian, (not Marx), says is true, that "the important thing at any given time is not what the masses understand or are doing ..."—then there will be no conscious, socialist-educated mass-base for the continuing revolution.

Here, and elswhere, (Avakian's response to K. Venu in A World To Win #17 1992), Avakian calls for the"institutionalization" of the party and the standing army after seizure of power. Along the way, Avakian completely negates the Cultural Revolution's practice of socialist democracy and ignores the fact that revisionism has a strong material basis in the professionalized standing army itself.

Continuing his negation of the Cultural Revolution, Avakian states that, "... when it is said that under socialism the masses are the masters of society and the owners of the means of production, this is true; but it is true relatively and not absolutely. Given the actual contradictions in socialist society, the mastery and ownership by the masses is expressed not only through the active role of the masses themselves in all spheres of society, but also through the role of the representatives of the masses. ... *Even under communism there will still be this kind of contradiction.* There will still be the need for representatives in certain aspects."(p. 97, emphasis added.)

No doubt, under communism there will exist contradictory divisions of labor and leisure-time—and maybe even mass organizations—but to claim that the Party, and not the masses, is the *relative* "master of society" and *relative* "owner" of the means of production—even under socialism—is anti-Cultural Revolution. Why is the commandist Avakian compelled to attack the very idea of the masses' absolute ownership of the economic base and absolute control of the superstructure under socialism—not to mention communism?

"As Mao stressed, when leadership is in the hands of the genuine Marxists then the masses will have these fundamental rights and powers in actual fact; when leadership is in the hands of revisionists or other representatives of the bourgeoisie, then in actual fact the masses will not have these fundamental rights and powers. And, in turn, whether leadership is genuinely Marxist and really represents the revolutionary interests of the proletariat can only be determined by what line this leadership puts forward and puts into practice. This is what Mao meant when he said that ideological and political line is decisive."(p. 97-98)

MIM begs to disagree. The masses, not the leaders, are the makers of history. Political line is decisive—maybe not in Avakian's netherworld of mentally superior bureaucrats—but decisive in mass practice and only in mass practice.

What Avakian actually says here is that only the leaders will be able to judge whether or not a political line is correct. This eliminates the masses—and continuation of the Revolution—from the equation. What it leads to is that if the leadership puts forth a line—then the line is correct—*if* they are "genuine" Marxists. This is a nonsensical tautology which boils down to: *the leaders are correct if the leaders are correct!*

The empire strikes out

Avakian claims that, "... the loss in China, like

the loss in the Soviet Union before it, was not primarily the result of mistakes of revolutionaries. Still less is it a question of some inherent "defect" in communism and proletarian revolution. *Rather, it was primarily a defeat inflicted by the international bourgeoisie."* (p. 10, emphasis added.)

The restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and China, according to the Chairman, was not the result of a capitalist bourgeoisie emerging within the top ranks of the Party. Socialism was restored by external imperialists. This concept is anti-Maoist.

Ironically, after stating that:"... [T]he revolutionary interests of the proletariat can only be determined by what line this leadership puts forward and puts into practice," Avakian, contradictorily, claims, "... [I]t, was not primarily the result of mistakes of revolutionaries." Doesn't anybody read this stuff before they print it?

Avakian more than implies that Soviet and Chinese socialism were destroyed because two-thirds of the world remained under imperialist rule and—here is the crunch—the socialist development of the productive forces could not withstand the more advanced productive forces wielded by Western imperialism.(pp. 12-18)

Despite Avakian's admonition against falling for the "theory of the productive forces"(p. 76) he states that, "... through all that development [of the productive forces] [society] will eventually reach the stage where the communist revolution will come on the agenda and be carried out."(p. 18)

Karl Kautsky ("peaceful evolution into socialism"), Leon Trotsky ("socialism cannot be built in one country") and Deng Xiaoping ("peaceful co-existence of three worlds") could not have put it so succinctly. The advocation of theories that hold the productive forces principal over the relations of production (and revolution in the superstructure) are the absolute bellwether of the slip into absolute revisionism.

Avakian is careful to uphold the analysis of Raymond Lotta's *America in Decline*. He still equates it in significance to Lenin's *Imperialism*.(p. 23)

In Lotta's thinly stretched tome the movement of the anarchy of production is held to be principal over the organizing tendencies of the productive forces. Now, without losing a beat, Avakian references Lotta's same arguments to substantiate the opposite assertion!

As far as MIM can tell, nuclear war between the Soviets and the Amerikans did not occur in the 1980s. This, says the Chairman, must be the result of the *organizing* tendencies of the productive forces to *counteract* the anarchy of production. But don't worry, he says, the socialized development of the productive forces will eventually see to the sunrise of communism. But just in case it doesn't, he hedges, the inter-imperialist contradiction is still principal.

An end to the horror

"The reality is that, ... there was a partial and 'perverse' recovery in the U.S. during the 1980s ..."(p. 54) America didn't decline. In fact, it brought down the Soviet Union through the sheer force of its national productivity, says Avakian.

Avakian explains that, "... capital, which had arisen fundamentally on the basis of the national market in the various capitalist countries, remained rooted in those national markets. Capital retained its 'national identity,' even as it accumulated, and could only accumulate, on an international scale."(p. 25) Well, which is it? Is capital accumulation profoundly national or profoundly international? It cannot be both!

Additionally, super-profits are realized—but not rooted—in the imperialist countries. They are *rooted* at the sites of surplus-value extraction—in the Third World.

Stuck in the RCP's wildly fluctuating imperialist economism, Avakian reiterates Lotta's metaphysics: "In the imperialist era, the competition among capitals is heightened and that competition finds its most concentrated expression in the contention among the imperialist states."(p. 25)

MIM says that the international financial oligarchy of imperialist monopoly capitalist groups finds its most concentrated economic and political expression in the daily cold and hot world war it wages against the surplus-value producing people of the oppressed Third World nations.

A horrible end

"Not only is the lopsidedness in the world likely to persist for a fairly long time but, bound up with this, for some time the socialist states that come into being will very probably begin with a low level of technology and labor productivity that will be below that of the remaining imperialist countries and will not be sufficient to produce the material abundance that will be required for communism ... the proletarian revolution is very unlikely to occur in

the majority of countries—or even a large number of them—all at once, but is more likely to occur in one or a few countries at a time."(p. 81)

Turning inside out the proposition that socialism can be built in one country at a time, Avakian implies that socialism can only be built in isolated countries—if at all—until that time when it can be built in all countries simultaneously. Here Avakian again trails after his unacknowledged mentors Bernstein, Kautsky, Trotsky, Khrushchev and Deng Xiaoping. His statement, in translation, says: *Imperialism will be around for a really long time. Since the imperialist countries have more highly developed productive forces than the Third World countries they will be able to extinguish any sparks that might start prairie fires so just forget about resisting imperialism or engaging in national liberation struggles because:*

"Even though in the bourgeois era the world is divided into different nations, the proletariat is an international class and its interests, as a class, lies in achieving communism worldwide."(p. 22)

That is to say, the class interest of the proletariat will eventually bring forth communism after the productive forces bring forth communism. The only possible inference to be drawn from this is that Avakian's false and idealized internationalism will be developed to such a high level by the organizational tendencies of the productive forces that one day we will all wake up and the oppressed nations of the world, along with imperialism, will have withered away of their own accord—without having had to engage in national liberation struggles against imperialism.

"It may seem ironic, but nationalist ideology—which, by definition, and despite any claims to the contrary, is bound to be the outlook of 'my nation first'—cannot lead to the liberation of nations. ... Nationalism, even where it assumes a revolutionary expression politically, in the struggle of an oppressed nation, still remains ideologically within the confines of the bourgeois world outlook."(p. 64)

What about the Soviet Union? Or The People's Republic of China? Or Peru? Or the Philippines? In the actual practice of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, proletarian revolutionaries have successfully allied—and are allying—with national bourgeois classes in united fronts against imperialism in the development of two-stage new democratic socialist revolutions.

First the imperialists and their compradors are kicked out of the colonies and neocolonies. Then there is a class struggle between the peasant/proletarian masses and the national bourgeoisie—which may or may not take the form of an armed struggle.

People's Wars, where imperialist-dominated cities are surrounded and choked by liberated socialist base areas in the countryside, until urban insurrection delivers the final blow, depend upon degrees of alliance between the proletarian-led revolutionaries and those sections of the national bourgeoisie that are restricted in their economic development by patriarchal imperialism. Without the conscious forging of these class alliances and united fronts there not only will be no national liberation—there will be no communist revolution.

The Soviet Union in decline

Continuing to dig the theoretical grave of the international proletariat, Bob Avakian sums up the collapse of Soviet social-imperialism:

"Looking at the recent events in the Soviet Union in broad historical terms, it could be said that the Bolshevik revolution represented bypassing the bourgeois-democratic revolution and moving directly to socialism. The rise to power of revisionism ... represented the restoration of capitalism without a bourgeois-democratic revolution and with the retention of certain outer forms, or trappings, of socialism. And what is going on in the Soviet Union today represents the discarding of those trappings of socialism and the taking on of the more traditional forms of bourgeois rule, accompanied by certain trappings of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. In fact, there is no revolution going on—not even a bourgeois-democratic revolution—but there is more open adoption of classical bourgeois forms."(p. 68)

Avakian conveniently ignores the February 1917 Russian Revolution in which the Russian proletariat and the national bourgeoisie overthrew the Czar and established a bourgeois-democratic government—which was subsequently overthrown by the workers, peasants and soldiers. These same groups then engaged in an extended civil war against many national bourgeoisies and seized power from them; after which the Bolsheviks instituted a period of controlled capitalist transition (New Economic Policy) into a socialist dictatorship.

MIM notes that it was ***Trotsky*** who opposed the initial seizure of power from the Kerensky government and the New Economic Policy and the worker/peasant alliance. (MIM distributes Kostas Mavrakis' excellent book *On Trotskyism* Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., London, 1976) It was Trotsky

who generally opposed seeing the Russian Revolution and other revolutions in stages—including the new democratic stage.

Avakian attempts to prove his point by relying on Engel's concept of the "negation of the negation."

"...the immediate negation of revisionism in such countries, in terms of the masses (or at least influential sections of them), is the demand not for genuine socialism but for bourgeois democracy."(p. 68) In other words, bourgeois democracy is the negation of revisionism which negated socialism which negated capitalism/feudalism (bourgeois democracy/autocracy). Avakian has always failed to see how demands for independent power and actualized democracy objectively weaken imperialism.

At any rate, Avakian's model of negations is, again, tautological—because it ends up in reality with bourgeois democracy negating bourgeois democracy.

Mao pointed out, in 1964, that "the negation of the negation does not exist at all" and that such a conceptual construct was really just a restatement of the law of contradiction itself; and therefore not a useful tool in the science of dialectical materialism. Ironically, in his book *Mao Tse-Tung's Immortal Contributions* (RCP Publications, 1979), Chairman Avakian states, "Finally on this matter of the negation of the negation, if this is made a law of dialectics, it will actually tend to promote metaphysics."(p. 185)

It is the law of contradiction—the identity and unity of opposites—that gives us the appropriate tools with which to analyze the internal collapse of Soviet social-imperialism in an external setting.

But Avakian sees only mechanical negations where the mutual exclusivity of opposites rules. He cannot even begin to deal with the "national question," which has come back full-force in the ex-Soviet Union today.

Imperialist economism: a full blown trend

Since 1988, the RCP has blindly "upheld" its previously published theories while at the same time it has moved away from them. Without his "left" economist theories of "inter-imperialist rivalry" and "historic conjunctures," Avakian is lost at sea. He has no choice but to adopt the determinism of his theories of the productive forces to accommodate his move to the right.

Along the way he, once again, accuses Mao of "certain nationalist and 'linear' tendencies" (p. 82) as he strives to "negate" the just revolutionary, anti-imperialist wars that the oppressed are right now fighting for national liberation from Occupied Azania to Azerbajdanskaje to Los Angeles. This is "right" economism.

"While the specific level of development of the productive forces may vary from one capitalist country to another, nevertheless in capitalist society, generally, the value of the commodity labor power is less than the total value produced by the workers during the time they are working for the capitalists."(p. 19) MIM Theory 1, "A White Proletariat?," Spring 1992, completely disproves this unsubstantiated assertion.

"... [T]he ruling class in all the major imperialist countries was able to bribe a section of the working class, with its more privileged, bribed sections the basis for, at best, reformist politics while its basic, most exploited sections remained the social base for proletarian revolution ..."(p. 26)

MIM says that the Amerikan ruling class has bought off the vast majority of the 180-million-strong settler population and that they are objectively and materially allied with the international bourgeoisie. The RCP has never made public a quantified class analysis of the United States.

"Especially during those times when the demand for labor power is less and generally in circumstances which are favorable for them to do so, the capitalists will drive the wages of at least sections of the workers below the value of their labor power; on the other hand, the bribing of sections of the workers in imperialist countries results in a situation where, at least for periods of time, the wages of these workers may actually be above the value of their labor power."(p. 7)

For how long a period of time? A week? A half century, perhaps? And what, Mr. Avakian, is the *source* of the surplus that subsidizes these high wages and the imperialist standard of death? What vast populations *consume* these super-profits?

"But none of this changes the fundamental relation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and specifically the essential fact that under capitalism the mass of proletarians are reduced to the position where they must sell their labor in order to live and are subordinated to the process of capital accumulation. ... at one pole, among a small minority of people, is wealth, power, and the concentration of capital; and at the other pole, misery, agony of toil, poverty, and so on. This applies even within the so-called advanced capitalist, that is imperialist, coun-

tries themselves."(p. 51-52)

According to Bob Avakian, a handful of rich Amerikans exploit and oppress the majority of Amerikan consumers who toil in agony in horrible automobile and weapons manufacturing plants and corporate back offices while forced to shop in supermarkets and *recycle*.

"The fact is that there are still millions of workers in production in the U.S. and in other imperialist countries, and especially the lower-paid strata of these workers are subjected to vicious exploitation, but at the same time there is a continuing tendency for the imperialists to shift productive investment ... into Third World nations ..."(p. 62)

If Amerikan imperialism has such a strong national grip on the productive forces—then why are they shipping those forces overseas? Could it be that the Amerikan capitalists do not actually profit off their white working class retainers and have eagerly turned—en masse—to the Third World where some real bucks can be made?

"... [E]xploitation ... has made possible the existence of fairly sizeable 'middle class' sections of the population, some of which are relatively well-off economically."(p. 53)

MIM knows that these "well-off," "sizeable sections" constitute a huge white oppressor nation that feeds its healthy "standard of living" by sucking surplus-value from external and internal colonies. MIM understands that the appetites of these consumers operate to realize the surplus-value produced by Third World workers and farmers. The RCP, however, concludes that the super-exploitation of the Third World is bad for "relatively well-off" Amerikans and that Amerikans are not allied with their imperialist providers.

"Ask those forced onto unemployment and welfare ... ask the workers at worksites all across the country where people are murdered and maimed in their millions [sic!-ed.]) ... Ask the workers even in the 'core industries' of what is becoming the 'rust belt' of the United States, those who perhaps thought they had 'job security' but now find their jobs being eliminated under this great system of 'free markets.'" (p. 52)

MIM can read that in the Workers Vanguard. The Sparts are not Maoists. They are Trots.

According to a Census Bureau report released on January 26, 1994, "The 1991 median white household net worth is $44,408. The median black household was worth about a tenth of that: $4,604." The median net worth of most Third World household is not available—but MIM figures it at about zero since shanties and broken shoes are not bringing much in the re-sale markets these days.

Conclusion

According to a massive footnote, Avakian has been reading one of MIM's favorite books *The Fundamentals of Political Economy, (FPE)* published in Shanghai towards the end of the Cultural Revolution. In fact, *Dead ... Long Live,* relies heavily on *FPE* to provide a Marxist cover for Avakian's wild, economist, social-chauvinist revisionism. Avakian can't use *FPE's* phrase "socialist abundance" often enough to really wet the gullets of his white, pseudo-feminist, middle-class readers. The Chairman thinks that *FPE* is a pretty good book—but it has one fundamental problem.

" ... the last chapter of the Shanghai textbook ... loses sight of the very class criteria it has insisted on throughout the textbook. It puts forward suggestions and discusses methods and models for how these 'nationalist countries' can develop their economies more independently of imperialism. This leaves out of the equation the fundamental question of which class is ruling in these 'nationalist countries' and what is the actual relation of these countries and their ruling classes to imperialism ... So, ironically, the very strengths of this book are forgotten to significant degree in its last chapter. This is something which underlines, in a negative way in this case, that the question of which class is in command, and whose class interests are being expressed in terms of guiding lines and policies, is decisive in determining what is possible and what in fact will be carried out."(p. 101)

Poor Avakian. There he was, tooling along in *FPE*, eating up all this great political economy (never an RCP strong point) and suddenly, right at the end, the Chinese Maoist Cultural Revolutionaries say something that negates everything for which the Chairman stands. What possibly could be the offensive Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought?

Probably this one: "The developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and other countries are the Third World. They are oppressed and exploited by colonialism and imperialism. They are the revolutionary motive power that pushes the wheel of history forward and are a major impetus in opposing colonialism, imperialism, and especially the superpowers ... They have a varying desire to free themselves from the enslavement and control of the superpowers ...

"China is a socialist state and also a developing country. China belongs to the Third World. The Chinese people have consistently followed Chairman Mao's teachings, resolutely supported the struggle of the oppressed people and nations to fight for and defend national independence, and opposed colonialism, imperialism and hegemony. They stand with the people of the Third World and the whole world to push the wheel of history forward." (*Fundamentals of Political Economy*, p. 503-504)

MIM concludes that despite the Revolutionary Worker's often informative coverage of Black and immigrant struggles inside the United States, the RCP's general line does not and cannot support the right of the internal oppressed nations to self-determination. Neither does it or can it support Third World new democratic revolutions.

Notes:
* MIM's dividing line questions:
(1) MIM holds that after the proletariat seizes power in socialist revolution, the potential exists for capitalist restoration under the leadership of a new bourgeoisie within the communist party itself. In the case of the USSR, the bourgeoisie seized power after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China, it was after Mao's death and the overthrow of the Gang of Four in 1976.
(2) MIM upholds the Cultural Revolution as the farthest advance of communism in human history.
(3) MIM believes the North Amerikan white working class is primarily a non-revolutionary worker-elite at this time; thus, it is not the principal vehicle to advance Maoism in this continent.

Opportunism is the sister of revisionism

by MC5

All around the world, MIM has heard the opportunist defense of the RCP line that it has never said that a majority of white workers was exploited—because the RCP has never said anything precise on the subject! What is even more amazing is that these apologists for the RCP know that the RCP has existed over 15 years and it still doesn't have a line on this question, and the apologists find this excusable and even worthy of defending! This is one of those questions where MIM is not sure which is worse, having the wrong line vaguely stated or reportedly having no line in disagreement with the MIM line, because the RCP hasn't bothered to come up with one on the most basic question of "friends" and "enemies" within U.S. borders.

Generally, the apologists for the RCP line say that they see no difference between our line and the RCP line. However, regardless of the apologists' weak reading of the RCP's literature, the RCP's program and other documents refer to the "majority" and "vast majority" of Americans as exploited. At least that much we know about the RCP line. Now, right off the bat, the RCP program disagrees with the MIM line, because MIM would not write a program addressing oppressed nation workers and Euro-Amerikan workers as ONE working class from ONE country. MIM would only talk about the separate national working classes in the same breath for research and statistical purposes—for calculations of the surplus-value, etc.

Now let us momentarily humor the RCP's multinational working class assumptions. What can we infer from the RCP's position on the "majority" and "great majority?" It is not possible in the United States to have a "majority" or "great majority" of exploited workers without including a near-majority of white workers pulled along by heavy majorities of the exploited oppressed nation workers that the RCP is obviously counting as part of its multinational working class of ONE country—"the single proletariat in the U.S.," (p. 34 of RCP programme). To see a "vast majority" of workers as "exploited," it is necessary to see a "majority" of white workers as exploited. (See Avakian's speech summing up the Black Panthers for his pointed comments in defense of the white working class on this.)

MIM has some sympathy for the apologists of the RCP line on this question. While the RCP has an official—if rather *dated*—"programme" and MIM does not, MIM's line is much more precise and less subject to multiple interpretations for use depending on whom the RCP wants to please at any particular moment (something also done so skillfully on the gay/lesbian question of late). Hence, the apologists are baffled because of the imprecision of the RCP line and haven't bothered to figure out what the RCP line, even in all its vagueness, *implies*.

A page by page reading paying careful attention to terminology is important. On pages 10 and 31 of its programme, the RCP refers to the labor aristocracy as the "minority" in the U.S. working class. MIM clearly disagrees and sees not only a majority as labor aristocracy, but also sees no proletariat from Euro-Amerika.

Avakian is so stuck in Marx's *Capital* as a reading of conditions of U.S. workers today, he paints a picture of a huge majority's opposition to a minority of imperialists and labor aristocrats. Listening to the RCP, one would have thought residents of the U.S. mother country have nothing to lose from revolution: the RCP program refers to "those who have no stake in this system, representing the great majority." (p. 10, similarly on p. 28) Meanwhile, MIM has pointed out that even Engels in his day of the ferocious conditions of the Industrial Revolution, was not so optimistic about the English working class's prospects for revolution. (See MIM Theory 2/3.)

Hence, not even the people who wrote *Capital*, were as stuck in its main theoretical model of exploited workers as Avakian is today. Marx and Engels were only trying to teach people how to think scientifically about social conditions. They did not think that one model of exploitation and economic conditions would apply for all times in all places. People who read *Capital* can see that Marx is very careful to talk about specific conditions and assumptions for everything he says.

The reason that Avakian is so fiercely attached to the notion of the white working class's exploitation is simple: the force of Euro-Amerikan chauvinism. Avakian would like to be the negotiator of a new deal between white nation workers and their bosses. Potentially, Avakian could be right that there is a lot of gravy to be had in denying the existence of oppressed nations, while championing the most ardent desires of the white working class. For every potential change in alliance of classes, there must be a political leader created and Avakian is an excellent potential spokesperson for the settler workers.

Thank you, RCP!

by MC86

As MIM Theory 5 goes to press, the Revolutionary Communist Party has finally owned up to its erroneous and social-chauvinist position that the bourgeoisified Euro-Amerikan working class is exploited.

The January 16, 1994 issue of the Revolutionary Worker contains an article about a two-day conference in Germany on Mao Zedong Thought—during November 1993—which was initiated by the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations.

At the conference, MIM presented a position paper demonstrating that the majority of the Euro-Amerikan working class is not exploited—which has obvious implications for concrete class analysis in all the imperialist countries. (See MIM Notes #85 January 1994 for more in depth coverage of the excellent conference.)

In the RW article on the conference, there appears an interesting paragraph—which for surface theoretical purposes might as well be a MIM criticism of the RCP:

"The conference also revealed how some organized Marxist-Leninists have sought to invoke Mao's name but to rob his teachings of their revolutionary thrust. This was especially apparent with groupings from the imperialist countries (like the MLPD). [The Marxist-Leninist Party Deutschland hosted the event.-ed.] Many are mired in economism—trailing after the economic struggles of the workers and not building an all-around revolutionary movement that aims to be prepared, when the objective conditions ripen, to launch the armed struggle for power. And they are also mired in social chauvinism—downplaying imperialist domination of the Third World and the key role of national liberation struggles in the world revolution, as well as downplaying the struggles of immigrant workers and oppressed nationalities in the revolutionary process in the imperialist countries."(p. 5)

It is heartening to see the RCP appear in print supporting the concept of real-life national liberation struggles—and we can only hope that the RCP uses the content of this paragraph to rectify its political economy and abandon Trotskyism. Unfortunately, the RCP immediately proceeds to undue all this good self-criticism in a small, but sectarian, footnote.

"The participation of a questionable organization called the Maoist Internationalist Movement must be noted in this regard. This organization tries to associate itself with the people's war in Peru, and it was seemingly opposing social-chauvinism when it spoke from the floor about imperialism and the Third World. But it argued that white workers as an economic-social grouping in the United States are not exploited, are part of the process of exploitation of the workers of the Third World and have no revolutionary interests. This is a wrong and counterrevo-

lutionary idea. Some conference participants thought this was the RCP, USA and RIM's view, which it is not."(p. 5)

Leaving aside the attempt at nasty gossipmongering and the attempt to split and wreck the unity of those in the International Communist Movement who support the Communist Party of Peru and the revolution in Peru—it is a crying shame that the RCP, USA and its self-isolating Revolutionary Internationalist Movement remain willfully and consciously in denial about the political economy of North Amerika.

In MIM Notes and MIM Theory, MIM has done its best over the last ten years to present the scientifically developed case for a real and material class, gender and nation analysis of the United States. The RCP has tried to publicly ignore MIM's existence and has never made a case in rebuttal to MIM's political economy. MIM has done its best to positively influence the RCP, but mostly MIM just proceeds with the mundane work of slowly and patiently organizing the Maoist vanguard forces in North Amerika.

What can we say? Where there's smoke—there's fire. MIM urges the RCP to use the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to reassess its fallacious Trotsky-type theories, drop its social-chauvinism and worship of the bourgeoisified Euro-Amerikan workers and work hard to support the most advanced revolutionary forces in all the imperialist countries and all the oppressed nations and internal colonies. For its part, MIM will always leave the door open to honest forces struggling to develop a Maoist theory and practice—to mutually enter into rational and scientific discussion of concrete conditions.

In the words of Jose Maria Sison, founder of the New People's Army and former Chairperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, who also attended the conference in Germany:

"There must be a conscious and organized effort to build solidarity and cooperation among all workers and peoples of the entire world in order to bring about the resurgence and advance of the world anti-imperialist movement.

"To carry out the task more effectively than before, there must be an international system of aid and cooperation under working class leadership."

As evidenced by several articles in this journal, MIM pulls few punches and makes principled, well-documented criticisms of published RCP theory. MIM is not surprised that the RCP does not have enough strategic confidence in its own political economy and general line to scientifically debate a vitally important question—now pressing on the agenda of the revitalizing International Communist Movement. MIM suggests that the RCP leadership cease its senseless tactic of useless sectarian slander and infantile posturings: if the white working class in Amerika is exploited—prove it.

Chapter 7
CPP Returns to Maoism

The journey back to Maoism

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA): its rectification movement and MIM's view of the CPP analysis and the international movement it leads.

On December 26th, 1968, Amado Guerrero, now known as Jose Maria Sison, re-established the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on Maoist principles. Before its re-establishment the CPP had degenerated into a pathetic revisionist husk.

Jose Maria Sison also re-organized some peasant rebels into the New People's Army (NPA) at about the same time. In previous issues of MIM Notes, MIM has referred to this fact and the fact of the CPP's original support for the Cultural Revolution and Maoist principles.

Somewhere along the way between 1968 and the present, MIM lost track of the CPP/NPA. From what it could tell from limited experience in the mid-1980s, the CPP had degenerated into a narrow nationalist organization tailing after revisionism. MIM Notes referred to the NPA as "semi-Maoist," "neo-Maoist" or the like. There was also an intentional policy of referring to the Philippines as a situation of "just rebellion" or ignoring the CPP altogether.

As late as 1990, MIM had an internal discussion of the CPP. At that time, MIM had wind of a struggle within the CPP and surmised the possibility that certain people appearing to be revisionist to the naive eye, might actually be genuine Maoists. Nonetheless, MIM continued a policy of avoiding the issue or at the very least not referring to the CPP as fraternal. Some literature referred to the NPA as "Maoist-inspired," because of the clear-cut nature of its founding principles. Ads for studying Mao Zedong Thought appeared with old excerpts from the CPP's founder Amado Guerrero. Meanwhile, internally, MIM asked itself, "What happened to Amado Guerrero?"

On March 4, 1990, MIM published the following ad encouraging comrades to study Maoism: "Too busy to study Mao? Busier than the NPA in 1970? 'The universal theory of Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung Thought and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution have already had incalculable impact on the concrete practice of the Philippine revolution. The revolutionization of the 700 million Chinese people has transformed the People's Republic of China into an iron bastion of socialism. We are very fortunate to be so close to the center of the world proletarian revolution'—Amado Guerrero, Chairperson Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which had just founded the NPA on March 29th, 1969, ending his book *Philippine Society and Revolution*."

On May 18, 1990, MIM published the following statement on the NPA: "Perhaps the largest and most established armed struggle against a U.S. puppet regime in Asia has been going on since 1969 in the Philippines. But the New People's Army (NPA) started as a Maoist group. To this day they are not openly pro-Soviet. Surprise, surprise, there are few solidarity groups for the NPA. (Kudos to the Progressive Student Network for stepping out on this one, however.)

"Overall, in-depth study of the Senderos, Eritreans, the NPA or Mao's historic guerrilla war would leave a lot of questions about the politics and strategy of the FMLN or the Sandinistas." (MIM Notes, Number 42) [Since that time MIM's record on this as in other issues is rather impressive. The Eritreans won the first stage of their revolution. The NPA and the Senderos continue forward while the FMLN and Sandinistas have capitulated or given up power. And of course, the Soviet Union dissolved.-ed.]

As it turns out, the CPP is now going through a rectification in which it identifies what it calls "deviations" from its founding principles. Struggle to identify such "deviations" started within the CPP in 1988.

With each passing year since 1988, the position of the Maoist pole within the CPP has gained strength. The collapse of the Soviet bloc helped to clarify the situation—since angling for Soviet aid was a part of the deviation in the mid-1980s. Even as late as January 1989, we cannot say there wasn't a certain ambiguity with regard to the Soviet Union. (See Jose Maria Sison's book, *The Philippines Revolution: The Leader's View* (NY: Crane Russak, 1989), p. 189, 193-4)

While the ways in which this period of the 1980s was a deviation from the CPP's original principles is now clear, we should also understand the underlying social basis for the deviation. One is that in the process of struggle many of the key leaders ended up in prison under Marcos. The growth of the CPP/NPA continued under Marcos, but its direction

altered. At crucial points the CPP fell just short of abandoning its founding principles entirely—both with regard to the analysis of the Soviet Union and the need for protracted warfare and new democratic revolution. Confusion with regard to these points prevailed in the 1980s.

Secondly, with regard to the social basis of the deviation, the very success of the CPP was a reason for its deviation. After 15 years of protracted warfare, the CPP had accumulated military and political strength, so that by the early 1980s, certain possibilities of final victory found their way into the thoughts of many comrades wishing for a quick end to the struggle. The CPP has since identified this as a period of ultraleft deviation.

The ultraleft deviationists favored the formation of larger military formations (aided with Soviet weapons) for use in regular mobile or conventional warfare against the regime. It was the estimation of the ultraleft that the NPA was close to ready for beating reactionary armed forces in a frontal onslaught—especially in the context of an urban insurrection reminiscent of the last days of the Sandinista Revolution against Somoza.

These larger military formations favored by the ultraleft in the 1980s required large sacrifices of the people. They also cut into the time left for political education. For these reasons, they were unsustainable, especially with the collapse of any hope of Soviet military aid.

What made the ultraleft deviation worse was the rapid quantitative growth of the CPP/NPA which outpaced its qualitative deepening of comrades' political understanding. The result was serious in that nearly 1000 comrades died in anti-infiltrator hysteria alone and more lost their lives in misguided battles and above-ground insurrectionary tactics incorrectly premised on what the ultraleft deemed to be the imminent collapse of the regime.

The Nicaraguan Revolution was a bad influence in this regard, because many NPA comrades interpreted that successful battle against the U.S.-backed Somoza regime as principally an urban insurrection that did not require a prolonged buildup of the revolutionary forces. So it was that conditions in a country less than a tenth the size of the Philippines became a subject of misinterpretation: "It is a manifestation of low theoretical understanding, subjectivism and opportunism to rate any Sandinista leader as more significant or more relevant than Mao in terms of seizing political power and making social revolution." ("Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors: Adopted by the 10th Plenum of the Central Committee," July 1992)

It is no accident that Maoism is the most profound revolutionary military doctrine. The revolutionary struggle in China lasted for decades in the world's third largest territory with a variety of terrains and with tens of millions of participants. The overall war situation in the Philippines bears more similarity to the conditions in China than to conditions in Cuba or in Nicaragua—which opted out of waging people's war.

In China, the blood of the people spilled for socialism in many different environments—urban, rural, mountainous and coastal. To this day, the largest insurrections in industrial cities have been in Shanghai. Maoism is effective in all terrains and environments—once political line is materially developed.

In its rectification movement, the CPP has had to set straight the relative importance of the Chinese and Nicaraguan revolutions to the Filipino people. It is unfortunate that such invidious comparisons must be made, but thousands of lives have hung in the balance on the question.

The life and death struggle of the Filipino revolutionaries proves that the deeper issues of revolutionary science are not academic in the least. The CPP finds itself waging a fierce polemic against its ultraleft deviation—having to draw fine distinctions between the Sandinista doctrine and the Maoist doctrine, between the "back" to Marxism-Leninism doctrine and Maoism and between focoism and Maoism. That is not to mention the ever greater clarity that the CPP has had to obtain on the Soviet Union and the Cultural Revolution.

Even MIM found itself surprised to hear NPA comrades say that they believed a Cultural Revolution was necessary at this stage of its own movement, because of the problems targeted by the rectification movement. In general the CPP has a reputation for a strong stress on unity. However, at this point, the recent literature of the CPP has the ideological ferociousness of MIM literature.

MIM had come to the conclusion from the degeneration of numerous genuine forces like the Progressive Labor Party in the United States that such especially difficult ideological struggle is a permanent fixture in the imperialist countries, where the material basis for degeneration is much greater than in the oppressed countries. It appears that this is also the case in the Philippines, at least occasionally.

The most important documents of recent times come from the Central Committee's 10th Plenum in July 1992. The "principal document of the ongoing rectification movement" starts out as follows: "Because this is a summing up of major errors and shortcomings and also a rectification document, there is a preponderance of criticism rather than a celebration of the achievements of the party." (Rebolusyon: Theoretical and Political Journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines, January 1993, p. 1) MIM understands this experience because—more often than not—we have had to sum up the negative lessons of the International Communist Movement, instead of cheerleading for the backsliding promoted by revisionists in power.

Fighting imperialist country revisionism

While the pro-Soviet revisionists have been quantitatively and qualitatively insignificant in the Philippines relative to the Maoist forces, the pro-Soviet revisionists of all stripes could be found squelching Maoism in the United States until recently when they abandoned the political field. Throughout the 1980s, MIM had to sort itself out from the Soviet revisionists and the distinctive pro-Chinese revisionist phonies. Events have proven us correct time and time again with regard to all the phony communist movements and states of the 1980s.

In retrospect, standing against these revisionisms was "easy" thanks to the work led by Mao Zedong. MIM's especially ferocious ideological struggle is necessitated because it requires detailed political consciousness in a number of complex revisionist arenas—in addition to the two main kinds of revisionism. We find that anarchism, pseudo-feminism, Trotskyism, crypto-Trotskyism, focoism, and ordinary social-democratic reformism and economism occupy much of the space where the progressive forces need to be.

Steering away from these many proven dead-ends for the oppressed has been difficult—in the ideological sense more difficult because the conditions for systematic armed struggle are not ripe in North America. Nonetheless, we at MIM believe we have separated ourselves from a number of these problems with our three fundamental principles. In particular, our third one—that the oppressor nation working class is not exploited—separates us greatly from Trotskyism, economism and even much pseudo-feminism.

With the distribution of MT #1 and the associated literature, MIM took a giant step away from revisionism and toward a firmer basis for proletarian internationalism. MT #1 directly attacked the material basis for the repeated degeneration of the communist movement in the imperialist countries.

MT #2/3 likewise set to work on a major source of corruption in the movements of the oppressed—the gender aristocracy, first named and defined as such in communist theory by MIM. The swamp of pseudo-feminism that the anti-imperialist movement of the 1960s and early 1970s walked into is now seen for what it is and can now be avoided. In the place of the popular pseudo-feminism that speaks for the gender aristocracy, MIM has boldly put forward a genuine revolutionary feminism, not based on its own wishes, but based on what has already proven to work in the liberation of women.

With the publication of these two journals alone, the revisionists of various stripes have let out a huge collective howl. The labor aristocracy and gender aristocracy are two main pillars of the status quo, two of the biggest front-line defenders of imperialism— all the more effective because they have often successfully deceived the oppressed into thinking that the labor aristocracy's and gender aristocracy's concerns should lead the proletarian movement.

In the context of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial oppressed nations, the publication of two theoretical journals attacking the majority of workers and the majority of women as bought-off would have been ultraleft. To attack the majority of workers or women in the Third World would have served the imperialists. However, within the imperialist countries, these two journals pull apart two active props of imperialism, the labor aristocracy and gender aristocracy. As such, the masses of the oppressed nations cannot be divided when they read these scientific journals. On the other hand, the revisionists in the imperialist countries will be struck to the quick as long as the MIM ideas circulate.

Consolidating even one party in North America on the basis of the attack on the labor aristocracy and gender aristocracy would be work enough for a strategic period. However, in light of the all- round ideological offensive of the imperialists, MIM has decided not to stop there.

Forthcoming issues of MIM Theory will treat Bukharin, Trotsky and Stalin in particular. MIM has a very unpopular stand defending Stalin, but it does not shirk this responsibility because popularity in

the imperialist countries comes from synchronicity with the imperialists. MIM will also detail the national question within North America as it has developed so far. Finally, another related area of questions concerns the united front and its application in World War II and the Three Worlds Theory. This series of questions in North America is all connected up with the difference between Trotskyism and Maoism.

The old revisionisms, chauvinist economism, pseudo-feminism, Hoxhaism, Trotskyism, anarchism, social-democracy and focoism— once we have defeated these in detail in our context, the bourgeoisie will start to run out of general ideological tricks that we won't have experienced. Even then, the bourgeoisie may consolidate a new revisionism or "neo-revisionism," which shows every likelihood of developing in Europe first, so we must keep our eyes open. In the future we may find ourselves locked in battle with those calling themselves defenders of Stalin but not of Mao. This remains to be seen. A fair bellweather in this regard is the PKB of Belgium.

Since it is unlikely that imperialism will be able to come up with too many more entirely new tricks, there will come a time in MIM's development where our principal task will be to unite those who can be united around our very confrontational line. Right now we are emerging principally from struggle against revisionism, imperialist economism and pseudo-feminism. When we have finished going into detail on our differences with others on the above questions, we will focus on unity as the principal way to advance the overall struggle. We will prepare for a strategic length of time to do battle with imperialist economism, revisionism, pseudo-feminism, Trotskyism, anarchism and so on in a distinctive way. However, even in seeking unity, MIM will find itself in struggle much more often than many parties in communist history. For a variety of reasons, what MIM has said is rare to non-existent in the imperialist countries. So even as the labor aristocracy thesis becomes clear as day to us and "old hat," it will seem fresh to many for some time to come.

International communist unity

At this juncture, MIM has the great fortune to come into contact with both the Peruvian and Filipino comrades. While we do not call our movement a "rectification" movement, MIM's formation has had the character of a "rectification" movement because it has had to reclaim legacies from the Black Panthers on the one hand, and also forge ahead in areas where there are no great principles to be reclaimed.

We hope that our comrades abroad understand that the situations in the imperialist countries and the Third World are different. If we had seen an imperialist country party undertake the kind of deviations the CPP of the 1980s took—or that the PCP of the 1960s took—we in the imperialist countries would not expect the situation to turn around. There is a solid material basis here for deviations becoming revisionism or liquidationism.

At the same time, our own ultraleft must learn that not everything is resolved with breaking, splitting and wrecking. There is a role for communist diplomacy, negotiation and persuasion. The examples of Gonzalo in Peru, and Sison in the Philippines, prove that sometimes there is a universal basis for patient struggle and unity. Indeed, these two struggles are the most significant armed struggles in the world and both adopted the tactics of fighting on a long-term basis for revolutionary unity.

MIM's letter to the CPP's National Democratic Front (NDF) organization indicates something about how MIM approaches the workers conventionally thought of as the backbone for communist organizing:

"In the imperialist countries, we believe it is improper to organize for the class demands of the labor aristocracy, since those demands amount to asking for a greater share of superprofits sucked from the superexploited masses of the oppressed nations. At the same time, we have accepted as comrades and allies people from the labor aristocracy and all other classes and we believe from experience that it is impossible to organize people from a labor aristocracy background in an internationalist fashion without understanding that the vast majority of imperialist country workers are not exploited.

"We believe that the growth of the labor aristocracy and petty-bourgeoisie has eradicated the existence of an oppressor nation proletariat in the imperialist countries. As a consequence, we should not organize for the class demands of those waged oppressor nation workers. Instead, we seek to get these workers to understand the history of their class's alliance with imperialism and imperialist militarism. Advanced workers find this helpful in explaining many phenomena here that seem out of line with the conditions of the general international proletariat—principally located in the

Third World. Once this point is grasped, they find it easier to act in genuine solidarity with the international proletariat.

"We agree with the CPP that it must look forward into its future and recognize the need to fight the new bourgeoisie created in the midst of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Likewise, we must all look to the day when we get a chance to dismantle the principal enemy of the world's people—U.S. imperialism."

In speeches in Germany and in published works, Jose Maria Sison of the CPP has said that imperialism is in a "general crisis" from which it cannot escape. Currently, it is financially overextended and not prepared to lead a new round of accumulation in the current geopolitical situation, according to Sison. We also find him echoing the German comrades of the MLPD to the effect that the current crisis is comparable to the Depression of 1929.

While both MIM and the CPP recognize that they share unity in Mao Zedong Thought, the Cultural Revolution and opposition to the restoration of capitalism in China, MIM disagrees with the CPP's assessment of the imperialist countries' internal economic conditions—while understanding that the Third World is in a state of perpetual general crisis and depression. The letter to the NDF organization of the CPP continues:

"Currently, the U.S. imperialists are engaged in a hot war, a World War III with the oppressed countries. In the talk about the decline of imperialism—it's general crisis—we find it inappropriate to conclude that the labor aristocracy will return to the proletariat. Even in Lenin's day, Lenin found this impossible in Russia and that the portions of the working classes that would line up with each side would be unknowable until the very end. Imperialism has expanded its penetration considerably since the days when Lenin spoke of the labor aristocracy in Russia, which was only a semi-imperialist country.

"We must understand that the imperialists will intensify their wars before they allow a 1929 Depression situation to develop again. Organizing anti-militarism is and will be much more important than organizing the unemployed in the imperialist country for jobs. We have already learned once this century, during World War I, that social-chauvinists are willing to support militarism in exchange for jobs and social welfare, as the social- democrats did in England to pass the war budget through Parliament."

This is a major area of concern for MIM in its relations to the revolutionary parties in the oppressed nations. In practice, the CPP is not organizing a party in the imperialist countries, and it is not yet recognized as the CPP's responsibility to do so; so our concern with the Marxist-Leninist Party Deutschland (MLPD) and the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP) on this point is qualitatively much higher. (Between the two, the RCP, USA has proved its inability to accept the correct line when confronted with it. Meanwhile, there is no force in Germany that is the vanguard other than the MLPD; hence, we are friendly toward the MLPD, but not the RCP.) The problem most shows up when it comes to signing the Declaration on Maoism signed by the CPP and a number of parties from the imperialist countries. MIM has made the nature of the imperialist country working classes a line of demarcation for the imperialist countries.

On the question of the imperialist nation working classes, MIM formulates the following points of unity for consideration by the international communist movement.

First are the points that are incontestable and obvious:

1. The workers and peasants of the oppressed countries will destroy imperialism regardless of the actions or inactions of the imperialist country working classes.

2. Imperialism has expanded its penetration of the oppressed countries since Lenin's day.

3. Even Lenin, in a country that he called only "semi-imperialist," said that it was not possible to know what portion of the labor aristocracy would return to the proletariat after economic crisis; but under no circumstances would the philistine stream of labor aristocracy based opportunism disappear.

Secondly, are the points for further study:

1. According to Engels, there was no workers' party in England because the workers shared in the feast of British monopoly. If this were true in Engels' day, then the possibility that there might be no progressive workers' movement in the imperialist countries today—in contradistinction to progressive movements within the colonies and oppressed nations internal to the imperialist countries—must be examined more carefully.

2. Just as the reality of whether or not certain oppressed nations are really fully capitalist or just semi-feudal is currently of life-and-death importance, the reality of whether or not waged workers in the imperialist countries are exploited is a ques-

tion of life-and-death consequences.

3. Given the comments of Engels and Lenin and the comments of Mao and Lin Biao concerning the necessity of surrounding the imperialist countries from the international countryside, we must make a concrete analysis of these questions and not assume that imperialist nation wage workers are exploited. As Lenin said, there is definitely a "split in the working class;" hence it is a question of where that split is occurring and to what degree.

4. The principal work of revolutionary parties from the oppressed countries is the analysis of their own countries; accordingly these organizations should study the position of the MIM, the Black Panthers, the Weather Underground and others before making further references to the economic conditions of workers in the imperialist countries.

The ultraleft deviation in the Philippines and in North America

With regard to the military and political situation in the Philippines, MIM finds what the CPP says extremely enlightening and of general application for much of the Third World because it embodies the practice of Maoism in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country.

Indeed, while the circumstances are entirely different, MIM is familiar with the general ideology behind the ultraleft and rightist deviations in the Philippines. MIM, too, has had to combat some of the negative influences of the Sandinista example. We have to patiently explain that the electoral process is a dead-end in an imperialist-dominated world and that a combination of U.S. capital and its armed contras forced the Nicaraguan people to say "uncle" in order for an imperialist-style "peace" to be partially achieved. We have also had to combat the influence of "solidarity" people who thought the Maoist principles were no longer applicable to the world and that the Soviet Union was a friend of the oppressed.

As for the idea that the gun should lead the party and the various focoist problems that the CPP points to in its list of deviations, MIM Notes's pages are full of references to incorrect military strategies. Though we do not know the specifics of the Philippines situation as well as the CPP does, we do know where the impetuous approach leads.

Finally, in a general ideological sense, MIM has had experience with the ultraleft deviation that somehow believes revolutionary success is nearly here or only worth fighting for if it is around the corner. In his book *Revolutionary Suicide*, Huey Newton criticized Eldridge Cleaver for getting all excited and working hard after gun battles, but for disappearing when more mundane work had to be done. This is a problem that imperialist-country Maoist organizers experience again and again. It has a material basis in the massive distribution of superprofits to imperialist-country populations as a whole—even trickling down to groups suffering from national oppression.

MIM also had a comrade who referred to himself self-critically as the leader of the "action faction." This comrade was excited by demonstrations, speeches and the like, but rarely showed independent work initiative on the mundane details in which we slave for the international proletariat.

Throughout the 1960s, the Maoist movement suffered at the hands of large numbers of people who practiced Maoism as a form of excitement, like taking psychedelic drugs or enjoying communal sex. They wanted to conduct bombing campaigns, but they left little behind in terms of political organization, not to mention a newspaper or any institutions requiring steady work. In comparison, MIM is much smaller numerically than the organized movements of the 1960s that did Maoism for excitement, but this is a case of "better fewer but better."

The 1960s kind of ultraleftism is a form of liberalism. These ultraleftists will work as long as there is "excitement" or as long as they think that revolution will happen soon. When they have to work hard at tasks that would be boring if done for any cause other than that of communism; when they see that they might have to work 30, 40 or 50 years and maybe still not see success; then the ultraleft loses its stomach for struggle. "Too many snags" as the song of the cynical revolutionary goes—and the ultraleft suddenly discovers it doesn't want to struggle anymore. Ultraleftism is another brand of liberalism. Usually it end up swinging to the right—or just disappearing.

The ultraleft's desire "to get it over with" collides with reality, and in the case of the Philippines, cost the blood of thousands. The ultraleft forms battle-field battalions and expose themselves in public as if they were going to win the revolution next week. Often they concoct unscientific theories to keep themselves pumped up and jazzed for THE DAY.

The Cultural Revolution

While it cannot be expected that MIM and the CPP have unity on the imperialist country work-

classes, because it is not the CPP's principal duty to study this question and because imperialist economism has squelched the scientific analysis of this question for so long, the MIM and the CPP are on equal footing when it comes to the Cultural Revolution. As late as 1989, MIM would say the CPP had some seriously incorrect thinking with regard to the Cultural Revolution in China:

"The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is a matter primarily pertaining to the CPC [Communist Party of China.—ed.] It was supposed to be an antirevisionist revolution in a society that is already socialist. Whatever implications it has on the current or future course of the Philippines are of secondary importance to what is the CPP's primary concern of carrying out the new democratic revolution." (Jose Maria Sison, *The Philippine Revolution* (NY: Crane Russak, 1989) pp. 50-1)

Here comrade Sison denied the universal validity of the Cultural Revolution. To some extent this carries over to this day, though much higher accord is now given to the Cultural Revolution. As an example of what this means concretely, in 1989, Comrade Sison regarded the regime in north Korea to be a legitimate socialist government. (p. 191) To accept Korea as socialist, it-is necessary to view the Cultural Revolution as particular to China and not necessary in other countries. To accept the Cuban society as a dictatorship of the proletariat would be to rewrite history.

Recent documents from the CPP are much more hard-line Maoist, but they still refer to other societies as possibly socialist. We can almost read the internal struggle of the CPP in-between the lines. In 1989, the CPP said that "whatever the implications" of the Cultural Revolution, they were secondary to the practice of the new democratic revolution. Today, the same formulation is applied to the question of whether or not there are socialist countries left at all: "There are still a few remaining countries which are socialist by a certain measure or still consider themselves socialist. Whatever they are. . ." (Rebolusyon, July-September 1992, p. 18) In this regard, MIM must point out that north Korea has aided the Peruvian regime in counterinsurgency and MIM feels no discomfort in having disqualified north Korea as "socialist" for its lack of struggle against the new bourgeoisie created under socialism.

Describing north Korea or Cuba as socialist states disarms the masses ideologically, politically and organizationally. (Rebolyson July-September 1993, p. 62) This undercuts the universal validity of Maoism on the emergence of a new bourgeoisie and continuing the dictatorship of the proletariat through new class struggles: Cultural Revolutions.

By 1993, though, there is a high level of unity between MIM and the CPP on the Cultural Revolution:

1. The Cultural Revolution and the theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat was Mao's greatest contribution.

2. Counterrevolution occured in China in 1976.

3. There is no "transition to socialism" going on in China.

In general, MIM has extremely high unity with the document "Stand for Socialism against Modern Revisionism," (Rebolusyon, April- June, 1992) Written by the Chairperson of the CPP named Armando Liwanag, the document is a very sharp exposure of revisionism including from the time of Stalin. It also includes some up-to-date analysis of the Soviet Union.

There is so much that MIM agrees with in this document that MIM chooses to distribute it so the reader can see for him/herself. Here we will criticize those elements that we do not think are quite correct.

It is an area of concern that MIM has no statement from the CPP on Hua Guofeng. We are concerned that a change of regime in China could have the CPP calling China socialist again. It is not impossible that a new regime could be socialist, but it is not likely. Elsewhere, MIM literature explains how it is that Hua Guofeng and other supposed leftists still in the Communist Party of China are state-capitalists.

Another point of omission is that the CPP speaks of the new bourgeoisie under socialism, but it apparently adopts an incorrect understanding of its material basis by seeing only a petty- bourgeoisie based in the bureaucracy of the party. Ironically, Hua Guofeng allowed some good comments by Mao on this to appear in vol. 5 of the Selected Works. Much more extensive material is available elsewhere—including the book *Fundamentals of Political Economy* published by the Gang of Four. In particular, we must understand the basis of bourgeois right and how it is concretely restricted under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In another irony, Raymond Lotta took a strong and correct stand on this point at the 1993 Mao Zedong Thought conference in Gelsenkirchen (see MIM Notes #85). MIM couldn't help noticing the humor in Lotta's criticism of the conference participants on this point when 10 years prior MIM had

fierce arguments with the RCP over the exact same point.

Having said that about what is omitted from the CPP treatment of the Cultural Revolution, MIM would also like to treat those few parts that are incorrect in the CPP literature. In its document on modern revisionism and others, the CPP basically defends the Cultural Revolution correctly. However, on the question of excesses during the Cultural Revolution, the CPP takes up metaphysics essentially of the Hoxhaite variety. Hence, the CPP's view of the dictatorship of the proletariat itself is affected.

Here is what Liwanag says, "Any individual or organization has the right to express anything in any legal way, be this criticism or constructive proposal without fear of reprisal. Due process is guaranteed. A person is presumed innocent, unless proven guilty in a court on the basis of evidence and through a fair trial. Thus, in the popular struggle against counterrevolution, the target is narrowed and the danger of abuse is averted." (Rebolusyon, April-June, 1992, p. 41)

At the same time, the CPP is quite aware that the capitalists will not be allowed to overthrow the regime—the CPP is not simply being liberal. Elsewhere the CPP says, "Supraclass, universalistic and ahistorical terms erased the proletarian class stand in Soviet society." (Rebolusyon, July-September, 1992, p. 15)

The CPP views the Cultural Revolution excesses as violations of human-rights. This is understandable given the strong anti-fascist character of the Filipino revolution. It is the communists who are the champions of human-rights in the Philippines.

Nonetheless, the guarantee of those rights has nothing to do with the misleading language of rights and law. The due process of law will do nothing to prevent the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

We must understand that when the bourgeoisie is in contention for control of the state, we cannot simply appeal to law for a resolution of difficulties. In the Cultural Revolution, there were many injustices, but at the height of intense political conflict it is not possible simply to appeal to a neutral legal institution to ensure that there are no excesses in the struggle.

During the Cultural Revolution it was, of course, illegal to kill, burn or loot. At the same time, the two or more sides in the various battles each claimed that the other side was guilty of killing, burning and looting, often with exaggeration, and in many cases with outright lies. Who is to decide who is guilty of murder or other crimes in the midst of Cultural Revolution? Letting the government decide is to negate the whole issue of the Cultural Revolution: is the bourgeoisie in control of the government?

In the name of combatting crime and preventing human-rights abuses, the bourgeoisie cracked down on the masses and asserted its control of the government whenever it could during the Cultural Revolution. This left the masses wondering: Was there really a crime committed or was this just the bourgeoisie claiming it would benefit everyone so that it could rule? Where it suited the bourgeoisie it invented crimes to tag on the working class. In other cases it committed crimes and let others think the crimes were committed by the proletarian camp.

In the most key period from 1966 to 1968, Mao ordered that the army stay out of politics. The party was also often effectively helpless in applying the law, because it was besieged with varying claims from the different factions. This is something we must understand clearly. Mao wanted this to be apparent to the naked eye and ordered that the party not replace the political initiative of the masses.

If the party or the army made all the decisions about difficult questions, when would the masses ever learn to administer their government? Without the masses administering their own affairs and learning from conflict, how could the communists prevent the bourgeoisie from seizing power?

Hoxha in Albania answered that the party could be assumed to be free of a bourgeoisie if one didn't use Mao's "liberal" methods. Then Hoxha's closest comrade-in-arms restored capitalism and parliamentary rule when Hoxha died. So much for his theory, a rehash of Stalin's incorrect theory of the extinction of classes under socialism.

The same problem is evident in the CPP's thinking on this question. Merely asserting that there will be rule of law does not resolve the question of "whose law?" As the experience of the socialist countries has proved since Stalin, we cannot assume that "rule of law" is the rule of "socialist law." There is no way out but to organize and rely on the oppressed masses, the toiling students, workers, peasants and soldiers of the Third World. If this means doing without the rule of law while the masses retake control of "law," then so be it. Contrary to what the CPP says, "the danger of abuse" cannot be "averted" in revolutionary class struggle. Indeed, not only will the bourgeoisie instigate abuses on purpose to discredit the revolution-

aries, the genuine forces will commit excesses in revolutionary struggle by accident. As Lenin, Stalin and Mao all noted, it is not possible to have a revolution without overbending the bar, smashing some eggs and living outside the rules of dinner parties.

This is an unfortunate price that we all risk paying to live in a society moving toward communism when such violent conflicts will no longer occur.

Conclusion

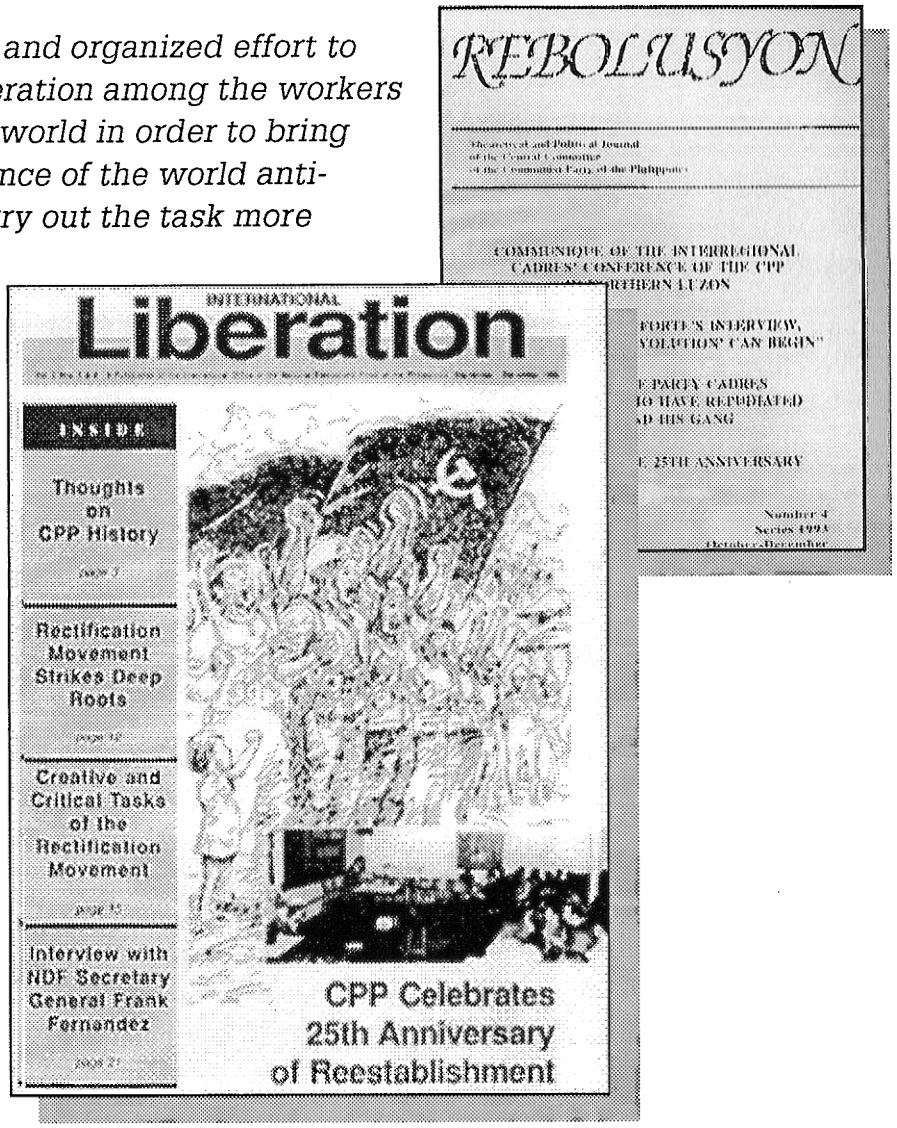
Having raised these areas of disagreement with the CPP, again let us end on a note of unity. The return of the CPP to Maoist principles is one of the two most important developments in world history since the counterrevolution in 1976. The success of the armed struggle by the Sendero Luminoso is the other most important event of post- 1976 communism.

In that light, MIM will distribute Reboluyson, the NDF magazine called Liberation and Comrade Sison's works. Let this discussion of these works accompany MIM's efforts distributing them. Instead of summarizing all the positive aspects of these publications here, MIM will distribute them directly to the imperialist-country masses—as we continue this very fraternal debate and work together to amplify the continual reaffirmation of Maoist practice in our world.

Read Up on the Philippines

There must be a conscious and organized effort to build solidarity and cooperation among the workers and peoples of the entire world in order to bring about the resurgence and advance of the world anti-imperialist movement.... To carry out the task more effectively than before, there must be an international system of aid and cooperation under working class leadership.

— Jose Maria Sison, founder of the NPA and former chairperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines.



INTERNATIONAL LIBERATION
A Publication of the International Office of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

Published every two months.
US$21 for yearly subscription in Canada,USA and Europe.

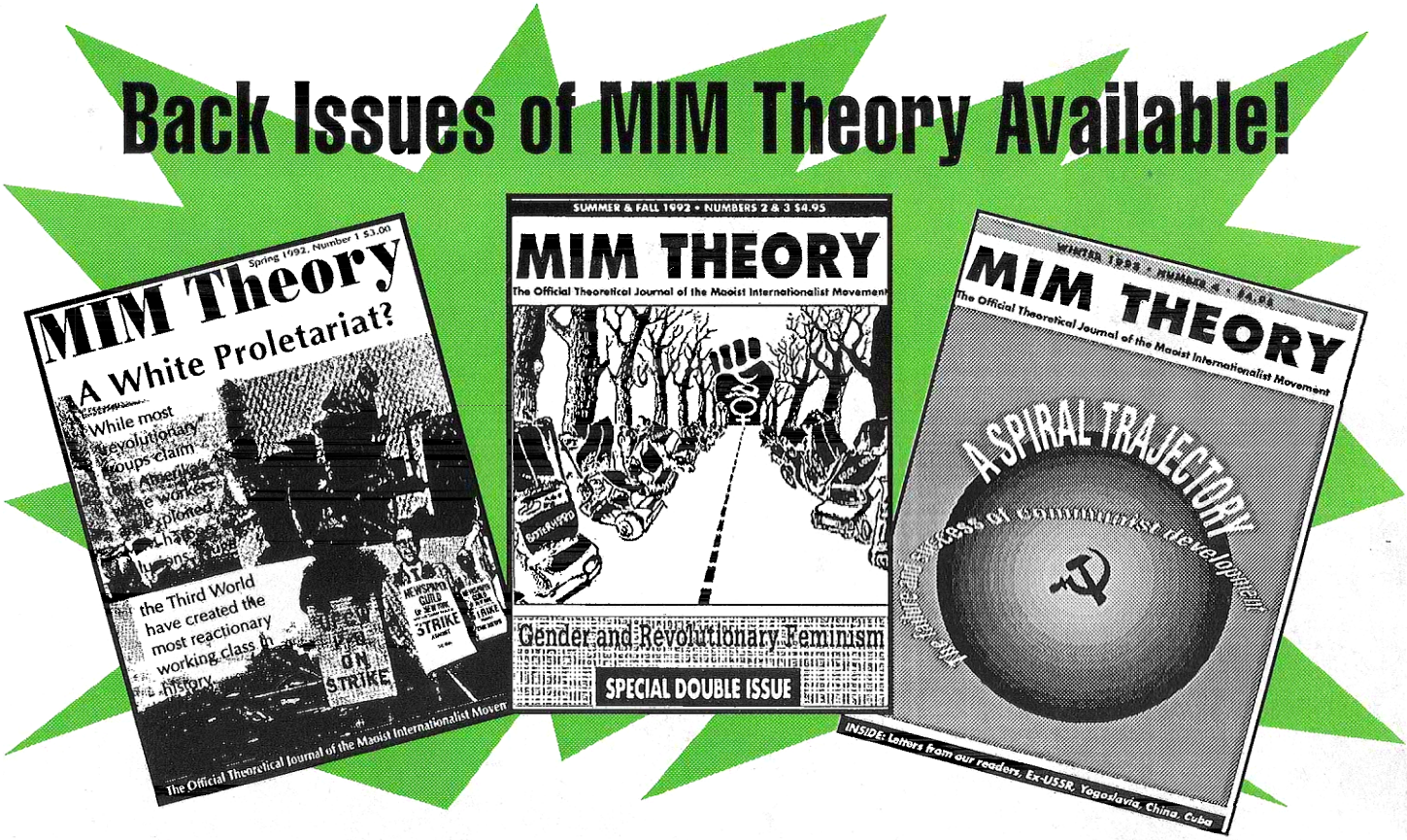
REBOLUSYON
the Theoretical and Political Journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Six back issues available, including:
- **Stand for Socialism against Modern Revisionism** April-June 1992
- **Reaffirm Our Basic Principals and Rectify Errors** Adopted by the 10th Plenum of the Central Committee July 1992

REBOLUSYON Send $4 for the new issue and US$4 for each back issue.
INTERNATIONAL LIBERATION Send US$21 for yearly subscription in Canada, USA and Europe.

Send cash or check payable to ABS
MIM Distributors
PO Box 3537
Ann Arbor MI 48106-3576

Back Issues of MIM Theory Available!



MIM Theory 1 "A White Proletariat?," — explains why the North Amerikan white working class isn't on the side of Third World revolution. For 32 pages the Party lays down the line with statistical studies and polemics with those who disagree. **MIM Theory 2&3** "Gender and Revolutionary Feminism"— a double issue, tackling gender and revolution, an area where MIM significantly differs from all other communist and radical groups. This issue takes on first world feminism and imperialist patriarchy. This issue also deals with the Black Panther Party on gender and gay liberation, and takes a stand on how class, nation and gender oppression intersect in the United States today. **MIM Theory 4** "A Spiral Trajectory, The failure and Success of communist development" — discusses the collapse of state capitalism in the Ex-USSR and its former allies in the Eastern Bloc. MIM examines the so called collapse of communism and what success really means, by analyzing socialist economic development. **If you're serious about wanting a revolution for the world's most oppressed people then it's time to subscribe to MIM Theory.**

Sign me up, MIM

MIM THEORY

I can't do without a sub. I know to send only cash or a check made out to "ABS."

Name: _____

Address: _____

City & Zip: _____

Country: _____

Mail to: MIM, P.O. Box 3576, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576, USA.

- ○ Start me up with No. 1 and a year's sub, $18.
- ○ Better yet, make it two years for only $35.
- ○ Hey, I know MIM is better than the bourgeois journals. Here's $100 to prove it. I'm a lifetime sustainer & subscriber of MIM Theory.
- ○ Artsy fartsy? I know art is not enough; send me some ideas to draw MIM cartoons.
- ○ Some countries aren't lucky enough to have a MIM, let me help translate MIM Theory into_____.
- ○ Institutional subscription, $48 per year;
- ○ With MIM Notes for one year, $90.