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The Sandinistas blame revolution for their failures

The Sandinista leadership has scheduled the first Congress of the FSLN for February 1991. Yes, this is the first Congress, although the FSLN ruled Nicaragua for ten years. It is scheduled to update the Sandinista program in the light of the experience of ten years of Sandinista government after the overthrow of Somoza.

The July 1990 issue of *Barricada International* set forward the resolutions of the FSLN's June 17 national assembly in preparation for the Congress. The document is couched in revolutionary phrases. Everything the Sandinistas touch is revolution. If they are in power, that is revolution. If the contra-lovers of the UNO are in power, well, then that "in no way meant the end of the revolutionary project". Optimism galore.

But it turns out that underneath the revolutionary phrases, the Sandinista leadership blames revolutionary measures in favor of the toilers for the victory of the UNO. It hides the history of its own abandonment of the toilers year after year. Instead it holds that it failed to get an alliance with the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie because it was too revolutionary. And it can now get an alliance if it removes the last traces of revolution from its program.

This peeks out here and there from the document.

They want to woo the right-wing

What was the internal problem facing the Sandinistas?

They say this was "The formation inside the country of a bloc of growing disagreement ... This bloc brought together Somoza supporters, anti-Sandinista businesspeople, large landowners and well-off peasants,... political parties and professional associations from the traditional right wing as well as politically backward sectors of society from both the countryside and urban areas."

The FSLN doesn't seem to believe that its cherished "national unity" should have had any opponents, from Somoza-lovers to the traditional right-wing to the businesspeople. This is why they are surprised that any bloc at all formed to oppose them. And they lump together in the same breath "backward sectors", which one should strive to win over, and the pro-Somoza forces. (Of course they don't

admit the existence of another bloc that disagreed from the left, consisting of politically advanced workers and poor peasants.)

The Sandinista leadership is not saying that the masses should have been split from the right-wing, but that everyone should have been satisfied in a broad consensus. The problem was that "For years our aim...was to consolidate the Revolution's social base, rather than seeking

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The struggle against racism outside Harpos in Detroit

From the September 11 issue of Detroit Workers' Voice, paper of the MLP-Detroit. It also contained the article "This law is not loving and supportive/'Parental Consent' Aims To Punish Young Women and Can Ruin Their Lives":

Why does Coleman Young deny racism in Harpo's incident?

The street in front of Harpo's nightclub was blocked by a crowd of brawling white people in the early morning of August 31. A young black man got out of his car to see what was going on. Racist shouts rang out. A white man, throwing racist curses, blocked him from returning to his car and attacked. Four or five other whites joined in, chased him through a vacant lot, and beat on his car. When he got a friend to help, a group of whites

surrounded and savagely beat them with a baseball bat.

Racism has raised its ugly face in Detroit, and it must be confronted.

But Mayor Coleman Young denies this was a racist attack. Indeed, one police investigator claimed "it was just a bunch of white kids fighting among themselves" and the blacks "got caught up in the fight." (*Detroit News*, Sept. 9)

This is outrageous! Not only were racist insults shouted in the attack, but it is reported that racist literature had been circulating at Harpos previously. As well, a few racists shouted insults and even threw rocks at blacks outside Harpos just the week before. We don't know if the handful of whites who joined the attack are in an organized racist group, like the Nazis or White People's Party. But certainly racism was being incited, and they joined in.

Mayor Young and the police know all of this, but they are covering up the racism. Young is known to cry "racism" at the drop of a hat if anyone simply disagrees with him. But when the black masses are attacked, all of a sudden he falls silent.

And this isn't the first time, either. In May, for example, a white man shouted racist abuse and then shot and killed a black teenager following a traffic accident on East 7 mile. But the police refused to acknowledge it was racist.

And what about in June, following the Piston Basketball win? According to witnesses, an apparently sober white man slowed his car, crossed two lanes, and then sped into a crowd of 50 mostly black youth. Four were killed and another injured. The man was arrested, but neither the police nor the news media would even speculate on why he ran down the youth.

Why are Mayor Young and Police Chief Hart covering up the racism? Well, it seems they are more interested in protecting the businessmen, like Harpos, than the black masses.

The fact is that racism is spreading like a plague throughout this country. It is encouraged by the top reaches of the government—by President Bush and Governor Blanchard, with their Willie Horton-styled campaigns against "crime" and "drugs." It is spurred on by the capitalist ruling class—who find good business sense in breaking up the solidarity of black, latino, white, and Asian workers. And it is accepted by the black upper crust—who, in their climb up the ladder to become rich partners of the capitalist rulers, are showing complete disregard for the black masses. They act as if the poor and the working people are nothing more than criminals and drug runners.

This racism must be fought. But you can't count on Mayor Young, or the police, or the courts to fight it. Instead, the black and white working people must unite and build up a fighting mass movement. No to the police

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cover up! Join the protests to confront the racist terror! □

Protesters shout down racism at Harpos

"Hey, Hey, Ho, Ho, the Racist System's Got to Go!" That was the shout of some 200 people who rallied at Harpo's nightclub on September 6. Black and white working people came from around Detroit and some suburbs. And angry youth from the neighborhood poured into the streets to join the protest.

"Rock and Roll's Okay, But Racism, No Way!" was shouted too. We know that many of the white youth who frequent Harpos don't want any part of racism. And so as concert goers drove up, some demonstrators talked to them about the protest and got their support. But some who came for the concert ran to the police. And the police tried to escort them in by pushing and shoving and grabbing protesters. The demonstrators were outraged. "Police and klan go hand in hand!" they shouted. The police grabbed one demonstrator and whisked him to jail, as the protesters shouted "Let him go! Let him go!"

The confrontation went on for hours. Finally it was announced that Harpos was closed (and it eventually decided to close for the entire weekend).

The next night demonstrators returned. But before people from the neighborhood could join in, the police bullied and badgered the protest. They kept jabbing picketers with billy clubs and flashlights. They pressed the marchers back foot after foot. And then a Harpo's manager pointed out a couple of protesters who had been leading slogans on the bullhorn, and the police moved to arrest them. The demonstrators were able to escape arrests. But they ended the protest, determined to return later to continue the fight.

Mayor Young's police, while denying there was a racist attack, are trying to arrest anti-racist fighters and prevent demonstrations. But they won't stop us. The power of mass action, of black and white working people uniting to fight the racists, shut down Harpos for the weekend and exposed the racism to the whole city. We must keep up the fight with more rallies and demonstrations and a movement of the working masses that can put racism in its grave. □

Why the communists fight racism

At the September 7 protest, a self-appointed black "leader" came out denouncing not the racism but the protest

against it. He shouted at people from the neighborhood to stay away from the demonstration. He claimed whites don't know about racism, so black people should not unite with them in anti-racist protest. He claimed communists were simply trying to use black people to recruit for their organizations. While posturing about black unity and black culture, he was actually trying to get black people to give up the struggle and follow the "respectable" black leaders.

But facts are facts. Coleman Young and his friends were not out there protesting the racism. The NAACP leaders did not come to protest. The black nationalists, like leaders from Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam, were not demonstrating. No, the "respectable" black leaders have been trying to climb up to the banquet table of the rich white ruling class, and have turned their backs on the black masses.

Instead, it was working people, black and white, who came out to fight the racism. They were called out by Stop Racism Now and other groups.

The Marxist-Leninist Party (MLP) was active in the struggle from the start. The Party marched through the neighborhood the day after the attack. The night before the protest, the *Detroit Workers' Voice* was spread through the neighborhood to rally people to demonstrate. And the Party brought out workers from other parts of Detroit and some suburbs to stand up to the racists. The communists understand that racism is a weapon of the capitalist bosses to grab extra wealth off the backs of black workers and to split up the masses so they can hold down all the workers. And so the communists fight racism to help the black people liberate themselves and work to bring white workers into the protests to help unite all the working people against the capitalist ruling class. □

A 'summit on violence' or mass protest?

The NAACP says its oh so concerned about racism. But do they organize the masses to fight back? Heavens, no. They want a "summit" to "bring together all of the major players in this: New Detroit Inc., police agencies, the FBI and U.S. Justice Department and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and Detroit Urban League." (*Detroit Free Press*, Sept. 6)

But just a minute. Many of these are denying there even was a racist attack at Harpos and in other incidents. And the police are actually arresting people who are protesting the racism. Such a summit will hardly fight racism. It's just a show to make the masses think something is done. Racism must be fought by militant mass action. But the NAACP is playing at "summits" to try and hold back that struggle. □

Harpos and the news media blame the victims

Right after the racist attack on August 31, a Harpo's spokesman blamed the black victims instead of the racists. Ernie McCausland claimed the racists were just acting in "self-defense" after a black man fired a gun. (*Detroit News*, Sept. 2) And the news media has gone wild, acting as if having a gun meant the blacks are at fault and there was no racism involved. We don't know if one of the black men had a gun or not. But it seems to us if you're surrounded by a racist mob, you are quite justified in using any means to defend yourself. Harpos and the news media are just looking for an excuse to blame black people for the racist attacks against them.

Of course now, after Harpos was shut by protests, the bosses are crying a different tune. John McCausland, a co-manager of Harpos, claimed "We'll work any way with the neighbors to fight racism." (*Detroit News*, Sept. 7)

But you can't trust them. They're just trying to stop the protests. Indeed, at the march on Friday, Sept. 7, Harpo's bosses called on the police to arrest a couple of demonstrators who had been leading slogans on the bullhorn.

Meanwhile, the news media blacked out coverage of Friday's demonstration and launched front page headlines claiming "Racism was secondary at Harpo's." (*Detroit News*, Sept. 9). To hell with them. We must defend the victims of racism. □

Keep up the fire against racism!

This article and the next one are from the September 19 issue of the Detroit Workers Voice.

The protests of the masses against racism has forced the owners of Harpos to finally start to deal with the community. They have agreed to open Harpos' doors Monday night, September 24, for a community meeting.

There are many questions that Harpos must answer. Why were racists able to organize at Harpos, leading to several attacks on black people and culminating in the brutal beating of Derrick Daniels and Stevie McNeil on August 31? Why did the newspapers report that a Harpos'

spokesman blamed the black victims for the incident and claimed the white racists were just acting in "self-defense"? Why did a Harpos' manager try to get protesters arrested by lying that they had supposedly broken a window? How, if Harpos is allowed to stay open, will it oppose racism and prevent future racist attacks?

The masses must have answers to these questions and more. Every one should come out Monday to give their views and force Harpos to answer to the community.

In the mean time, we must keep up the protests. Nothing has yet been done to prevent further racist attacks. Only the protests of the masses stand in the way of racism. And only the militant protests have forced Harpos' to meet with the masses. **Keep Up the Fire Against Racism! Picket Thursday Night! Speak Out Against Racism at the Monday night public meeting!** □

More Lies from the News Media

After the September 18 meeting of Harpos' owners and the protest groups, Channel 50 TV news claimed there was an agreement to stop the protests. This is an outright lie.

Harpos begged for a stop to the protests. And it even threatened a court injunction outlawing any protests outside of Harpos. But the Marxist-Leninist Party and the other protest groups refused to be intimidated. They stated clearly that only the community has the right to decide the fate of Harpos. They made it clear that protests will continue at least until the community has its say at the public meeting at Harpos on Monday, September 24. And they forced the Harpos' owner to drop his court ban on protests.

All along, Detroit's news media has claimed this was not a racist attack and tried to help Mayor Young's police stop the protests. Why? Because this is a news media of the rich, of the capitalists. They don't want the masses of working people out in the streets fighting for their rights. We should learn a lesson from this. We can't trust the capitalist press. Instead, we must build up an alternative press, a press of the working class like the *Detroit Workers' Voice*. Help us build up the workers own news media by contributing articles and information for articles, giving financial support, and distributing *Detroit Workers' Voice* in the workplaces, schools and neighborhood. □

"Pro-Life" Clerics Rally Behind Bush's Oil War!

From the August 30 issue of Boston Worker, voice of the Boston branch of the Marxist-Leninist Party:

The anti-abortion crusaders like to promote themselves as being pro-life. The Catholic Church hierarchy is the biggest financier and organizer of the anti-abortion movement on the East Coast. But once again the actions of the Catholic hierarchy have proved that the anti-abortion movement is not pro-life but pro-rich, pro-war, and anti-woman.

The weekly paper of the Boston diocese carried a front page editorial backing Bush's war build up in the Persian Gulf. The Church said if war breaks out Bush's war will be a just war to back "our friends".

A just war? Even the man on the street knows that this is not a war to defend democracy or over any principle. It is a money-grubbing war for control of oil and the Arab people's oil at that. It is a war where Bush's friends are some of the most brutal and filthy rich monarchs in the

world. What a bunch of apologists for the rich, for imperialism.

When women decide to terminate a pregnancy they can't handle, the Church calls them murderers. When billionaires prepare the massacre of hundreds of thousands for oil profits, they are statesmen engaged in a just war. How low can our "pro-life" hypocrites go?

But this blatant contradiction is nothing new for the anti-abortion movement leaders. From the very beginning the anti-abortion leaders have considered their anti-abortion, anti-women's rights agitation a lead in for organizing for a whole right-wing agenda, including support for "aggressive foreign and military policy" (quoted from Richard Viguerie, major ideologue of the anti-abortion movement and the Republican right).

The fight to defend women's abortion rights is a fight against the defenders of everything reactionary, against the powers of the whole capitalist establishment. □

The Priorities of "Our" Capitalist Government

From the Aug. 30 issue of Boston Worker, voice of the MLP-Boston:

In a mere three days, Bush and the Pentagon had an entire hospital built, complete with equipment and staff, in the Saudi Arabian desert. The Army has called on 800 doctors and nurses to volunteer to help the war effort. There are a total of 5,875 doctors and 10,700 nurses in the Reserves who could be called up. And they've sent over two hospital ships. Amazing what health care the government is capable of providing when it considers it a worthy cause: keeping the monopoly on Mideast oil.

This stands in stark contrast to what is going on here in the U.S.: Medicare benefits are being cut for the elderly; 37 million people have no health insurance and the number is rapidly growing; community and inner-city hospitals and clinics are shutting down; thousands of AIDS victims are homeless and denied medical care; preventable childhood diseases and TB are re-emerging etc. To defend the billionaires' oil empire, the government can build a desert hospital in three days flat. But when it comes to healthcare for workers and the poor: "Sorry, there's no money."

Down with Bush's war for oil! No more cuts in health care! □

No parental leave, but military leave

Bush mobilized the reserves as part of war plans for the Middle East. They are guaranteed their jobs back after their tour of duty, no loss of seniority, and even certain pay raises they would have had if they had been working.

But what about women who become pregnant? Bush recently vetoed the parental leave bill. If a woman becomes pregnant, she may lose her job or her seniority. The capitalists say it costs too much money to guarantee the woman's job, and Bush claims that it must be left to individual bargaining with employers, so that the poorest

workers will end up with no rights at all.

It seems that the objections to guaranteed leave vanish when it comes to war. It's a matter of what the capitalists and congressmen find to be a worthy cause. Nothing should get in the way of slaughtering Arabs in the Persian Gulf or Latin Americans in Panama or Nicaragua. So the cannon-fodder are given a few promises to cushion the shock of serving in an unjust cause. But when it comes to elementary workers' rights, it's all wasted money in the view of Bush and the companies. □

Lose your job—and lose your child “Pro-family” drug czar Bennett thinks orphanages are better than parents

Whenever the Bush administration strips people of their rights, likely as not it does it in the name of being “pro-family.” Abortion rights, why no, Bush is too “pro-family” for that. A right to privacy, why no, Bush is too “pro-family” not to snoop on moms and dads with police and courts. And now Bush’s drug czar has gone the limit—he is so pro-family he wants to see America populated with orphanages, filled with children taken away from their parents.

William Bennett, one-time Secretary of Education under Reagan and now Bush’s top drug cop, broached his plan while speaking to a luncheon of the National Urban League, a reformist, business-oriented group in the black community. It was on Monday, July 30, that Bennett put forward his “Urban Children’s Plan.” It seems, from his choice of audience and the name of his plan, his idea is especially to strip black children from their parents. And imagine, some people think of slavery as just some pages in a history book.

Bennett would remove children from homes in the name of fighting drug addiction and child abuse. But the government already takes away children from “unfit parents.” There is a necessity for this sometimes. But, if anything, the government has repeatedly abused this authority. If Bennett were serious about fighting drug abuse and child abuse, he wouldn’t be so quick to strip away more children. Instead, he would advocate more funds for drug treatment programs, and more support for parents dealing with the harsh realities of life under Reaganism. If he were serious about helping children, he would advocate stiff laws enforcing the 40-hour week, so that parents could get home to their children rather than having to work compulsory overtime. If he were really pro-child, he would advocate a higher minimum wage, so that the working poor could afford food and clothing for their children. But no. Bennett supports the very devastation of the masses that is intensifying the problems of family life.

Bennett’s solution is more and more foster homes and orphanages. His “pro-family” stance is to break up as many families as possible. He doesn’t support more child care to help out families, while leaving the children in their own

homes. Nor does he consider what is happening to the foster care system. It is already overloaded and creaking at the edges, while you can imagine what orphanages are becoming in these days of social cutbacks. (Remember the Reagan-Bennett directive that ketchup should serve as a “vegetable” in a balanced diet for school kids?)

Indeed, Bennett doesn’t think that any money should be spent on the kids. To feed and clothe them, who cares? He thought this could be financed in part by taking away government assistance from delinquent parents and stealing funds from Aid for Families with Dependent Children. Apparently he is especially eager to take away welfare children. Lose your job and lose your children too. (So you better not talk back to your local slave-owner, that is, employer.) Indeed, let the parents starve, while the children—well—also go hungry. If the welfare check didn’t suffice for the family in the first place, you can imagine how far it will go to fund orphanages and oodles of more social workers.

But Bennett hailed this idea as the way to solve the drug problem. You see, he stated, it would shift to parents the burden of proof that they can provide a caring home. Really? Apparently, if Bennett had his way, the government wouldn’t have to prove anything before taking your children away. You have to bear the burden of proof to the government. If you want a child, first get a certificate of merit from your local, upper-class Republican bankers’ association. After all, they did so well running the S&L’s that they are bound to straighten out the kids as well. And the deregulation of industry and the cutting of safety inspections left a host of unemployed officials. So it’s only humanitarian to let them have a go at parents.

The National Urban League is a tame, pro-bourgeois and pro-establishment group, but even it gagged at Bennett’s speech. You could just see the scene. After Bennett finished talking, the president of the National Urban League, John Jacob, hemmed and hawed, while the audience sat on their hands. A local Urban League official, Ernest Prince, later stated: “It was very shortsighted and very dangerous for the black community. Why don’t they just put them [children] all in concentration camps?” □

New York trackworkers strike back!

The September 1 issue of the Workers' Advocate carried a brief report on the struggle of the provisional transit workers in New York against the elimination of their jobs. The New York Workers' Voice, paper of the New York Branch of the Marxist-Leninist Party, has stood with the trackworkers and mobilized in their support. Below we reprint articles from the September 1 issue that report on recent developments and otherwise provide a more detailed account. Besides the articles reprinted below, the September 1 issue also contained the article "No war for the oil companies! U.S. troops out of the Persian Gulf!"

After the articles from New York Workers' Voice, we include some background material.

Rank-and-file picket at TA headquarters protests firing of provisional trackworkers

Something new has taken place in transit! On Monday, August 27, about 60 transit workers picketed TA headquarters on Jay Street from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. They were protesting the firing of all 290 provisional trackworkers and attacks on the pick rights of the remaining trackworkers.

The picket was extremely spirited. Undaunted by a sudden thunderstorm and periodic showers, the picketers kept up a steady stream of loud slogans denouncing the layoffs and pick givebacks, and calling for an all-out fight against the TA. It was the first time in anyone's memory that such a bold action had been called directly in the face of the TA and despite a boycott by the TWU officialdom.

At a brief rally following the picket, several rank-and-file Bronx trackworkers, provisionals, a representative from the *Workers' Voice*, and others spoke. They summed up the current situation, saluted the militancy of the workers, and denounced the betrayal of the TWU sellouts who boycotted the picket and tried to sabotage the developing motion of the rank and file.

Why is this picket line so significant? Because it was based squarely on transit workers themselves. It was the product of a three-month campaign, organized and carried out by rank-and-file trackworkers and the *Workers' Voice*, in the face of hostility from the TA and the TWU bureaucrats.

The campaign to defend the provisionals and restore pick rights [job-bidding rights] involved various forms of work carried out directly among trackworkers. There was the June petition drive against pick givebacks in Track [the Track division] and in support of provisionals' rights, which quickly gathered several hundred signatures. There were big

mobilizations for the June and August Track division meetings. There were leaflets circulated by "Suspended Bronx Trackworkers," Transit Workers Against Layoffs, and the Marxist-Leninist Party/*NY Workers' Voice*. There was also a bright red sticker.

Thousands of pieces of literature were circulated in Track, in Car Maintenance, and in front of Jay St. itself. Small meetings of trackworkers were also held to spread the word and mobilize for the various union meetings and the picket.

The boldness, creativity, and militancy of ordinary transit workers broke through the repressive atmosphere of the TA and sabotage of the TWU leaders. These workers did not wait for the stamp of approval of Sonny Hall & co. They did not wait for the TWU apparatus to pass an official resolution sanctioning our actions. They did not say we can't do anything until we win positions in the union bureaucracy. In the three-month campaign rank-and-file transit workers took actual steps of struggle independent of the union bureaucrats. This is what's new and exciting! □

290 trackworkers fired! Hundreds more lose pick rights, tour, RDOs!

In two weeks of callous firings and transfers, the TA has wreaked havoc on the lives of some 800 trackworkers. First, on August 22 the TA fired all 290 provisional trackworkers. They were given two weeks severance pay (state law) and told to turn in their passes and get off the property. Some thanks for "rebuilding the system" over the past 2½ years!

The same day, more than 100 of the most junior trackworkers in the Capital rebuilding program were transferred—on two days notice—to the former provisionals' old jobs. These workers were removed from their pick jobs, reporting locations, tours, RDOs [regular days off], and, in most cases, given graveyard shift work with weekday RDOs.

Then, during last week, all remaining workers in Capital were informed that their pick RDOs were being canceled and changed to weekday RDOs. Being senior workers, almost all had one or two weekend days off.

Jobs? What jobs?

For over 40 years, a transit job has been a secure job. Even in the 1970's fiscal crisis, no transit workers were laid off. Where is this job security now? While there is a new trackworker list to hire from, *The Chief* reports that only

120 will be hired. Thus, barring a successful struggle to save the provisionals, most of the 300 jobs will not be replaced in the near future.

Six months ago, the TA seemed worried about losing the provisionals because it might affect their rebuilding program. Today, faced with a mounting budget deficit, the TA is pleased to hide these firings under the excuse of civil service law and hopes to make up for their work through productivity increases such as speedup and tour and RDO changes. In fact, the TA was chomping at the bit and fired the provisionals two months sooner than civil service required.

Pick rights? What pick rights?

Most workers assume that picking a job gives them certain rights; that is, it protects their reporting location, shift and RDO for the duration of the pick. In August, trackworkers found that nothing could be further from the truth.

In just a few days, even senior men's lives were torn asunder. Virtually every worker in Capital had his shift or RDOs changed, or both. Backfilling of jobs—where workers are transferred from pick jobs which are then filled by other workers—was the order of the day. Seniority was completely disregarded as the TA assigned new jobs randomly. Trackworkers were pulled from shops, yards, support gangs, even Maintenance gangs on an “as needed” basis and arbitrarily assigned around the system.

The issue here goes far beyond the need for a new pick, though. Even more important is the need to fight against the complete elimination of weekend RDOs in Capital and its growing rarity throughout all of Track. In the name of productivity, hundreds of workers are having their family lives put on the chopping block.

Rights can only be protected by a fight

The vicious attacks on trackworkers are part of the TA's attempt to balance the budget on the backs of the workers. On the one hand, the TA apparently can find the money to buy Grand Central, two office buildings on Madison Ave., and to build a new office building on Jay Street. Highly paid managers ooze through every crack.

On the other hand, the TA plans to lay off up to 1,500 workers. Proposed, rumored, and already implemented cuts in service translate into further job cuts. And a contemplated fare increase would not only hurt the riding public, but mean further ridership and service cuts down the road. If this keeps up, we are likely to see workers transferred from title to title and division to division, as in the 1970's.

As the TA tries to impose these burdens onto transit workers, we are likely to see a big push for increased productivity, including speedup. Safety will go out the window. Work rules will be trashed. Pick rights will disappear. All this spells grave danger for the 1991 contract too.

Transit workers must not sacrifice their safety, living conditions, and dignity upon the altar of productivity. We must organize and fight now to protect our current jobs and our future lives. □

And what are our union leaders doing?

With all the happenings in Track these days, what have our union leaders been up to? In a word, nothing.

Take the situation with the provisional trackworkers. Their precarious situation has been well known since 1988, when the previous Track list expired. For two years, the TWU leaders have confined themselves to a mild letter-writing and lobbying effort to extend the list and retain the provisionals.

Worse. Back in the spring, the situation for the provisionals became more dangerous. Their rights were violated at every turn. Management slandered them as “weak people” who should be “remove(d) from their title.”

Workers' Voice denounced the “master plan to fire provisional trackworkers” in a June 25 leaflet. But the TWU hacks turned their backs on these workers and denounced a petition circulating in Track to defend the provisionals. The TWU misleaders also walked out of the June union meeting as rank-and-file workers, including many provisionals, turned on the heat.

At the end of July word leaked out that the TA would soon fire all 290 provisionals in Track. Again, *Workers' Voice* broke the news on July 25 at a Track division meeting and called for a rank-and-file picket line and rally at TA headquarters. At the meeting, rank-and-file workers demanded action from the TWU. But the TWU hacks said they were alarmists because nothing had happened to the provisionals yet; the union hacks then canceled the meeting.

At the August 22 union meeting, Sonny Hall and his boys dropped the other shoe. Hall announced the layoff of 290 provisionals, but cried they had done “everything possible” to protect them. Hall claimed the TA was on the workers' side on this issue, despite their mass, overnight firing of the provisionals! And he lined the walls with scores of loyal bureaucrats to intimidate the 80+ trackworkers in attendance.

Then, in an attempt to subvert the motion building for the August 27 rank-and-file picket, Hall announced a TWU picket at the Brooklyn Supreme Court for August 24. About 100 people showed up at the union picket, which had one slogan and little spirit. Nevertheless, many workers tried to corner Hall to expose him during the brief union rally.

Needless to say, the TWU honchos boycotted the much more spirited August 27 rank-and-file picket line at Jay St.

which had about as many ordinary workers as the union-called picket three days earlier.

This is the history of the TWU leadership's "support" for the provisional trackworkers: ignoring their problems; covering up for the TA's layoffs; denouncing the petitions, leaflets and actions of militant workers; walking out of and canceling union meetings; joint lobbying with and support for the TA, while opposing independent activity of the rank and file against management.

Is it any wonder that workers are seething with anger at the bureaucrats and looking to build a trend of independent action? □

Outspoken Bronx trackworkers still under the gun

The outspoken Bronx transit workers who stand in the forefront of the fight against the TA in Track have come under sharp attack. It is a two-pronged assault. On the one hand, the TA hands out write-ups and suspensions. On the other hand, the TWU bureaucrats act like their not-so-silent partners.

The TA has been very busy meting out discipline to J.C. Rivera, R. Toussaint, D. Delaney, and J. Iglesias. These workers have been subjected to repeated write-ups and threats to their livelihood ever since they started challenging the harassment and safety violations in the Bronx. All have been suspended for a period of one day up to three weeks. Hardly a week goes by without some new charge being thrown in. Some face termination as their cases head towards arbitration sometime in September.

Why has the TA been so gung ho after these workers? Is it because these outspoken workers are defending their fellow workers? In part, this is true. The TA wants to run the railroad its way, without regard to safety, work rules, pick rights, or the dignity of transit workers.

But just as significant is **how** these suspended workers have been challenging the TA. These workers have all supported the mobilization of rank-and-file workers into the fight for safety, to defend the provisionals, etc. and have not waited on the do-nothing sellouts of the TWU. They have not waited for labor-management cooperation to iron out problems (i.e. calm the workers down), but have stood up for transit worker rights themselves.

It is this trend of independent action that the TA is out to suppress with their suspensions and termination threats.

While the TA is holding the gun to these workers' heads, the TWU bigshots are handing them the bullets. The TWU bigshots do not like these activist trackworkers because they do not kiss up to them at every opportunity —because, in fact, they dare to expose the TWU sellouts to their fellow workers. Since Hall, O'Brien, Mirrione, etc., can't get these workers out of their hair, why not let the TA do their dirty work and fire them? This is exactly how

they reason.

The TWU honchos denounce these workers at every turn. But most significantly, in mid-July the Track officials sent a statement to all members in CD-1 publicly denouncing them. It said the union hacks "have nothing but contempt" for the activists and slandered them as "self-appointed 'leaders'," "activists," and "union-busters who seek to divide us." They spit on the word "activist" as if it were a dirty word in the dictionary.

Such strong words against transit workers, yet hugs and kisses towards the TA bosses who fire 290 provisionals and send trackworkers to their death in unsafe conditions!

And please note: This statement by Track officials appeared right after the TA suspended these four trackworkers! It was a blatant signal that the TWU officials would not defend the workers against the most outrageous trumped up charges!

The TWU hacks have continued to abuse these workers at union meetings, where they are singled out by name and followed around by thugs, even to the bathroom! Such despicable acts have enraged many trackworkers.

The *Workers' Voice* denounces the unjust charges and suspensions by the Transit Authority managers. We equally denounce the TWU sellouts for their despicable betrayal of these workers. We call on all track and transit workers to rally to defense of their brothers under attack. □

Background to the struggle of the provisionals

During the fiscal crisis of the 1970s in New York City, capital work (construction) in the transit system ground to a halt and maintenance was limited to emergency work. By the mid-1980s a dangerous situation had developed. Around that time the Transit Authority (TA) was able to replenish its capital budget, and thousands of new trackworkers were hired for both capital projects and maintenance. At that time the TA sought to bring in a two-tier system among track workers. First it tried to downgrade the status of already-hired workers to a new category called "laborers". Failing at that, it created an informal second tier by hiring the next several hundred workers as "provisionals", even though they were hired off the trackworkers' exam list and were fully qualified.

But now the TA has decided to try another way to squeeze the transit workers. It decided to replace the provisionals with a murderous speedup of the other workers. It has permitted the old list (from which the provisionals were hired) to expire quietly in July. With a new list in place, it placed the status of the provisionals in jeopardy.

The TA planned to present the throwing of the provisionals into the street as simply a technical requirement of

the civil service law. In fact, the lower and mid-level management of New York City agencies are honeycombed with Koch-era "provisional" appointees who failed subsequent exams but remain in their positions. How much easier it would be to keep the provisional trackworkers, who are fully qualified by exam. But the TA wanted to eliminate most of the positions filled by the provisionals, intimidate the remaining workers, and institute the speed-up regime.

The TA felt confident in this because it had been given the green light by the indolence of the Transit Workers Union (TWU) bigshots. Their defense of the provisionals had consisted in sending out two or three memos in as many years—not enough paper to wipe their fat butts, let alone cover them.

What the TA did not count on was the rebellion of the trackworkers. Throughout the summer, track division union meetings were packed with angry provisionals and other

track workers demanding action. The TWU chiefs responded by repeatedly canceling meetings. But leaflets circulated anyway, and a picket was called. News of the layoffs broke in the *Daily News*, adding to the alarm.

The TA panicked. It could ill afford a rebellion by the trackworkers at a time when a big speedup was in the works. So the TA tried a preemptive strike by sacking the provisionals overnight. At the same time, hundreds of other workers were transferred to night tour to fill in on the capital projects, adding to the shock and confusion. Of course, the TA faced the problem that these moves upped the ante. But it plunged in and took the gamble.

But the workers weren't cowed down. More leaflets spread widely, and a successful picket line was held on Monday, August 27 against the firings. It broke through the gloomy atmosphere of TA-TWU collaboration. And it has already resulted in the TA backing down on the firing of a number of the provisionals. □

Detroit postal worker wins victory against harassment

From the September 20, 1990 issue of Detroit Workers' Voice, paper of the MLP-Detroit:

Workers defeat the attempt to fire North End letter carrier Rick Broza

The postal bosses' attempt to fire North End letter carrier Rick Broza has been defeated. The charges against Broza (described in his letter below) were a frame-up. His only real "crime" was his activity in organizing other workers to stand up to management harassment and overwork.

As all postal workers know, every day management is saddling them with arbitrary disciplinary measures. Why then, in this case, was management forced to retreat?

Rick Broza stood up to intimidation

One reason was that letter carrier Broza was not

intimidated by management threats and bullying. The North End bosses promised Broza they would never agree to remove his "letter of removal." Despite this, Broza did not passively accept this but actively fought back.

The rank and file mobilized in support

Of course, no matter how bold one is, a worker's ability to resist management attacks is very limited if one fights alone.

In this case however, many of Broza's co-workers were mobilized into the struggle. Workers circulated petitions and leaflets exposing management and offered testimony in his defense. As well, the Marxist-Leninist Party (MLP) circulated *Detroit Workers' Voice* carrying news of Broza's case to many USPS workplaces in Detroit and surrounding suburbs.

The light of public exposure, along with the fear of the rank and file getting organized, caused management to back down.

What did the NALC Branch #1 leadership do?

While the rank and file began to mobilize itself, what

was the local NALC [National Association of Letter Carriers] union "leadership" doing?

They always complain how inactive the workers allegedly are. So did they encourage the workers' participation in Broza's defense? NO. When management confiscated a petition in support of Broza, Branch #1 president Al Wendland was contacted by a station shop steward. The shop steward was told by Wendland that it was not "polite" to circulate a petition without management's permission! Even having the rank-and-file circulate a simple petition was more than the union bureaucrats could stand. Wendland's stand highlights how important it was that the struggle in Broza's defense relied on the ordinary workers and not the sold-out union bureaucrats.

What now?

Although management was forced to drop their "letter of removal" against Broza, they have forced him to transfer from North End station to another station of his choice. Broza explains the reasons for accepting this compromise in his letter below.

However, the bosses should not think that organizing of the rank and file will cease at North End. Management's constant harassment and efforts to speed workers up will continue to create anger and resistance among the workers. Other militant workers will continue their work. To assist them Detroit Workers' Voice will also be around as a voice for all workers who resist.

Detroit Workers' Voice calls on all postal workers to take to heart the lessons of the struggle to defend Rick Broza. This struggle shows that management harassment can be dealt a setback. The workers can win.

Build up rank-and-file action to resist the postal bosses' assault on your working conditions. Organize independently of the sold out trade union bureaucrats. Rely on your own collective strength. This is the path forward. □

Letter from Rick Broza

Dear *Detroit Workers' Voice*:

Thanks to the support of my fellow postal workers, management's attempt to fire me has been defeated. All of the phoney charges of my August 17 "letter of removal" have been removed from my record.

Workers may recall that the charges against me were for such "crimes" as complaining to another letter carrier about a supervisor's harassment and following a long-standing practice of giving mail to an apartment manager when I was unable to deliver mail to one of the apartment's units. The truth is, these flimsy charges were just an excuse for management to get revenge for my participation

in activities to oppose route eliminations and otherwise working with my fellow workers to resist management attacks.

When I got my letter of removal, my supervisor had told me that there was no way management would back down. But I did not let these intimidation tactics scare me. Instead I relied on gathering support from my coworkers. A worker who witnessed the incidents that led to some of the charges gave a written statement refuting management's false version of events. A petition in my defense was also circulated at North End.

As well, *Detroit Workers' Voice* leaflets reported each development in the case. These leaflets exposed management's false charges against me.

In short, I was not just fighting alone, which is what management wanted, but began to get the collective strength of many behind me. This is what forced management to reconsider its original claims that it would never back down.

I would like to thank all my coworkers for their assistance and support and urge them to stand up to management harassment in similar fashion.

Unfortunately, I also have to report that the victory was not complete. As a condition of dropping the charges against me, management is forcing me to transfer from North End to another station of my choice. I want to explain why I accepted this compromise.

First of all, although it is not right that I am being forced to transfer, management's immediate attempts to get rid of me have been set back.

Second, I will continue to contribute to the efforts of postal workers to resist management harassment, overwork, etc. no matter what station I am sent to. As well, I want to maintain contact with all workers at North End who are interested in getting organized to defend their working conditions.

Finally, there was a chance that I could have won a complete victory where I would not have to transfer. Under the present conditions, however, it appears this would have required going all the way through the grievance procedure to an arbitration hearing. It often takes a year or more to complete arbitration. During this time I would have been out of work. I would be willing to take the financial sacrifice involved in this, but it would also mean that it would be harder to keep in touch with my fellow workers.

Given all these factors, I felt it was more important for me to stay working side by side with my fellow workers than to push for a complete victory through arbitration. Moreover, despite the flimsiness of the case against me, the whole arbitration process is stacked against the worker and for management. It could very well be that the arbiter would not give me anything more than I have already won.

In closing, I just want to repeat that I hope this defeat for management encourages others to stand up against their bullying. This struggle shows that rallying the rank-and-file for collective resistance is the best way for workers to fight. □

From the history of the Mexican miners' movement in Arizona

The following article comes from material sent in by comrades doing research on the history of the Mexican nationality workers in the U.S.

One of the racist slanders against the Mexican nationality workers in the United States is that they are passive and docile. The chauvinist trade union bureaucrats have justified all kinds of segregation and racist attacks against the Mexicans, especially the immigrants, by claiming that the Mexicans are unorganizable and damage the workers' movement in the U.S.

But both history and the present show these claims to be lies. In Mexico and in the United States, in the mines, fields, factories and mills, the Mexican workers have been the backbone of many strikes and other fights. One interesting piece of this history of struggle is the history of the miners and smelters in the Southwest United States, in particular in Arizona. This history is continued today in the role of Mexican workers in the last two copper miners' strike, the Phelps-Dodge strike of 1983 in Morenci and the ongoing Asarco strikes in Hayden, Arizona. This history not only shows the militancy of the miners' struggles in general, but also shows the important role of the Mexican workers in the class struggle in the United States.

In 1848 Mexicans living in the northern part of the state of Sonora, Mexico found themselves suddenly to be living in Arizona, U.S.A. Arizona, along with Texas, New Mexico, California and part of Utah and Colorado, was part of the territory seized by the U.S. from Mexico in the Texan hostilities and the Mexican-American war of 1846-48. The Gadsden purchase of 1853 added more of what is now southern Colorado and New Mexico.

The first copper mine was opened in Ajo, Arizona in 1855. But the U.S. government ran into the same problems in Arizona territory that the Spanish crown and the Mexican government had—fierce Indian resistance to settlement. In 1856 the U.S. army was sent in to occupy Arizona and make it safe for the mining companies. The army was brutally successful in putting down the Indian resistance and unsuccessful in trying to take more Mexican territory.

In the mining boom that followed "pacification", mining and smelting operations were opened up in the Arizona towns of Bisbee, Douglas, Clifton, and Morenci by companies such as Phelps Dodge and Anaconda. The American mining companies also expanded operations inside of Mexico.

While the mine owners built mansions, the miners lived and worked under the harshest of conditions. Miners

worked 12 hours a day for 6 days a week, many were maimed or lost their lives in "accidents," and they were forced to spend most of their wages in the company stores where the mine owners made profits of 200-300%.

The majority of the miners were Mexican and they suffered segregation and discrimination in the mines. A blatant two-tier wage system was in effect with "Mexican wages" and "White wages". For example, in the 1860's "Mexican wages" in the mines and smelting operations ranged from \$9 to \$12.50 a month for unskilled work and \$25-\$30 a month for skilled work. Wages for the white workers ranged from a low of \$30 a month for unskilled labor to \$70 a month for skilled labor.

Segregation and discrimination extended from the mines to the town and all aspects of life. As the mining industry prospered, the capitalists pushed racial divisions among the miners. Racist propaganda and attacks were organized against the Mexicans, and confrontations and fights occurred between the Mexican and white miners. Vigilantes were also organized to keep the Mexican workers "in their place". In 1904, for example, there was a campaign by the Catholic church for families to adopt orphaned children from the Eastern U.S. The Mexican workers responded to this call and sixteen children arrived in the Clifton-Morenci area and were placed with their adoptive Mexican families. But these children were white, and racist vigilante committees descended upon the adoptive families taking the children away from them. The adoption agency and the nuns who had accompanied the orphans were forced to leave town abruptly. Later on the right of the vigilantes to seize the children was upheld in the Arizona supreme court.

By the 1880's the class struggle in the mines had sharpened and union organizing was in full swing. The AFL unions had a reputation for racial exclusion and segregation along with class collaboration. In Arizona they were organizing miners into an Arizona Miners' Union rather than the well-known United Mine Workers of America and they had little strength.

The Western Federation of Miners had won a reputation for militancy and for organizing all nationalities during strikes in Colorado at Leadville, Telluride, and Cripple Creek in the late 1800's. They began organizing in the mines in Arizona in the 1880's, but in the face of the racist atmosphere they fell into the trap of racial discrimination by concentrating their organizing among the Anglo miners. This considerably weakened the first big strikes in Arizona.

In 1903 the Arizona territorial legislature passed a new labor law setting an 8-hour work day. The mineowners immediately responded with a 10% cut in the workers' wages. On June 3 between 1,200 and 1,500 miners went

on strike in Clifton-Morenci. Some 80% of the strikers were Mexican. The armed miners seized the mines demanding the restoration of their wages, free hospitalization, life insurance, locker rooms, fair prices at the company stores, hiring of members of the miners' society, and protection against firing without cause. By June 5 most of the Anglo strikers had withdrawn from the strike. Although the Western Federation of Miners issued a declaration in support of the strike, they were accused of abandoning it. The mineowners sent in the Arizona Rangers (Arizona's version of the Texas Rangers) to fight the miners and the Mexican Consul to "reason" with them. When this failed to convince the miners to give up their struggle, six companies of National Guard were called in and martial law was declared. Nonetheless, on June 9 the defiant miners organized a march of 2,000 in Morenci. As the march proceeded a torrential rainstorm and flash flooding began which scattered the demonstration and drowned 50 people. The strike was broken and the leaders of the strike were later tried and convicted of "inciting a riot".

The Western Federation of Miners did learn something from this strike. At their convention in 1903 the delegates voted to change their previous policy and organize all the miners in Arizona and to expand organizing efforts to Cananea and Naco in Mexico as well. After its founding in 1905 the Industrial Workers of the World also began organizing in the mines in Arizona.

The close ties between the workers' movement in Mexico and in the border region of the U.S. became even more significant after 1905. In Mexico the fight against the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz was heating up and it drew the workers into action. The PLM, Mexican Liberal Party (a left-wing party, which developed many anarcho-sindicalist views), set up activity against the Diaz dictatorship on both sides of the border. Some local PLM leaders were miners who joined the WFM and also worked closely with the IWW (from 1905-1908 the WFM and IWW were closely associated). Besides the trade union activities the Mexican miners also organized Liberal Clubs affiliated with the PLM and organizations such as the Obreros Libres (Free Workers) which concerned themselves with the fight against the Diaz dictatorship and with the fight against the American capitalists.

On July 1, 1906 a militant strike broke out at Cananea in Sonora, Mexico. Thousands of miners struck for higher wages and against the anti-Mexican discrimination and abuses by the American owners and their supervisors in the mines. The miners marched on the mining company headquarters, and when the American owners appeared on the balcony of the building and turned a hose on the demonstration, the miners attacked the headquarters killing the owners and burning down the building. The Arizona Rangers and numerous vigilante or "irregular" American forces were sent into Mexico against the miners. This military force was followed by a larger force of Mexican federal troops sent by the Diaz government. The strike was broken and those miners who survived the murderous

repression scattered. Many of these militant miners found their way into the mines in Arizona. And the strike at Cananea made its mark on the American working class movement as well as on the class struggle in Mexico.

Strikes, union organizing and political activity continued in the mines in Arizona and in Mexico; so did the racist attacks against the Mexican workers. In 1909 Arizona enacted a "Literacy Law" which denied the right to vote to anyone "who not being prevented by physical disability" was unable to read the Constitution (of the United States) in English or unable to write their name. In 1910, with the support of some trade union "leaders" a law was passed that prohibited non-citizens (i.e. not U.S. citizens) from working on any public works projects.

In 1914 a series of smaller strikes against wage cuts took place across the mining communities of southeastern Arizona. 70% of the strikers were Mexican workers. Their demands included restoration of wages, the elimination of the racist two-tier wage system, and an end to the corruption and brutality of the foremen. Affiliates of the WFM, IWW and the AFL were involved in the strikes. The miners forced the mineowners to rescind the wage cut—it was replaced with a sliding scale, piece-rate wage. Notably, in 1914 the Arizona legislature voted to restrict "foreign workers" to no more than 20% of the total workers in any company. This measure was also supported by some trade union officials.

During this period the American bourgeoisie carried out a brutal repression of the workers movement in the U.S. paying special attention to trying to crush the left-wing unions and organizations. This repression was also brought to bear against the militant miners in Arizona.

In September of 1915, 5,000 miners struck in Clifton-Morenci and Metcalf with all three of the miners' unions involved. The miners' demands included a wage increase and the elimination of two-tier wages. They won their wage increase, but the new contract also gave exclusive representation to the AFL union, cutting off the legal position of the more left-wing WFM and IWW.

In May, 1916, miners affiliated to the IWW and WFM struck in Bisbee and Jerome demanding wage increases. Vigilante violence organized by the mineowners broke the strike. A year later, in July 1917, miners in Jerome and Bisbee affiliated to the IWW went on strike. In response the U.S. army seized the town, shut down the telephone and telegraph service and then rounded up 1,267 Mexican miners, loaded them onto railroad cars, and "deported" them across the border, dumping them off in the Sonora desert.

The miners' movement in Arizona did not end with the repression of these strikes. And while the history of the miners' struggles in Arizona serves as an indictment of the racist and repressive force of the capitalists, it also serves as an example of persevering and militant class struggle and of the combative role of the Mexican workers in the U.S. □

Albania adopts "market socialist" economic program

The August issue of the *Workers' Advocate* carried articles on recent developments in Albania. This article looks more closely at the recent economic reforms.

In World War II, Albania defeated fascist occupation through a mass revolution. This led to revolutionary changes in society such as the end of the power of the former Albanian exploiting classes. Albania, a tiny country and about the most utterly poverty-stricken and undeveloped one in Europe, began a series of economic and political changes. It identified itself with the cause of progress and socialism. It did not jump from abject poverty to overflowing wealth, but the toilers benefited immensely from the changes in the new Albania.

In the 1960's Albania rejected Soviet revisionism and took measures to build a society without a class of privileged bureaucrats consolidating at the top. Later Albania also broke with Chinese revisionism. At the same time, there were always major gaps in their criticism of revisionist state-capitalism.

A decade ago the Albanian leadership was faced with the cutoff in aid from China; as well there was a pressing need to deal with problems that had been accumulating. Instead of dealing with this challenge by improving its conception of socialism, by calling forth mass initiative, and by re-vitalizing itself as the party of the working masses, the Party of Labor of Albania (PLA) turned away from revolutionary policy. This has led to crisis. The Party of Labor of Albania still tries to keep up a communist pose, but this is just a facade over a revisionist policy.

This article looks at some of the main Gorbachev-style economic reforms being launched in Albania today. Just the general outlines are presented, as the published material from Albania lacks many particulars needed to get a good picture of some of the economic issues and economic history involved.

Albania entered the 1980's in difficult economic straits. For the first time since liberation, the country was faced with doing without any outside aid. Besides having to meet growing current needs, industry also needed major retooling. Meanwhile, world commodity prices fell, cutting into the country's export earnings. And to make things worse, the government made some costly blunders in economic policy.

It was in this situation that the PLA turned away from a revolutionary path. It rejected the revolutionary measures it had taken in the 60's, apparently seeing them as some sort of mistaken, Maoist adventures. It lost faith in the world revolutionary movement. In foreign policy the PLA pragmatically looked towards West European capitalism and such powers as Khomeini's Iran and the Turkey of the

generals. And at home the PLA tried to return to the Eastern European model from the 1950's.

A deep stagnation took hold in Albanian society. Politics became dry and empty, public declarations became far removed from reality, and bureaucracy grew. The workers were asked to labor harder than before, but they were regarded only as producers, not as the conscious makers and directors of a new society.

If economic miracles were expected, they did not come. Stagnation in the society, at a time when the regimes around them were collapsing, has brought growing economic and political pressures from the Albanian masses. As well they had to cope with agriculture being hit by years of drought, and with fluctuations in the world market. The PLA leadership has now decided to confront this new situation by embracing Gorbachev-style policies. They are turning towards "market socialism." They are cutting back on the state-run economy and central planning, giving more room for the enterprises and new private business.

Clearly serious problems had accumulated in the old way things were done in Albania, but the new system will only compound problems further. It lays the basis for threatening the conditions of large sections of workers.

Market socialism was embraced by the revisionist economies of Eastern Europe several decades back. And when Gorbachev first advanced his program of *perestroika* a few years back this is what he proposed for the Soviet Union. Look where it has gotten them. Gorbachev's economic crisis has gotten worse, and market socialism only paved the way towards what's going on in Eastern Europe today—a turn towards all-out privatization in the economy, the harsh cost of which falls on the shoulders of the working people. Layoffs, cuts in services, price hikes. The PLA wants to avoid what's happening in Eastern Europe today, but they forget that the difference between "market socialism" and the "free market economy" isn't all that much.

Behind the fancy talk of democracy in the economy

The biggest change is turning central planning into a matter of general guidance, while the enterprises are being made autonomous—in matters of investment, employment, wages, and relations with one another.

This is precisely what Gorbachev championed in the Soviet Union a few years ago. Gorbachev pointed to suffocating bureaucracy in revisionist state capitalism to justify turning to modern western-style capitalism. And in Russia, the Albanian leaders point to bureaucratic methods in the system of planning they've had and decide that the

solution is to by and large give it all up.

The fashion, in Tirana (Albania's capital) like Moscow, has now become fancy phrases about democracy in the economic field: the new reforms are painted as allowing the workers a bigger role in running the economy. And just as in the Soviet Union, the government holds out big promises of the creative miracles that will flow from the new system.

Don't hold your breath.

The Albanians are making a lot of to-do about "independent account management" (self-financing) as a new system. But in fact self-financing (the idea that enterprises should make more than they spend) has been true for years. It's not self-financing per se that's new, but the idea that enterprises will work generally on a market basis. From the point of view of the immediate situation of the workers, the key change is that wages will be tied to the profit or loss of enterprises and workers can be laid off. As well, by making most of the enterprises responsible for new investment out of their own funds, an additional squeeze will be placed on the workers.

This new policy will undermine the conditions of the Albanian workers. At least until a decade ago, there was a standard national wage scheme, and the government had a declared policy of keeping wage differentials low. Now workers' wages are to be subject to the ups and downs of each enterprise's fate, in other words, they would have profit and loss sharing.

Albania also used to have a commitment to full employment. Today the PLA gives the enterprises the right to lay workers off. Presumably previously there were ways in which the number of workers were readjusted when necessary, but no layoff rule meant that the welfare of the worker had to be safeguarded. Of course now they still declare that everyone will be found a job, but that's a mere promise: a somewhat hollow one given that unemployment has already reared its ugly head in the country.

Price hikes are also planned. Of course here too, the PLA makes pledges that prices "affecting the well being of the people" won't change. But how much is that worth when most prices will be set by enterprises, peasants and others working on a market basis?

The bottom line is that the way is being opened to wage cuts, job cuts, and the accumulation of wealth by a small section of people at the expense of the majority.

Petty capitalism in the name of "cooperatives"

The doors are also being opened to a new surge of private capitalism. An example of this is the latest declaration in favor of "artisans' cooperatives" in PLA leader Ramiz Alia's speech to the 11th Plenum of the Central Committee, held in early July. The word "cooperative" can cover a wide range of economic institutions of different types. In this case, the

"cooperatives" are not a form of transition from private to socialized economy, but the other way around.

Ramiz Alia grudgingly admits that there are shortages in public services in the country. He says, "Apparently a contradiction has been created between the needs of the people, their purchasing power and their cultural level on the one side and the possibilities that the state offers for services on the other side." His solution: let the enterprises set up their own specialized shops, form artisans' cooperatives, and let private entrepreneurs emerge. In everything from tailors and jewelers to peddlers and fast-food sellers.

This too was a Gorbachev pet project. As in the Soviet Union, it seems the issue isn't just opening up to "cooperatives" and private entrepreneurs but bringing law into conformity with reality. Ramiz Alia admits that "private workmanship goes unchecked and worse still, more often than not, it consumes state materials."

Now like Gorbachev, he sees legalizing such activity as a way to a) take up the slack in public services which the state can't provide, b) as a means to soak up some of the unemployed, and c) as a means to get new revenue from taxes (Albania does not currently tax the people, having abolished taxes years ago).

Also like the Soviet leaders, Ramiz Alia pooh-poohs any idea that the new system brings with it any risk of "creating a category of private holders or exploiters." He says instead that they "will make their earnings by working personally or by employing their family members." Oh sure. As if he's got a magic wand to ward off the laws of capitalism, which dictate that petty capitalism will inevitably give rise to competition, bankruptcies, exploitation, and the growth of some richer exploiters at the expense of others.

Also in agriculture

A greater leeway for private enterprise has also been introduced in agriculture. Reforms in agriculture were among the first to be implemented by the PLA last year.

After breaking the hold of the old landed exploiters, Albania had successfully brought the small peasantry into large-scale collective farming. And the fruits of the development of an Albanian industry served to develop agriculture.

At the end of the 70's the Albanians began to talk about further steps in collectivization. It doesn't appear that there was sufficient objective basis for these steps, nor that they were carried out in connection with mass sentiment, and they ran into big trouble. The expected production increases didn't take place. An attempt to collectivize personal herds of animals was disastrous; peasants responded by slaughtering livestock en masse. Faced with this fiasco, the Albanians apparently not just retreated on the particular measures, but are also now undermining the system of collective farming.

Now there is a wider role for peasants to market the produce from their private plots. The sizes of these plots

are being enlarged. Also, animals which used to be owned by the cooperatives have been returned to the peasants. And there have been changes in the way the cooperatives are organized.

The prospects

What it all adds up to is that the Albanians are moving towards a mixed economy of state and private enterprise. The PLA is backhandedly admitting that they are incapable of moving forward with a collective economy. They do not see any progress along that road because a gulf has developed between the ruling party and the working masses.

However, the main economic problems will not be solved

by the reforms. No miracles will come from them. It is possible that in providing some consumer goods and services, some bureaucratic bottlenecks may be loosened. But this didn't require a path toward "market socialism." And the reforms will come at the expense of the society retreating into a more typically capitalist country. All the ills of capitalism will inevitably come sooner or later.

In particular class stratification will grow, a small number of wealthy will profit from exploitation of the many, and the working class will suffer. The institutions that rule in the name of the workers have been abandoning the interests of the workers. The Albanian workers have to organize in defense of their own interests in the hard times ahead. □

Red Dawn's views on the recently formed left social-democratic party in Sweden

Below is the lead article is from issue #6, 1990 of Röd Gryning (Red Dawn), paper of the Marxist-Leninist League of Sweden. The front page of the paper bears the slogan "Join and build the Workers' List--for a new workers' party". The translation has been provided by the comrades of the MLLS. Our views on this article appear elsewhere in this issue of the Supplement.

Once again on the Workers' List

At May 19-20, the Workers' List held its first congress, constituting itself as a party. Without exaggerating, it has actually to be regarded as a historical event for the Swedish working class movement. The issue at stake is nothing less than a process, although striving and embryonic, of break-up among the rank-and-file. Thus, the Workers' List is to be regarded as an objective phenomenon, i.e. a product of the existing situation in the class struggle and itself a component thereof.

If the Workers' List is looked upon just on the surface, looking simply to the form of appearance of the thing,

then it seems to be merely a re-grouping within the "left": some bankrupt currents, from Maoism to dogmatic Trotskyism, are to be found among those who regard the Workers' List as a possibility to survive politically since their own respective project have perished or come to stagnate. Some of them want a "broad electoral alliance" with the Euro-Communist Left Party (formerly the VPK--Red Dawn), while others are waiting in the background or even oppose it. Seen from the angle of their common perspective, this is nevertheless a tactical question, as in general they appear to have concluded armistice among themselves in order not to rock the boat. Unfortunately, it was these very forces who succeeded in putting their stamp on the congress, and thereby also on the party leadership that was elected, although there appeared as well at the congress strongly marked alternative stands, taken by forces working for renewal and programmatic clarity, reflecting the necessity of building the Workers' List as a party of and by social-democratic workers.

But if one leaves the form of appearance aside, going into the kernel of the matter, by "going from the concrete to the abstract", we get another picture. Why, one has to ask oneself, does this new party rise exactly at this very time, since similar ideas and projects have existed in the

heads of many at several earlier times? This question must, if it is to be comprehensible and in accordance with reality, be answered in a materialist way. Although there is no upsurge of struggle in Sweden, and the influx of new members takes place on a rather small scale, nevertheless the Workers' List answers to a need which has come forth as a result of the fact that the class-collaborationist policy of social-democracy, after the re-taking of power in 1982, by means of its own logic--the post-war boom is long since passed and has been replaced by a deepening crisis of the entire capitalist world system--more and more departs from what the working class traditionally expect from reformism, namely, a policy which is capable of satisfying at least some of their needs by a general welfare policy etc. Thereby, the social-democratic party changes form having been a bourgeois workers' party to becoming simply a bourgeois party. The reformist way out is closed, and thereby preconditions are being created for a dynamic, an explosive force, even through the social-democratic illusions. This, now, does not at all mean that we today see spontaneity, as political idea and "solution", as progressive. No, self-evidently there is a need for a workers' party, a political class organization of the proletariat. But that takes, because of this new situation, new forms. The Workers' List is such a form.

For our part, it remains to draw the consequences of that. It raises the question of whether there is any reason

for the MLL [Marxist-Leninist League] to exist as a separate organization, so much more since the MLL was formed (only not yet nine months ago!) with the today, as we have seen, inactual task of building a communist party. That is something which is going to be decided upon soon at the MLL's annual conference. Of course, this does as well affect [whether] *Röd Gryning* [Red Dawn, which was first the paper of the Communist League of Norrköping, and then of the its successor, the MLL--ed.] [is] to be or not to be. This journal has existed 3 years by now--publishing regularly, monthly for 2½ of them--founded as a theoretical organ for struggle against the Mao-Stalinist tradition, ideology and methodology of the so-called Marxist-Leninist movement. Therein lies its, however modest, credit. But a publication can, like an organization, never be a fetish. On the contrary, it has always to be put into practical relation to the struggle of the working class, whose aim it exists in order to serve. To put oneself and one's resources, however small, at the disposal of the construction of the Workers' List, is therefore a real challenge for all revolutionaries and class-conscious workers. By this way drawing the consequences of the proletarian class stand is, thus, also to carry through to the end the struggle against revisionism, which has been our driving force. With that, the staff would as well take the opportunity to thank our readers. □

Merging with the left-wing of social-democracy The Marxist-Leninist League of Sweden on the verge of dissolution

Elsewhere in this issue we reprint the lead article from *Red Dawn*, #6, 1990. It announces that the MLLS is considering dissolving in order to devote all its effects to working inside the party called the "Workers List". *Red Dawn* will probably cease publication, and the article ends with some final words to the readers. The final decision is to be made at a coming conference of the MLLS.

This means that the MLLS is on the point of liquidating in order to merge fully into left social-democracy. This is an extreme opportunist position, which they justify with arguments reminiscent of the 7th Congress of the CI (but which they take to the point of dissolving, reminiscent of the liquidationist stands of the notorious American revisionist Browder). The path towards this liquidationism has been paved by the trotskyst ideology which the MLLS has been promoting. This trotskyst stand vastly reinforced a certain

hesitation that the Swedish comrades have had from the beginning about standing up as an independent force when they were so small. Trotskyism denigrates such independent communist effort (sometimes calling it "Stalinist third period" politics), and emphasizes an accommodationist attitude to the large reformist formations in a country.

What Is the Workers' List?

We know of the Workers' List primarily through the articles and statements of the Swedish comrades. The formation of the Workers' List was indeed a significant development in Swedish politics. A section of the trade union leaders affiliated with the social-democratic party split away to form the Workers' List. This reflects a growing dissatisfaction among the rank-and-file with the

austerity policies and anti-worker policies of social-democracy.

Back in 1988, this dissatisfaction had given rise to what was known as the "Dala Uprising". In 1988 dissatisfaction spread among the workers, and some wildcat strikes broke out, as austerity measures were rammed through by the capitalists and the social-democratic government. Various of the lesser social-democratic trade union bureaucrats issued the "Dala Statement" with a list of economic demands. This leadership of the Dala Uprising concentrated on lobbying inside the trade unions and sought to keep the movement narrowed down. But the Dala Uprising itself also reflected that something was stirring among the masses.

The contradiction between the masses and the social-democratic austerity policy continued. On January 21 of this year some of the leaders of the Dala Uprising decided to leave the social-democratic party. A number of workers followed them out of the social-democratic party and into the new "Workers' List". As in the case of the Dala Uprising, the Workers' List combines a genuine movement among the rank-and-file, with a reformist and bureaucratic leadership which is still within the framework of social-democratic ideology.

The stand of *Red Dawn* towards the Dala Uprising

Back in the days of the Dala Uprising, the *Red Dawn* had a different stand towards this phenomenon than it has now. *Red Dawn* supported the mass upsurge underneath the Dala Uprising, while maintaining a critical stand towards the trade union bureaucrats at its head. (See "Swedish Marxist-Leninists on reformist trade union bureaucrats" in the April 15, 1988 issue of the *Supplement*.) This stand was, we believe, correct, and we supported it at the time. It is true that the criticism of the social-democratic leaders remained somewhat general, and there was also a certain non-partyism in the way they made their appeal for united front tactics. But they had an overall framework in which, it seemed to us, they could further develop their work and their analysis.

A different stand towards the Workers' List

This time *Red Dawn* has acted differently. They hailed the motion behind the Workers' List, which seems to us correct. But they have painted the Workers' List right from the start in flaming red colors.

In issue #2, 1990 the lead article is entitled "For the renewal of the workers' movement—for a party of the rank-and-file!" It puts forward the prospect that the Workers' List itself may be this new party, ready-made. It states:

"...A possible way forward lies in the growth of a new, independent workers' party, organized and built up

from below, by the rank-and-file, firmly rooted in the best of the traditions of the democratic workers' movement, and with a program of action which, contrary to the dead-end of class-collaboration, is able to stake out the direction of course towards a society which is really ruled by the workers. We want to call to all class-conscious workers not to stand aside, but [to take part in] joining in solidarity, working for unity and struggle through the Workers' List."

They do go on to say that "One could say that the Workers' List is an expression of, has two sides..." But compared to the glorious picture they have just painted, they have only a pale description of the dangers confronting the masses in the Workers' List. They do not talk openly about the left social-democratic bureaucrats, unlike their freedom of language in the case of the Dala Uprising, although apparently many of the same people and same politics are involved. And their criticism boils down to "...what kind of party shall the Workers' List be? A class party, which takes up and promotes the issues of the workers' movement, or some kind of broad' popular 'left-in-general' party which appeals to 'everyone'? Should it deal with things like wage and tax policy, energy policy, the EEC [European Economic Community] question etc. first and foremost, or should it rather put forward a number of moderately radical 'small issues', like drugs, crime, culture, environment etc. in its focus? This is something which has to be discussed."

This seems rather weak. It doesn't put forward that the masses want to fight on certain issues, and concretely point out what is the path of class struggle on these issues and what is the path of social-democracy. Instead of contrasting the social-democratic and militant answers to the different issues, they present that the problem is simply that the reformism wants to deal with the environment, etc. The working class shouldn't have its own views on such issues?

By issue #4, *Red Dawn* carries an article entitled "Build the Workers' List—for a socialist party of social-democratic workers!" This puts forward the astonishing slogan of building "a socialist party of social-democratic workers". It stresses that "we communists say that it is necessary and of the uttermost importance to build up the Workers' List as a socialist party of social-democratic workers" (emphasis as in the original).

It is one thing to appeal to social-democratic workers who are beginning to move left. It is quite another to tell them to build up a new organization precisely as social-democratic workers, to cling to being social-democrats, and to ensure that any new organization that comes into being preserves that identification. From the agitational point of view, how is it possible to do work against social-democracy while putting forward this formula? This formula may well be adapted to the mentality of many of the workers forming the Worker's List, who have not yet given up social-democratic illusions but believe that the official social-democrats have betrayed them. But this formula is adapted in the backward sense of reinforcing social-demo-

cratic ideology, rather than in the sense of finding a burning issue that moves these workers and pushes them against social-democratic ideology.

It is also notable that the article devoted a good deal of its attention to the criticism of revisionist or other opportunist left-wing groups in the Workers' List, but not of the social-democratic ideology brought into the party by the left social-democrats who founded it. Instead, *Red Dawn* has visions of ready-made mass politics with its call for a "socialist party of social-democratic workers." For example, it notes that the Workers' List did not call for participation in the Swedish May Day demonstrations. This fact might, one would have imagined, show a certain passivity in this party, as there was in the Dala Uprising. But in dealing with this and other issues with respect to the Workers' List, *Red Dawn* blames the opportunist left groups, but not the left social-democratic ideology.

In the article in issue #6, which deals with the First Congress of the Workers' List, they are again worried about the Maoists and other leftists, but have little to say about the social-democratic politics inside the Workers' List. They put forward that there are forces "working for renewal and programmatic clarity" inside the Workers' List, but characterize this only as "reflecting the necessity of building the Workers' List as a party of and by social-democratic workers."

Merging into the Workers' List

All along, the MLLS has been working inside the Workers' List. Since our knowledge of the Workers' List is second-hand, it is hard for us to make an absolute judgment about how to work with the rank-and-file workers in the Workers' List who are moving left. It appears that one could work in the Workers' List without restriction on what one said. And it may well have been correct to do work inside the Workers' List, provided one could maintain an independent stand while doing so.

But this presumes that an independent stand is maintained. Such a stand requires effective agitation on the vital issues of the Swedish working class movement. Such work actually puts new tasks before a communist organization.

But the MLLS finds that work inside the Workers' List replaces the need for communist organization, or even for a communist journal. This means that they are abandoning any independent stand. They expect the Workers' List to build up into the party that is needed, and they don't have need for any independent form of agitation. Indeed, it is notable that their articles on the Workers List actually had little to say about the concrete stands of the Workers List.

Yet the stand of communists would be to formulate the burning issues on which the masses are discontented and to contrast the stand of class struggle against reformism. It would be to appeal to the rank-and-file to embark on the path of consistent struggle and thus to consolidate their break from official social-democracy.

But instead *Red Dawn* now sees no role for itself at all.

Spontaneity

Red Dawn's view is that the Workers' List is a workers' party; it is to the left of official social-democracy; and it has a certain size; and so hurrah. All one has to do is work wholeheartedly in it.

They say in their article, of course, that they are not for "spontaneity." Why, they know spontaneity is a bad slogan in certain circles. So they disassociate themselves from it. But whether they have a stand of expecting the working class movement to evolve spontaneously is determined by whether they see a need for communist agitation, whether they see the need for organization, whether they see a need for independent activities. It is what they do in the world that determines whether they follow the line of spontaneity, not whether they know whether they consider "spontaneity" a nice word.

They in fact give the view that "the reformist way out is closed" because of the economic crisis. This is one of the most ill-fated slogans to be launched in the working class movement. In the 1930's, the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern put forward a similar view, and this was part of the change in line of the CI and its abandonment of the path of revolution. The Seventh Congress held that the rise of fascism and the growth of crisis would force the social-democratic leaders to take up the stands of class struggle. In fact, these conditions did cause profound changes among the social-democrats, but it did not eliminate the need to struggle against reformism and social-democracy. Reformism found a reformist way to deal with the great depression and the rise of fascism, and to continue to oppose the class-struggle.

Trotskyism

At a certain point in its development *Red Dawn* increasingly took up trotskyism of the trend associated with Tony Cliff (the "IS tendency"), and the MLLS apparently was founded as they became consolidated on this. This trotskyism was supposed to bring forward a more resolute stand on all the burning issues of the revolutionary movement, and they recommended it to their readers on this basis.

They promoted Cliff's pamphlet on the "deflected permanent revolution" as the supposed way to carry the struggle against the "three worlds" theory through to the end. Elsewhere in this issue of the *Supplement* we publish a letter concerning Cliff's pamphlet that deals with this issue. Suffice it to say that Cliff's International Socialists is actually bogged down in three worldism. For example, in the name of "military, but not political support" it was willing to speculate that the hangman regime of Khomeini in Iran could become a bastion of anti-imperialism if the U.S. intervened in the Gulf.

They took up the trotskyist denunciation of stages in the revolution, and rhetoric against "popular frontism", as

the alleged way to combat tailing against the subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. But it turns out that they have taken up a 7th Congress-style rhetoric about the economic crisis meaning that "the reformist way out is closed" in order to justify outright merger with social-democracy.

It seems that reducing the criticism of the 7th Congress to simply cursing the phrase "popular frontism" may actually help open the way for merging with those reformist trends that appeal to the working class. The 7th Congress had a special terminology. It distinguished between the "united front" among trends appealing to the working class, and the "popular front" which supposedly deal with trends appealing to other toiling masses. The theses it put forward on both the united front and the popular front were wrong. In the name of the united front, it justified capitulation to social-democracy and reformist trade union bureaucrats. In the name of the popular front, among other things it prettified bourgeois liberal parties as parties of the toilers.

To reduce the criticism of opportunism to opposing "popular frontism" obscures the actual stand that should be taken to the toiling masses and opens the way to unity with reformist trends with working class support (since that has nothing to do with the "popular front", but the "united front"). Since the Workers' List has a working class base, no servility before it, no abandonment of an independent standpoint, can be "popular frontism". (Similarly, in the February 15 issue of the *Supplement* we saw that in their resolution on the oppressed countries, the MLLS criticizes the stand of political organizations such as the ANC, but not of those trade unions which have a similar or even weaker stand. Those trade unions are praised as independent class organization.)

In general, most trotskyist trends look to larger, existing trends to work within. In the 1930's, the trotskyist practice of "entrism" (or entry-ism) oriented them to merging with social-democracy. More recently, such trotskyist trends as Moreno-ism bank on submerging themselves into larger reformist groupings. Naturally, most trotskyist trends try to maintain themselves in some way while working with the reformists, or else they might vanish from the political scene. But despite their left-sounding rhetoric, they abandon a truly independent stand.

For example, it is typical of most trotskyist trends to combine a certain criticism of the trade union bureaucrats with reliance on the official trade union apparatus. The fate of all struggle is supposed to depend on the apparatus. It is typical for them to denounce the independent communist stand of our Party, for example, as supposed "Stalinist third period politics". (This obscure reference is to the politics of the Comintern from the Sixth congress of 1928 until the change in line of the mid-30s. In fact, our party has its own assessment of what was right and wrong in this period. But the issue here is not what the CI did, but that most trotskyists trends use this phrase today to denounce independent communist work.)

Red Dawn may be going further than most trotskyist

groups in proposing to dissolve without a trace, but it has absorbed the spirit behind the trotskyist theses.

The role of theory

Finally, trotskyism led *Red Dawn* to believe that various general formulas could answer all the problems of work. They ended up with a narrow view of the role of theory and communist analysis. In their article, they retrospectively say that the role of *Red Dawn* was simply to "struggle against the Mao-Stalinist tradition, ideology and methodology of the so-called Marxist-Leninist movement." They see the role of theory and of communist analysis only as serving to break up those trends in the left they don't like.

This shows that they do not see the constructive role of communist theory. They can see polemics among left groups. But they do not see the difficult problems constantly posed by the development of the mass movement, and instead are apparently willing to flow with the left social-democratic mainstream. They do not see the theoretical issues that arise in building up independent organization. They believe all the major issues have been solved by general formulas about this being the era of imperialism, or about imperialism entering a crisis period in 1974-75, or by relations to the world market. And they want to solve the issue of dealing with the issue of the Workers' list with such views as "the way to reformism is closed." And after that, there is simply nothing much left for a Swedish communist journal to do, in their conception.

A difficult situation

Red Dawn from the first had to deal with the difficult situation of carrying out independent work while being small in number, and without the prospects of rapid growth that might be present in a turbulent upsurge. They also had to undertake the analysis of the concrete issues of struggle in Sweden, as well as dealing with the issues in the solidarity movement with the oppressed countries. The founding of *Red Dawn* itself was a bold step by the Swedish comrades to undertake. But they had many issues to resolve.

When they turned to Trotskyism, it provided ready answers to everything—not Marxist-Leninist answers, but answers. It replaced the complex issues of concrete analysis with general formulas. But these formulas have turned out to be so empty that *Red Dawn* now has nothing left to say to the rank-and-file of the Workers List, and thinks that it might as well cease publication. Trotskyism also provided formulas for how they could carry out their work. But these formulas reinforced their hesitations on independent work, and have led them to consider simply merging into left social-democracy.

The Swedish comrades fought for a period of time to establish something new in Sweden. They deserved something better than being ensnared by trotskyist phrases and dissolving into the left reformist marsh. □

Some theses on the permanent and deflected permanent revolution- -

A short reply to the comrades of the MLP,USA

In issues #5 and 6, 1990 of *Röd Gryning* (Red Dawn), the Marxist-Leninist League of Sweden published a translation of a letter of December 6, 1989 from a member of the Central Committee of the MLP,USA. This letter criticized Cliff's pamphlet "Deflected Permanent Revolution" which had been reprinted in the June 15, 1989 issue of *Red Dawn*, along with some introductory remarks. The MLLS had asked for permission to publish the letter, and having received it, published it along with a reply in issue #6, 1990 of *Red Dawn*. This reply is reprinted below, based on the translation they have provided us with. The letter itself is also printed in this issue of the *Supplement*, starting on page 23. As well, the February issue of the *Supplement* has an article discussing the resolution from the founding conference of the MLLS on imperialism and the oppressed countries; this article deals with a number of points raised in the theses below.

I. Capitalism has, after the turn of the century, entered into a new stage, differing qualitatively from the historically progressive competitive capitalism: imperialism. Imperialism is characterized by the monopolization of capital on a world market. The imperialist countries thus are what might be called metropolises of this world market, while the rest of the world constitutes a periphery, which from the beginning was dominated by the metropolises' monopoly capital. The countries in the periphery are in a colonial or semi-colonial status by various degrees. Pre-capitalist modes of production there are either smashed or tied up to the needs of imperialism—usually both. Any repetition of the pre-imperialist capitalist construction in the countries that became imperialist, can not take place since the world market would strangle each such attempt. Thus, the bourgeoisie in colonial and semi-colonial countries can not play any progressive role. It may be in a certain contradiction with imperialism, but is nevertheless dependent on it and integrated in its world system as more or less comprador.

II. The epoch of imperialism is also the epoch of the proletarian revolution, since the monopolization and expansion in the world-wide scale of capitalism only leaves two main classes: the imperialist bourgeoisie (monopoly capital in the metropolises) and the international proletariat. By main classes is meant that only these do represent real

alternatives of how society is to be organized, what system is to be. Other classes, like the petty-bourgeoisie, peasants, middle layers in cities etc., might play a vacillating role and perhaps be won as allied to the proletariat, but do not represent any solution of their own—these may be classes in but not for themselves. This means, that in countries where national-democratic tasks are still on the order of the day, which is the case in almost all countries except for the metropolises, solely the working class is able to carry these through to the end, since it presupposes that a fight is taken against the interests of imperialism, something which the local bourgeoisie, as we have seen, is not able to really do. Without the hegemony of the working class, such revolutions do stop half-way in comparison with classical bourgeois revolutions—while under the hegemony of the working class such a revolution necessarily has to break the frames of itself, in which case the construction of socialism is put on the order of the day. This since the working class, in order to keep its power and thus hinder a counter-revolution, has to run all the way in struggle against capital. It is this that is called permanent revolution: it begins as democratic, but the establishment, necessary for that [the democratic tasks—ed.], of the dictatorship of the proletariat leads to the carrying out to the end of the democratic tasks taking place "by the way" [in passing—ed.] in the march "further on", "ahead". It is, therefore, meaningless to talk about stages; rather, it is a process with phases which "overlap" each other and which, taken as a whole, constitute a qualitative leap.

III. In the same way as it thus is a vulgarization to say that this would be to "only put purely socialist revolutions on the order of the day everywhere", since the permanent revolution is permanent simply thereby that it ties together different tasks, which, with the takeover of power of the working class being the red thread, put tasks, slogans etc. looking different at the beginning and the end of the process—in the same way it is a vulgarization to say that rejection of the theory of "socialism in one country" means to regard the takeover of power as some arbitrary adventure and the defeat as given if the country in question is not enough developed or immediate aid is not to [be] expected from developed countries. The capitalist world system can be overthrown only by the working class in imperialist countries, in the metropolises, but that does by no means imply that the revolution has to begin there. Rather,

the chain of the world system is to be broken through where its weakest links is, whether they may be in Germany or Brazil or elsewhere. The task of revolutionary socialists must always be to be in the front rank of the struggle of the working class and the toiling masses, trying to lead it to the takeover of power. However, single countries can, because of the international character of capitalism, i.e. the integration of the economy across national boundaries, the extensive communications, etc., not be regarded solely in and for themselves, but have to be seen in a context. A revolution in one country can hardly avoid to unleash a chain of events in other countries too, as well as periods of revolutionary upsurges use [?] to be world-wide. Theoretically, an isolated workers' state is imaginable, but not because a revolutionary crisis had appeared only in that country, but rather because the proletariat did not succeed to take or keep the power in the other affected countries. If such a single workers' state is big and strong enough to withstand and beat back armed intervention from outside, then it may exist for some time, but not on its own arrive to socialism, although the socialist construction of course has to be carried out as far as possible, since the alternative would be defeatism before the non-socialist and anti-socialist class forces, which, especially if the country in question is a backward one, inevitably would tend to be strengthened in such a situation. The hostile encirclement would necessitate that the needs of the working masses are subordinated to the accumulation of capital, and although that may for a certain amount of time be consistent with the proletarian dictatorship by mobilizations to sacrifices for survival, something which also was the line of the Soviet Left Opposition in the 1920's, nevertheless in the long run it could not avoid to lead to the degeneration of the workers' state through the very logic itself which is the result of everything's subordination to capital accumulation. Thus, the spread of the revolution is a real question of survival for the proletariat in each country.

IV. In the Soviet Union, a counter-revolution took place at the time of the 1st five-year plan, i.e. from 1928 on, by the state and party bureaucracy, representing the backwardness of Russia, constituted itself as a class by taking possession of all means of production in society and, as agent of the needs of capital accumulation, created a state capitalist system. Stalinism, i.e. the original form of modern revisionism, and its treachery was thus a product of the defeat of the revolution in Europe in the beginning of the 1920's. State capitalism, which meant screening off from the world market by means of economic planning and the monopoly of foreign trade, was thus able to achieve, in the economic sphere, what the bourgeoisie in the peripheral countries is unable to by reasons mentioned above. In this way the bureaucratic class, the nomenklatura, came to be a historical substitute for an impotent national bourgeoisie. Russia was the sole example of a workers' state existing for any longer period of time, and state capitalism there does

thus differ in its origin—but only in that sense—from similar systems of national, of imperialism-independent capital accumulation that has been established after World War II in a number of countries in East Europe, Asia and elsewhere. Except for most of the East European countries and North Korea, they have been established by petty-bourgeois intellectuals who, by means of guerilla warfare, military coups etc., have come to power, establishing bonapartist regimes and introducing state capitalism. That these regimes are bonapartist substitutes does, thereby, not change the fact that solely two main classes exist in the world, not least since the possibilities for such a "solution", which Cliff calls deflected permanent revolution, are limited: the productive forces can not be developed very far within the narrow national framework without "running the head into the ceiling", the growth then turning into stagnation, and, as well, the crisis period that imperialism entered about 1974-75 seems to have eliminated or, at least, in essential degree have limited the space for enclaves separated from the work market, something which, empirically, is shown by the fact that state capitalism nowhere has been established after the above-mentioned time, and that state capitalism today on the whole tends to be reduced to crumbs by pressure from the world market.

V. Thus it is wrong to, like the MLP does, hold that the theory of deflected permanent revolution assigns to the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia an exaggerated importance. Its role as historical subject is, as we have seen, limited in time and space, and does thus not concern the struggle in the imperialist metropolises either. Thus, as far as we can see, there is no connection between Cliff's theory in question and the tactical concentration on the part of the IS tendency towards recruitment among students. The last-mentioned thing is, from what we are aware, a way of relating to the situation that appeared about 1980, the same one as has made e.g. the British SWP change the form of its basic organizations from mainly production units to mainly geographical ones.

VI. However, we admit that there seems to be certain reservations to do against [to having certain reservations about—ed.] certain tendencies from Cliff's part, both in the book *State Capitalism in Russia* and his pamphlet on the deflected permanent revolution, to not with enough stress, underline that state capitalism cannot play any progressive role at all, that its ability to achieve economic growth does not mean development of the productive forces, and that the possibility for petty-bourgeois leaderships to seize power and carry out the deflected permanent revolution ultimately must be derived from the fact that the treacheries of social-democracy and stalinism, which have created reformism and modern revisionism, do leave the world proletariat without a revolutionary leadership. Nevertheless, this does in no way mean that Cliff regards state capitalism as a step forward compared to "usual" capitalism, or that he sees deflected permanent revolution

as a way out, the working class as impotent etc. Quite the contrary—as far as we can see, the theory of deflected permanent revolution is a strong blow to the tailing of pablo-ism [a trend of trotskyism] and other dogmatic trotskyist currents (as well as the “left” in general) after the petty-bourgeois leaderships in the peripheral countries. Since Cliff’s methodology means to differentiate between

national and international levels of observation, departing from the last-mentioned one at determining the state capitalist character of existing planned economies, Cliff’s conclusion becomes very clear concerning the necessary task of the proletariat: to carry further the struggle, class against class. □

Letter to the Swedish comrades about Cliff’s pamphlet

December 6, 1989

CL of Norrköping
Sweden

Dear comrades,

After we received the June 15 issue of *Red Dawn*, and the English brief summary, I was surprised to see that you reprinted Tony Cliff’s pamphlet *Deflected Permanent Revolution*. I read over carefully the part of this pamphlet which you kindly sent us in English (which was everything but the introductory material). You put forward this pamphlet as containing views that the world’s communists could learn some things from. But I was astonished by this pamphlet, which did not contain useful material but appears to be a polemic among trotskyists with Cliff revising Trotsky’s version of “permanent revolution” to fit his view that the whole world has gone to hell for the last five or six decades. I regretted that your own comments on the pamphlet were so few, because I have great interest in knowing what issues concern you and how you see them. As well, I think that the process of your investigation and working out of issues is more important than Cliff’s views, and perhaps after you read this letter you may understand better why I have more respect and interest in your experience and working out of views than I have for Cliff.

I intended to write you about Cliff’s pamphlet, but other work intervened. As well, I gradually came across more of the writings of Cliff and the International Socialists (IS) trend, and have been trying to find time to read them so as to get a better idea of what their theories are. His pamphlet uses stock trotskyist phrases, and it seemed to me that perhaps there might be an elaboration elsewhere.

But it seems to me that I had better write now if these remarks are to be of any use.

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In your introduction to Cliff’s pamphlet you say that what motivates your printing of this pamphlet is an important political issue. This is how to handle the question of the democratic revolution and of the struggle in non-imperialist countries. You say that the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists reject tailing the “anti-imperialist bourgeoisie” in the non-imperialist countries, and emphasize instead the class independence of the working and toilers and the necessity of the workers and toilers being at the head of the democratic revolution. You say that this is a step forward, but the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists must go further.

You are right that these are major issues of importance to the world movement, and it is valuable for us to exchange views on these matters.

As far as I understand it, you find something suspect in the idea of a democratic stage of the revolution or in the concept of a multi-stage revolution. You seem to be saying that, in every country of the world, there can only be socialist revolution. You seem to imply that democratic revolution might have been the task in some places prior to the rise of world imperialism, but certainly since the rise of imperialism and the occurrence of the October Revolution of 1917, there can only be socialist revolution. And you put forward that national and democratic tasks can be solved in the course of the socialist revolution.

It seems to me that you are raising important issues with respect to the national liberation struggles, democratic struggles, etc. But your presentation astonishes me from

several angles.

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First of all, your presentation of the views of the world revolutionary Marxist-Leninists doesn't seem correct to me. It is true that the necessity for the independent role of the proletariat has been put forward for the democratic revolution. But in the course of the struggle against the "three worlds" theory and in, for example, the literature of our party, a number of other issues have been raised. For example,

- 1) That various of the non-imperialist countries face the socialist revolution, and not a prior democratic revolution.
- 2) That even when there is either a democratic stage of the revolution or a straightforward national liberation struggle, it doesn't follow that all the democratic and national tasks are solved first as a prerequisite for going on to the socialist stage. The socialist revolution has to, and can, carry out various of the preliminary tasks that have not been solved in the previous stages of the struggle.
- 3) However, we have not said that the time for all revolutions but the socialist revolution has passed, and we have spent a good deal of effort in trying to deal with how to determine the nature of the struggle which is on the agenda. In this, we differ from the perspective that you have now sketched out.

I have not had the time to search out various of the articles in which we have developed these points. If it would be of some use to you, I could do so. For now, however, let me point to simply one document, of perhaps added importance because it is a Congress document discussed and approved by our whole Party.

The documents of the 2nd Congress of our Party, printed half a decade ago in the *Workers' Advocate* of January 1, 1984, deal with some of these issues. Take Resolution J *On the revolutionary struggle in the oppressed and dependent countries: the national liberation movement, the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution* of Part IV "The International Situation." It deals with the question of the nature of the revolution, distinguishing, actually, not just two possible stages, democratic and socialist, but also the possibility of a "straightforward national liberation struggle" in some cases.

In dealing with such possibilities, it does not negate the nature of the present imperialist era, but understands it in the sense of Lenin. It quotes Lenin as saying that:

"The social revolution can come only in the form of an epoch in which are combined civil war by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and a whole series of democratic and revolutionary movements, including the national liberation movement, in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed countries." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 60—this is from section 5 of the article *A caricature of Marxism and imperialist economism* of August-October 1916).

Lenin's conception, which I believe is correct, is that the proletarian socialist revolution comes about in combination with a whole series of revolutionary movements around the world.

I know that Cliff and various trotskysts are fond of saying that Lenin later adopted Trotsky's idea of permanent revolution. They advocate that Lenin learned from the year 1917 that Trotsky was correct, and that Lenin came to Trotsky's stand rather than Trotsky coming over to the Bolsheviks for a time. In this way, just about everything written by Lenin and all his theories are thrown aside and replaced by trotskysm.

But an examination of Lenin's writings on the struggle in the more backward nations after 1917 show that he didn't change his views about the combining of the proletarian socialist revolution with a whole series of revolutionary movements. Take, for example, his *Preliminary draft theses on the national and colonial questions* drafted in 1920 for the Second Congress of the Communist International.

On one hand, Lenin stressed that

"The world political situation has now placed the dictatorship of the proletariat on the order of the day. World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic..." (Point 5)

This stresses that centrality of the socialist revolution in the strongest possible terms.

But he goes on to talk of there being grouped around this single focus not just "the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries..." but also "all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities..." And Point 6 continues on this issue. And it adds that

"the form of this alliance will be determined by the degree of development of the communist movement in the proletariat of each country, of the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement of the workers and peasants in backward countries or among backward nationalities."

Here Lenin talks the "bourgeois-democratic liberation movement", and not just in backward countries but also "among backward nationalities", presumably referring to certain section of the toilers in more advanced countries.

In fact, the early congresses of the Communist International agonized a good deal over the complexities of the revolution in different countries. They did not reduce everything to one single pattern. And the fact that the socialist revolution can carry out various tasks not completed earlier was not taken to mean that one can forget about the complexities and zigzags needed to get to the proletarian stage.

Engels, in his article the *Program of the Blanquist Commune Emigrants* (June 1874), quotes the Blanquists as saying

"We are Communists because we want to arrive at our aim without stopovers at intermediate stations,

without entering into compromises, which only put off victory and prolong slavery."

Engels goes on to comment on the Blanquists as follows:

"The German Communists are Communists because through all intermediate stations and compromises, created not by them but by historical development, they clearly perceive the ultimate aim: the abolition of classes, the inauguration of a society in which there will be no private ownership of land and means of production. The thirty-three [Blanquist emigrants] are Communists because they imagine that as soon as they have only the good will to jump over intermediate stations and compromises everything is assured, and if, as they firmly believe, it 'begins' in a day or two, and they take the helm, 'communism will be introduced' on the day after tomorrow. Neither are they Communists if this cannot be done immediately. What childish naivete to advance impatience as a convincing theoretical argument!"

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But back to our resolution at the Second Congress.

One can see that it does not restrict itself to talking of proletarian independence in the democratic struggle. True, it does talk of that, and show the need for work to imbue the proletariat with "socialist consciousness" even at this stage. It says that the proletariat stands for the most decisive outcome of such struggles, but that "whatever the outcome", the proletariat should use the new conditions to "continue the struggle uninterrupted". And it talks of the need to continue to the socialist revolution.

But it does not say that the struggle is always either a national liberation movement or a democratic revolution. It states that "In some countries, it is the socialist revolution which is the only way to fight imperialist domination." Thus we did not simply say that the issue is the class independence of the workers and toilers in the democratic revolution, but also talk about the socialist revolution. In order to do this, we did not need to learn from Cliff and cast aside Lenin's theory of revolution in the imperialist era.

Revolution involves many complex questions. It requires an assessment of the local conditions in order to see the immediate tasks of the revolution facing the proletariat in the varying situations in different countries. Lenin dealt with this diversity, and in our resolution we also stressed it. True, there was a definite limit to our ability to distinguish various cases. We don't hide that. But our resolution went beyond your characterization of what the revolutionary communists stood for. I think this shows the need to be more careful in considering how the struggle against the "three worlds" theory has actually proceeded.

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This brings us to the question of whether Cliff and the

IS trend internationally (such as SWP in Britain) put forward a useful framework for these questions. Before going into Cliff's pamphlet, we note an extremely interesting and significant fact that you pointed out in your letter of mid-July. You say that your sharpest disagreements with them is on the question of the threat of a U.S.-Iran war during the last part of the Gulf war. They hold that in such a case the Iranian regime should be supported "militarily but not politically".

So it turns out that this trend, in practice, cannot even separate itself from support for the hangman regime in Iran. It uses the standard trotskyist dodge of pretending that one can support a hangman regime "militarily" while not supporting it "politically." (They cast aside the view that war is the continuation of politics by violent means; thus here too they cast aside the materialist view of the class struggle.)

The SWP's stand on Iran reminds us of similar stands that came up ten or fifteen years ago from the supporters of the "three worlds" theory. The Maoist RCP of the US wanted to oppose the most extreme rightist stands from other supporters of the "three worlds" theory, but it never could repudiate the "three worlds" theory altogether because of this theory's connection with Mao. At one point the RCP held that, with respect to international politics, the Shah of Iran should be supported when he comes into conflict with imperialism, while with respect to internal politics, one should support the workers and peasants overthrowing the same Shah. This looks like what SWP is saying now about the IRP regime in Iran. In the case of RCP, this stand was advocated in the name that the "three worlds" theory was correct, but that it was only a part of the "more general world-wide united front line" and wasn't the whole thing. SWP undoubtedly would say it opposes the "three worlds" theory altogether, yet their own Trotskyist theories lead them into positions with respect to Iran that are startling reminiscent of RCP.

In any case, I think it would have been better if you had mentioned your disagreement with SWP on Iran in the issue of Red Dawn dealing with Cliff's pamphlet. It seems to me that, if the world's communists are to study and learn from the example of IS, then such views from SWP on Iran are important. It has to be considered why their theories, as expressed in Cliff's pamphlet, give rise in practice to this blatant apology for the Iranian hangman regime. Such questions of practice have always been important ones in the struggle against the "three worlds" theory, and you put forward Cliff's pamphlet precisely as an example of going further than the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists in this struggle. And, if you think that SWP's stand on Iran is an unfortunate deviation from Cliff's framework, what grounds do you have for this opinion?

Actually the SWP's talk of "military, not political" support for the Iranian hangmen is just typical trotskyism. We have dealt with this trotskyist framework in articles in the *Supplement* dealing with the trotskyist "Bolshevik Tendency" in the U.S. True, BT thinks the USSR is a

degenerated workers' state, and Cliff doesn't. Yet their basic trotskyst framework is similar. BT's defense of Soviet aggression in Afghanistan, to which they give "military, but not political" support, is based on this same framework that leads SWP to offer support for the bloodstained clerical regime in Iran.

In theory, the SWP, like other trotskysts, are the purest of the pure. They are for the socialist revolution without any deviations or messy need for zigzags and maneuvers. Why, the Leninists are allegedly opportunists for discussing different stages of the revolution, or impure measures in the socialist revolution, etc. SWP and Cliff will have none of such things—the revolution they stand for will proceed in excellent utopian fashion. But it turns out that through such phrases as "military, but not political" support they can give "military" support to the most backward, blood-drenched forces, while "politically" they are supporting the most pure socialist revolution. Thus Cliff-ism and trotskysm in general display the most blatant hypocrisy.

And it seems to me that their concept of "military, but not political" support shows that this hypocrisy is not an accidental deviation on their part but follows from the IS or trotskyst framework.

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But let's continue onto Cliff's pamphlet. What does it put forward about the issues of the "three worlds" theory that is of such importance? The pamphlet deals with the revolutionary struggles of this century in the less advanced countries. Very well, what has it learned from this rich experience, an experience that is not altogether happy, but which has shaken the old world profoundly and roused hundreds of millions of toilers in struggle.

Let's start with the conclusions of the pamphlet. This means starting at the end and then working backward. But this way we will see what the endpoint of Cliff's exertions are. If we find treasure there, we will be encouraged to follow Cliff through his various twists and turns. So let's look at section 6.

The final sentences of section 6 and the pamphlet are "The central theme of Trotsky's theory remains as valid as ever: the proletariat must continue its revolutionary struggle until it is triumphant the world over. Short of this target it cannot achieve freedom."

This is what we are going to be learning from? The assertion that the proletariat must keep struggling until victory? This is all that Cliff and Trotsky can assert about revolutionary strategy and tactics? Is this really new and liberating and a great step beyond what others have achieved?

This is so threadbare that one involuntarily leaves aside Cliff's own summation and looks deeper into section 6 to try to find a more elaborate summation of what the central theme must be. In the first half of the last paragraph, Cliff states:

"For revolutionary socialists in the advanced

countries, the shift in strategy means that while they will have to continue to oppose any national oppression of the colonial people unconditionally, they must cease to argue over the national identity of the future ruling classes of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and instead investigate the class conflicts and future social structures of these continents. The slogan of 'class against class' will become more and more a reality."

What does this mean?

We should "investigate the class conflicts ... of these continents." Is this something new?

As well, we should investigate the "future social structures". Perhaps someone could explain what this means.

We must "cease to argue over the national identity of the future ruling classes of Asia, Africa and Latin America..." What does this say about the national liberation movement? What about the "national identity" of the "future ruling classes" of South Africa and how does this apply to the struggle against apartheid? What does it mean about the struggle of the Palestinian people?

Cliff does talk about continuing "to oppose the national oppression of the colonial people unconditionally". Unconditionally, that's strong. But what's left of the concept of opposing national oppression if it is then stated that the national identity of the government is irrelevant because nothing matters until final liberation in the global classless society?

Note also that Cliff in these sentences doesn't talk about the revolutionary socialists fighting for a "future social structure", or rallying the masses for it, or supporting the revolutionary trends that are fighting for it, but "investigating" it, "arguing" about it, etc. This, however, may correspond with the SWP practice and its passive attitude to the mass struggles.

I think that so far we have platitudes from Cliff—combined with phrases that seem to denigrate the national liberation struggle, the anti-apartheid struggle, and the Palestinian struggle, except insofar as these struggles immediately give rise to full and complete socialism and the elimination of all classes the world over.

Not much treasure here.

Well, let's look further back into section 6 for a few more conclusions.

"...for the workers in the emergent nations: ... they will now have to fight against their 'own' ruling classes (and Nehru proved no less harsh when incarcerating striking workers than the British Raj)."

This is the most profound and detailed conclusion Cliff draws in his final section. So let's look at it. Cliff says the workers should fight, but he has no idea of what their fighting tasks are. Cliff is unable even to characterize the nature of the ruling classes in the various countries of the "emergent nations". Which classes are in power? He evades this.

This is not just a quibble. It is important for revolutionary tactics. And Cliff's silence is part of Cliff's failure in his conclusions to deal with the concrete situation at all.

The situation in these countries varies widely. Only from the most blatant European or North American blindness—or social-democratic-style blindness towards the backward countries—could one regard this vast expanse of the world as one single, homogeneous realm.

—There are situations where the masses are still subjected to the most blatant denial of all national rights, such as in South Africa and Palestine.

—There are hangman regimes, such as Iran.

—There are bourgeois reformist governments in some countries.

—And there are petty-bourgeois reformist governments emerging from revolution or dramatic changes (such as the Sandinistas presently [the letter was written before the Sandinista government had been replaced by the pro-contra Chamorro government—ed.], or the case of Grenada in the past).

—And in the latter case, there are dramatic differences between Nicaragua, which has a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist force, and Grenada which didn't. As well, there have been changes over the last years inside Nicaragua itself.

—There are also such situations as that in El Salvador.

If one is dealing with revolutionary tactics, one has to know how to distinguish these situations, and how to deal with them. And Cliff's pamphlet cannot even distinguish among them. He just lumps together all Asia, Africa and Latin America. On one hand, the proletariat should keep fighting. And on the other hand, in an earlier section, (section 4), he attributes whatever advances have taken place in the meantime to various factors such as "the growing importance of the state in backward countries." (p. 18)

No wonder Cliff's conclusion is just a general assertion that the proletariat should keep struggling until victory. All he advises them is that, short of creating a classless, communist society the world over, they cannot achieve freedom. At best, this means to advise militant workers that the struggle will continue, without mentioning what the forms and stages of the struggle are. (In the 60's, there was a phrase "keep on trucking"—i.e. just keep on doing whatever it is you are doing; but no one called this a pearl of revolutionary brilliance.) At worst, Cliff is denouncing the struggles of the present on the grounds that they are not the final goal, or they are not pure, or that they haven't yet brought world communism.

And this is put forward by Cliff as the central theme of Trotsky's great work, which allegedly advances and corrects Leninism. I think that the emperor has no clothes. This is not a step forward, but a frenzied flight to the rear.

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Well, if there is absolutely nothing of any use for revolutionary tactics in Cliff's conclusions, perhaps something can be extracted from the discussion in the body of the pamphlet, in sections 2-5? But Cliff's discussion

centers on two themes: a) Simply denigrating the struggles in China, Cuba, India, etc. and b) glorification of the role of the intelligentsia.

Cliff has to deal with half a century of struggles. But his only interest is to show how worthless these struggles are. Since Trotskyism proved irrelevant to the revolutions, the Trotskyists must prove the revolutions irrelevant to the world. I don't think that such an approach from Cliff is even serious. It is just typical social-democratic sneering.

Of course, Cliff does have various theoretical summations. For example:

"To sum up, up to now experience has shown both the strength of revolutionary urges amongst industrial workers in the emergent nations, and their fatal weakness. An automatic correlation between economic backwardness and revolutionary political militancy does not exist."

This is not revolutionary communism speaking, but the typical bourgeois approach. Instead of analysis of how revolutions develop, we are informed that there are revolutionary urges among the industrial workers, but also weaknesses.

Cliff's next sentence is

"Once the constantly revolutionary nature of the working class, the central pillar of Trotsky's theory, becomes suspect, the whole structure falls to pieces."

Thus Cliff identifies the "central pillar of Trotsky's theory" with "an automatic correlation between economic backwardness and revolutionary militancy."

So this is what the Trotskyist idea of "permanent revolution" boils down to. This is what, we are told, Lenin supposedly came to see as a result of the experience of 1917. This is the analysis of the revolutionary crisis, the stage of revolution, and the development of the class struggle; it is that there is "an automatic correlation" between economic backwardness and revolution. And the "automatic correlation" was supposed to give rise to "the constantly revolutionary nature of the working class". So much for the careful consideration of the zig-zags of revolutionary tactics, of how revolutionary struggle is built up and how revolutionary consciousness develops—there is instead "the constantly revolutionary nature of the working class".

Cliff, of course, while holding that Trotsky was right as opposed to Lenin, holds that Trotsky's "permanent revolution" has turned out to be "deflected permanent revolution". And how does Cliff correct Trotsky? Does he restore Leninist theory and careful analysis of the nature of revolution? No, the point of Cliff's pamphlet is to maintain the "central theme" of Trotskyist theory despite the failure of the "automatic correlation." So Section 5 puts forward that the intelligentsia steps forward as the historic key to the struggle in the backward countries in this era. Instead of the proletariat stepping forward in this era, instead of the toilers shaking up the old world, Cliff thinks that it was the intelligentsia (and a state power that "reflects not only, or even mainly, the national economic base on which it

risers") that was responsible for the world-shaking events that undermined the main edifice of old-style colonialism.

(If Cliff's views were true, by the way, it would go directly against your remarks in *Red Dawn* introducing Cliff's pamphlet. Your remarks were based on the idea of this being the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, while Cliff's amendment to Trotskyism is that this century is NOT the era of the proletariat rising up but of the world role of the intelligentsia in the "emergent nations". Basically Cliff and the IS trend pride themselves on their "realism" against other trotskyst trends, but this realism generally comes down to replacing the pretense of revolutionary activity with denigration of revolutionary movements.)

It is perhaps no accident that in its practical work in such advanced industrial countries as Britain and the U.S., the IS trend also elevates the intelligentsia.

In any case, Cliff's discussion shows that he rejects, or has never even considered, the Marxist theory about the role of the intelligentsia. He fails to see that they are not a separate power but instead end up as supporting the aspirations of one or the other of the major classes. He fails to understand how classes build up their own parties and movements. Instead he regards the presence of the intelligentsia in these parties and movements as proof that it is the intelligentsia that has stepped forward as the major motive force of development.

I think the body of Cliff's pamphlet doesn't even have a Marxist framework. It resembles the way bourgeois academics treat the revolution. It does raise a few issues about this or that struggle, but so do the bourgeois academics or even some works of anti-communist centers like the Hoover Institute. It misses the main issues to be raised. It doesn't know how to deal with the few facts it raises. All in all, it shows a distinct resentment at the revolutionary movements in the world (combined with praise for the intelligentsia and even "the state" or "state power" itself, a state that Cliff believes is "mainly" above the local class structure, as the factors "break(ing) the yoke of landlordism and imperialism"—page 18). If this attitude penetrates the revolutionary communist ranks, then we have no reason to call ourselves either revolutionary or communist.

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Well, that leaves us with the start of the pamphlet. Here Cliff, for the sake of disposing of Lenin, makes the most effort to discuss issues with Marxist-sounding words. I have put it off to last so that we could first see the practical results of Cliff's theorizing. But now it's time to take a look at Cliff's more theoretical efforts. I think that this examination will show that it is necessary to replace Cliff by a serious study of the Leninist theory concerning parties, classes, movements, and revolution.

By the way, I have not had the time to examine other elaborations of the trotskyst version of "permanent revolution", although I have examined some other IS trend

writings. As a result, I have to deal with permanent revolution simply as Cliff presents it here.

Cliff gives six points which he calls a summation of "the basic elements of Trotsky's theory". He then says that "The 1917 revolution in Russia proved all of Trotsky's assumptions to be right", presumably as against Lenin. This is the basic theoretical point to section one.

But strangely enough he gives no evidence of his assertion. One is just supposed to take it for granted. This is one of the trotskyst articles of faith, their sign of the cross by which the faithful recognize each other, one of their sacred rosary beads. I presume that Cliff's pamphlet is basically a polemic against some other trotskysts who want to keep "permanent revolution" without making some changes. Since they all take it for granted that Trotsky is right and Lenin wrong, Cliff doesn't see a need to elaborate on this.

However, it seems to me that the facts show a different story.

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First of all, there were two revolutions in Russia in 1917. The February revolution was a bourgeois-democratic revolution—if the October revolution hadn't taken place, the February revolution would have ended up strengthening the establishment of a bourgeois system. The February revolution did have unique features of great importance, such as the development of soviets. But Lenin and the Bolsheviks had stressed in advance that the proletariat would step forward in the coming bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia.

This two-stage character of the revolution in 1917—first February, and then October—seems to me to go against Cliff's assertions. Or should it be believed that it was not the objective development but the shortcomings of the Bolshevik party that resulted in the February revolution? Or should it be taken as a dogma that there must be years and years between the different stages of a revolution? When a revolution goes through various stages rapidly, should this be taken as refutation of the obvious fact that there was more than one stage?

Of course Lenin did not predict all the particular features of the revolutions of 1917 in advance, nor write the April theses in advance. But we are talking about political theory, not about crystal balls and not about fakery and trotskyst showmanship. The Marxist-Leninist theory established the framework, within which Lenin could immediately deal with the tasks of the revolution. Lenin pointed out, in his *Letter on Tactics* of April 1917, that:

"The bolshevik slogans and ideas *on the whole* have been confirmed by history; but *concretely* things have worked out *differently*; they are more original, more peculiar, more variegated than anyone could have expected."

Lenin then denounced repeating formulas from before the revolution "by rote" rather than basing tactics on the

current actual situation. Now, if one just "reinterprets" Lenin's statements a bit; if one regards his talk of Bolshevik formulas having been confirmed as some pleasant lies to reassure the Bolshevik Party; if one puts forward a bourgeois-academic idea of theory that regards it as a refutation that one has to stay alive to the original, peculiar and variegated way in which profound people's revolutions develop theory further, then of course one can interpret such statements as Lenin DISCARDING the former theory. And so Cliff does.

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One of Trotsky's assumptions that Cliff says was confirmed is his attitude to the peasantry. Cliff presents two particular theses:

That Lenin's conception of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants requires the existence of a peasant party; and

That "the peasants were too sharply divided amongst themselves between rich and poor to be able to form a united and independent party of their own."

This is supposed to refute Lenin.

To back up these points on the peasantry, Cliff presents an alleged paraphrase of Lenin's theory. I think that studying Lenin's theory from such summaries is a big mistake; one must look at Lenin's actual work. Cliff isn't accurate, and he isn't even honorable, in his attempt to put forward Lenin's ideas. In his pamphlet Cliff puts forward as Lenin's views ideas that Lenin had spoken explicitly, and at length, against.

Read over again how Cliff characterizes Leninism on the issue of the question of the independent peasant party, and then consider Lenin's article *The aim of the proletarian struggle in our revolution* of March 1909. In Part III he dwells on what he calls "Trotsky's mistaken views". He quotes Trotsky saying that a coalition of the proletariat and the peasantry

"presupposes either that the peasantry will come under the sway of one of the existing bourgeois parties, or that it will form a powerful independent party."

Indeed, this is Trotskyist view that Cliff just copied into his pamphlet. And Lenin goes on to say:

"...This is obviously untrue both from the standpoint of general theory and from that of the experience of the Russian revolution. A 'coalition' of classes *does not at all* presuppose *either* the existence of any particular powerful party, *or* parties in general. This is only confusing classes with parties. A 'coalition' of the specified classes *does not in the least* imply *either* that one of the existing bourgeois parties will establish its sway over the peasantry *or* that the peasants should form a powerful independent party! ... The experience of the Russian revolution shows that 'coalitions' of the proletariat and the peasantry were formed *scores and hundreds of times*, in the most

diverse forms, without any 'powerful independent party' of the peasantry. ... To deny it means to engage in pettifoggery, or to transform the broad scientific concept of a 'coalition of classes' into a narrow, juridical concept, almost that—I would say—of a notary."

Thus one sees that Cliff utterly misrepresented Lenin's views. He just repeated some rhetoric from Trotsky and didn't bother to study Lenin's views and think about them. He completely misrepresents Lenin. But he assures his reader that he is just presenting Lenin's ideas from *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* or other works.

Furthermore, what did the experience of 1917 show about peasant parties? Weren't the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Left Socialist Revolutionaries peasant parties? Whether Cliff wants to call them "independent" peasant parties or not, the fact is that they were major factors among the masses. The Socialist-Revolutionaries were in the government prior to the October revolution. And, after the October revolution the Left Socialist Revolutionaries were also, at one point, in the government. No wonder Cliff just leaves it at that 1917 verified all Trotsky's views without bothering to discuss the actual experience. Since the facts go against Cliff, he resorts to bluster.

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Trotsky's theory, as quoted and presented by Cliff, also makes a big deal of throwing aside any consideration of "the state of the productive forces." This is presumably related to the fact that Cliff doesn't see much point in even trying to distinguish between different types of regimes and economic conditions among the "emergent countries" of Asia, Africa and Latin America—such details are irrelevant.

But for revolutionaries, worrying about such minor details are essential, for they have huge impact on revolutionary strategy, agitation, tactics, etc. Of course, for Cliff, with his ultimate conclusion that the proletariat won't achieve final liberation until communism, why deal with the minor issue of how to get to communism?

In any case, Cliff cites Trotsky saying that the timing of a proletarian revolution does not "depend" on the state of development of the country, but on many other factors. (Actually, the quotation from Trotsky given by Cliff is contradictory, because it does give the state of the productive forces as directly determining the timing of the revolution:

"In an economically backward country, the proletariat can come to power sooner than in the economically advanced countries."

Cliff in fact regards this economic determinism as a central feature of Trotsky's permanent revolution, as we pointed out above. We quoted Cliff characterizing Trotsky's thesis as

"An automatic correlation between economic back-

wardness and revolutionary political militancy", and then going on to refute it as his amendment to Trotsky. But at the beginning of the pamphlet, in section one, he simply says that all Trotsky's assumptions were correct. This is just another example of the empty nature of Cliff's approach.)

In actual fact, the level of economic development doesn't determine the date of an uprising, but it does have tremendous importance. The level of development sets the stage for what class struggles are possible, as one would imagine that any Marxist materialist would recognize. The social-democratic dogmatism which negates the class struggle and the revolution in the name of basing everything on the growth of the productive forces is, of course, a parody of Marxism. But Cliff and Trotsky take the parody as the real Marxist theory, as allegedly Lenin's theory before it was corrected by Trotsky. And then Cliff and Trotsky throw aside the careful consideration of the material issues facing the revolution.

Cliff quotes Trotsky as saying that

"How far, however, can the socialist policy of the working class go in the economic conditions of Russia? Only one thing we can say with certainty: it will run into political obstacles long before it will be checked by the technical backwardness of the country."

It's not really clear what Trotsky is saying here, but it does appear to be denigration of the economic or "technical" issues. Yet while the Russian proletariat was able to seize power and begin the transition to socialism, it was precisely the economic difficulties and backwardness that proved most stubborn and difficult. They were a constant pressure pulling the Soviet Union backward. The study of capitalist restoration in the USSR is in large part a study of what went wrong in the efforts to fight this backwardness.

Thus the history of the October revolution shows the importance of the level of economic development. After the revolution, the working class was faced with great sacrifices and great efforts to deal with problems of economic development. The actual revolutionaries could not take such an attitude of other-worldly disdain for food, for necessary industry, for weapons of defense against the interventionists, etc.

However Cliff can. He finds it quite acceptable to call for socialist revolution while believing that socialism couldn't actually be developed in Russia. This minor problem is to be solved by outside support from economically advanced countries; when they make revolution, their aid is supposed to tide Russia over all problems. All one has to do is seize power one way or another, and then rely on outside aid.

Thus, for Cliff, one carries out a revolution in a country even though its completion "within national limits" is "unthinkable". Aid from the outside is supposed to transform the situation and bring socialism. Cliff's theory ends up in the idea that one can declare socialist revolution at

will, and then rely on outside intervention to bail out of an untenable situation. What a remarkable theory of revolution!

But I think that on this question too history has shown Cliff to be wrong. The Bolshevik revolution was eventually reversed, but not before it accomplished marvels in building up by its own efforts the material conditions for socialism. They went far in developing transitional approaches for developing towards socialism; out of the maze of different measures, the false steps and the inspired actions, they accomplished things of general significance. Not all of their experience was positive experience, even before the general turn back towards capitalist restoration. What they did cannot simply be copied word for word. But it was awesome, and it refutes the social-democratic view of Cliff that Russia as a backward country was fatally doomed to capitalism until such time as revolutions elsewhere would save Russia.

As well, it seems to me that Cliff's theory on this point goes against your introduction to Cliff's pamphlet. You are interested in the socialist revolution, and Cliff says only the socialist revolution will bring freedom. Yet how could a socialist revolution be victorious if Cliff's view are right? If Cliff is right, then the more backward countries cannot achieve socialism on their own (not unless they have more development and resources than Russia had in 1917). The conclusion from Cliff's theories would be either that

a) they should not make a revolution until a long period of development, or

b) they should not make a revolution until they can count on victorious socialist revolutions in advanced capitalist countries that will send resources, technicians, etc. to provide the material basis for socialism.

* * * * *

It seems to me that if the world's communists study Cliff's theories seriously, I think they will find that Cliff's views are not revolutionary. Indeed, the social-democratic foundation of his views peek out again and again.

And with respect to Cliff's pamphlet in particular, all it adds up to, as far as I can tell, is a protest against other trotskysts who are conciliating with the ruling classes of Asia, Africa and Latin America. (Perhaps the introduction to Cliff's pamphlet explained more about who he was arguing against. But then again, perhaps it too said nothing.)

Unfortunately, Cliff correction to the other trotskysts is the argument that nothing much is going on. Furthermore, as it turns out, Cliff's SWP has also declared to you that it may conciliate even hangmen regimes under the slogan of "military, but not political support." Your experience with them on Iran seems similar to that of some CPI supporters' experience of British politics. They too were upset with SWP's stands on Iran, among other things, as well as with SWP's preoccupation with the petty-bourgeois milieu.

* * * * *

Well, enough of this for the time being. But I do want to point out something about our party's opposition to trotskyism.

We didn't take up opposition to Trotskyism because it was decreed in a totalitarian fashion from some "Stalinist-Maoist" center. Our predecessors, those who first formed our party, were not beholden to any political trend. They were not bureaucrats from some party or people who were committed in advance to adopt this or that view. They were activists from the mass struggles of the 1960's, intensely interested in developing the revolutionary movement in the U.S. and in supporting the revolution elsewhere. We were (and still are) the "nobodies", not the big names of the movement, but the activists at the bottom of the heap.

The immediate group of activists that took the decision to found the American Communist Workers Movement (M-L) (the predecessor of our Party) first looked around at the different trends that existed. They had personal experience with some trends, including various trotskyists groups, and had seen the injurious and undermining efforts of trotskyism on the movement. With respect to some organizations with which they had no experience, they wrote and asked for their views.

It was because of the inadequacies and opportunism of the other trends that these comrades decided that a new trend, a new organization had to be founded. Many of the things we said or did may seem outlandish from our present viewpoint, and indeed they were. But we stood for developing the revolutionary organization of the mass movement and of the proletariat as best we could.

I raise this so that you can understand why we don't see the IS trend as some wonderful new recruits to the world left. I don't see their views as some new revelation but as the old trash we have fought from long ago. This doesn't come from prejudices and lies inherited from decades ago,

but from our own experience and from our own struggle, from our own theoretical work as well as from our study of the Leninist principles. Both in their styles of work in the practical movement, and in their theoretical considerations, the IS and other Trotskyist trends represent not our comrades, but opponents, just as the revisionists and social-democrats are. (Naturally, this has to be dealt with as a struggle of political trends, not as sectarian warfare.)

There has of course been a lot of nonsense said about trotskyism by various trends. The revisionists have called everything to the left of them "trotskyist", and they have a stock denunciation. But when the revolutionary communists replace the revisionist trash about trotskyism with consideration of what their actual experience with the trotskyists is, and with their own consideration of trotskyist theory, I think that the case against trotskyism will be pretty damning. Whether the revolutionary communists come originally out of various traditional organizations, or originated outside such direct links (such as we did), they both face the task of this struggle against trotskyism.

For our part, we are going to fight the anti-party and anti-Leninist social-democratic trash from Cliff and others to the end. In our view, the fight against Trotskyism is one of the essential tasks of the world communist left today. And I worry that your fascination with the IS trend detracts you from the serious work of making a real study of Marxist theory and a real analysis of the current vexed problems in the world. As well, I worry that your definition of yourself as coming from the Maoist and Stalinist background, besides being an implied denigration of the mass struggles of the 60s and 70s, means denigrating your own capacity to develop revolutionary views and practices. The Cliff trend doesn't represent a break-away from the established trotskyist trends, but it is an old, established trend, whose history shows its corruption many times over.

So much for now, I look forward to seeing the CLN further develop its views on the vexed questions of the world movement.

Communist regards,

[...]

Member of the Central Committee,
Marxist-Leninist Party

consensus." This consensus, hence, was to go beyond the Revolution's social base.

Of course, from the very first moment the Sandinistas not only sought "consensus" outside the social base of the revolution, they brought the hostile class forces into the government. They tried to rule in coalition with the bourgeoisie. And when that government coalition collapsed, they continued to woo the bourgeoisie, offering it money, subsidies, government posts, even to businessmen who had fled to Miami. So when the FSLN leadership complains that consensus wasn't sought in the past, this is not a description of their past policy. It is instead a pledge to bow down even deeper to the bourgeoisie in the future.

Revolution exhausted them

And why did their own supporters become cynical about the Sandinistas? Was it due to the constant concessions to the right-wing and the repeated cutbacks in programs for the masses? Not at all, says the new Sandinista resolutions. It was due to the horrible burden of literacy campaigns and social welfare.

"...Recruitment for the SMP [the draft], the mobilization of brigadistas in production tasks, the organization of popular health campaigns, the literacy campaign, the organization of the militias and the BIRs (Regular Infantry Battalions), implementation of the distribution system by ration card, among others, were central tasks of revolutionary power carried out by our militants... Nevertheless, these actions contributed to the FSLN's political exhaustion."

The FSLN document mixes together deeply unpopular acts (the substitution of the draft for popular militias) with revolutionary social measures. But its analysis is clear—the point is that the mass mobilization for social aims was so exhausting. It is blaming the mass revolutionary movement for its ills, when in fact it abandoned the mass revolutionary movement step by step in order to win over the bourgeoisie and seek a deal with U.S. imperialism.

In the countryside

The document admits that the FSLN alienated large sections of the peasantry. This is, of course, obvious. The question is why were they alienated. The FSLN blames such measures as land reform. It isn't worried about the mass of poor peasants who never received land. It doesn't point out that the land reform was half-hearted and left many landless peasants desperate and angry as they suffered destitution while seeing the FSLN government protect the unused land of pro-contra "patriotic" landlords. It doesn't point to the government's lack of support for the other agricultural needs of the peasants, and its channeling of resources into the hands of the capitalist farmers.

Oh no, its analysis is that too much land was distributed, and this "led to the indiscriminate confiscation of land from large, medium and even some small private producers. Although this was gradually corrected, it had already had

negative effects."

There was of course arbitrariness in the way the Sandinistas carried out their programs. But the brunt of the new Sandinista project is to forget about land reform altogether. Just leave the poor and landless peasants at the mercy of the wealthy farmers—in the name of protecting the "small private producers," of course.

The building of a new bureaucratic stratum

Meanwhile the Sandinista leadership doesn't admit that its interests diverged more and more from the masses. It hides the fact that it fostered the growth of a bureaucratic strata which would reap the benefits of a deal with the bourgeoisie, while the masses were left to pay the price.

Yet the life-style of this stratum was one of the reasons for increasing cynicism among the masses. The Sandinista document is forced to take some notice of this. It has to mention the elitism, arrogance, abuse of power, corruption, and that "some compañeros led lifestyles which contrasted with the difficult living conditions experienced by the majority of our population." (A polite way of referring to the cars and homes of the petty-bourgeois officialdom, while these same officials wanted to take away even the guaranteed food rations from the masses.) And the document mentions "There were cases of individuals ... accused of corruption who for a variety of reasons were kept in their posts or transferred to equivalent or even higher ones."

But it regards all this as matter of individual excesses. It doesn't admit that these were symptoms of the building up of a petty-bourgeois bureaucratic stratum. It even ends up praising the alleged purity and self-sacrifice of the Sandinista officialdom. Why, it would have us believe, "virtually all the top and middle leaders left government as poor as or poorer than when they entered it." Interesting. They left poorer than they were during the guerrilla struggle against Somoza? Or where were these officials recruited from? Or has Daniel Ortega given up his designer eyeglasses and donated them to charity? It is silent on comparing the position of the Sandinista officialdom to the masses, who made huge sacrifices for the revolution and gave up everything to support it against imperialist-bourgeois blockade. But, a few sentences after praising the supposed exemplary austerity of the Sandinista officialdom, even this document has to apologize that in leaving the government, certain officials rewarded themselves in a way that "led to injustices or abuses which the FSLN neither approves nor supports."

In fact the Sandinista leadership vacillated between the masses and the bourgeoisie. Its new program is to put the seal on abandoning any belief in the revolutionary movement of the masses. Boiled down to its briefest essence, its demand is mainly that the bourgeoisie and U.S. imperialism allow a petty-bourgeois stratum to join it in the ruling circles of Nicaragua.

Is the Chamorro government counter-revolutionary?

While jettisoning revolution, the Sandinista resolutions prepare to be a loyal opposition to Chamorro. The Chamorro government came to the power as the result of ten years of U.S. imperialist pressure, and ten years of bourgeois sabotage of the revolution. Chamorro ran the paper that was the voice of counterrevolution in Managua. But does that make it a counter-revolutionary government?

It wouldn't be nice for a reformist opposition to say such a thing. Not at all. After all, Chamorro has a place for FSLN bureaucrats in government positions. Chamorro wants to have the FSLN as junior partners, like a traditional bourgeois opposition, and that's just fine for the FSLN leaders. Nothing should be said to jeopardize that. So they analyze that only those UNO leaders who are opposed to employing FSLN bureaucrats are counter-revolutionary.

And so the resolution states that "A significant sector of UNO's leaders—particularly the group of eight parties which for one reason or another have taken up hard-line anti-Sandinista positions—are in the counterrevolutionary camp."

The UNO leadership is, of course, split into different factions. There is Chamorro and company, who thinks dealing with the FSLN is useful, certainly for the time being. And there are the ultras who want to trample openly over the masses without any talk of reconciliation. This is a split among the gravediggers of the revolution, a split over whether they can enlist the FSLN in their ghoulish work.

But for the FSLN leadership, this means that Chamorro is not counterrevolutionary. After all, Chamorro is still giving positions to Sandinistas. If the FSLN had won the election, Ortega would have offered to make her a junior partner. And now that Chamorro won, they realize that in any deal they would have to be the junior partners until the next election.

The Esquipulas peace process

The Sandinista leadership not only wants to work with Chamorro, they want to work with imperialism. Their program seeks to assure imperialism that the Sandinistas are no threat. This is accomplished through praising the Esquipulas (Arias) peace process. Of course, they sum it up as a great victory for Sandinism: it "isolated the contras even from their US patrons and made it impossible for them to continue with their policy of war."

You wouldn't guess from such fine, triumphal rhetoric that the Sandinistas were defeated by the contra political coalition and driven from power.

The outcome of the Central American peace plan was that, despite one concession after another by the Sandinistas, despite one promise after another, the contras were never disbanded until the Sandinistas were removed from power. No concession offered to imperialism or the

neighboring Central American pro-American regimes was enough. The only thing that would satisfy the White House and Congress was the removal of the Sandinistas from power.

Even after the Chamorro government came to power, the contras were still maintained as an army. Only after months, and still more promises and concessions, did the partial disarming of the contras begin. The contras were promised an area of the country to themselves, rewards for their years of murdering, raping and pillaging the Nicaraguan countryside, and their continued viability as a major force in Nicaragua. The Chamorro government not only wants to give them pensions, but pensions higher than those received by disabled Nicaraguan veterans or the families of those killed in action against the contras, and this has been the subject of mass struggle.

Bankrupt before the collapse of revisionism

As well, the Sandinista document only hints at the significance of the collapse of one revisionist regime after another. Yet this collapse is not only a major world development, but it is of direct interest to Nicaragua in that the Sandinistas had close ties with world revisionism (as well as with social-democracy). The Sandinistas followed many prescriptions from world revisionism in their attempts to come to terms with the bourgeoisie, to seek favor with U.S. imperialism, and to build up a bureaucratic stratum. But the Sandinistas simply don't want to touch the collapse of revisionism directly. This is too sensitive a subject—too close to the theme of the collapse of the Sandinista revolutionary pretensions themselves.

Thus the document still praises the revisionist countries as "socialist", although these countries had bureaucratic state-capitalist regimes. And it doesn't talk about the failure of most of these regimes to exist anymore.

It does have a certain implied criticism and says that "practices from socialist [read: revisionist, state-capitalist] countries were reproduced which led us to take up a one-party style in the political leadership of society and to an excessive emphasis on the control and centralization of public administration."

This is partly true and partly another affirmation of their past practice in the name of self-criticism. For example, despite their "one-party style", they always wanted to rule alongside the bourgeoisie and sought to bring hostile class forces and parties into the government in the name of "pluralism". The "self-criticism" is written in such a way as to reinforce this past practice.

At the same time, the Sandinista leadership was intolerant towards mass forces that opposed them, and they took a model of bureaucratic and even despotic measures from the revisionist countries, both with respect to the state and with respect to the mass organizations. For example, the Sandinistas had their own disdain of elections, and the model of bureaucratic rule over the masses in the revision-

ist countries probably reinforced them in this. They only instituted elections as a concession to the right-wing and imperialism, even though they could easily have won elections in the early years.

But unfortunately, the Sandinistas aren't moving towards revolutionary democracy, but simply to parliamentary games with the bourgeoisie. A large bureaucracy will remain, and the role of the working masses is only to be a cheering squad or pressure group to get the bourgeois bureaucrats to hold open some spots for the Sandinista petty-bourgeois bureaucrats. If the new Sandinista dream goes through, the masses will be able to vote (every six years) for a shift this way or that in who exploits them and who guarantees the wealth of the upper classes. But no matter who wins the election, the state machine will stay in the hands of exploiters and bureaucrats. Like the revisionists worldwide, the Sandinista leadership are in transit from one position foreign to the rule of the working masses to another position, also foreign to the rule of the working masses. There can be no tears for the old Sandinista bureaucratic idea of the state, but no applause either for their new conception.

For the revolutionary class organization of the Nicaraguan toilers

The FSLN to the contrary, the reversal of one revolutionary measure after another, and then the installation of the pro-contra Chamorro government, marks the end of the decade of revolution following the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship. A difficult and harsh period is in store

for the Nicaraguan workers and peasants. They must build up a new revolutionary movement. It is not simply a continuation of the old, but will be based directly on waging a class struggle against the rule of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie.

The FSLN new program presents itself as a summing up of the new situation. Actually, it is just a summing up of the FSLN attempt for ten years to ally with the bourgeoisie. It doesn't look the truth in the face, that the attempt to whitewash the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie as "patriotic" co-workers was a miserable fiasco. Instead, behind its revolutionary phrases, it holds that one must abandon even the pretensions of the old Sandinista program in order to bow deeper to the bourgeoisie and the American government. The new congress of the FSLN is designed to orient it to being a reformist party, that squabbles with the government in power, but is loyal to the parliamentary game of bourgeois politics. They want to play the game of Democrats and Republicans with Chamorro, in which it doesn't matter who is the majority and who the minority, because the basic system continues unchanged. They only oppose as "counterrevolutionary" those who would exclude them from such a bipartisan "consensus" style of government.

It is not at all clear that such a consensus style of bourgeois government will develop in Nicaragua. But if it does, to take part in the bourgeois coalition would be treachery to the interests of the workers and peasants. The new resolutions of the FSLN leadership show that the toilers of Nicaragua must achieve their own voice and their own organization.

New tasks confront Nicaraguan Marxist-Leninists

Part Two

(The introductory article, Part one, appeared in the July issue of the Workers' Advocate. Additional parts of this article will deal with further issues of revolutionary work.)

The advent of the pro-contra Chamorro government to power in Nicaragua earlier this year brought a new situation to Nicaragua. Like every sharp change, it leads all major political forces involved to make their summation and reorient themselves. As we discuss in this issue of the *Supplement*, the Sandinista leadership is putting forward its summation—that it must bow still deeper to the bourgeoisie and imperialism and become a typical reformist party.

But there is another force in Nicaragua than the Sandinistas, a force closer to the toiling masses. This is the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua (MAP-ML). And it too faces new tasks, and the evaluation of the plus and minuses of its past decade of struggle.

Past periods of reevaluation

This is not the first time that MAP-ML has faced such a situation and the need for rethinking its methods and tasks in the light of a new situation.

MAP itself arose out of the midst of vigorous debates and reconsiderations of policy that took place in 1970-71

in the Nicaraguan revolutionary movement. In these discussions the activists had to take account of the results of decades of changes in Nicaragua during the Somoza dictatorship. The working class had become more prominent, and in the countryside too capitalist relations were spreading. As well, there was the reevaluation of the methods of struggle championed by various forces.

MAP was formed in 1971. It sought to organize the Nicaraguan toilers, and it opposed the petty-bourgeois orientation of the FSLN, such as foco-ism. MAP comrades participated in certain common activities with FSLN militants, and respected the determination of the Sandinistas, but didn't merge with them and carried out an independent path of struggle. MAP was also active in the workers' struggles, where they came up against the entrenched position of the revisionists in the unions. Right amidst the workers, MAP opposed the servility to the bourgeoisie of the revisionists of the "Socialist" and "Communist" Parties, and MAP's work led to the formation of the Workers Front (Frente Obrero) trade union center in 1974-75. And then, in 1978 as the revolutionary crisis leading to the 1979 overthrow of Somoza began, MAP founded the MILPAS (Popular Anti-Somoza Militias) that were the second army of the insurrection. Hundreds of MILPAS militants gave their lives to topple the dictatorship.

After Somoza was overthrown in 1979, a broad offensive of the workers and peasants took place, for better conditions of employment, against economic sabotage by the owners, for seizing land from the big landholders, etc. It involved urban workers, agricultural workers, and also land-poor peasants. It did not come into existence because of the call of some group or party, but was an objective class upsurge of wide scope, and MAP threw itself right into the midst of this struggle. The Sandinistas however opposed this movement and denounced the supposedly "ultra-left" and "adventurist" forces of MAP and the Workers Front, and the Cuban revisionists also denounced the movement over the radio. The Sandinista leadership proceeded to clamp down on the masses in order to seek consensus with the bourgeoisie. They came down hard with arrests and repression against MAP and the Workers' Front trade unions, and they suppressed *El Pueblo*. The workers protested, but the mass wave of initiative was stamped out by the FSLN.

This was a setback to the masses and to MAP, and it marked a new situation for the revolution. It set the stage for what's happened throughout the 80's. The new twists in the revolution, the repression the militants faced, and the pressure to join in a coalition with the Sandinistas or the revisionists, caused a crisis in MAP's circles. MAP could not simply repeat the same forms and methods of struggle as in the past. And the old way of handling relations with the Sandinistas were dead and gone and had to be replaced with a new way. The old slogans and forms of organizing had to be modified in the new conditions.

MAP/ML survived and rebuilt itself for its new tasks.

Throughout the 80's it stood for revolutionary struggle for the interests of the masses as opposed to deals with the bourgeoisie. It stood for socialism, and for continuing the revolution to a power of the workers and toiling peasants. It repeatedly sought to develop organization in factories, communities, schools, etc.

But the revolution ebbed throughout the 80's. The masses displayed heroism against the CIA's contras and determination in various movements, but the Sandinistas turned to increasingly bureaucratized forms of organizations. Although there were outbursts of struggle, in the main the toilers' initiative to organize themselves on their own behalf didn't rebound, but seeped away.

And now there is the installation of the Chamorro government. There is no longer a government seeking to balance between revolution and counterrevolution. Now the old revolutionary wave is definitely over. A new period has begun. Its outlines are not yet established. It is not even clear whether the Chamorro-Sandinista compromise will reach a certain stability, or a more repressive government will come in power, or whether a period of chaos will ensue. But the prospects are quite different from the decade of the 80's. The time will come when the energy of the masses rebounds, and the long ebb will end, but the movement will come back on a new basis. And even while the level of mass initiative is relatively low, the sentiments and feelings of the masses and the basis of their political alignment is changing.

As this period begins, the MLP of Nicaragua (MAP-ML) is championing the interests of the toilers. It has kept its head and avoided being drawn into adventures in the early days after the election, and it has instead looked towards the mass struggle. But the new situation calls on it to consider its path of struggle, and how it must be modified. And it calls upon it to reconsider the strengths and weaknesses of what it accomplished throughout the 1980's. A great deal will depend on whether MLPN can draw together its activists and the revolutionary toilers and boldly set forward an appropriate course for the future.

We have worked with our fraternal comrades in MLPN now for a number of years. In this article we want to put forward some of our views on the issues now facing them. We differ from them on some issues, as the earlier public differences between our two parties on the question of the international Marxist-Leninist movement show (see the MLPN's views on "The political organization of the international working class" and our response "What road to world Marxist-Leninist unity?" in the June 20, 1989 issue of the *Supplement*). We hope that this discussion of tactics and strategy will help forge a common language between our two parties, so we can collaborate in facing the problems of the new decade.

Historic strengths

MLPN's historic strong point has been its class instinct and resolute stand in the class struggle. In the struggle

against the Somoza dictatorship, it rallied the working masses. And in the decade of the 80's, its strength was its ability to fight for the political independence of the working class during all the twists and turns of the conflict between petty-bourgeois Sandinism and bourgeois reaction.

Part of this strength was its constant attention to the search for ways and means to link up with the revolutionary motion and energy of the masses. It did not simply fold its hands when old forms of organization were disrupted by circumstances, but constantly sought out new appeals and new methods to link up with the masses in the changing situations. For example, if Sandinista repression or economic crisis disrupted one form of its work in the factories and trade unions, it would seek out another way to keep itself among the working class.

Because of these strengths, the MLPN, alone among the major political trends in Nicaragua, kept its honor through the complex years of Sandinista rule.

But at the same time, certain problems are coming to the fore at the present time. They are hindering the MLPN from dealing with the complex situation at present. How does one deal with a period of protracted decline in the movement (even though there are sporadic outbursts of struggle)? What are the new features of politics in the post-Sandinista government situation? How does one present the proletarian political trend inside Nicaragua at a time when the Sandinistas are in the opposition? How does one deal with the new world climate with the collapse of most revisionist regimes? How does one deal with the debates inside the revolutionary circles?

The nature of the Nicaraguan revolution

To begin with, there is the question of the nature of the Nicaraguan revolution. During the period of Sandinista rule, MAP called for continuing the revolution to the power of the workers and poor peasants. With the Chamorro government in power, it is clearly impossible to use such a slogan. A power of the toilers is now a matter of a new revolution, not a continuation and development of the 1979 revolution, which is now over. And the class movement of the workers has to deal now with a more sophisticated rule of the bourgeoisie (which includes the Sandinistas seeking the role of junior partner) than that of the narrowly-based Somoza regime.

In fact, MLPN clearly recognized that a new situation existed. Unlike the Sandinistas, it did not pretend that the country was still undergoing the "revolutionary process". And it immediately dropped the old slogans about continuing the revolution.

However, no general perspective has yet taken its place. The general slogans of mass struggle remained, but now without the overall slogan concerning the revolution. Their statements simply appeal for "Popular Unity" or other mass unity. (See, for example, the section on tactics in MLPN's "Basic thesis for the analysis of the situation and

the determination of our tactics in the immediate period —April 1990" in the May issue of the *Supplement*.) Thus one task that now confronts them is to define the path for the coming period, and to orient their work in accord with it.

It is of course natural that a party might take some time to consider what the nature of the revolution now was, especially in such a turbulent and unclear situation. But it is no longer clear what significance MLPN gives to this issue, and perhaps it even thinks "popular unity" is a sufficient answer. In fact, even before the elections, for a few years now, there has been some vagueness in the MLPN's views on the overall nature of the revolution. Although they maintained their old views, these views had less and less to do with the main appeals for struggle of the MLPN. Instead there were appeals for struggle through various types of popular or anti-imperialist unity. When *El Pueblo* was restarted, it maintained its masthead slogan of "expressing the aspirations of the majority". Yet these slogans, which conveyed the spirit of the earlier anti-Somoza uprising, do not evoke the class struggle that was currently proceeding in Nicaragua. Rather they show a tendency to move toward general democratic or anti-imperialist appeals.

The problem is not that terms like "popular front" or "anti-imperialist unity" or "popular unity" can never be used, depending what is meant by them. Nor is it necessary that every mass front emblazon the full communist program on its banner. The problem was that the appeals for broad mass struggle, the concept of the general fronts to be built, the tactics for organizing the masses, began to have less and less connection with the class struggle the MLPN stood for, and less and less to do with MLPN's overall analysis of the situation facing Nicaragua.

This could be seen in MLPN's reply to the Sandinista statements, after the elections, that denigrated revolutionary struggle as outdated and obsolete. The Sandinista leaders began to give interviews about the end of revolution in the current era (even while they proclaimed to the Nicaraguan masses that the "revolutionary process" was still alive). *El Pueblo*, in order to oppose this atmosphere of capitulation to the bourgeoisie, published Ho Chi Minh's *Testament*, which is an appeal for the defeat of the U.S. imperialist aggressors. But this missed the point. The old form of the revolutionary movement is indeed over in Nicaragua, and in much of the world. The revolutionary mobilization of the Nicaraguan toilers requires putting to the fore a new perspective, the perspective of the class struggle being waged in a more conscious and organized way. The new movement will not simply be a repeat of the old anti-Somoza movement. The old struggles, in Nicaragua and Vietnam and elsewhere, and their legacy, will not be forgotten, but it just won't work to simply raise their banner. (As well, and we will deal with this later on, it is necessary to oppose the revisionism of the Vietnamese party, and not to hide it under sentimental remembrances of the heroic liberation war against U.S. imperialism.)

United front tactics

The nature of MLPN's general appeals brings us to the question of united front tactics.

MLPN has had historic strengths on united front tactics. They have been conscious of mass moods, and they have been active in trying to develop forms to mobilize the masses. And, in dealing with other trends, they have avoided compromising their independent political stand.

But they have also had certain long-standing weaknesses. They generally don't see public criticism as part of united front tactics. And their approach to other trends appears to rely on an instinctive grasp of politics rather than clearly formulated idea of tactics. This has led them in some cases to take a "good guys, bad guys" view of certain groupings. When they are working with a trend or a grouping, such as a section of union activists, they simply regard it as good, and tend not to discuss the limitations of the grouping and of its general political stand. Such a discussion may have to be done tactfully, given the situation among the masses, but sometimes they don't do it at all. And when they see the need to stay clear of some reformist scheme, they may simply regard the scheme and grouping involved as bad, and they tend not to publicly discuss the matter.

Thus *El Pueblo* writes relatively little about such issues. There is an interesting article on such subjects here or there, but overall there is a lack of lively agitation and public discussion of some of the different stands and political trends coming up in the mass movement. It seems as if the MLPN doesn't recognize this as a subject of mass agitation, but only gives a restricted role to it. In general, the MLPN will denounce the right-wing stands and the stand of the Sandinista leadership. But they don't deal much with differences about how to build a movement independent of the right-wing and the Sandinistas, with the different conceptions of what such a movement should be, and with how these different conceptions reflect the class interests involved.

In the last few years, the trend of "left" reformism has grown in Nicaragua. The "left" reformists pose as critical of the Sandinistas from a left-wing perspective, but they haven't really moved beyond a reformist, or perhaps even a militant Sandinista, standpoint. This trend succeeded in gaining a number of votes in the elections. The MLPN correctly refused to merge its election campaign with these groupings, but MLPN didn't discuss the nature of this problem publicly, nor does it analyze the nature of these groupings in its press.

Yet, without a conception of the struggle between political trends, the danger is that united front tactics may be degraded to simply a search for the golden scheme that will magically bring in large numbers. This is a real danger at a time when for years the mass struggles haven't gone very far, when every promising mass action has later petered out instead of building up into a broad movement. The idea can arise that vague democratic and anti-imperialist phrases can serve as a short cut to uniting large

numbers.

In any case, MLPN's conception of united front tactics seem to have gone backwards over the last few years with the giving of many calls for a broad front, or a popular front, or popular unity. It has generally been hard for us to understand concretely what MLPN has been calling for in these appeals, what these appeals meant organizationally and practically, and how they are connected with MLPN's other work. It has been said these appeals are a means of making sure that the working class isn't isolated from other sections of the toilers (peasants, handicraftsmen, small vendors, etc.) But it is the development of mass struggle or agitation among these sectors that would accomplish this, not declaring "popular unity". And it has been said that this isn't a political front, but a front to link up economic interests. But it isn't so simple to separate the political from the economic. Such an explanation suggests a conception that separates the mass struggles from the overall stand of the MLPN on the political tasks of the day.

The collapse of revisionism

The crisis of world revisionism is one of the historic events of our day. It affects the ideological climate surrounding the working masses and all activists. The view of the ongoing collapse of most revisionist regimes, why it has taken place and what it proves, profoundly affects one's idea of what should be done. The evolution of world revisionism also directly affects the tactics and views of the revisionist and reformist parties around the world. In Nicaragua, this collapse has had direct effects.

But MLPN has been silent on this. They don't discuss this type of issue in *El Pueblo*.

Among the issues raised by the crisis of revisionism is what is the alternative. Cuba, Vietnam, etc. have been posing as the real communists and the alternative to Gorbachovism. With his squabble with the Sandinistas, Castro has been hiding the fact that he fervently agrees with the Sandinista conciliation with the bourgeoisie and imperialism.

The MLPN hasn't dealt with this in their press. Various MLPN comrades may privately pour scorn on the Cuban revisionists, but in the past the MLPN rarely wrote about them. Now, when it is just as important as ever to denounce Castroist revisionism, there have even been a number of basically friendly reports about Cuba in *El Pueblo*. There was a bit of criticism, but no real attempt to deal with Cuban revisionism. And, as we have remarked before, there was the reprinting of Ho Chi Minh's testament. This could only create further confusion about the crisis of revisionism.

There are certain questions about Cuba that have to be handled carefully. The Cuban medical personnel, teachers, etc. were highly valued by the poverty-stricken masses in Nicaragua, and so there was outrage over the Chamorro government-Sandinista agreement to remove them. And, in

general, U.S.-Soviet collaboration against Cuba is really filthy and worth denouncing. But the MLPN comrades, while sensitive on such points, are oblivious to the need to conduct a systematic exposure of Cuban revisionism before the masses.

Thus, while *El Pueblo* does not expose revisionism, a number of articles expressing positive views toward various opportunist forces get expressed. This has not only been the case with respect to Cuba, but there was also *El Pueblo*'s recent publication of Ho Chi Minh's testament, which has been referred to above. Since *El Pueblo* didn't make any remarks concerning the revisionism of the Vietnamese party and its present plight, this could only create confusion. And similarly, there was a small article in *El Pueblo* commemorating Luis Prestes, the now deceased leader of the pro-Soviet party in Brazil and the architect of Brazilian revisionism.

The MLPN has spoken to the crisis of world revisionism in the joint statement of the delegations of the Marxist-Leninist Parties of Nicaragua and the United States—May 1990. (See the July issue of the *Workers' Advocate*.) However, as far as we know, the MLPN has not published this statement—only the *Workers' Advocate* has. As well, *El Pueblo* did begin to serialize our statement "Tasks of Workers' Communism During the Collapse of Revisionism". But it never gave the views of the MLPN on the subjects covered in this statement, and it even stopped printing the statement before it had gotten very far.

It would be one thing if MLPN vigorously put forward views against revisionism in *El Pueblo*, while also opening its pages as a forum to activists with other views. That would perhaps be one way of airing the issue, and of establishing *El Pueblo* as the place where activists go to debate the most crucial issues of the day. But instead *El Pueblo* is basically silent, and the MLPN is silent on the burning issue of the political collapse of revisionism.

Some sources

We hope to deal with additional issues of revolutionary work in future articles.

Some of the views that we think should be reconsidered may be connected to remembrances of the days of the fight against Somoza. There are many valuable lessons from the legacy of MAP's struggle in this period. But there were also different conditions that affect certain methods of work. Yet that was the time of mass upsurge, while most of the era of Sandinista rule is a period of gradual decline of mass motion, and therefore recollections of the old days must have an added attraction. As well, there are some traditional ideas of the Latin American left as well as non-Leninist ideas spread in the communist ranks since the 1930's.

Furthermore, there is the influence of certain parties for whom MLPN had a great deal of respect, such as the Communist Party of Colombia (M-L), which was part of a grouping of the mid and latter 1980's which put out the

magazine *Theory and Practice*. The MLPN took up many of the slogans and views from this grouping, even though they sought to give them their own interpretation. Yet *Theory and Practice* was a grouping that was degenerating and never broke free of the wrong orientations put forward in the 80's by the Party of Labor of Albania. Indeed, this grouping could not even support MLPN wholeheartedly because it really wanted to flirt with the Sandinistas. The Ecuadoran MLCPE and others in this grouping never wanted to support MLPN from the first, and preferred to gaze lovingly at the Sandinistas. And the leaderships of such parties as the CP of Colombia (ML) and the CP of Spain (ML) also went over to supporting the Sandinista regime.

Yet the MLPN loyally followed the *Theory and Practice* grouping. Its support for this grouping was one reason that it failed to deal with a trend that came up to support the MLPN among revolutionaries around the world. These revolutionaries were outside of or opposed to or denounced by the *Theory and Practice* trend.

It wasn't wrong for MLPN to have contact with the *Theory and Practice* grouping, which for a short while hinted at some militant stands, with the leaderships of the Communist Parties (ML) of Colombia and Spain even talking some big words in private. But it was a mistake to adopt this grouping uncritically, to think that it had the answer to the questions of revolutionary work and organization, to restrict oneself to it, and not to see the wrong direction that the *Theory and Practice* grouping, including the Colombians, was increasingly taking. The influence of the *Theory and Practice* grouping has caused the MLPN a number of problems. Meanwhile, the demoralizing and capitulationist views of the *Theory and Practice* grouping, such as the frantic search for immediate breakthroughs rather than consideration of how to build up a revolutionary trend, has led those parties, including the Colombians, quite far into the gutter.

The *Theory and Practice* grouping has betrayed the MLPN and fallen into Sandinism. Indeed, with respect to the Colombians and some others, they are even praising Castroism. But the MLPN has not mentioned publicly the treachery of the *Theory and Practice* grouping, to say nothing of analyzing the general framework that the *Theory and Practice* group put forward. *El Pueblo* has never informed its readers of what became of these parties and groups. As a result, it seems that the general ideas of the *Theory and Practice* grouping remain influential with MLPN.

Support the revolutionary Nicaraguan workers!

The MLPN has gathered much valuable experience over its years of struggle. It is the MLPN which groups around itself the class-conscious workers and activists of Nicaragua. Once again, it faces the task of summing up its experience in order to be able to deal with new situation in Nicaragua. Revolutionaries throughout the world will be watching the MLPN and wishing it success. □

The arithmetic of the drug war How Liars Use Statistics

From the Aug. 30 issue of Boston Worker, voice of the MLP-Boston:

Two weeks ago the *Globe*, the *Herald* and *Patriot Ledger* all carried an article planted by the MBTA [Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority] management which implied that drug and alcohol tests showed that 17 per cent of the T workers were getting high on the job. This is the second time in two months that such articles have been carried and they are perfect examples of how to lie with statistics.

The T did not give figures on the general population of T workers, but on groups likely to fail the drug and alcohol tests. This is a deliberate attempt at disinformation since the T withheld its figures for bus drivers and train crews who are required to take drug and alcohol tests at their annual physicals. These figures would show that drug use

among T workers is much lower than among the general public.

In the T's figures, over a third of the people who tested positive for drugs were workers returning from drug treatment programs—and you would expect a high rate of relapse among these people since this is why they got help in the first place. Another 40 per cent came from a small group who were suspected by their supervisors of being drunk or high on the job. The rest were people who failed urine tests after accidents. But even here the tests did not indicate the workers were high on the job, but only that they had used some drug in the past month. One middle-aged woman was fired after a test mistook a pain killer she had taken three days earlier for heroin.

These articles were government propaganda in favor of random drug testing to harass transit workers. □

Torture by the New York police

Police torture in "free and democratic" America? It's an everyday event. Take New York City for example. In early August, police sprayed a young man with Capstun, a chemical used commonly to subdue people. But spraying the youth man wasn't satisfying enough to the police. Once sprayed, the police then used an electric shock gun on him.

The electric current ignited the chemical spray inflicting second degree burns.

The NYPD tried to justify itself by claiming they didn't know Capstun was flammable. They suspended its use, in favor of a nonflammable mace that can be used together with stun-guns. How, how humanitarian they are! □