

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

# The Workers' Advocate

## Supplement



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VOICE OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY, USA

January 20, 1991

## Build the anti-war movement, now more than ever No More Blood For Imperialism

Bush now has the war he wanted. Bombs are crashing across the Middle East.

The corporate news media are covering the war like the Super Bowl. They go into raptures over each high-tech weapon. But what they ignore is that under the bomb sights are people: soldiers and civilians, including women and children. For the first time since Viet Nam, B-52s are dumping their 50,000 lb. payloads of death and destruction.

How many bodies will be stacked up on both sides before the killing stops?

That doesn't matter to the war dogs in Washington and their media cheerleaders. They have already declared "victory."

### This is an unjust war for oil and empire

The U.S. war machine may prevail in the end. But what sort of victory will this be, bought at the cost of destroying an Arab country? Will this improve the lives of the working people in the Middle East, or here at home?

No!

Bush claims he is "liberating Kuwait." Only the liars in Washington can equate freedom with restoring to the throne the hated king of Kuwait. Kuwait was a tyranny, not even a democracy in name. Most of the people who lived there, even those born there, didn't have citizenship.

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The royal family made fabulous profits from oil and the sweat of foreign workers.

Bush's "new world order" is not a pretty sight either.

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## Despite media censorship: Anti-war protest builds

While the Pentagon censors news at the war front, here at home the news media willingly censors news of anti-war protests. Oh yes, they carry some news; there's too much going on not to. But they try to relegate the anti-war movement to the level of an insignificant fringe. Meanwhile, any gathering of know-nothing, pro-war jingoists—no matter how tiny—gets lavish coverage.

But the truth will not be suppressed: even with the breakout of war, anti-war actions continue to build. Here we can't possibly report on every city, but just take a glance at some of what's going on:

### Quarter of a million protest the war on January 19

On Saturday, Jan. 19, protests drew hundreds of thousands across the country.

100,000 took to the streets in Washington, D.C. A crowd even larger marched in San Francisco. Quite early on, Dolores Park the assembly point, was filled to overflowing. It was the biggest demonstration in this city since the war in Viet Nam.

Another 5000 marched in Seattle, 15,000 in Portland, Oregon, and 3000 in Boston. Smaller actions elsewhere.

### A week of hectic anti-war organizing

These weekend demonstrations capped a series of large and small outbursts all week.

Continued on the next page

San Francisco buzzed with anti-war activity every day. The Federal Building was shut down by blockades Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The Bay Bridge was blockaded for two hours on Tuesday, and people in cars applauded the action of the protesters. There were also big actions in Berkeley, Santa Cruz, Los Angeles, and other cities across California.

Seattle in the northwest too was a hotbed of protest all week. On Monday evening, Jan. 14, 30,000 marched. Several times during the week, marchers shut down Interstate 5. In Olympia, Washington, protesters took over the State Capitol.

Demonstrations on the east coast matched the angry actions in the west.

In New York on Monday, students walked out of high schools and 2000-strong, marched down Broadway. They swarmed into the street and broke through police attempts to corral them. The next afternoon, 2000 rallied outside the U.N. and later marched for several hours. Several other marches also crisscrossed Manhattan that night. On Wednesday night after the war began, 2000 gathered outside the Times Sq. Recruiting Station. And the day after, 10,000 rallied there again.

In Boston, 5000 turned out for a teach-in at MIT Monday night, followed by 1000 the next evening. At Northeastern U., 500 mostly black people turned out for a teach-in which linked the struggle against war with the

fight at home against racism and poverty. On Tuesday morning, high school students in Cambridge defied suspensions and walked out to march against the war. Other high schools also organized protests. Over the next several days, protesters repeatedly tried to blockade the Federal Building. In several parts of the city they blocked traffic, even taking over a major expressway during rush hour.

There were also angry demonstrations in the Midwest.

In Chicago, 5000 showed up downtown Monday morning. They took over the streets and snarled traffic for four hours. It was repeated the next day. As well then hundreds of high school students walked out. On Wednesday evening after the war broke out, 7000 demonstrated until midnight. And the day after, about 10,000 rallied at Federal Plaza. They marched and snarled traffic, and received widespread support from people in cars and pedestrians.

In the Detroit area, there were several protests, which included students from high schools and colleges. The U. of Michigan campus at Ann Arbor saw a midnight march of thousands. The "day after" action in downtown Detroit drew over 1000 people.

There were protests also reported from smaller towns across the country. Many high school students walked out of classes, defying suspension. Everywhere you could see that a whole new generation of young people are joining the fight against war, linking up with those who fought the Viet Nam war and the interventions in Central America.

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## A worldwide campaign

Across Europe, hundreds of thousands denounced the war. There were actions every day in Germany, Spain and Italy. In Paris, protesters defied a government ban. These demonstrations punctured the lie that people in Europe are supportive of the U.S. war.

Meanwhile, across North Africa and the Middle East, hundreds of thousands more came out to condemn the U.S. bombing of Iraq—from Mauritania and Algeria to Jordan and the Sudan.

Anti-war actions were also reported from elsewhere in the world—including South Asia, Australia and Latin America.

## Fight media censorship

Looking at the "free press" we supposedly have, you wouldn't get any idea of the scope of the anti-war movement. This is no surprise: the media are owned and run by the corporate elite who stand behind Bush's war.

In reply, the anti-war movement has to publish its own literature and distribute it far and wide. Keep exposing the government's lies. Don't let them cover up what this war's all about. Help anti-war people stand up to the war propaganda blitz. Let everyone know about the protests. Build the discussion about how to further the movement against the war. □

## No More Blood for Imperialism

Continued from the front page

This will be an order where the oil companies and the local oil kings will continue to hold sway in the Persian Gulf, backed up by U.S. bayonets and bases. It will be an order where yet more generations of Arab people will feel the jackboot of the U.S. imperial order.

The big stick may gain Bush a military victory, but he will not get the imperial stability he seeks. The region will end up more of a powder keg than ever. The working people there will revolt against Bush's new order and eventually find their way to real liberation: against imperialism and all tyranny, whether that be kings like Fahd or militarist dictators like Saddam.

### Congress has blood on its hands

This is not just Bush's war.

The Democrats control Congress but they helped pass the "use of force" resolution. Yes, they had a debate, but this was a disagreement on whether to strike now or to starve Iraq with sanctions for a while longer and go to war later if necessary.

This is why Congress has eagerly endorsed the war after Bush's bombing began. The honorable ladies and gentlemen have voted to stand by Bush's war, by 98-0 in the Senate and 399-6 in the House.

Both Democrats and Republicans support the war because they are part of the same ruling establishment. Defenders of the military-industrial complex, they are all politicians of imperialism.

### A rich man's war, fought by the poor

Congress has lined up behind the war under the guise of "supporting our troops."

Bush and Congress are engaging in the worst hypocrisy. They don't care about the ordinary soldiers: The soldiers are mainly from working class and poor families; they are disproportionately black. Most of them signed up because they were lured with promises of jobs and training.

And do the rich give a damn what happens to the troops when they come home? Won't the vets face despair and unemployment? Won't blacks among them face racism and police attacks? Won't the vets be abused at the hellholes called veterans' hospitals?

Mr. Bush and the Democrats, your concern for the troops is a lie. You know full well, the troops do not decide the aims of the war. Neither do the American people. That's decided by the politicians and generals, who are all mouthpieces for the wealthy elite. The troops are simply used as cannon fodder, to fight an unjust, imperialist war.

The anti-war movement sympathizes with the sons and

daughters of the working class caught up in this trap. But this doesn't mean we should fall for the warmongers' propaganda about "supporting the troops." This is just a trick to support the war. Helping the soldiers means encouraging the soldiers to resist the war. This is what the anti-war movement did during the anti-Viet Nam war struggle.

### Our struggle is here at home

The workers and youth of the U.S. have no stake in Bush's war for empire. Our beef is not with Iraqi workers and youth (in or out of uniform). Our beef is with those who oppress us here at home. Our beef is with a system that brings us unemployment, homelessness, racism, bigotry and war.

While the wealthy on top applaud the warfare, down below among the masses there is disbelief and anger. This anger is spilling into the streets in powerful protests.

Build the anti-war movement

With the outbreak of war, our rulers are working hard to put down the anti-war movement.

They have geared up their propaganda machine to cheer on the war. They play with opinion polls to show that dissent is tiny and futile. They try to launch a pro-war movement. They censor news of protests in the media. And they let loose their police to club and jail demonstrators.

But the anti-war movement remains the necessity of the day, even though we may not have been able to prevent the war. Let us not forget that the movement against the Viet Nam war broke out during that war and it succeeded in playing a big role in helping to end that unjust war.

So what must be done today?

**\*\*Keep up the anti-war protests.** Mass struggle is what counts. Looking to Congress, media or other bigshots are futile—build the movement in the streets relying on our own strength.

**\*\*Go out among the working people and the poor.** It's they who have no stake in this war, it's they who will pay in blood and economic sacrifice. It's they who have the strength to stop this barbaric war.

**\*\*Organize, organize, and organize.** Set up anti-war groups and networks everywhere—in workplaces, schools, communities, and the military itself. Activists have to link up, plan actions large and small, discuss how to win over other people, and spread the word. We need to publish and spread widely anti-war and anti-imperialist leaflets, flyers, and newspapers. All the lies of the warmongers must be exposed.

**\*\*To build the strongest anti-war movement, we must forge a clear opposition to the imperialist system.**

We have to raise the question: what kind of system do we live in which believes in bombing to dust a people far, far away? What kind of system goes to war for the oil companies' profits? What kind of system uses the poor to

fight for the rich man's aims? What kind of system brings us poverty, racism, and homelessness while spending billions on high-tech instruments of death?

The fight against this war is also a struggle over what kind of society we want to live in. We need a new society

that can uproot militarism altogether. Let's build up a revolutionary opposition to the imperialist system, so that each generation does not have to keep waging an anti-war struggle, so that we can do away with imperialist war altogether. □

## In this war, no justice on either side

Bush's war is a war for oil and empire.

He tried to sell this war with every possible argument. But the whole world knows the bottom line is oil profits—billions of petrodollars for the U.S. and European oil multinationals, and for the Persian Gulf oil kings.

If Kuwait produced olive oil, Bush wouldn't have given a damn. But Kuwait is in the petroleum-rich Middle East. The U.S. wasn't about to let Saddam Hussein rearrange the local oil booty. But even more than that, Washington is worried that the whole system of rule by pro-U.S. kings and dictators is coming apart.

The U.S. has seized on the crisis over Kuwait to set up a long-term U.S. military presence there. U.S. imperialism wants to be the region's top cop.

Bush's war is also a war to maintain the Pentagon's huge military machine.

The crisis in Kuwait came as a golden opportunity for the generals and weapons makers. With the Cold War waning, the Pentagon had grown nervous about potential cuts in military spending. But now with the current war, the military-industrial complex has lost its worry. This means that the working people of the U.S. will have to

keep pouring in a huge portion of our labor and resources so that the Pentagon can remain the world's biggest military machine.

There is no justice in Iraq's side of this war either.

Saddam Hussein is no liberator. He is a tyrant like the Saudi and Kuwaiti kings that Bush embraces. He is no opponent of imperialism; in fact Western imperialism took part in building up his war machine. Can we forget that the U.S. backed him up until the recent crisis? For Saddam Hussein, seizing Kuwait was just a grab for oil and a bid to boost Iraq as a capitalist power in the region.

Sympathy for the Iraqi victims of the U.S. carpet bombing is one thing—support for the Iraqi regime is quite another.

This is a criminal war on both sides. Over a million soldiers—the children of the poor and dispossessed—are being pressed to slaughter each other so that the wealthy can grab more wealth and the powerful more power.

Only the working people can turn the tables around. It is up to the working people of Iraq to overthrow the little bully Saddam Hussein. And here in the U.S., the workers and youth must fight the big bully, U.S. imperialism. □

## What about Iraq's missile attacks on Israel?

The government and media are up in arms about Iraq's missile attacks on Israel. Attacks on civilian population centers are reprehensible. But the U.S. and Israeli governments are the last ones on earth with the rights to put on moral airs on this question.

While Iraq has shot a few thousand pounds of explosives at Israel (doing little damage), the U.S. has dropped 36,000,000 pounds of explosives per day on Iraq! Bush killed several thousand Panamanian civilians by bombing during his brief war to replace Noriega with a regime more to his liking. And millions were killed in the "free fire" zones of Viet Nam.

Israel in 1982 shocked the world with its massive bombing of civilians in Beirut. Over the last two years

Israel has shot to death over 700 unarmed Palestinian protesters in the West Bank and Gaza to maintain its apartheid-like subjugation of Palestinians. And though Israel is not officially part of the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq, it is no secret to anyone that Israel has been eager to see the war against Iraq begun and it has supported the wanton bombing of Iraq.

Saddam Hussein has not attacked Israel out of concern for the injustice suffered by the Palestinians. No, he merely hopes to draw Israel into the current war and thus step up the pressure on the Arab regimes that have gone along with Bush's war. Saddam knows that there is great anger among the Arab masses about Israel's oppression of the Palestinians and about its role as a bulwark of American

imperialism. Israel deserves this hatred not because Jews live there, but because it is a racist, bully regime. -And if it joins the war, it will not do so in legitimate self-defense, but as part of its long-standing oppression of Arabs.

Saddam Hussein's selfish motives cannot clean Israel's

dirty hands. The struggle of the Palestinian people to overthrow the racist Israeli state remains just.

And the attack on Israeli cities in no way changes the dirty, imperialist nature of Bush's oil war. □

## Take to the streets against Bush's oil war.

*Below we print excerpts from MLP anti-war leaflets from the Boston Worker, the Jan. 17 Bay Area Workers Voice, and a Jan. 18 leaflet of the MLP-Seattle.*

### **Boston: March on Washington!**

Everyday the war drums in Washington and Baghdad beat louder. Congress and the UN have given Bush a green light to start the war as of January 15th. The Pentagon has launched the biggest war force since Vietnam. Hussein is digging in. But it is neither Bush nor Hussein who will be fighting and dying in this bloodbath. It is the young workers and the poor of the U.S. and Iraq who will spill their blood for the profits of the rich.

George Bush says that all Americans, rich and poor alike, will benefit from this war. Supposedly, the wonderful "American way of life" will be preserved by maintaining control of Middle Eastern oil.

First of all, the "way of life" for the American working class, especially for the black workers and youth is far from wonderful. Unemployment is spreading like cancer. Real wages and benefits have been cut by thirty percent over the past decade. Education and healthcare have been cut to the bone. Now we are sinking into a recession as banks collapse and tax money is handed over to the wealthy and the Pentagon. When Bush speaks of defending the American "way of life", he means defending the superprofits of the rich, not the livelihoods of the workers.

And secondly, control of Middle Eastern oil is not for running American industry, but is a source of huge profits and a means of world domination for the handful of billionaire capitalists.

And thirdly, we all know who will be killed and maimed, and it won't be Dan Quayle and his country club friends.

We have no stake in this war. Both sides are fighting for the rotten aims of oil profits and power. If Bush and the big corporations lose their position as number one dog in the Middle East and become weaker, so much the better for our struggle against them here at home! Our enemy is not some poverty-stricken Iraqi soldier in a desert 10,000 miles away. Our enemy is the rule of the rich here at home. Our enemy is those who would send our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters off to die for their bank accounts.

We must fight to get the troops out, to get the oil companies out, to get the arms merchants out, to get all of U.S. imperialism out of the Middle East. The Middle East will never be rid of dictators and wars until the big imperialist powers who prop up these tyrants and stir up these conflicts are out of the region. We will not be helping the Iraqi people by replacing Hussein with another oppressive regime. To stop this war and help solve the problems in the Middle East, we must fight our own government, our own exploiters, here at home.

Marches have been called for January 19th and 26th in Washington, D.C. The Marxist-Leninist Party will be going to both. We invite activists at both marches to join our militant contingents to demand that U.S. imperialism get out of the Gulf right now. Teach-ins are being organized at MIT every night at 8 starting on the 14th. A demonstration has been called for the day after shooting begins at 4 at the JFK building (Government Center). Organize groups from your schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and army units to march against the war. Hold meetings and distribute leaflets against Bush and the rich imperialists who are preparing the slaughter. Let's tie Bush down with mass struggle here at home. We say no to a rich man's oil war. We say yes to fighting against the rich and their imperialist system, for a better world for all working people.

### **San Francisco Bay Area: An unjust war for oil and empire**

Bush & company have tried to sell this war every which way. But the whole world knows that the bottom line is oil profits and hundreds of billions of petrodollars. There are also military bases and strategic points to be seized.

It is a war for profits & empire, to try to ensure the U.S. military of its place as world policeman.

Saddam Hussein is no liberator either. He is a tyrant like the Saudi and Kuwaiti sheiks that Bush embraces.

### **Our struggle is at home**

The only justice in this war is on the side of the workers and oppressed who are struggling against the governments

responsible for this insanity.

On top, the Pentagon brass, the politicians, the Wall Street crowd, and their media flunkies, applaud the warfare. Down below, in the work places, schools and communities, there is disbelief and anger. This anger is spilling into the streets in powerful protests across the country.

### **Take to the streets!**

The protest is U.S.-wide and world-wide. It is the voice of millions, giving the lie to the claim that America is united behind the war and the world is united behind America. What direction for the protest movement?

We need a movement of mass struggle against the war makers. No faith in the Democratic politicians. No pacifist schemes of gaining peace without confrontation.

The anti-war movement needs to target the government, the corporations, and the military, focusing on imperialism as a system as the source of this war.

It needs to be rooted among the workers and poor. Bring the news of protests into the work places and schools. Bring the marches into the communities. Link up with the working class, black and Latino kids in the armed forces who are bravely standing up against the war.

The movement needs militant actions that refuse to cower before the police clubs or federal marshals. Such actions show that the movement means business and demonstrate the power of mass struggle. This doesn't mean trashing random shop windows; isolated actions of a few are impotent in the face of the war machine.

We need actions that help bring political focus to the thousands already in the street; actions that grip the imagination of the millions of others opposed to the war and encourage them towards struggle.

The anti-war fight has unleashed a wave of mass energy. Let's make good use of it to build up the revolutionary movement of the workers and activists that can challenge imperialist war.

### **Seattle: Bush's war is imperialist aggression!**

Bush has launched an unjust war, a war of aggression. He says that it is to "liberate Kuwait" and build a "New World Order". But his plans for Kuwait are to restore the corrupt Emir along with the lucrative contracts of U.S. oil companies. He wants Kuwait subjugated differently than what the Iraqis have done. This is an unjust war for oil profits.

Bush's "New World Order" is to be one where the U.S. and its huge corporations have complete world hegemony. One where no future dictators like Saddam, nor especially any revolutionary movement of the workers and poor, will attempt to take any country out of the U.S. sphere. The "New World Order" threatens: if you try, we will carpet bomb you to smithereens. This is an unjust war for empire, an imperialist war.

The U.S. economy is sick. While the Soviet state

capitalist bloc has collapsed, the U.S. is rapidly losing the economic competition with its new rivals of Japan and Germany. And it is now going into deep economic crisis. The U.S. war machine, however, remains unsurpassed. Using this war machine to prop up its hold around the world is seen as about the only remaining viable option. Witness the war on Panama (where the canal is not of minor interest), and now on Iraq. This is a war to shore up a decaying imperialist power.

### **"Saddam is a madman"?**

In the U.S. the issue is not the alleged "madman" Saddam Hussein, but our own "madmen": those who prop up gruesome death squad regimes, who invade tiny countries like Grenada and Panama, who want a horrific "new world order" where worship of U.S. military hardware is surpassed only by idolatry of the dollar. Bush did not consider Saddam a madman when the US backed Iraq with money and arms in its dirty war against Iran throughout the 1980s. Or when he gassed Kurds. Saddam is only considered a "madman" because he now threatens U.S. interests and its lapdog gulf monarchies.

### **"Support our troops"?**

Bush's call to "support our troops" is extremely hypocritical. He is sending the mainly poor, and disproportionately black, youth to die for this "new world order". And what do they face when they get back? Unemployment, despair, racism and jail. (The U.S. has the highest per cent of blacks in jail in the world.) And the Veterans' hospitals! It is common knowledge that they are underfunded hellholes. From LBJ to Bush, "concern" for the American troops amounts to: use them up and throw them away. The call to "support our troops" is more than just hypocrisy. It means to support the goals and aims of the war. But it is not correct to support troops warring for an unjust cause. Anti-war activists need the courage to stand up to this "patriotic" claptrap. We support the struggle of soldiers attempting to resist this unjust war.

### **"Peace through a quick war"?**

Bush and the Democrats say to "support the troops" in order to "achieve a quick end to war", i.e. to achieve peace. So we are to believe the real "peace" position is to kill hundreds of thousands of Iraqi young people with B-52's. This "short and quick" position would be a type of peace, it is true. And this shows that there are problems with merely calling for peace.

In fact, there will no peace of any kind in the Middle East with a U.S. victory. Quite the opposite. This war is like throwing match into powder room. The Arab peoples hatred of U.S. bullying will only increase with this war.

The actual logic of make it "short and quick" leads toward using nuclear weapons. Wouldn't this be the fastest



way to end the war? (But the Pentagon seems to think this is like throwing a grenade into a powder room, and for now, is showing "prudence" on this point...)

### A TV brainwashing barrage

One of the more annoying Big Lies on the TV news is that "such and such scientific poll shows that virtually everyone supports the war." But among other things, everything depends on how they frame the questions. Believe not the talking hairdo's on TV. Believe one's own eyes and ears. Hundreds of thousands are in the street from coast to coast. And these protests are greeted with choruses of honking horns from cars giving support. The polls also lied during the Vietnam War, and failed to intimidate the anti-war movement. There is also the hysteria about "terrorists", along with false reports of

snipers on the freeway. The jackals of the "free press" really have no shame.

In this vein, absurd attempts are underway to militarize the Boeing workforce in preparations for "acts of terrorism". In some plants, workers are to report to "incident commanders". Many workers can hardly keep from laughing. But in fact this is a serious attempt to muzzle the progressive workers from speaking out against the war. If the establishment thought the polls were accurate, would Boeing go to such absurd lengths?

U.S. imperialism, get out of the Persian Gulf!

DEMONSTRATE!

Mon. Jan.21 Garfield High School at 11am: ML King Day March to Othello St.

Jan. 24: campus actions across Wash. state vs. the war

Jan. 26: San Francisco march for entire west coast.

Feb. 2: Garfield H.S. at noon: March vs. the war □

## Statement of the Dec. 19 picket of the Injured and Handicapped Postal Workers United

800 copies of the following statement were passed out at the Dec. 19 in front of the main Detroit post office on Fort Street. More information about the picket can be found in the article "Injured postal workers on the march" in the January issue of the *Workers' Advocate*.

To postal workers and other working people:

We, injured postal workers and supporters, are picketing the GMF today to protest the inhuman treatment of injured and handicapped workers by greedy postal management.

■Injured workers, some with over 20 years seniority, are being denied work and put into the street because management claims it is not required to provide chairs with backs called for by the workers' doctors' restrictions. Then management puts healthy workers in these same chairs and has them throw mail that the injured worker could have thrown.

■Management stalls in approving injured workers' requests for Light Duty, putting still more people into the street. And yet Postmaster Frank claims there are no layoffs at the Post Office!

■Carriers whose doctors' restrictions call for use of a push cart are being denied work, yet in some stations push carts are offered.

■Injured workers who simply cannot afford to be put

out of work are being forced back to their original jobs—still injured—where they are aggravating their injuries or acquiring new ones.

■Management is delaying and mishandling Workers' Compensation cases, increasing the financial pressure on injured workers. The Workers' Compensation process itself, which takes 5 to 10 months, is already too complex, difficult and biased against the workers. Management is forcing each individual worker who contracts a repetitive-strain disorder like carpal tunnel syndrome or tendinitis to prove his or her case through the Workers' Compensation process. Consequently, these workers, whose injuries are actually job-related, spend months being treated as non-job-related and many never get classified as job-related by the Post Office. Many of these workers are being put on the street or suffering extreme insecurity about their job future.

■Management regularly fires NTEs (casual workers) for injury-or sickness-related absences.

■Injured workers are subject to huge stress because of how they're treated by postal management and the workers' compensation bureaucracy. Many face loss of homes, loss of credit, and intense disruption of their lives. Some have been thrown onto welfare.

■There is growing talk from management about terminating many workers with long-term injuries.

■As management automates its operations at a frenzied speed, it steps up the workload on healthy workers by

speedup, forced overtime, longer routes for carriers, etc. The automated machines are injury mills, even worse than the LSM machines before them. Together this is multiplying the injury rate, facing all postal workers with the danger of career-threatening injuries.

■The postal unions do next to nothing for the injured workers. They have not made a peep in the present contract negotiations about changing Article 13 of the National Agreement to guarantee injured workers' jobs. They have put all their hope in slow-moving grievances, which are based on the present flimsy contract and which may take up to a year and a half to process. These grievances then end up being decided by establishment-minded, so-called "neutral" arbitrators. Even the picket line November 20, which did mention the plight of injured workers, was not originally planned to do so. It was only after injured workers protested the unions' neglect that any emphasis was put on the injured. And Roger Holbrook blurted out the real position of the union leadership when he closed the November 20 picket line with the words: "I hope we don't have to do this again."

Well, Roger, we are doing it again! We, the Injured and Handicapped Postal Workers United—an organization drawing together workers from all postal crafts and

supporters of the injured—believe that direct, mass action is the best answer to management harassment and brutality. As in the days of the Civil Rights Movement, we are launching a campaign of marching and picketing to defend our health, our jobs and our well-being. Today we picket the GMF, then march to the newspapers and TV stations nearby, and then to the Federal Building. Next time we will march somewhere else.

Postal management: we are not going down without a fight! In fact, WE ARE NOT GOING DOWN AT ALL! Together with the other postal workers, we move the mail and have done so for years. We will not be thrown away like used toilet paper! WE WILL BE HEARD!

Sold-out union leaders: you are a disgrace to true union struggle and solidarity. We warn you: we will not allow ourselves to be sold down the river! We stand for the age-old slogan of workers' solidarity: AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL! We, the workers, will win!

[The statement then announced the time and location of the next public meeting of the IHPWU, on January 6, and concluded with the organization's mailing address.]

\* Injured & Handicapped Postal Workers' United, P.O. Box 10038, Detroit, MI. 48210 \*

## Shame on the APWU hacks for attacking the injured workers' picket

*From the January 10 issue of Detroit Workers' Voice, paper of the MLP-Detroit, on the response of the American Postal Workers Union officialdom to the concerns of the injured:*

Injured workers have taken things into their own hands because the postal union officials have done piddling little for them. So now that the injured workers have begun to organize for their demands, what are the union officials doing? They're attacking the injured workers for daring to organize and protest! What treachery!

For months, the injured have asked the union officials for help. They got next to nothing. If the union officials were really for the injured workers, they would have applauded, supported and built for the Dec. 19 picket. But what did they do instead?

Just a few days before the picket, they sent a letter to some laid-off injured workers from the GMF [the main post office and General Mail Facility in Detroit]. For the first time, this letter promised all sorts of help. It said the union would place their lawyer at the laid-off people's disposal, it spoke about filing an EEO complaint, and also offered money. The workers were asked to show up at a meeting Dec. 17.

They only offered these things because they are feeling

the heat from the injured workers' organizing. How else do you explain this meeting being called just two days before the Dec. 19 picket? But there was a worse side to what the union officials were up to — the honey was laced with poison.

Some of the laid off went to this meeting. They were spoken to by Pres. Holbrook and Vice-Pres. Chornoby. And what did these guys do? They attacked the injured workers' plan to picket and spread every scare story to frighten people away from the picket.

Listen to some of their bogus arguments:

### They said "Pickets are useless"

If that was so, why did they bother to hold theirs on Nov. 20? Why does the national APWU newspaper praise their picket in Washington, D.C. last November, or a recent one in Louisville?

No, Roger, pickets aren't useless. Nor are they the only weapon workers need. But how would you know — you are so far removed from the concerns of workers' organizing to fight.

Look at the injured workers' picket. Sure, it didn't get any jobs back yet. But no one thought this single one



would. But it did serve notice to management that injured workers are getting organized. That they can't attack injured workers under the cover of darkness and ignorance. When they do so, they will be exposed. The picket also spread the issues facing the injured to all the GMF workers. And news spread wider, e.g. even to the Troy GMF. And the injured themselves built this picket. They met and made the plans. They wrote out the placards. They spread leaflets to other workers. It gave them a good dose of confidence that rank-and-file workers can act for their interests.

### **They said "If you picket, the P.O. will fire you"**

This was supposedly because the injured would be violating their medical restrictions by picketing.

Once again this was hypocrisy. During the Nov. 20 APWU picket, union hack Dwight Boudreau denounced injured workers for not coming out in bigger numbers.

But the whole thing is another lie. Sure the bosses can try to threaten firings, but so what? The injured workers' restrictions aren't for picketing, they're for certain kinds of work. And the injured workers aren't stupid. The IHPWU made arrangements for those who couldn't picket, or do so for long. They asked people to join as long as they could. They asked those who couldn't walk to stand in solidarity, or sit. Chairs were made available too. And people did all these things. It was an inspiring sight to anyone but crusty labor fakers.

### **They said, "Don't join the communist picket"**

Holbrook and Chornoby also suggested that injured workers should stay away from the Marxist-Leninists because they'll just use you and abandon you.

These are lies from A to Z. Yes, supporters of the Marxist-Leninist Party are involved and *Detroit Workers' Voice* supported and took part in building the picket. But this didn't make it just a Marxist-Leninist picket. The injured workers' group has united workers with many different ideas, views and political leanings around a common cause — fighting for the injured.

Cursing the picket as a communist action is an old trick to divide the workers away from the Marxist-Leninists. But the truth is, it has been the Marxist-Leninists who have stood with the injured workers from the outset. More than you can say for yourself, Roger.

And it's a stupid lie to claim that we lead workers to wild things and then abandon them. The policies we propose to the workers are in line with the mood among the workers and what they themselves can sustain. We make it a point to bring our ideas to democratic discussion among the workers and the workers decide on the basis of what they themselves think and learn.

The big difference between the Marxist-Leninists and the union hacks is that we believe that workers should engage in mass struggle, while the hacks believe either in

standing on management's side, or at best being some type of middlemen. Workers don't need middlemen, they need fighting organizations.

### **They said, "Other workers won't support you"**

When nothing else works, attack the workers. That's a fine stand coming from a "labor leader"!

This too is another lie. In fact, the injured workers' organization includes non-injured workers. And many non-injured workers joined the December 19 picket. While the union tries to split the injured and non-injured, the IHPWU has worked hard to build a common fight of all postal workers for the injured. And they have made a point of demanding safe working conditions for all — because that's what causes injuries. And if you aren't injured today, you may well be injured tomorrow.

At their small meeting with the laid-off, there was also a BMC [Bulk Mail Center] worker. She came there as an activist of the IHPWU, to support the laid-off and help press for their demands. Here was a concrete case of a non-injured worker standing in solidarity with the laid-off injured, disproving the union hacks' lies. But did the hacks feel humbled by this? Oh no, Holbrook and Chornoby attacked the BMC worker, "What are you doing here?" As if that needs an answer. As a postal worker, and even a member of the APWU, why did she need a justification for being there?

The real purpose of this attack was that Holbrook and Chornoby wanted to attack the plans for the injured workers' picket and they couldn't hold back their venom at anyone participating in the rank-and-file organizing.

The lesson of this small meeting is clear. The injured workers by organizing on their own have put the heat on the APWU union officials. Now they feel compelled to do a few things for the injured. But they haven't turned over a new leaf. Because, more than they want to fight management, the union officials want to attack the rank and file. The injured workers are thus right to press forward with their struggle, independent of the union bureaucracy. □

## **NY postal workers to demonstrate against USPS contract demands**

*From the January 2 issue of New York Workers' Voice:*

Last month, discussion started among carriers at FDR Station about the possibility of holding a picket line or a rally to denounce management's outrageous contract demands. The carriers felt that this was a time for postal workers to be active. ... Just as some sectors of the city workers had held rallies to protest threatened layoffs, postal workers too, should protest. They should add their voices to all those who have recently been forced to fend off take-back demands from their employers. Some carriers thought

it a good idea to suggest it to the union leadership.

But many carriers know from past experience that the union leadership is not interested in rank-and-file action of any sort. It was thought that the union leadership would either oppose the picket line outright, or that it would give lip service to the idea while doing absolutely nothing to carry it through.

For this reason, the carriers decided to take the issue to the December city-wide carriers' union meeting, since many rank-and-file carriers were expected to attend on that occasion. And to back up the proposal, and further spread the idea around, the carriers circulated a petition. Over 130 signatures were collected in just two days, with no

cooperation from any of the shop stewards. (In fact, some shop stewards openly opposed the idea, and virulently campaigned against the petition—although they ended up voting for the picket line at the union meeting.) At the meeting, the proposal was approved overwhelmingly by those present.

It was officially decided at the December Branch 36 union meeting that demonstrations or pickets would be held at every station on Thursday, Jan. 24, after work.

Carriers should plan on attending (in civilian clothes) in order to make it a spirited and lively event. Let management, the arbitrator and anyone else know that postal workers intend to stand up for their rights! □

## On the collapse of revisionism

Speech at the Fourth National Conference  
of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA  
Fall 1990

*(In this issue we continue our coverage of the Fourth National Conference. The following speech has been edited for publication.)*

Comrades, at this time, let's discuss the collapse of revisionism. Since we cannot possibly go into the great variety of subjects which this covers, I will focus on the impact of the collapse of revisionism on the American left. As well, I will make some comments about Albania. Of course, the discussion following this speech can range over other topics raised by the collapse of revisionism.

The crisis, and collapse, of revisionism has proven to be a sharp test to all trends in the left. And that's no surprise, considering that everyone who claims to be socialist has always had to have some view about the systems claiming to be socialist and about what the working people who live under those systems should do. Some supported these systems as socialist or workers' states of some type or other, while others opposed them. Everyone had some explanation of what these regimes were and what role they've been playing in the world. All theories and stands have been put to the test.

The drama is yet to be fully played out. But while we cannot declare any of the left trends out of existence yet, many of them are in disarray or having a hard time dealing with the crisis of revisionism. Meanwhile, our Party has succeeded in having a revolutionary, honorable, and realistic stand towards the collapse of revisionism. We've been able to do this because our movement has from the outset been opposed to revisionism. We came into being to build a revolutionary alternative to revisionism. And for a decade now, we've been involved in a thorough-going

campaign of research, study and struggle to uncover the roots of revisionism. And though we do not have all the answers we want to our theoretical and historical questions, our anti-revisionist, Marxist-Leninist framework has allowed us to successfully meet the test.

Let me begin by reviewing how the different sections of the left have been affected. I start with the pro-Soviet revisionist forces.

### The pro-Sovlets

It's only just over a decade ago that the pro-Soviet groups were trying to make hay out of the crisis of Chinese revisionism and Maoism. They acted as if life had vindicated them, and the anti-revisionist criticism had been proven wrong. Singing the glories of the "existing socialism" from Moscow to Berlin to Havana was all the rage.

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Only ten years ago—but look where they are now. Over the decades, the pro-Soviet revisionist movement has gone through many a crisis, but in the latest one they stare at disaster. Now it's not just a matter of some small troubles, but their whole international movement is in disarray and falling into pieces. The result is widespread liquidation, demoralization, and fragmentation.

They were already having difficult times. But since so much of their politics was wrapped up with "existing socialism" in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, they've been hit hard by the crisis in the Soviet bloc. The whole edifice of revisionist state-capitalism on which they based their movement is in pieces. Most of those regimes have vanished, and how quickly! And the CPSU itself is staring at the loss of its country-wide power in the near future. In the course of the collapse, not only have the so-called communist parties fallen but they've been shown to be enemies of the working people, hated by them. Tons of lies about their working class, socialist, character have been exposed. And—this is significant—life has smashed up their pretensions that state-capitalism could provide economic development, job security, and other welfare measures for the toilers, never mind how bad the political system was, never mind how much the bureaucrats in power pigged out at the expense of the masses.

The result has quite naturally been liquidation. Many revisionists have simply dropped away from political life, several parties have just dissolved—such as the West Germans—and others are on the way. Those among the revisionists who want to maintain political existence have opted to drop most of their old baggage and are now born again as open social-democrats and reformists. In country after country, they are dropping the communist name and symbols. The CP of Italy, long a thoroughly reformist party, but which still wanted to claim to be a variety of communism ("Eurocommunism"), went into crisis, first named itself as "the thing", and now is calling itself the Democratic Party of the Left. The CP of Great Britain is toying with the Radical Party label. In several countries, the revisionists are seeking merger with social-democratic parties, such as in Canada. Applications for membership in the Socialist International are also a new fashion, but the revisionists have to do a few more "Hail Marys" before the social-democrats will let them in.

Intensifying the problem for the pro-Soviet parties is the fact that the collapse hasn't just had a political-ideological effect, but also a huge material impact. The Soviet bloc used its state power and economic resources to build up its trend in a big way. But the material support has dried up. The collapse of Berlin and Prague were especially painful. Their international journal *World Marxist Review* is no more. The large number of subscriptions to national CP papers bought by East Germany, Bulgaria, etc. are no more. (Why, this cutoff even found its way to affect us. We lost \$25, which we unthinkingly had sent in to renew a sub to the *World Marxist Review*. Comrades should check before sending any renewals to revisionist publications these days.)

So how's it all affected the U.S. champions of Soviet state-capitalism?

### Line of March

The "Line of March" (LOM) organization has dissolved. There were other reasons for their crisis, but the emergence of Gorbachev and the exposures of reality under Brezhnev played a big part. Remember, LOM sought to be the ultra-Brezhnevites who competed with the CP for Soviet revisionist orthodoxy. Now they are ultra-liquidators. They've collapsed into a group calling itself the "Frontline Political Organization" (they debated calling themselves "Desperately Seeking Socialism" too). But they don't have their own paper any more. Instead they are putting out a magazine called *Crossroads*, along with social-democrats, other liquidators, etc.

This journal wants to "regroup" the left, a task which many a liquidator's paper has sought to do over the last years. In the name of seeking "renewal" of the U.S. left, they are campaigning hard to get "the monkey off our backs," the "monkey" being anything smacking of revolutionary spirit and ideas—both Marxism-Leninism as well as the spirit of the 60's. In the second issue of *Crossroads*, they highlight a piece by the *Guardian* writer John Trinkl, appealing that it's high time to put the 1960's into the dustbin. Why? Because we came to glorify "protests," "Third World struggles," and sought to form "toy Marxist-Leninist parties." Because "opposition to the status quo became so entrenched that being on the fringes of society itself became a virtue." Oh my, how bad that opposition to the status quo became so entrenched! Now, it's true that the 60's should be looked at critically, but Trinkl wants to throw out important positive things of the 60's—militant mass struggles, intransigence to the establishment, the turn to revolutionary theory and organization.

Trinkl quotes approvingly from Carl Oglesby, ex-SDS president, who in 1969 called for a "post-Leninist theory" and a "post-Leninist practice." Now to give you an idea of Carl Oglesby's post-Leninist ideas and practice: I heard him speak in 1974, and he was promoting that the critical issue facing the U.S. left was to rally around a national campaign to ask "Who killed Kennedy?" This would allegedly do all sorts of radical things in the society, he promised us.

Enough on LOM.

### CPUSA

The grand-daddy of American revisionism, the CPUSA, is also in crisis. And even its generally stolid press is being forced to somewhat reflect this.

Everyone probably knows that the CPUSA had to turn its daily into a weekly. The subs have obviously dried up in Sofia (Bulgaria) and Prague (Czechoslovakia). They're not getting much help from the Soviet Union, but just think what the fall from power of the CPSU will mean to Gus

Hall and co. Gus complained a year ago that on his last visit to Moscow Gorbachev wouldn't see him—the first Soviet leader not to do so! But Yeltsin and his ilk will offer him even less.

A fight is brewing in the CPUSA, although both sides publicly proclaim party solidarity, and the *People's Weekly World* puts the best face on it. Gus Hall and his fellow dinosaurs want to keep the party as their private nursing home, where they can nurse their memories of trips to the Soviet Union and how they used to hobnob with the CIO bureaucrats in the 30's and 40's. Another section, largely 60's generation black leaders, apparently would rather be 90's-style reformists without the old baggage.

Well, none of the real issues are openly brought out. If you read their press, you'll see Gus Hall criticizing how some want to get rid of the "working class, class struggle, policies of our party." The other side talks about concerns over the level of struggle against racism in the party, how the black struggle for equality must be central to the CP's stand. You know that both sides are using class struggle and black struggle as code words. They have little to do with the mass struggles by workers and black people. They are simply pseudonyms for the big-time reformist forces. Gus Hall would prefer to preserve the traditional CP politics of tailing the AFL-CIO hacks and the Democratic Party politicians closest to them, while the others drool at the successes of BEO's (that's black elected officials). The Angela Davises and Charlene Mitchells are seeing their like-minded colleagues in the black petty bourgeoisie get elected to City Councils, State Legislatures, Congress, etc. and drool at the prospects that would supposedly open up to them if the CP is changed (or dissolved, although that's not yet being said). In the arguments, quite a few angry remarks are hurled at the inner-party regime of Gus Hall and they appeal for more democracy. In the face of this barrage, Gus Hall and co. appear to be on the retreat, looking for some compromise solution.

The result is that there is a strong thrust among the CP's dissidents towards outright dissolving into the larger, reformist milieu—from the Democratic Socialists of America to Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. Since there is no serious social-democratic party, such as the New Democratic Party in Canada, for these people to merge into, they are looking towards the reformist milieu on the fringes of the Democratic Party. This is where they've been anyway, but now they're headed for being part of the larger reformist milieu, without having Marxist-Leninist labels in their baggage to worry about.

### The dinosaurs

Meanwhile, what of the dinosaurs? We don't know how the CP's crisis will end up, but it's not unlikely that some of Gus Hall's disciples may regroup as some type of "orthodox" holdouts. Worldwide, there have been a smaller number of parties who wanted to hold out in this fashion. For example, some Latin American parties, such as the CP

of Colombia and the CP of India (Marxist). Some had longingly looked at East Germany to back up such a new revisionist international. There were ideas of regrouping around such parties as the Chinese, Vietnamese, Koreans, Cubans, Albanians, etc. But the collapse of East Germany put an end to that dreaming. The result is not some rejuvenation of the "orthodox" revisionists, but a smaller phenomenon of small hangers-on rallying around Cuba and Korea.

But this corner of the arena already has several contenders. Sam Marcy has eagerly jumped in to play a leading role as one of the least shamefaced defenders of revisionist tyranny. There's not a discredited, bloodstained regime that the Workers' World Party (WWP) hasn't jumped to support. From Ethiopia's Mengistu to Romania's Ceausescu. But it's not that he hasn't been rewarded. This year he finally got his 30-year-long wish, an invite from the Great Leader himself, Kim Il Sung of North Korea.

But Marcy's WWP isn't the only one. The Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) is also in this corner. Its leader Jack Barnes too just made it to North Korea. The SWP has finally broken its official ties to Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat of the 4th International. Their real interest is being the franchisee of Castro, although Castro isn't handing out such exclusive franchises. Meanwhile, SWP's activity has become more and more bizarre. Besides banking on Cuba and devoting a large part of their resources to reprinting Cuban documents, they are eagerly wooing a section of the trade union bureaucrats—they make the strange claim that the Eastern Airlines strike is getting stronger and more successful. They also use the Mark Curtis legal defense campaign to chase liberals and union bureaucrats (but then, that's a long-standing SWP tradition). Abroad, they've succeeded in splitting away a few small outfits in Sweden, Canada, New Zealand, etc. from their erstwhile colleagues in Mandel's 4th International. All these groups are supposed to use the *Militant* as their newspaper, be the representatives for Pathfinder Press, etc.

### The Trotskyists

The WWP and SWP, although they originated in Trotskyism, have simply merged with Soviet and Cuban revisionism. But what about those who still claim loyalty to Trotskyism?

The fact is, most of Trotskyism too has been thrown into trouble with the collapse of revisionism. Their theory of defending these countries as deformed or degenerated workers' states didn't imply the exact same degree of support for the revisionist regimes as given by the CP, WWP, and SWP, but nevertheless it provided enough support for the state-capitalist system that it too has been hit by current developments. The Trotskyists have gone into contortions to explain what these allegedly workers' states have to do with the working class.



## Sparts

In particular, the Spartacist League has been put to a hard test. After all, this is the branch of Trotskyism that wanted to take its "defensism" to the wildest extremes. And as the Soviet bloc went into crisis under Brezhnev, the Sparts' cheering grew even louder. A decade ago, the Sparts decided to be the loudest cheering squad for Brezhnev's camp. They hailed the Red Army trampling Afghanistan. They cheered the crushing of the Polish workers by Jaruzelski's tanks and martial law. They hung up Jaruzelski's picture in their New York office and even put together a Yuri Andropov Brigade for an early 80's demonstration. [Andropov was briefly, until his death in February 1984 following a lingering illness, the Soviet leader after the death of Brezhnev in November 1982.]

This gave a boost to the cause of decaying Soviet revisionism, but this didn't mean that the Sparts were about to merge with them. No, the Sparts were interested in winning a section of pro-Soviet revisionists to bolster their separate international trend. They went after whoever would be even more pro-Soviet than the official CPs (loosely known as the "Afghans"). But they didn't have much success apart from a circle (who had originated as entryists in the 1950's) from the CP of France, and they reportedly lost these people in their hot air spouting campaign over sending a "fighting brigade" to Afghanistan.

Last year as East Germany went into crisis, the Sparts thought here was their golden opportunity. To counter Gorbachev's perestroika, they had held up the German Democratic Republic as an example of a successful, planned economy. And they even used to support the Berlin wall. But when the wall collapsed, Spart opportunist triumphed. They used it as an opportunity to go across into East Germany, where they set up shop as the Spartacist Workers Party. They poured in thousands of dollars and quickly set up a press. And what did they do with this apparatus? They began hanging around the edges of the collapsing East German ruling party. Every small mention they got in the press of the Socialist Unity Party, they reprinted to show off in the U.S. as proof of their success. They created in their ranks the idea that a big breakthrough was at hand. The long sought after "political revolution" was here, and the Sparts would recruit from among the so-called honest and devoted East German Stalinists. [Most Trotskyists called for a "political revolution" in Eastern Europe, intentionally contrasting it to a social and economic revolution, as they believe the economic base of the revisionist countries is socialist in some sense.—ed.] Unfortunately, things didn't pan out. They ran a big election campaign, but reportedly got less votes than the German Beer Drinkers' Union (which only ran in one city).

Since then, they're trying to put a good face on the whole thing. But it's not as if they've changed. They are still speculating about a favorable turn in the Soviet Union where they expect the workers to defend the "degenerated

workers' state" against the possibility (?) of counterrevolution. For example, in the Persian Gulf War, they see defense of Iraq as a line of defense of the Soviet Union (Why, the imperialists are tightening the noose against the USSR! The Sparts are so blind they can't see the imperialists don't need to tighten a noose against the Soviet Union indirectly via the Persian Gulf—they're already having a good ol' time inside the Soviet Union itself. To say nothing of the counterrevolution that took place decades ago.)

## What about the other Trotskyists?

Now, most other Trotskyists don't go this far in their "defensism" (that's their jargon for defense of degenerated and deformed workers' states). In fact most have tried to distance themselves from the crimes of the revisionists. Nevertheless the crisis in Eastern Europe has also put them to the test.

All of them are trying to fit the upheavals there into their dogmatic schema of "political revolution" in a "deformed workers' state." Since only a political, not economic revolution, is supposed to take place (because allegedly the workers will fight to defend nationalized property), these Trotskyists are straining to show that the new regimes aren't really capitalist. Or that even if they are, the capitalist counterrevolution is still not here. They still speculate about how the workers will rise up in defense of nationalized property.

As far as their practical politics go, the Trotskyists range from support to the new, pro-Western regimes to empty, r-r-revolutionary screeching. Some of the Trotskyists are so ultra-opportunist, they have simply hitched themselves to the capitalist forces who've come to power. Or, more commonly, to social-democratic groups trailing behind the new governments. Those that didn't take this approach simply shout empty calls for political revolution, workers' councils, etc.

It is worthwhile to add a footnote that this isn't just taking place with the "orthodox" Trotskyists but also the Cliff-ites. The followers of Tony Cliff posture as oh-so intransigent against the revisionist regimes. Yes, they did oppose these regimes, but that "intransigence"—without being connected to a firm stand in favor of working class independence—has tended to lead them in the direction of merging with pro-Western bourgeois liberalism and reformism. They too have fallen into trailing the new governments, accompanied by chiding them with the necessity of becoming more pro-worker.

## The Maoists

That brings us to other groupings who've also claimed to be opposed to the Soviet bloc regimes as capitalist—the Maoists and PLP, both of whom originate in 1960's anti-revisionism.

Here too, at first glance there would appear to be less impact on these forces because they haven't been politically

supporting the revisionist regimes.

With important exceptions, of course. The outright pro-Chinese groups had long taken to supporting all the Soviet bloc countries as "socialist." But there aren't many of these groups left in the U.S.

But what about those who claim to be opposed to the Soviet bloc? Such as the RCP and PLP?

The big problem RCP has had is that their dogma about the third world war emerging from US-Soviet rivalry has been thrown into shambles. They had already begun to retreat from this several years back, substituting instead the imminent specter of death-camp fascism here in the U.S. But it looks like they have run into trouble here too: they had big hopes in "Refuse and Resist" as the embodiment of the anti-fascist struggle, but there are signs that relations are strained between RCP and "Refuse and Resist." However, the Persian Gulf events may allow RCP to bring back its wild speculations about inter-imperialist rivalry (though in a different form).

As for the crisis of Soviet revisionism, RCP hasn't had much to say. They've covered some of the mass struggles favorably but, as for analysis, for them it suffices to say it's phony communism and Mao is the real thing. They theoretically believe that these countries only went revisionist in the mid-50's, but they haven't bothered to explain that theory.

### The Progressive Labor Party

Meanwhile, the PLP, who proclaim their own trend of "egalitarian communism," have taken to ever-louder shouting in support of Stalin. In fact, besides the tiny pro-Albanian grouplets, PL is the loudest champion of Stalin in the U.S. today. They have a curious version of Soviet history. You see, Lenin was wrong because he made compromises with bourgeois intellectuals and bourgeois culture and didn't want to go over to communist distribution immediately. But Stalin was great—after all, years down the road what choice did he have? But what happened to the fact that the worst diatribes against egalitarianism are from JV [Stalin]? Go figure that. But consistency is not PL's hallmark.

Meanwhile, PLP has taken over hysterical predictions of World War III just around the corner. They've also come up with the strange analysis that the collapse of revisionism has already brought a Soviet-German imperialist axis into being.

Like RCP too, there is very little by way of concrete analysis of the Soviet Union from PLP. For them, shouting that it's phony communism which is collapsing suffices. Meanwhile the old dogmas, about Stalin, about these countries going revisionist in the mid-50's, all suffice.

### The approach of the MLP

Let me take a minute to contrast the views of these groups to our party's attitude to the collapse of revisionism.

True, we couldn't foresee that the collapse was going to take place in this way and at this time. But we were not caught ideologically unprepared. Although we can't answer every question, nevertheless we had the framework to deal with the recent crisis. Besides our long-standing opposition to revisionism, for a decade we've been working on deepening our anti-revisionist critique.

From the outset, our movement has opposed the Soviet bloc regimes as capitalist, and we stood in solidarity with the struggles and strivings of the workers. For instance, the American Communist Workers Movement (ML) supported the Polish workers rebellion in 1970. And when the Polish workers' movement re-emerged in 1980, this time not under revolutionary slogans but under the strong influence of a negative political trend, we stood against Jaruzelski and with the workers. This approach stood in contrast to the Party of Labor of Albania who we respected and supported back then—comrades may recall that the PLA took the stand of opposing the workers movement and showed signs of softness towards the political system in Poland. Ours was the Marxist approach. We supported the workers' struggle, and at the same time recognized the limitations and problems of the movement as pro-Western forces were coming to their head. We didn't get caught up in sterile contrapositions that suggested you had to support either Jaruzelski or Walesa.

And in 1989, it was a situation like Poland in 1980 that we saw spreading across Eastern Europe. And we already had the framework to deal with it. We welcomed the collapse of the revisionist regimes at the hands of the masses. At the same time, we remained sober-minded. We analyzed the political forces concretely and saw the difficulties facing the working class. We stood with the workers but didn't jump behind the new-found apologists for free-market capitalism. We see that the old is dying out, quite painfully, but we also know that it will take a process for the new to be born. Yet we remain convinced that the workers will indeed find their way to their class independence and the cause of class emancipation.

True, we did once subscribe to the idea that these countries had become revisionist in the mid-50's. That was true, for example, when we discussed Poland in 1980. But this was not some dogma for us. We were also launching major theoretical investigations to deepen the critique of revisionism, precisely because we did not feel the old answers were sufficient. And in the course of that work over the 1980's, we have learned a great deal. The results of this theoretical work, while not answering every question, have strengthened our framework towards the Soviet bloc state-capitalist countries. Meanwhile, the collapse of revisionism itself has given impetus to the ongoing theoretical work on socialism.

Our party stands for a rigorous scientific approach based on the actual realities of history. We think our Marxist approach has been verified, rather than being undermined, by the crisis in Eastern Europe. We didn't approach the crisis in the Soviet bloc by having to fit it into some



dogmatic framework about these countries—dogmas which have little to do with Marxism. Anyone who did that has run into trouble, whether they saw these countries as socialist, or deformed workers states, or that had gone bad in the magical year of 1956.

What were the ingredients of our framework? Intransigence towards the revisionist systems. Our class instincts and sense of solidarity with the mass strivings of the workers. Our firm stand in favor of working class independence. Our ability to distinguish between the workers and leaders that come to their head. Our program of work to deepen the critique of revisionism. Altogether this meant that we could take a rigorous, scientific, honest and revolutionary attitude to Eastern Europe.

In closing this section I do, however, want to acknowledge that there is one area of dealing with the collapse of revisionism where we have only been able to make the most limited progress. At the Third Congress [of the MLP in Fall 1988] we had discussed the importance of improving our socialist agitation. And though this is a broader question, the collapse of revisionism does give it added importance because the exploiters are using the crimes and bankruptcy of revisionism to campaign against the socialist idea. Unfortunately we haven't been able to put much effort into agitation specifically promoting socialism. This isn't from a lack of framework, but I think this agitation has primarily been a victim of our working constantly at the edge of overextension. We simply have been unable to put in the necessary effort into it.

### The Albanian question

Of course, had we been satisfied back in 1980 with where the PLA was headed, with the ideas and stands it was advancing, and had we closed our eyes to what's been going on in that country during the 1980's, we'd have fallen flat during the upheavals of 1989. But that was not a choice before the MLP.

What's happened to the PLA has only verified the correctness of our struggle against the new course of the PLA. Today Albania is gripped in the revisionist crisis too and there is nothing positive one can say about anything from the PLA. This of course does not mean we denounce all the current changes and prefer the status quo that existed before. For example, the rigid political system there certainly needed to be relaxed. But there's serious problems with the way the PLA is going about it. Of course, the PLA isn't carrying out political reforms for revolutionary reasons, but it appears it's super half-hearted with even the reforms it has agreed on. They've been merely designed as a flimsy sop to ward off mass dissatisfaction.

The *Workers' Advocate* has been writing on the Albanian situation, and we hope to have more. At home the PLA is going over to market-socialism while trying hard to keep the regime in power, despite being faced with dissatisfaction and unrest from the working masses. And in their foreign policy, they are drooling at the prospects that will

open up economically if they can get into the process of European integration. Meanwhile, they have dropped all pretense of opposition to imperialism. One of the last good things we had to say about the PLA in the 1980's was that they used to oppose the two superpowers. And now, they can't even take a stand against the U.S.-led imperialist war build-up in the Persian Gulf! All they have to say is in favor of the "international effort" against Iraq. Ramiz Alia was sent to address the UN this fall, the first time an Albanian leader has ever done so, but he had no words against the U.S.-led imperialist war build-up in the Gulf!

The present crisis is also offering insights into what's been happening inside Albania over the years. It now appears that in the late 1970's, when we saw a revolutionary approach from the PLA, the PLA did indeed take a left turn in not just its international policies but also in domestic affairs. Unfortunately it seems that this left turn at home had serious problems. And when the expected results did not materialize, the PLA swerved sharply to the right. What we saw taking place in Albanian foreign policy around 1980, a turn towards opportunism, coincided with a revisionist turn in domestic policy too. They undertook a rightist critique of Maoism, and the whole hoopla with the renewed championing of Stalin meant that the PLA was bankrupt in coming up with any new, revolutionary answers—they simply went back to the early 1950's model, which is the model of what much of Eastern Europe has been (prior to the introduction of market-socialism). And when they reached a new impasse, they followed in the same pattern as the other Eastern European countries and turned to market-socialism.

Of course, the Albanian experience also raises historical questions going further back. It is true that in the 60's the PLA tried to build an anti-revisionist model, and there was good reason for the interest it attracted from anti-revisionists worldwide, including our movement. It is worth studying that effort, but it's also apparent that, as in international policy, there were pluses and minuses in their domestic effort. There were many wrong things they borrowed from 1930's Soviet Union, and earlier, and never got rid of. The influence of the Soviet model, both when it wasn't revisionist and when it was, are issues that come up when looking at Albanian history.

We can't answer all these questions yet. And the study of Albania is not a high priority item for us at this time. However, many of the theoretical conclusions we come up with from our study of the Soviet experience will have immense value in making the historical assessment of Albanian experience.

We are not historical idealists. We came into political existence at a time when there was immense interest, and correctly so, in the attempts to build socialism on a revolutionary model, different than what existed in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—the efforts in China and Albania. The issues raised by these parties, despite many problems and shortcomings, also played a role in helping a new generation of activists to cast aside the pall of Soviet

revisionism, and later with the PLA, that of Chinese revisionism. These things are part of our history, but unfortunately they did not go further and also played a very mixed role. Along with the impulse their stands gave to certain activists who wanted to go left, the Chinese and Albanians also played a negative role in frittering away the energies of many activists who came up in the last big wave against revisionism. It is unfortunate that the Chinese and Albanians did not see the break with the Soviet Union as an impetus for a more thoroughgoing critique of revisionism, for a more revolutionary, workers' communism. That's a tragedy for communism, but it's a success for communism that there were others who fought to carry the struggle further and overcome the sabotage.

### **In conclusion: The future of some political trends**

In finishing, I wanted to return to the impact of the collapse of revisionism. So what does it all add up to?

What we are seeing is the playing out of certain trends from the past. Over the 1980's we saw the collapse of Chinese revisionism. To that is now added the collapse of Soviet revisionism. Remnants of these trends of course remain, and will remain. For example, the LRS, or RCP, or WWP, or SWP may well remain alive for some time yet. This or that group may no longer exist, but some basic political trends will remain as roadblocks to the revolutionary class struggle.

First, there's social-democracy and reformism. A large part of the pro-Soviet trend is finally making the full merger into social-democracy and reformism. But does this mean a new resurgence of social-democracy? Not in the sense that social-democratic views are getting a fresh wave of recruits. No, those who are now openly proclaiming themselves social-democrats have long been that in reality. But those joining social-democracy from the liquidationist collapse are a whole new bunch with fresh grievances they lay at the door of communism and revolution. Social-democracy's been getting these people for ten years now, like ex-OLers. [OL was the Maoist October League, later the CP(ML), which ended up as champions of social-chauvinism, "striking the main blow at the Soviet Unions", and three worldism.—ed.] Now it's the turn of the Irwin Silbers and Kendra Alexanders (she's Northern California chair of the CPUSA and a big voice for dissidents in that party). So there will be much noise against revolution, militancy, and communism.

This will not however do away with a complex of groups claiming to be Marxist-Leninist. The situation will be more fluid here. Some groups will die, others will maybe even be born. And these groups will still present us with a range of political complexions—from reformism that really can't be distinguished from the social-democrats to those who will still sound and look quite left.

A particularly significant section of these forces form today, and will continue to form, part of the left social-

democracy that we have discussed several times during conferences in the 1980's. These groupings may be fragmented, and we may encounter one group in this city and another elsewhere, but they represent the same basic phenomenon. Recall our experiences with Bolshevik Tendency in the Contragate Action Committee, Earl Silbar and friends in the Anti-Imperialist Group in Chicago, and the Revolutionary Workers League in the pro-choice struggle. This includes a variety of Trotskyist groups. Left social democracy includes other forces besides many Trotskyites, but the Trotskyites have a long history of forming an important core of this broader trend. This goes back to the 30's. And Trotskyism, even though it has been hit by the crisis in Eastern Europe (and despite the fact that this or that outfit may collapse), still has adaptability.

We will also continue to encounter a variety of more "left" sounding currents. For example, sectarians like the PLP. But even more significant is the wider renewal of anarchism. Not so much in the form of this or that group, although some new groups have come up, but as an ideological influence over a whole section of young activists. It is not surprising at all that the collapse of revisionism brings new interest in anarchism as a revolutionary alternative. Frequently, though, the anarchist influence is combined with reformism, so that the anarchist-inclined currents aren't really separate from left social-democracy.

### **A caution**

This is largely the situation we are coming out of the 80's with. I should caution that when social upheaval breaks out anew, no political force should be discounted. When the 60's emerged, the CPUSA and SWP were pretty corrupt and rightist. They even earned anew the hatred of a new generation of activists. But even they were able to recruit and grow. And new political groupings emerged out of them, as well as out of the mass upheaval generally. And we can expect similar things to recur. True, there will be the MLP also, but we shouldn't think that there will be any smooth and easy rallying by new activists around us.

### **The old is dying**

We have an old line-up in the left dying, and a new situation still yet to emerge. You can see the old dying, and you can see some of the phenomena we will be confronting. But we can make no exact predictions and can't lay down some schema beforehand. Remember that someone in 1958 could hardly predict what the situation would look like in 1964, not to mention 1969. Still, our party's long years of struggle against opportunism—the fight against reformism, the struggles against left social-democracy, what we have learned about how to approach activists under the influence of opportunism—all these remain invaluable experience and training for our Party to face the ideological and political struggles which lie ahead. □