

# Chicago Workers' Voice

## Theoretical Journal Issue #9



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# Editorial Guide to Issue #9 of *Chicago Workers' Voice Theoretical Journal*

by Jake

The slaughter in Yugoslavia, Anarchism, class analysis in the U.S, Mexico, Nixon, Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg: that's what's in this issue or, at least, that's what we've written about.

NC from LA and Jack from Chicago analyze the war in the former Yugoslavia. NC focuses attention to the horrors of ethnic slaughter. What is the history of this and especially what is the role of imperialism? Jack adds his comments on this same question.

Sarah's review of Ulricke Heider's book on anarchism discusses some of the history of this political philosophy and analyzes its major trends. We are also printing a speech given at a discussion forum three years ago. This speech points out that anarchism attracts much of the radically inclined youth. Further, we often find that we are working together with anarchists at a variety of actions. What can we say about this trend, beyond that we don't agree with it?

Continuing to debate the role and composition of the working class, we are publishing the first half of a major article analyzing certain theories about the "middle strata" by Pete Tabolt of the Boston Communist Study Group. *CWV TJ* disagrees with Tabolt's position so Jake presents a rebuttal to Boston's article. What do you think? Has the industrial proletariat (which has grown proportionately smaller) missed its chance to lead a revolution? Has the "middle strata" become decisive, as some left theorists have posed? Some claim that the "middle class will become the basis for a new wave of progressive politics. Tabolt, however, is pessimistic about organizing either the proletariat or the middle strata.

Our coverage of Mexico continues with a diverse selection of articles. A letter from the members of *La Coordinadora Internacional en Apoyo al Pueblo de Mexico*, exposes repression against the left in Mexico. Jack looks at two recent books on Mexican politics by liberal leftists. What kind of change is needed in Mexico and where is it going to come from? Two articles from the Mexican newspaper *El Machete* continue our coverage of their debate on Marxism. Closer to home, Jack corrects some of the many mistakes that Mark and Joseph (our ex-comrades in Detroit) make in regard to Mexico.

On the cultural front, CV of the *Los Angeles Workers' Voice* gives a sharp commentary on the new movie *Nixon*. From the viciousness of the attacks on Oliver Stone, one might think that Stone has become a communist revolutionary. No way! says CV.

Barb continues discussing the politics and ideology of Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky, this time taking on their views regarding nationalism and self-determination. These are major issues in world politics today and some people think that time has proved Luxemburg right about nationalism. Barb thinks Lenin was right, and she gives a clear and detailed explanation of the difference between Lenin and Luxemburg on these questions.

Finally, you may already be aware that *Chicago Workers' Voice Theoretical Journal* is now a quarterly publication. We are honoring all subscriptions for the full number of issues purchased.

As always we encourage our readers to write us with their comments. ◇

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### *CLETA, Continued from p. 3*

at the destroyed site of the Open Forum. They declared the "First Aguascalientes in Mexico City" in exile. "Aguascalientes" events are being held as "lightening" actions all around Mexico City, at universities, and other places. CLETA and other organizations are calling for the resignation of the mayor of Mexico City, and the rector of the National University. They are also demanding access to the Open Forum site in order to rebuild it.

Expressions of solidarity with CLETA and the other independent organizations of CNOSI (Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Sociales Independientes) can be sent to

**CLETA: Donato Guerra No 1-311  
Col. Juarez/C.P. 06600  
Mexico D.F.**

For more information, questions or communication contact, La Coordinadora Internacional en Apoyo del Pueblo de Mexico-Chicago; E-mail: [rcs@mcs.com](mailto:rcs@mcs.com) ◇

# Letter against repression in Mexico:

January 26, 1996

To: *Chicago Workers' Voice*

From: Members of La Coordinadora Internacional en Apoyo al Pueblo de Mexico, in Chicago

This is to bring to your readers's attention recent events in Mexico which highlight the ongoing and increasing political repression and harassment of any forces that may threaten the government's already shaky stability.

Every day brings a new exposure of the ties of the Mexican political class to the drug cartels and their growing instability in general (assassinations, the Dow Jones publication declaring a coup de etat by the Mexican military, a missing ex-president Salinas hiding out either with the New York Times, Dow Jones or Fidel Castro -- or all of those). However, at the same time, and even while they are still carrying on negotiations with the EZLN in Chiapas, a campaign of repression and harassment has increased.

Over the past months and continuing to the present, the PRI government has begun deportation actions against a number of foreigners in Chiapas. These deportations have included foreign journalists, film makers, "solidarity people" and priests who support the liberation theology branch of the Church or who have been perceived as sympathetic to the mass struggles. Meanwhile in Mexico City the leaders of SUTAU (the bus drivers union-Route 100) are still imprisoned after almost 10 months, and there are still persons in jail who were arrested in 1993 and 1994 as presumed supporters or organizers of the EZLN. Threats have been made against many other organizations. Many leaders of left wing and independent organizations are living in semi-clandestinity — still active and public but continually changing residence, etc.

On January 13, 1996 the government struck against another well known left wing activist organization -- El Centro Libre de Experimentacion Teatral y Artistica (CLETA) [Free Center for Theatrical and Artistic Experimentation]. CLETA has been well known for the past twenty years for its independent and anti-reformist politics, for beginning the publication of *El Machete* newspaper in 1993 and for its takeover some ten years ago of an amphitheater owned by the National University in Chapultepec Park in Mexico City. This amphitheater (Foro Abierto de la Casa del Lago — the Open Forum at the House on the Lake) became a center for popular revolutionary theater, political discussion and organizing activities. Its popularity redoubled after the EZLN uprising in Chiapas as CLETA was one of the early, open supporters of the rebellion in Mexico. There have been

many tries over the years by the university and the government to evict CLETA from the locale, but without success.

Without success, that is, until January 13th of this year when the government sent more than 100 police (riot squad, special forces and federal police) in the middle of the night to evict the small number of supporters who stay the night. They then used bull dozers and other heavy equipment to completely destroy the theater, leaving nothing but a pile of rubble. It does not seem coincidental that on January 12th, CLETA had announced that on January 14th the Open Forum would be declared the "First Aguascalientes in Mexico City"; this seems to have been the "straw that broke the camel's back" for the beleaguered government. The significance of the founding of "Aguascalientes" is tied to recent and past history. Aguascalientes was the location where, in 1914, the organizations of the Mexican Revolution (most importantly those of Villa, and Zapata) met to try and agree on a written program to unite them. The Zapatistas revived the name when they built the amphitheater and meeting center in Zapatista territory to host the first convention of the National Democratic Convention. While the Zapatista estimation of the CND convention was overly optimistic, their "Aguascalientes" infuriated the Mexican government. So much so, that in January of 1994, when the army launched its military offensive against the EZLN, it captured the "Aguascalientes" and razed it to the ground, not leaving a single seat or building standing. Since then the EZLN and its supporters have built four new "Aguascalientes" in the liberated zone and called for others to be created as free cultural/political places for refuge and organizing for the masses. Another "Aguascalientes" was built in Tijuana. Apparently, the declaration of an "Aguascalientes" in Mexico City where the mass movement is so large, was too much for the PRI government. They launched the police attack and have threatened arrest of CLETA leaders, including Enrique Cisneros, one of its founders.

The government is not being given any chance to enjoy the destruction of the Open Forum. Despite the government threats and violence, a protest was held on January 14th, involving more than 30 mass organizations,

*Continued on p. 2, See CLETA*

## Movie Review: *Nixon*

by CV, *Los Angeles Worker's Voice*

The movie *Nixon* is quite "hot" and topical. Oliver Stone's latest movie, starring the superb actor Anthony Hopkins in the lead role and a host of other fine actors and actresses, has stirred up quite a firestorm of criticism in the corporate owned media.

But why? Has Oliver Stone declared himself for socialism? No! Does Stone's movie *Nixon* really expose US capitalism as a ruthlessly exploitative and decadent social system that must be overthrown by the US working class if humankind is to survive? No! Then why, in the name of Tricky Dick and all the imperialist gods of war, is Oliver Stone being attacked so viciously by the all-American PAYtriotic press, TV, and radio? Can it be that Stone has exposed the late naked emperor Richard Nixon for the paranoid, war-mongering state-terrorist bomber & megalomaniac that he was? Is it because Stone has torn to shreds the massive falsification of history by bribed pseudo-intellectualist liars and other promoters of the late infamous Nixon as a "great American statesman"? Perhaps so, because Stone's movie certainly helps demolish the mythology around Nixon as a man of honor and character.

Nixon is properly portrayed by Stone as a corrupt, ambitious, evil character who could and would do anything to be the supreme commander and chief of the US ship of state of the real #1 "Evil Empire", US imperialism. Yes indeed, Stone does show us "Nixon's the one", the one who destroyed many on his enemies lists in McCarthyite style inquisitional Congressional committee "hearings", the one who for years mercilessly bombed Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, the one who authorized Watergate style burglaries, the one who conspired to murder Fidel Castro, did murder the reformist Chilean President Allende, helped crush his elected regime, and other rivals of US imperialism with both CIA and Mafia assistance.

Yes, and Stone also shows us that Nixon's the one, who like a faithful dog, served well his masters, Wall St. bankers, Big Manufacturing firms, the merchants of death in the military-industrial complex, the elite rulers, the super-rich capitalists who really rule the AmeriKKKan government and the New World Order (pun intended!).

But does the liberal Democrat Oliver Stone really get down to the core of why Tricky Dick Nixon ordered horrifying war crimes, burglaries, assassinations, CIA led coups, US National Guard executions of anti-war protestors at Kent State & Jackson State colleges, & paid off thugs to pose as "Hard Hats" to assault anti-war marchers, etc.? No, here is Oliver Stone's self-censorship, his

step back at the edge of the cliff. Stone will not and cannot go beyond the bounds of liberal capitalist politics. There is a powerful scene in the movie where Stone seems to be getting warm. It is a dialogue at the Capitol Steps between Nixon and a group of protestors staging a sleep-in during the Vietnam War. The radicalized youth challenge Nixon to stop the bombing, end the war, and bring all US troops home at once. Nixon lyngly assures the protestors that he is "doing all in his power to bring peace and end the war, blah, blah, blah." But the youth find his answers unconvincing. The protestors point out that they are not taken in by Nixon's lies and point out that "the bombing continues, the war goes on because the system is really responsible for the war, etc." Aha, "the system" at last! But in the bourgeois liberal script of Oliver Stone, alas, there is no room for playing "I've Got a Secret" or Name That System!

Facts are that most the youthful anti-war protestors of that time were enlightened through the mass movement to know the name of this plundering and war breeding system, it is the capitalist system based on exploitation of person by person. But in this scene, Stone, the liberal Democrat, lets no one utter such clearly dangerous, subversive words from their lips. Instead Stone has Nixon himself muttering some garbled phrase about the "system" being like a "wild animal out of control!" with a split second reference to Bankers on Wall St. and the Pentagon. End of scene pronto!

It is OK for Stone to key in on Nixon's drinking problems, inferiority complex, childhood problems with his Quaker mother, & these Freudian psychoanalytic wonders in Stone's imagination along with speculations in search of the causes of the rise and fall of Tricky Dick Nixon. But Stone just throws in the towel at the key moments when he could have clearly exposed the true systemic origins of modern wars, plunder and corruption as a cancer endemic to exploitative capitalist production relations and class rule. Had Stone made the "leap" in this film, possibly more viewers could draw the conclusion that the system needs to be toppled, not just a president!

Well, as they used to say, the workers revolution will not be televised—not even by Oliver Stone! And safe to say, it won't be supported by hardly any Hollywood stars or producers either! But if we are to seriously attempt to put an end to war crimes, racism and repression that were shown in the film, the sleeping giant of the US working class is going to have to be shaken and awakened to understand its historic task and mission to build up revolutionary forces in its struggles to make a real working class socialist revolution! ◇

# ***Balkan Killing Fields --***

## **Down with Nationalism and Imperialism!**

### **All Capitalists are "War Criminals"!**

by NC, *Los Angeles Workers' Voice*

The end of the "Cold War" era and the internal collapse of the state capitalist regimes of Eastern Europe circa 1990 provided the material economic and political basis for the implosion of the former Yugoslav Republic and the current round of bloody campaigns fought between nationalist and chauvinist clans, Serbian, Bosnian, and Croat, et. al. Millions of workers have paid a horrifying price for following in the wake of bourgeois nationalism and religious sectarianism on all sides. They get to kill and be killed while "their own" capitalists get to rob and exploit them. Today these ruling elite nationalist "liberators" directly invite the major imperialist powers so they can set up "joint" plunder.

By 1991, the Croatian and Slovenian ruling elites, never satisfied with the hegemony of the Serb controlled federal state in Belgrade and now backed up by a re-united Germany and Austria, seceded from the old Yugoslav federation in 1991 and formed "independent" states still laden with debt and other IOUs to a number of imperialist powers. Bosnia-Herzegovina, though a majority muslim, has, since 1991, been torn asunder at first by a 3-way civil war between Orthodox Bosnian Serbs, Catholic Croats and the Bosnian muslims. The religious sectarianism also being fostered to hide real naked class interests of the leaders of the Nationalist bands.

Bosnia-Herzegovina being the most heterogeneous of all 6 Yugoslav republics by far, has been the main killing fields of the victims of the policy of "ethnic cleansing" carried out by all the nationalist forces. Close to 200,000 people have died in the war and close to 2,000,000 have been displaced from their homes.

For the first two and a half years of warring, it seemed that the Serbs in Bosnia and in the Serbian enclave in Croatia called the Krajina, being temporarily backed by military and financial aid from the Serbian government of Slobodan Milosovic was going to gain the upper hand on the battlefields (or we should say killing fields as this war has left little distinction between soldier and civilian on all 3 sides). The none too objective establishment media hacks here of late seem to concentrate on

Serb war crimes, but the facts are that ALL sides have been guilty of massive war crimes, mainly horrific butchery of helpless civilians and POWs. True to form for those choosing butchers, the British and French imperialist and especially Russian media covers up for the Serbs. The

German and Austrian media covers up for the Croats and lately the Bosnian muslims too. The US media at first played down the Serb atrocities, but as the US government has chosen its current proxies, the Bosnian Muslim state and Croatia over the last year, the corporate controlled media here now focuses only the mass murders of Bosnian muslims and Croats and totally dummies up about atrocities against the Serbs. In other words the flunkey like TV and radio media of each major power involved stands there next to their own government holding a smoking gun but only pointing the finger at the other side.

As the US and Germany have entered the fray with their direct military aid and assistance to the Bosnian muslim state and the Croatian regime in Zagreb in 1995, the tide of battle has turned. The Croatian forces have pushed the Serbs out of the Krajina region and the Bosnian Muslim dominated forces are more than holding their own against the Bosnian Serb armies and had regained part of their lost territory at the time of the recent US brokered "peace agreement" in Dayton, Ohio, signed by the leaders of the 3 main warring nationalist groups on November 21st. Under the guise of upholding this "agreement" the imperialists states will now send interventionist forces of at least 60,000 combat troops. 23,000 from the USA alone!

Recent events show that all the squawking about "punishing war criminals" by the Clinton regime was just so much bull. To carry through its plans for Pax-Americana, it invites here none other than 3 of the major war criminals to sign on to its bogus Dayton, Ohio, peace plan, the political heads of state Milosovic of Serbia, Tudjiman of Croatia and Itzbegovic of Bosnia.

Indictments anyone?? Not on your life! The business of America is really business!! Now most all the "war criminals" are really for peace sayeth Dan Rather (CBS) and Tom Brokaw (NBC), etc.

Most Balkan reports, bourgeois and "leftist" deal mainly with the "external" struggles, clashes, diplomacy, personalities but notice hardly any, excepting a few genuine communist groups deal with the internal material aspects and contradictions that tore Yugoslav society apart and gave rise to the implosion of the Titoist Federal Republic by 1991.

Let us examine more deeply the politics and economy of Yugoslavia.

Fact is Yugoslavia was never a socialist country. The old ruling "Communist Party" (CP) or later "Communist League" of Yugoslavia came to power in 1945 as a victorious mass movement in its anti-fascist war for "national liberation." The CP government headed by the Croat Josip Broz Tito nationalized the industries and the lands of the pro-fascist bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces but this did not "liberate" the workers and farmers from the yoke of capitalism in toto, only capitalism in fascist form. All capitalist relations of production, wage labor, commodity production, market mechanisms, ruling class elite-party bureaucracy and technocrats solidified themselves in state-capitalist form by the late 40s.

(1) M. Djilas "Conversations with Stalin", Harcourt, Brace and Co. 1962. M. Djilas "The New Class", Praeger Publ. 1957

Tito's break with its close ally, Stalin's Russia in June 1948 was not based at all on opposition to the Russian state capitalist model of fake socialism but on Russia's attempt to economically and politically dominate and exploit the Yugoslav regime as it was doing with other East European and Balkan states.

(2) V. Dedijer "The Battle Stalin Lost" Viking Press 1971

In fact it is true there were significant differences in the Titoist model of state capitalism as opposed to the more centralized Russian model but in the main, these differences were quantitative and not qualitative. The Yugoslav state was a federalized political superstructure that meshed well with the "self managed" statified capital of the 6 separate Yugoslav Republics. The leading Yugoslav economist B. Kidric tries to make the case that the more "de-centralized" economy and so-called workers self management was a transitional socialist republic, but he could not get around the fact that all capitalist social relations, though modified, remained in place and the working class were still just hired and fired wage slaves with manager-technocrat manipulated councils promoted as a facade for real workers power. After 1948, Yugoslavia played both sides against the middle in the deadly "Cold War" rivalries for the best deals in trade, commerce, capital investment schemes and military supply and by the 1970s, this so-called "leader of the non-aligned nations" like most the other "non-aligned" nations was more firmly ensconced in the more powerful Western imperialist bloc and in the case of Yugoslavia, was in hoc to the Western Bankers and Corporations to the tune of \$20 billions by the early 1980s.

## **Economic-Political basis of Yugoslav Republic's Dismemberment**

The motion of the internal laws of capitalism and the buffeting around of the Yugoslav economy in the growing world economic crisis of the mid and late 70s created more friction amongst the state capitalist ruling groups. Political antagonism erupted as the living standards of the Yugoslav workers began a deep tumble and the ruling elites vastly stepped up the promotion of the poison of ethnic based politics in all 6 different republics. The most economically well off Croatian and Slovenian bosses blamed the crisis on the transfers of wealth to the Federal State in Belgrade and scapegoated the nationalities of the poorer regions, Montinegrins, Kosovars, Bosnians etc. The Serb leaders in Belgrade did the same. The main targets of this chauvinism was the independent workers' struggles which could be more effective if united across ethnic lines.

In the 1980s the chauvinist trends became much more pronounced as the economic and social crisis deepened with the falling rate of profit and capital accumulation slowed. State capitalist reforms of the 1970s had opened up Yugoslav industry to compete more on the global capitalist market. Hence the economy was much more adversely effected by the boom and bust cycles of the more powerful Western capitals. In addition the crisis of the Russian dominated bloc became more pronounced in the 1980s and this led to a steep decline of Yugoslav trade and commerce with that bloc.

Josip Broz (Tito) died in May, 1980 as the workers were finding that no so-called great man can, in the end, buck the laws of motion in Yugoslavia's decaying state capitalist order. Chasms already festering between the workers and the ruling professional, managerial and party elite in all 6 Republics that had been simmering under Tito only increased. Fitting any society geared to wage labor, the market and accumulation, the ruling class in crisis even more fervently pursued a policy of each separate republics capital for itself and the devil take the hindmost!

(3) For more details see Communist Review #11, Fall 1993, Communist Workers Organization, UK.

The ruling professional, managerial and political elites of the 6 republics implemented savage austerity programs in the mid-80s. By 1986-88, a huge wave of rebel workers strikes and protests had broken out, in Belgrade, Serbia, Zagreb, Croatia and other urban centers large and small. To forestall the growth and generalizing of the mass actions of the workers, the state capitalist

rulers and their nationalist hangers-on turned loose their leashes on previously restricted reactionary separatist gangs. In the 60s and 70s, some of the leaders of these gangs had actually been imprisoned during the Tito period, but now the establishment needed them to attack the workers. As the Yugoslav society began to implode in the late 80s, the organizing and arming of these gangs became more accelerated.

In Bosnia-Herzegovnia, the most ethnically heterogeneous of the republics, chauvinist incitement was the heaviest and open warfare of ethnic clans soon erupted.

Unlike the cover-up stories told by the capitalist/state propaganda outlets, in fact all 3 major ethnic groups in Bosnia organized political parties based mainly on ethnicity. There was Izetbegovic's muslim SDA Party, Karadzic's Bosnian orthodox Serb SDS Party and the Bosnian wing of Tudjman's Croatian catholic HDZ Party. All these outfits were extremely reactionary and dedicated to crushing any ethnically united workers organizations.

The reason the Bosnian muslims got the worst of the "ethnic cleansing" policies at first was that both the Bosnian Serb and Croatian outfits were heavily supplied with advanced weaponry and training from the Serbian and Croatian governments respectively. Since the end of 1994 with the more direct intervention of the major imperialist powers now more openly choosing sides, there has been a shift in the balance of military power in the Bosnian conflict. Britain and France still seem to tilt toward propping up the Serb rulers. Russia, in deeper crisis, has been forced to pare down its support for Serbia. Germany and Austria, still the big backers of Croatia and Slovenia, have seen their Croat allies lured by the competing interest of American support, economic and military. Germany and the USA have also decided to compete for favors with the Bosnian muslim regime and have arranged a temporary Croatian-Bosnian muslim military alliance.

1994-1995 battlefield fortunes have, in fact, almost mirrored these competing imperialist interests. Serbia more isolated and under a limited UN embargo has reduced aid to the Bosnian Serbs. British and French military forces entered the fray under cover of the UN "peacekeeper" mask. The Croats have thrown the Serbs out of the Krajina region. The USA has shown its partisanship by launching heavy air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions under the cover of NATO. The Bosnian muslims have united with the Croatian forces in Bosnia to retake significant amounts of territory previously lost to the Bosnian Serbs.

Into this cauldron, the major powers will now reinforce their presence in Bosnia with elite combat troops.

Approximately 60,000 troops total for the time being. At least 23,000 will come from the USA.

A few points should be obvious. None of the major imperialist powers are "neutral" nor is "peacekeeping" or "humanitarianism" their overriding mission. This is just more self serving state department assisting propaganda of corporate owned and dominated Television, radio and newspapers to cover up the real economic and political reasons for the US intervention. Military force is always a continuation of politics (and economics) by other means.

### **Imperialism Wants Oil and Stable Markets — Not Humanitarianism**

Over the past year, the US using its hegemony in NATO has carried out bombing attacks on Bosnian Serb positions. This has really been an effort to whip these Serbs into line and force them to accept the US brokered "peace treaty" signed recently in Dayton, Ohio.

The "peace" agreement actually grants the Serbs in Bosnia the right to hold most of their annexations and even federate with the Serb regime of Milosovic in Belgrade. Reportedly, under the agreement to partition Bosnia into 3 ethnically pure regions, the bosnian Serbs will get 49% of the land with 31% of the population. A Bosnian Federation of Muslims and Croats will get 51% of the lands. Their will be political recognition by Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia. Serbia and Croatia will agree to work within the brokered framework to solve their own festering armed conflict. The UN economic embargo of Serbia will be ended. The US will be allowed to grant Bosnia economic "aid", and also to upgrade and train its armed forces.

The agreement works out so that the Bosnian Muslims, 44% of the population will get will get 21% of the land. The Croats, 22% of the population will get about 30% of the land. The Serbs with a bit over 30% of the population will get 49% of the lands in Bosnia. The agreement actually seems to favor the Serbs, at least on paper. This is yet another flip-flop for the US and other imperialists who a couple years ago claimed that they would never let the alleged leading "ethnic cleansers" the Serbs, get away with their annexations of lands.

But behind this, the US (and the other imperialists, have larger fish to fry). The US seems to be cozying up to Croatia as of late as well. The US (with Germany and Austria) gave both material aid and blessing to this August's Croatian army offensive which "ethnically cleansed" the Serbs off their lands in the Croatian region of Krajina. The balance of these Serbs having taking flight into Serbia proper. The US maneuvers have a definite

material interest, mainly OIL!!! The Clinton government thinks its heavier leverage on Bosnian Muslims will be best for its capitalist interests, at least for now. World Bank financed exploratory studies show possible significant deposits of oil and coal around Tuzla as well as the eastern part of the "Dinarides Thrust", a 300 mile slice from Bihac to the Neretva River along the Dinara Mtns. All 3 warring groups, plus the governments in Belgrade and Zagreb were made aware of this find in 1992-3. It is no coincidence that the heavy fighting between the Croatian army and the Bosnian Serbs this summer then was near this Dinara region.

Richard Hamilton, who heads a special task force on energy in the Balkans for the World Bank admits that loans were already extended in the mid-1980s to Energo Invest, a state oil company in the old Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia. US based Amoco and companies from other powers have also been exploring the region. Amoco must be smelling big profits because they now have a subsidiary in Bosnia called Dinaredes Petroleum Company. In addition, rival companies, like the Italian AGIP Oil co. are already drilling at offshore sites off the Adriatic coast of Croatia, 60 miles west of the Dinaredes Thrust.

Mr. Menad Peleksic, an official of InTer-EnerCo which succeeded Energo Invest after Bosnian Independence in 1992 stated that there are large petroleum fields in the Serb held parts of Croatia across the Sava River near the Tuzla Region. Obviously the World Bank, under major US interest, knows far more than they want the US working people to find out. They have made clear however that the warring in the region must end if they are to invest capital and import technology. These sordid schemes of corporate profiteers weigh far heavier in the calculations of imperialist governments than any so-called humanitarian concerns over the huge slaughter of human lives.

(4) See The Organizer, Sept. '95, Page #8

But the US may be facing a more testy rival in German imperialism whose foreign minister Klaus Kinkel is already floating plans for a German dominated European "Marshall Plan" once the shooting dies out.

(5) See the *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 28, 1995.

It seems that some European powers will challenge the US attempts to monopolize the oil and coal wealth of the region. The imperialists do agree that the local Balkan regimes of the "ethnic cleansers" need to stop shooting the guns and ammo that these self same "humanitarians" supplied them with, en masse. Of course the sales of these was merely "added to the tab" of the warring local

capitalist groups. This has increased their foreign debt. The major powers intervening want "stability and market access" so the workers can be kept from organizing their own resistance again and the local bourgeois exploiters can increase accumulation of capital and pay off their debts to their masters the imperialist mafia clans, a real WORLDWIDE Murder, Inc.

The U.S. corporate owned media blitz for the massive "humanitarian" intervention of more big power troops and militarization borders on criminal. The US military industrial complex as well as those of the other big powers involved happen to be the principal arms sellers to the world. Over the past 5 years they have flooded the Balkans with arms. Lets look at the stats.

PRINCIPAL ARMS SELLERS (partial list)		
	% of world share 1990	1995
USA	34.5	55.0
Russia/USSR	33.9	3.9
France	7.2	3.2
Germany	5.4	14.6
UK	4.9	7.3
China	4.0	5.6

Source—*Revolutionary Perspectives*, Journal of the CWO/UK Ser.3 #1, Jan. 1996. This little chart probably says more in a few lines about the real nature of the "humanitarians" than all the mire that Madison Avenue Militarists have dished out over last 3 months or possibly 3 years!!

The U.S. (and its capitalist rivals) hold smoking guns right in their hands (no pun intended). The "Dayton Agreement" is a sham. Its attempts to legitimate separate ethnic cantons that are not economically viable with the barrels of these big guns will lead to a "cease-fire", but only temporarily. The seeds of another major war are already being sown.

### **Crocodile Tears by Imperialist Powers Reinforced by Mass Media Cover-ups and Lies**

The so-called major civilized powers, the US, Britain, France and Germany all claim to be fiercely opposed to the current bloodbath in Bosnia which has gone on for near 4 years now. They have even made regular claims over that time that they even intended to catch the war criminals and bring them to justice. They also lyingly claim that they all are opposed to the tens of thousands of cold blooded murders, but in fact it is these very powers, these "peacekeepers" which initially instigated the open shooting war



and then poured fuel on the fire with massive arms shipments to the region to keep their favored nationalist gang well stocked and in action- and the value of their munitions stocks soaring.

This war was greatly exacerbated by the major powers who took advantage of the long standing and simmering ethnic tensions for their own individual sordid imperialist ends. Germany, which wants open and friendly access to the Mediterranean for commercial and military purposes promoted the 1991 secession of both Slovenia and Croatia to become "independent" states. France and Britain, want to defend their own imperialist needs and so back the Serbs (albeit sometimes shamefacedly). The US has stepped up its support of the Bosnian Muslims so as to gain a secure foot-hold in the region and not be "frozen out" by its rivals. For tactical reasons it is also giving aid to Croatia at the present time. All the corporate media baloney about "peacekeeping" and "humanitarian" missions is an attempt to throw dust in ordinary peoples eyes.

All the leaders of these interventionists now pose as the greatest moral leaders of all times. What a disgusting spectacle! Just look at US president Billy "Blow Dry" Clinton in his national TV speech of November 27. This tissue of outright lies, distortions and just playing fast and loose with the truth about the Balkans and world history of this century would make Nixon, Reagan and Kissinger proud! The European powers all do the same on their corporate sponsored TV, radio and daily ragsheets.

The major powers have helped instigate and finance the carnage in the Balkans and in this sense the doltish Clinton analogies conjuring up 1914 and later World War 2 might make a bit of sense. Today Clinton claims all the major powers there are "peacekeepers" but how can this in any way jibe with even the establishment view of World Wars 1 & 2? The brainy Dan Rather (CBS) and Tom Brokaw (NBC), et al. surely know of all these contradictions, but they keep us in the dark as these "objective commentators/journalists" and their ilk would never want to upset their corporate paymasters!

The real historical track records of France and Britain should be discussed too. What about their "civilizing" role in Africa and Asia? There these worthies perpetrated one slaughter after another in their quest for plunder and empire. Like today in the Balkans they stooped to pitting different groups of indigenous peoples against each other. Britain slaughtered millions to subdue India. They set up the racist tyranny of apartheid in South Africa and kept the majority black population down in the most abominable conditions.

Let us see. What about Germany? This modern capitalist plunderbund put "ethnic cleansing" on a "scientific"

basis employing the most modern technology in the period of the 1930s-40s eventually throughout much of Europe at one point, complete with mass human extermination centers.

And what about that great "free world democracy" the USA. It was on our North American continent where the democracy loving US bosses and their state carried out massive genocide against the native American Indian population, killing off the vast majority of what was once near 10 million Indians in the continental US. This campaign was quite brutal and went on for centuries. The native people were driven from their lands and separated from their means of survival. The remnants are still caged into tiny "reservations" after the vast majority had been killed off and starved. These barbaric acts totally negate any so-called moral authority of the US government to lay down their "law" to even the bloodthirsty chauvinist gangs in Bosnia. To call US intervention "humanitarian" is to perpetuate a mass propaganda fraud! More recent US interventions also prove that the imperialist state is a major source of perpetuating massive violence and exploitation and not peace or justice for workers.

The actions of the US and the other imperialists in the Balkans have little to do with the rights of the diverse nationalities to live in peace. Their real goals are to eventually gain more hegemony for themselves so they can "peacefully" rob and exploit the working people of the region and keep their rivals at bay. The Bosnian intervention shows once again that imperialist leopards really do not change their spots! Working people must step up opposition against this intervention which only enriches some big sections of the same ruling class of capitalists that exploits us all.

Most leftist (and bourgeois) information in the USA on ex-Yugo almost totally dismisses any analysis of internal dynamics of national economy having much to do with the implosion of the old Titoist federation. Most information deals almost totally with external forces, IMF, World Bank, other machinations of German and US imperialism, etc. This article tries to honestly fill in some of these "missing links".

Leaving out the "internals", the class character, class politics, and social relations, laws of motion, in analyzing any society is actually quite non-scientific at best and definitely anti-marxist....

Most of the reformists here seem to tilt toward shame-faced support for Bosnian Federation with the Croats and hence they also apologize for the US intervention schemes. Some pseudo-socialist academics have all sorts of analogies torn from historical context to "justify" this.

We guess with some of the other leftist swampy

groups, mostly the trotskysts and remnants of stalinism lean toward Serbia, it is mainly because most still cover up for state capitalism, which is in reality their own "program." At least they have consistency—they are consistently wrong!

These outfits seem to tilt to Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs, because the Serb Republic still has much of the old state-cap trappings. They prefer exploitation by the state integrated ruling class rather than "privatized" exploitation of wage labor and commodity production. No problem for them here!

Workers and others looking to support genuine liberation forces must look towards a reconstitution of the multi-racial working class united in struggle against capital, foreign and domestic. This will be a difficult process. We socialists in the USA must work to expose the filthy lie machine of the corporate media and oppose the US and other imperialists' intervention in the Balkans at every opportunity. As with the foreign occupation and capitalist

plunder growing in a temporary "peace", the social and class contradictions will sharpen too.. It is out of this struggle that a new workers and communist movement in the Balkans can emerge. These can be the real forces fighting for oppressed humanity and they will totally unmask and face down the criminal frauds of imperial mafia groups, the NATO armies staking out "turf" and their local nationalist and racist gangs too.

The fighting unity of a united socialist working class against racist/separatist gangs and imperialist plunder is what we should support, linking it up with working people for class combat in all countries.

#### ADDENDUM

Add to Bibliography, M. Djilas, *The New Class*, 1956 (shows how the state-cap ruling class formed up in the Tito regime and the goal of workers rule abandoned —A PRIMARY SOURCE) Djilas has a very high Party official in the Tito regime in the 40s and early 50s. ◊

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#### *LaBotz, Continued from p. 30*

some sort of mass, electorally-oriented party which is a conglomeration of a lot of different trends.

Organizing the masses of the workers and oppressed to overthrow the existing order and to establish an entirely new political, economic and social order requires a real Communist Party, a party with deep roots in the working class and with revolutionary ideology and politics. In the U.S. we in the *Chicago Workers' Voice* worked for many years in the Marxist-Leninist Party, U.S.A., which tried to be such a party. That effort failed and the MLP is no more. In light of this experience, I don't feel qualified to give detailed instructions to Mexican revolutionaries on how to build such a party.

But I think the experience of revolutionaries all over

the world makes clear that to make a revolution, you must have a revolutionary party. Otherwise, how are you going to help the masses learn what is wrong with the opportunists who want to undermine the struggle? Otherwise, who is going to develop strategies and tactics for the struggle which will deal with the constant twists and turns of all the political forces? The masses of the working class and the oppressed must make up their minds that revolution is necessary for revolution to take place. Waves of revolutionary struggle are inevitable. A lasting victory is much more difficult to achieve. An amorphous struggle with no revolutionary pole to orient it is no match for the forces of the bourgeoisie, even though we number a lot more than they do. ◊

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

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# Ethnic Warfare in the Former Yugoslavia: The fruit of imperialism and national chauvinist politics

by Jack Hill, *Chicago Workers' Voice*

To supplement the article by NC, I would like to add a few comments of my own.

Working people in the U.S. and all over the world have been horrified at the ethnic warfare, the mass murders, the atrocities on a mass scale that have been taking place in Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia for the last several years. We would like to see these horrors stop. We seek to understand where these horrors have sprung from, who or what is responsible, and why hasn't someone put a stop to it before now.

NC deals a lot with the responsibility of the various imperialist powers for this war. A lot of spokesmen for the bourgeoisie have been trying to use the collapse of the state capitalist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to say that the capitalism has been proven to be the best and only workable economic system. However, I would say that the horrors of ethnic warfare in the Balkans are proof of just how horrible a system capitalism really is. This is a war for the redivision of the spoils from the former Yugoslavia among various local capitalist elites together with various of the bigger imperialist powers.

Another point that I think should be emphasized is that this ethnic slaughter was prepared for during several years of organizing, particularly by Milosevic and Tudjman. This was not just some spontaneous welling up of ancient hatred from deep in the souls of the Balkan peoples. Milosevic, as one of the principle criminals in this tragedy, cynically hitched his political fortunes to extreme Serbian chauvinism in 1988. (The series of reports on the Discovery Channel showed this quite clearly, for example.) Tudjman did the same from the fascist Croatian side. There are plenty of other criminals one could name. The point is that these politicians organized ethnic hatred to advance their own political fortunes and to benefit a small clique of capitalists of their own nationality.

The former Yugoslavia is a stark and extreme example of what can happen as the result of racial politics. I think working people in the U.S. need to ponder the lessons of the ethnic warfare in the former Yugoslavia. Racist politics can drown our struggle in fratricidal bloodshed. We should think about this when we hear politicians blaming Black people or immigrants for the problems we face. Pete Wilson has that in common with Slobodan Milosevic. I would like to see people's horror at the atrocities in Bosnia be turned into opposition to racist politics here inside the U.S.

The proletariat is not strong enough in the former Yugoslavia or internationally to impose a just solution to this situation. The imperialist powers have been deciding how far and how long this warfare between the local elites will continue. At a certain point the U.S. decided that it would tip the scales a little towards the Croatian and Bosnian Muslim side and force the Serbian side to accept less than what they were aiming for. As NC has forcefully pointed out, the U.S. has not intervened for humanitarian purposes. The U.S. imperialists, under both Bush and Clinton, piously wrung their hands for years and did nothing to stop the killing.

But, even granted all this, many ordinary people wonder might it not be better that the U.S. has finally sent troops to halt this slaughter, even if way too late and only temporarily? Might not the U.S. imperialist occupation be the lesser of two evils in this horrible situation? All I can say is that, in view of the proletariat's relative weakness, the imperialists are going to do what they are going to do and they are not asking our advice.

I certainly can't see getting involved in supporting U.S. and NATO troops in Bosnia. But neither can I see getting involved in calling for their withdrawal. This stand seems to me to play into the hands of reactionary forces who want to continue ethnic slaughter, for example, the extreme Serbian nationalists. Just as I think it was perfectly justified not to pick between Clinton and Bush in the 1992 elections, but to denounce them both, I don't think I have to choose between the alternatives that the bourgeoisie puts forward for Bosnia. Clinton's policy is not motivated by the interests of the masses and neither is the "non-interventionism" of the Republicans who would be glad to expand the bloodshed as long as it's not American troops getting killed. I think it's more useful to expose the root causes of this war and the lessons for the American proletariat. ◇

# Marxism vs. Anarchism

Speech from a Workers' Advocate Discussion Forum,  
April 18, 1993

*The following is the presentation that was given at a forum held by the Chicago Branch of the Marxist-Leninist Party in April 1993. The Marxist-Leninist Party dissolved in the fall of 1993. Left-wing anarchism is an important trend in the left-wing political movements. This presentation discussed some of the principles and political stands held by left-wing anarchists including their stance on the abortion rights movement, their activities during the struggle to oppose the 1991 U.S. war against Iraq, their views on leftist demonstrations. This forum was only able to deal briefly with some of the issues involved. Nevertheless, anarchism continues to be an important political trend in the progressive political movements. However, it is a trend mired in non-materialism and utopianism. It is frequently backward looking in the sense that it looks to going back to pre-industrial society. Its critique of revisionist and reformist "Marxism" falls on its face as it tends to be a critique against all ideology and all authority. Thus despite the militancy of many anarchist activists, anarchism as a trend can not lead a revolutionary political movement to success. Thus, this forum is a useful addition to the discussion over what kind of politics revolutionary activists need.*

Progressive workers, youth and activists are fighting on a number of fronts today against capitalist reaction. From the pro-choice movement to the fight against anti-gay bigotry, from strikes and struggles against plant shutdowns to anti-racist rebellions, a number of questions confront activists in each of these movements:

What should be the demands of the movement, what are its aims?

How will the movement build? From where will it draw its strength? Who should it link up with.

What forms of struggle should be waged, what forms of organization are needed and appropriate?

One of the better developments in the mass movement is that a section of activists have come forward that don't think that change can come about in the electoral arena, who don't think the movement should be restricted to legal passive forms. But agreeing on that, there are wide variations on how change can come about. Can there be adequate change within the present system? We don't think so.

Then what kind of system should replace the present capitalist "paradise"?

Discussion and debate on such questions are important and we for one would like to see more of it in the movement.

## Reformism

The mass movements on various fronts have brought forward some new forces and a few struggles have shown some development. There are people who don't like the domination of the movement by reformism and the non-militant, non-radical politics of the left wing of the Democratic Party, the trade union bureaucracy and the official community "leaders." They don't want the movement to be subsumed by electoral forms. The more left wing of the movement refuses to submit to such things as NOW's loyalty oaths on the clinic defense lines.(1) They oppose the assessment of some African-American bourgeois leaders that the Los Angeles verdicts show that the American justice system can work.(2) They oppose the trade union bureaucrats saying to submit to concessions. Many activists are dissatisfied with reformism, But the movement has not developed enough to pose these questions very clearly.

I think it is because many activists are dissatisfied with reformism that they look for more radical alternatives, or even for a revolutionary trend. One possibility is anarchism, another is Marxism.

Today is not the 60's when Marxism was taken up by a large section of the revolutionary movement. Most so-called "Marxist" trends are in crisis today. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc as well as the reactionary nature of the so-called socialist regimes have fueled this crisis. There is no socialist model or visible alternative to capitalism. There is also the outstanding question of what existed in the so-called "socialist" countries before their collapse in recent years into "market socialism" or "free enterprise." The MLP's assessment is that they were state capitalist countries and that socialist construction never got very far in any of them before they degenerated into state capitalism. Finally, there is no clear answer to what went wrong with the Bolshevik revolution,

*Continued on p. 19, See Anarchism*

## Book Review:

### Ulricke Heider's *Anarchism: Left, Right and Green*

by Sarah, *Chicago Workers' Voice*

The following article is a review of the book "Anarchism: Left, Right and Green" by Ulricke Heider. The book was originally published under the title "*Die Narren der Freiheit: Anarchisten in den USA heute*" in 1992. The book was translated and the author revised it and updated some sections. Page numbers listed refer to page numbers in the English edition of this book.

The author divides anarchism into three types - anarcho-syndicalism, eco-anarchism, and anarcho-capitalism. She discusses these three types as they exist in the United States. To do this, she reviews the thinking and activities of anarchist activists and theorists she considers to be "particularly typical" of the three trends. I found her book very informative as far as understanding the thinking and politics current among anarchist activists.

The author holds that there are three types of anarchism in present day anarchist politics, she divides anarchism into two main tendencies. She holds that these two tendencies have existed since the inception of anarchism.

"Since its inception, anarchism has brought to mind the Roman god Janus whose two faces are turned in opposite directions: one of them, resembling the social-revolutionary forefathers Bakunin and Kropotkin, turns its eyes toward a stateless democratic socialism, collective self-administration, and mutual aid. The other, inheriting its features from Max Stirner, the philosopher of unlimited personal freedom, looks to the brutal chaos of the war of each against all, waged in the arena of the unfettered free market." (p. 1)

Her book focuses on the "differences between the traditional two main tendencies of anarchism." (p. 1)

From what I can determine the author considers that anarcho-syndicalism is "social-revolutionary." There are features of both "social-revolutionary" and right-wing anarchism in eco-anarchism and anarcho-capitalism is the right-wing face of anarchism

The author thinks it is "anarcho-syndicalism in the Bakuninist tradition we can learn from most today." I disagree with the author on her assessment of anarcho-syndicalism. However, I think it is important to discuss what politics are needed for a revolutionary movement. Her book contains much useful information and analysis on present-day anarchism.

In reading the book it seemed to me that despite her declared sympathy for anarcho-syndicalism, the au-

thor had difficulty defending many of its aspects and many of the aspects of anarchism in general.

To my mind there are several fundamental problems with anarchist theory and programs including:

1. Anarchism is not materialist. It does not base itself on an analysis of where society, its economics and politics, are at present. It does not consider what is possible based on the current level of society. It does not judge what the class forces and interests are. Thus, anarchism is mired in a romantic view of how to change society. And this romantic view is frequently based on an idea of going back to some sort of pre-industrial society as a solution. This is a romantic, unrealistic view. Yes, we have to fight so that industry and technology serve the interests of the working class and oppressed and not the interests of profit. But, short of major catastrophe, we are not going back to pre-industrial society. Nor was pre-industrial society the idyllic paradise various activists might like to think.

2. Anarchism does not base itself on class struggle. It frequently sees change coming about through the moral behavior of individuals or groups of individuals. Thus, anarchism is frequently connected to various forms of putchism. It is also connected to schemes to change society through the lifestyle changes of individuals or groups of people.

3. Since anarchism is opposed to all authority, it cannot answer the question of how a progressive or revolutionary movement will enforce its policies.

Thus, anarchism is not a theory which can guide revolutionary activists.

I think that where the author does criticize anarchism it is precisely on these points.

I will present here some of the analysis she gives on each type of anarchism and discuss some of what I think its relevance is to the political movement.

#### Anarcho-syndicalism

The author states that "During the 1910's and 1920's leftist anarchists developed 'anarcho-syndicalism,' combining the ideas of Bakunin, Kropotkin, and early 20th-century syndicalism." (p.2) She gives a brief discussion of what she considers to be Bakunin's views. Bakunin "began his career as a Panslavic populist" (p. 13) After 1864 he became "an anarchist and internationalist." (p. 13)

She states that “at the center of his teachings is the concept of liberty.” (p.13). He held that “a revolution must be both social and cultural.” (p.13) “Future society must anticipate its structures in the given society.” Bakunin got some of his ideas from early socialists and labor organizations of his day.

“From the early socialist Pierre Proudhon he adopted the concepts of federalism and of workers’ association; from the French and Swiss labor movements he took the idea of the revolutionary labor union.” (p.14)

She explains what she thinks were some of the differences between Bakunin and Proudhon:

Whereas Proudhon envisioned his workers’ cooperatives as being united through a kind of loyal competition, Bakunin incorporated syndicalism into workers’ self-administration. ...The commune, which in Proudhon’s system is envisioned as a largely autarkic entity, is in Bakunin’s concept integrated into the larger society. (p.14)

According to the author Bakunin supported “the right to political and cultural autonomy for all regions and nations.” And he thought that “national and separatist independence movements are positive forces only when they originate with the people and not with a privileged class.” (p.14)

The author apparently agrees with these aspects of Bakunin’s writings. She does note some of what she considers to be his weaknesses.

He incorporated some aspects of Pan Slavist ideology into his theory of anarchism. He thought that “the Slavic peasants resemble the noble savage who, unperverted by bourgeois civilization and in possession of infallible tribal instincts, is the ideal subject of the revolution.” (p.14)

He was anti-Semitic.

His anti-intellectualism “has become a chronic problem for many of his followers, who still agree that “for the preservation of a people’s liberty, strength, and passion, ignorance is preferable to bourgeois civilization.” (p. 15, from Mikhael Bakunin “*Statism and Anarchy*” p. 27)

“Putschism,” “spontaneous-romantic vitalism” and a “recurrent weakness for secret conspiratorial societies whose members become the driving force of the revolution.” are “other facets of his problematic legacies.” (p.15)

Heider then goes on to discuss Kropotkin, whom she considers to be the other historical predecessor to anarcho-syndicalism.

I think her description of Kropotkin’s views is pretty damning.

After Bakunin’s death, social-revolutionary anarchism drifted away from the labor movement for a while, developing the utopia of “communist anarchism” which

placed more emphasis on the commune and local autonomy than on unions. While Peter Kropotkin, the classic proponent of this doctrine, never lost touch with the labor movement, many of his fellow believers became elitist individualism, reclusive eccentrics, and visionary founders of anarchist colonies. In Germany the movement had, by the turn of the century, become almost completely apolitical and individualistic, picking up mystical, folk-romantic, even prefascist characteristics. (p.15)

“Communist anarchism” is a composite of bourgeois-revolutionary, early socialist, liberalist, and social revolutionary elements. For Kropotkin, ...evolution is just as important as revolution: society..is moving towards communism of its own accord...Like the Russian Narodniks and Bakunin, he considered the *mir*, the commonly-owned pasture of the Russian peasants, the starting point for social change. Two other precursors of communism are the “voluntary contract,” and the “voluntary agreement.” Thus, trade and exchange associations independent of the state, the international postal association, the railroad association, scientific societies, and various other private initiatives anticipate free society. As does bourgeois tradition, Kropotkin see the Greek *polis* and the European Renaissance as the models of true democracy, and praises the honest merchant of the Middle Ages with his “mercantile ethos.” Under the nostalgic glow of the utopian lamp, the guilds seem like social associations of mutual aid, and the free cities like oases of democracy in the desert of feudalism. Since Kropotkin’s day, many an anarchist has fallen victim to nostalgia’s siren song. ...Mixing agrarian romanticism and belief in technology, he presents his utopia as a paradisiacal farming culture devoid of toil and drudgery. Small artisans and small industry will be located in the villages, thus ending the division of labor. Large industry will be almost nonexistent. How the future society is to be organized is barely explained. Technology, good will, and reason seem to be sufficient guarantees for human cooperation. (p.17-18)

I think that her description of Kropotkin’s views clearly show his views to be non-materialist. His views on how to change society are not based on a materialist assessment of where society is, what class forces exist, etc. He does not see the class struggle as a way to move forward. Instead he wants to go backward towards a non-industrial, romanticized agrarian society. Unfortunately, these ideas have a lot of influence among today’s left-wing activists.

## Anarcho-syndicalism in the Spanish Revolution

Heider then goes on to discuss some of the influence of these two tendencies of anarcho-syndicalism in the Spanish revolution.

She states that "Spanish anarcho-syndicalism was the product of a cross between peasant communalism (as derived from the commune) and the urban syndicalist labor movement." (p.24) "Bakunin's followers had agitated to turn the nostalgic provincial and particularist consciousness of the *mir* into the utopian ideology of village communism, whose declared goal was the autarkic 'free commune.'" (p.24) "Syndicalism, on the other hand, operating primarily in Catalonia, grew out of the industrial proletariat's future-oriented consciousness of reality and found expression in a well-organized union movement. The theorists of Spanish anarchism reflected the traditional contradictions of its basis, subscribing either to Kropotkin's autonomous agricultural communalism or to Bakunin's proletarian integrationist interNationalism." (p.25)

I am not clear why she describes Bakuninist anarchism as advocating "proletarian integrationist internationalist" when she has just said that his followers "declared goal was the autarkic 'free commune.'" Nevertheless, she clearly disagrees with a program adopted at the 1936 CNT (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajo, the Spanish anarchist union) conference in Zaragoza. According to her "representatives of both wings of the movement presented their programs." She gives a brief description of the programs of Isaak Puente and Diego Abad Santillan put forward at this conference.

Isaak Puente "presented a concept for direct village democracy." In discussing it she says that "his vision of autonomy and autarky was even more extreme and backward-looking than Kropotkin's." (p.26) Santillan "presented the opposing syndicalist view." She apparently has a lot of sympathy for Santillan's particular program. She then goes on to say that "revolutionary realism, however, could not win out over a captivating arcadian vision. The CNT decided to adopt Puente's utopian variant of anarcho-syndicalism."

She does not discuss whether this had any role in the defeat of the Spanish revolution. However, she does discuss that in Santillan's view "lack of organizational coordination, too few weapons, and the communist betrayal were the main causes of defeat." And I would ask, might it be that the lack of organizational coordination had something to do with the prevailing anarchist predilection for autonomy and autarky.

## Contemporary American anarcho-syndicalism

For contemporary American anarchists in the anarcho-syndicalist tradition, Ms. Heider discussed the views of Sam Dolgoff and Noam Chomsky whom she calls a "fellow traveller" of anarcho-syndicalism.

The author describes a number of Dolgoff's views and activities. Dolgoff worked with the IWW and other anarcho-syndicalist organizations. During the Spanish revolution, he was one of the publishers of the United Libertarian Organizations magazine Spanish Revolution. The author describes the United Libertarian Organizations as "an anti-fascist league set up as an alternative to the communist organizations." (p. 28) Dolgoff wrote extensively. His works include "The American Labor Movement" in which he critiques the politics of Samuel Gompers, John L Lewis, Sidney Hillman and various policies of the trade unions. He published "The Cuban Revolution" in which various articles and documents criticizing Castro's regime were published. He wrote critiques of Marx and Engels. He also translated some of Bakunin's work into English and published it.

The author notes some of Dolgoff's disagreements with other anarchists.

According to the author Dolgoff "never tires of distancing himself from the advocates of 'ox cart anarchism,' who oppose syndicalism and industrial production with 'simplistic notions' of returning to the 'primitive social life of a by-gone age.'" (p.27) Unlike some other anarchists Dolgoff "viewed World War II as a necessary evil for destroying Nazi rule" (p.28) unlike many anarchists who opposed participation in the war. He also supported "the decision of the CNT to take part in the government of Catalonia" during the Spanish revolution.

The author then goes on to note what she considers to be Dolgoff's weaknesses. And here is where, I think, the author has a hard time defending anarcho-syndicalism.

For Dolgoff, the defender of the traditional anarchist "ideal," economics takes a back seat to two higher principles: on the one hand, the inherent goodness of the human being; and on the other hand, the state whose demonic nature inexorably works towards the establishment of the dystopia of Orwellian totalitarianism. And so it happens that Dolgoff, though basically critical of romantic anarchists, often shares their weakness. (p.32)

She goes on to say that "The idealization of the good in human beings is as unrealistic as the demonization of both the state and centralism." (P.32)

She is critical of Dolgoff's "attempt to blame all evil on the state, for to do so is almost to render all economic, historical, or class analyses superfluous." (p.35)

She criticizes him for his ideas of a “utopia of a stateless, decentralized, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’ society.” (p.35) Dolgoff wrote an article entitled “Third World Nationalism and the State.” She cites this article as “describing the idyll of loosely federated tribes without a central government and the harmonious village communities in precolonial Africa, culminating in the suggestion that anarchism could be established in Africa by restoring the tribal system.”(p.36)

She then goes on to criticize this and I think fairly correctly. “Dolgoff makes no mention of the potential of industrial progress, implying that the solution to the problems of the world’s poorest countries is to turn back the wheel of history by several centuries.”(p.36)

Further, she notes that some of Dolgoff’s views some what dovetail with those of the right-wing:

He advises younger union colleagues to forget about the welfare state. Workers should demand their wages without deductions, set up independent unions, and administer their own social security and health insurance. As understandable as this position may be, considering the history of union corruption and the fact that labor representatives have traded working class rage for the meager benefits of a minimal welfare state, there could be no benefit in rejecting minimal welfare and unions if this strategy never went beyond the stage of a self-destructive boycott. That would simply be to play into the hands of union busters. (p.32)

### Noam Chomsky

Of Noam Chomsky, the author notes that “the fact that his social theories have always contained anarcho-syndicalist and council communist positions is usually overlooked.” (p.37)

I think it is significant that she brings out the significance of anarchism in Chomsky’s thinking.

The author states that Chomsky “subscribes to anarchism, because, among other things, its theorists are the only ones who have recognized totalitarianism as the “real basis of our age.”(p.40) Yet, she says he “never fell into the conservative trap lurking behind this viewpoint. (p. 40). She does not admit that this concept of “totalitarianism” is a non-class analysis of the political forces at play today. But she does admit that this non-class analysis has been a mainstay of conservative politics.

The author discusses Chomsky’s adherence to anarcho-syndicalism:

For Chomsky, anarcho-syndicalist society will be

characterized by production *conceived* and carried out by the producers and their councils. Another important notion is that the state is in and of itself an instrument of repression. Chomsky also stressed the modernity of anarcho-syndicalist forms of organization as suitable for industrial society. (p.44)

According to her Chomsky is very sympathetic to Bakunin and is very hostile to Leninism. “He calls Leninism a ‘particularly obscene variant’ of the idea that the ignorant masses must be ruled in their own interest by those allegedly more intelligent.” (p.39) This is another notable feature of anarchism in general.

According to her, Chomsky compares the “opportunism of Leninist and liberal intellectuals.” As an example of this; “he uses the Spanish Civil War as an example of how Bolshevism and Western liberalism were united in their opposition to the anarchists’ social revolution.” (p.39)

In regards to his views on Lenin, Chomsky may have some disagreements with others in the anarchist tradition. The author worries about what she calls “blind identification of young anti-authoritarians” with Third World liberation movements. This is undoubtedly a problem in the left-wing political movement. She links Chomsky’s opposition to this with his opposition to Leninism.

Despite his unwavering sympathy with the New Left, Chomsky never shared its unconditional identification with Third World revolutionaries. As a libertarian socialist and internationalist (much like the Old Left anarchists) he rejects the authoritarian Leninism of most Third World revolutionary anti-imperialist liberation movements, whose libertarian elements, he notes, are always the first to fall victim to imperialism, ...(p.42)

Further, the author states that Chomsky does not share the views of other anarchists against intellectualism in general. “Unlike Bakunin’s, Chomsky’s critique of intellectuals is directed only against the misuse of intellect and knowledge. He is very vocal in his rejection of the traditional anarchist mistrust of science per se.” (p. 39)

The author seems basically to like Chomsky’s views. She is somewhat critical of his views on human nature as she is of other anarchists:

As far as nature is concerned, almost all leftist anarchists, past and present, share Rousseau’s notion of the noble savage, inside us, irrespective of the extent to which they have abandoned early *socialist utopianism*. Chomsky emphasizes that it is the social nature of humans that pushes humankind toward progress and perfection, an



idea reminiscent of Kropotkin's notion of mutual aid.(p.151)

### **Eco-anarchism**

In discussing the second trend of anarchism in the U.S., eco-anarchism, the author traces many of its roots to Kropotkin.

"With the disintegration of the New Left and the rise of ecological awareness, Kropotkin's communal ideas were rediscovered as a means of developing eco-anarchism, especially in the U.S." (p.2)

Murray Bookchin is the person whom she discusses as an important representative of eco-anarchism. Here, she sums up what she thinks are some of his views.

Murray Bookchin... belongs to the avante-garde of eco-anarchist philosophers. He combines the ecologist tenet of a natural equilibrium with elements of early socialism and communalism. He refers to nature as a "source of ethical meaning" and derives human spirit, ethics, and rationality from it. He distances himself from anarcho-syndicalism whose basis-unionism and the class struggle-he believes is outdated. In his own concept, called municipalism, Bookchin seeks to revive the New England tradition of public town meetings. The "community as a whole," he says. not the workers or their unions, should decide about community affairs. (p.2-3)

In talking about Bookchin the author considers him to be "a household name among anarchists and ecologists. Especially in Germany, Bookchin's redefinition of anarchism in ecological terms has revived interest in it, and his writings played an important role in the early alternative movement." (p.48)

What are some important aspects of his writing and activity.

In 1964 Bookchin wrote an article "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought" which Bookchin refers to as the "manifesto of the ecological movement." The author says this article was "a pioneering critique of the damage and destruction of the environment." She makes this criticism of the article; "While he does confront the issues of bureaucratization, alienation, and mechanical standardization, he addresses neither social injustice, class inequality, poverty, hunger, racism, and war." She notes that Bookchin concludes that; "The sovereignty (of nature over man) has been forgotten by humans who must be seen as a 'highly destructive parasite' which 'threatens to destroy its host - the natural world- and eventually itself.'" (p.68-69)

In discussing Bookchin's adherence to anarchism in this article she states; "Bookchin holds that the 'integrative, reconstructive aspect of ecology' leads to anarchism whose primordial aspects are anti-urbanism, distrust in technology, and the attraction of village and agricultural life." (p.70)

Bookchin wrote an article in 1966 entitled "Listen Marxist." The author says that in this article; "He recounts how the Russian workers and peasants spontaneously organized themselves, describes the Machno movement, the Kronstadt uprising, the solidarity of the workers of St. Petersburg, and revives memories of the 'Workers' Opposition,' .. information long forgotten or repressed, and the time not widely known." (p.72)

Regarding this article the author also states that:

Bookchin thinks that Marx's analysis is outdated and no longer applicable to modern affluent society. Ignoring poverty and hunger, especially in the Third World, he says that economic need is no longer a problem. Capitalism, which 'itself performs many of the tasks ...regarded as socialist,'(from Bookchin "*Post-Scarcity Anarchism*" p.202) has not only eliminated economic shortages by introducing new technologies, but can also overcome its periodic crises. Thanks to the welfare state, which has bought off the workers, the class struggle has been integrated into capitalism itself. (p.73)

The author notes other aspects of Bookchin's views expressed in this article. He considers class struggle to be a "disease." Class struggle will come "to an end in post-scarcity society. The traditional class structure, the patriarchal family, and authoritarian educational methods are all in the process of dissolution." (p.73-74)

Furthermore she says that for Bookchin "classes within capitalist society will disappear" and the "time for the revolution finally comes after social classes have disappeared." (p.74)

He declares modern youth to be the representatives of 'life-impulses in humanity's nature-the urgings of desire, sensuousness, and the lure of the marvelous.'(from Bookchin "*Post-Scarcity Anarchism*" p.61) Today's youth, raised in affluence, are hedonistic, disregard taboos, and shy away from work in revolt against the puritanism and work ethic of their middle-class or class-conscious proletarian parents. Since the struggle against need has already been won, what remains is the fight for the cultural revolution. The middle classes, the workers, and society as a whole will follow in the footsteps of the young avante-garde, adopt their bohemian life-style, prac-

tice free love, take to communal life, reject work and consumer goods, and 'live the revolution in all its totality.' (Bookchin, p.67)(p.74)

The author states that in her opinion; "Bookchin plays off cultural revolution against social revolution, 'self-liberation' against 'mass liberation' or 'class liberation' and, in the final analysis, the revolution against its meaning - social change." (p.74)

She further states that "What begins as a well-stated, leftist critique of Leninism and Stalinism turns into bourgeois anti-communism, bohemian life-style philosophy, and youth-driven revolution ontology."

To me this is a general problem of the more left wing brands of anarchism. I consider it necessary to develop the critique of that legacy coming out of the Soviet Union and of the so-called socialist countries which passes for communism, but which is in reality an ideology which defends state capitalism. However, I think it is because of their fundamental weaknesses of non-materialism and plans for fundamental change without the class struggle that I don't see anarchism accomplishing such a critique. Instead, as with Bookchin, the anarchist critique frequently ends up equating bohemian life-style changes as the be all and end all of the critique of bureaucratic state capitalism.

The author further concludes that; "It is capitalism's growth, Babylonian immorality, and unlimited greed that makes Bookchin hate capitalism and modernity. He seems to despise industry more than industrial exploitation, the greed of the exploiter more than the plight of the exploited, the materialistic mentality of capitalism more than its unjust and murderous reality. The alternatives are the tribe, village, handicrafts, small trade, small capitalism - everything that is limited and confined." (p.87)

The author goes on to discuss Bookchin's role since the 1980's. In the late 1980's, despite his own penchant for idealizing pre-industrial society Bookchin criticized "irrationalist and antihumane ecofundamentalism." The author then gives a revealing history of Earth First and its origins in the extreme right-wing.

She discusses Earth First's neo-Malthusianism and social Darwinist philosophy and its connection to fascist ideology. "'Down with people'" is said to be one of the Earth Firster campfire battle cries. Its critique of technology, in combination with a voracious nostalgia advocating a return to the Stone Age, regards everything since the invention of the pulley as the devil's work." She notes Earth First's anti-immigrant activities and quotes one of their writers Miss Ann Thropy "If radical environmentalists were to invent a disease to bring human population back to ecological sanity, it would probably be something

like AIDS." (p.50)

The author credits Bookchin with being "one of the first to call these neo-Malthusian misanthropes what they are." She says that: "in 1987 Bookchin and his followers decided to refer to their own philosophy as Social Ecology to stress their concern about social problems and their conviction that capitalism is the source of both social and ecological destruction." She discusses some splits between the advocates of the Earth First type "Deep Ecology" and adherents of "Social Ecology." Bookchin she refers to as "the intellectual founding father of the Vermont Greens." (p.60) She credits him with being a major influence in the Left Greens. This probably has a lot to do with Bookchin's critique of "Deep Ecology."

She notes that Bookchin's strategy for change is what he and others call "municipalization." She notes that Bookchin's strategy is based on the traditional New England town meetings. "In the revived institution of the town meeting Bookchin and his comrades hope initially to assume the role of a 'parallel ethical system of governance' to influence local politics. In the long term they hope to replace capitalism with a decentralized, participatory democracy anchored entirely in public town meetings."

The author attended a New England town meeting with Bookchin and his associates. Her description of this meeting and Bookchin's glorification of it is very interesting. "It was in every way the most conservative and lily-white-meeting I have ever attended in the U.S. I felt that if someone had stood up, said he or she was a Green, a leftist, or an anarchist, proposed ending capitalism, or even raised the issue of equal rights for African-Americans, he or she would surely have been considered completely crazy."

She notes how Bookchin and associates felt that the Democrats in this town meeting were worse than the Republicans because of their "centralistic state philosophy." They felt that "Vermont Republicans are not like Reagan or Bush; they are real 'libertarian' decentralists who don't want to have anything to do with government or the [welfare] state, because they are proud and want to live independent lives; but, of course, unlike the Greens they are for free enterprise."

This was a rather enlightening discussion of how far off some anarchists are from any concept of class struggle and how far off from any concept of change for and by the working class and oppressed. And, it shows how, among even some of those who are considered "left" anarchists, the actual social program has aspects in common with the most right-wing.

## Anarcho-capitalism

The author gives a rather extensive discussion of the development of what she calls anarcho-capitalist thought. She traces its origins to Max Stirner. She discusses his views and those of Josiah Warren and Benjamin Tucker “the most important representatives” of American individualism. She says their views are “another source of pro-capitalist anarchism.”

She interviewed Murray Rothbard whom she calls the “intellectual leader of the anarcho-capitalists. She also reviewed some of his writings. She also interviewed five Libertarians, four of whom referred to themselves as anarchists.

This a brief summation of her tracing of the anarcho-capitalists’ views.

Today individualist anarchists in the U.S. call themselves anarcho-capitalists or libertarians; some, though not all, are organized in the Libertarian Party. Many of them, like their intellectual leader, Murray Rothbard...are former Ayn Randians who turned antistatist in the late 1960’s. Like Rand(who was far from being an anarchist), the anarcho-capitalists are followers of the Austrian School of Economics; its most famous theorist was Ludwig von Mises and its youngest leading intellectual is Milton Friedman, adviser to Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. The libertarians radicalize Mises’s antisocial free market ideology to its extreme culmination in the abolition of government. They intend to privatize the entire public sector including the police, the judiciary, the army, public transportation, education, and welfare. The only bond that holds together this dystopia of competition and survival of the fittest is natural law reduced to property law. Society is not responsible for the well-being and survival of human beings who do not own property. The legal code is rooted in retribution and included the death penalty and corporal

punishment. (p.3)

The author describes this brand of anarchism as “part and parcel of the current drive to reproduce 19th-century capitalism with all its misery and cruelty.” (p. 4)

In her discussion of this trend she also notes how many libertarians have sympathy for Nazi fascism.

I found it interesting that the author notes some ideological commonalities between the extreme right in anarchism and left-wing anarchism. She is, of course, correct in pointing out that the extreme right in anarchism is very much in line with the current capitalist offensive against the masses.

The author does note that left anarchism is making a comeback. She sees part of the reason for this being the result of the collapse of the so-called communist regimes.

I see it as a major problem facing the revolutionary political movement that most of those forces who say they are Marxist are reformists or are committed to opposition to the mass movements from a so-called “revolutionary” position. As well, many of the forces calling themselves Marxists have played a bad role in the political movements with various types of extreme bureaucratism and sectarianism. And a lot of the more left wing and radical activists are attracted to anarchism

I think it is important for these activists to consider the legacy of anarchism seriously. I think many of the weaknesses with anarchism that the author indeed notes are fundamental weaknesses of anarchist theory. I have read some of the anarchist critique of bureaucracy and sectarianism prevalent in the left-wing radical movement. And some of it captures well the rottenness that exists. However, I don’t think this justifies adhering to anarchism. Instead, I think the revolutionary character of scientific socialism needs to be reiterated and brought to the fore in guiding a revolutionary political movement.

Further, I think the discussion of anarchism in this book gives some useful insight on what issues need to be addressed among left-wing activists in order to combat anarchism. ◇

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*Anarchism*, continued from page 12

what could have been done to avoid a state capitalist system and stay on a path towards socialism.

These are vexing theoretical problems. As well, it was all too common for “Marxists” to apologize for the tyranny and imperialism of the Soviet Union and other so-called “socialist” countries. Further, a lot of the so-called “Marxist” trends play very bad roles in the movement. They often wind up as a left-looking cover for reformism. Various “Marxists”, “socialists” and Trotskyists support the trade union bureaucracy. They apologize for the

community misleaders and the bourgeois feminism of NOW. These “Marxists” have all done their best to turn make Marxism into something non-radical and non-revolutionary.

I think the reason that anarchism is seen as a major oppositional or revolutionary trend in the movement by so many young activists is due more to the bankruptcy of reformist politics and the dirty opportunism of various so-called “Marxist” left groups than to the viability of anarchism as a political theory or tactic for revolutionary change. *Continued on next page, see Anarchism*

### **Anarchism, Continued from previous page**

Reading the anarchist press, there are a number of distinguishing features. (The quotes from the anarchist press were taken from *Wind Chill Factor* - an anarchist publication in Chicago).

It (*Wind Chill Factor*) expresses opposition to the domination of the movement by the Democratic Party. For instance, in discussing a NOW march on Washington it said: "Particularly enjoyable were the male politicians telling several thousands wimmin how pro-choice they were and that they should therefore empower them (vote them into office) so they can make all the decisions for those wimmin..."

And in referring to the speakers at this demonstration who raised the Zero Population Growth argument for abortion rights it said their reasoning "... is a sick fucking argument that can be used as an excuse for sterilization and genocide of people of color." The anarchist press also expresses discontent with keeping things in the electoral arena.

I have already discussed somewhat the anarchists' discontent with the lack of militancy in the movement. However, the anarchists in general don't see how to connect militancy in demonstrations with building a mass movement which can lead to radical change. It doesn't provide answers on how to break the influence of reformism over the masses and to build a movement independent of the rich and their political parties.

### **Some comments on the history of anarchism**

Anarchists claim that some of their ideas can be found in every period of history. Certain affinity is claimed with the ideas of Lao-Tse, the Hedonists and cynics of Greek philosophy, to early Christian sects of the Middle Ages. Certainly there were thinkers in all those periods who thought society should be directed on a rational basis and who considered what a society might be like that is not based on some men ruling others. But the class development of those periods did not allow any thinker no matter how great to judge the class basis of such a society and to see by what means and through which class society could be built on rationalism and materialism and without the rule of one class over others.

But modern day anarchism — like Marxism — emerged during the rise of capitalism as a trend in the socialist and working class movements. Some of the major writers who developed the anarchist traditions were William Godwin, Pierre Proudhon, Max Stirner, Mikhael Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin.

Proudhon essentially held that there could be a peace-

ful change in society through the establishment of new collectivist institutions that would be without authority and would trade with each other. Stirner was an advocate of extreme individualism and the "war of all against all." Bakunin and Kropotkin held that change would come about through a form of civil war. They were opposed to all political institutions.

With the development of a socialist workers' movement in the mid 19th century the ideas of the anarchists influenced certain sections of workers and hampered the development of revolutionary workers' movements. For example, the ideas and methods of the anarchists showed a certain bankruptcy in the Spanish uprisings in 1872 where the anarchists allied with the bourgeois republicans, where their ideas of no authority, not even revolutionary authority, and federalism kept the working class from playing any leading role in that uprising and contributed to the uprising being smashed by the government. Marx, Engels and Lenin wrote a number of works critiquing the anarchist ideas and practices.

### **What are some of the politics of present-day anarchists?**

#### **1. One component is rage at society, all of society**

They see the destruction of the environment, the degradation of the poor, the yuppie consumer culture and think the solution is to go back to pre-industrial society. They don't look at the class interests at work which cause these problems, nor at the class forces which have the potential to solve them. Here is a quote from *Wind Chill Factor* which gives a bit of their thinking:

"Industry is such a sick way to have a society. There is an entire people stretched all across the world who have allowed themselves to be convinced that the life they live on this planet depends upon the destruction of the planet that provides the life they live. They are duped, by a government of all things"

In several other places they denounce industry. In various of their literature there is a desire to go back to pre-industrial society.

Capitalism is the source of pollution and environmental destruction. There is nothing inherent in mass manufacturing itself that causes environmental damage. It is the profit motive that keeps industry from cleaning up its mess, or making things properly so there is not toxic mess to clean up in the first place.

Short of mass destruction in a war or something like that society is not going to go back. No, but what we do need to do is wrench control of industry from the rich who see it only as a way to make the most profits and thus can

not have any rational solution to the problems they've created. Large-scale, modern socialized production in the hands of the working class and run in the interests of the working class and oppressed has the potential to resolve the problems of environmental destruction and pollution.

## 2. General opposition to or suspicion of politics.

Nietzsche said "Whatever is great in a cultured sense is non-political is even anti-political." This seems to express a viewpoint the anarchists also hold. In their press and in meetings I have heard and seen a disdain for ideology. Ideology ipso facto will split us. They don't look at the class interests that the various political trends serve, but strive to avoid politics altogether. They fail to grasp that the way to oppose bourgeois politics, the control of the media by the rich etc. is to work hard to grasp class politics, and to develop alternative politics.

While anarchists have an ideological predisposition to avoid the discussion of politics, reality nevertheless forces them to do it.

Judging from their press there are a number of issues they are interested in and which they debate such as the attitude to war, whether to have meetings at all, whether to participate in coalitions, vegetarianism, and animal rights. They debate whether to support a black nation in the south and whether it is viable and other issues.

## 3. Tendency to deny the need for mass struggle. These quotes from *Wind Chill Factor* indicate that.

"Anarchism is not an event but a process. There will be no single giant anarchist revolution, where a specific day or place can be marked as before or after anarchy. The anarchist revolution is under way now. Anarchism is a way of living each of us applies to our lives by rejecting hierarchy and coercion in our friendships, family, life, work, religion, society and every possible way...."

This quote shows a denial of mass struggle and a view that society can be changed simply by individuals making lifestyle changes.

"For the most part, leftist demonstrations in the U.S. don't do a whole lot. They are usually ignored by the media and get the issues across to only a few people. In their passivity, they do nothing to raise the social costs, nothing to unleash the people's anger, and present no danger or serious challenge to the system. In fact, they have for the most part become an accepted form of protest by the establishment - a way to funnel people's outrage into a close, ineffective medium that they just ignore."

Here *Wind Chill Factor* seems to be upset with the lack of a mass movement which aims at challenging the system. However, as they tend to oppose all political

discussion and political differentiation, they can not identify the problem of reformism. Or they can't identify it further than that reformism does usually oppose civil disobedience and various other forms of direct action i.e. actions the anarchists think have social costs.

These quotes show a lack of recognition that only a serious mass struggle can bring about a restructuring of society. This class struggle will inevitably come into sharp contradiction with the class of capitalists who benefit from the present structure of society. The anarchists don't give consideration about how to go from the present level of protest to more serious mass struggle. *Wind Chill Factor* seems to say that since the present level of protest hasn't changed anything - then protesting is pointless. This harkens back to the ideas of Proudhon. He advocated "mutualism" in which small groups would interact economically and politically within the framework of agreement on basic principles. He was opposed to force and believed that ethical progress would make government superfluous.

*Wind Chill Factor* also tends to view certain militant tactics such as illegal postering and taking the streets during demonstration as a means of self-empowerment. Thus, tactics are seen as something relevant to the moral stand of the individual and not as questions of how to build up a mass revolutionary political movement.

## 4. Opposition to all governments and political forms.

"Despite the comforting illusion of the ballot box, the government (all government) does not serve the needs of the people it controls. Governments serve themselves, and rule with the threats of police, army, and prison. Temporary unions of concerned individuals can build bridges, provide disaster relief, stage festivals or perform any other function a community might need without creating a government."

Here *Wind Chill Factor* fails to discuss how to overcome those who make billions off the exploitation of others. Is *Wind Chill Factor* against this exploitation. And if so, how will they overcome the resistance of the exploiters to losing their profits and control. Temporary unions of individuals do not solve this problem.

## 5. Militancy as a moral means of self-empowerment.

They don't see a way of connecting their anger to building a mass revolutionary movement.

For example, two years ago (1991 ed.) the U.S. launched a war against Iraq. A rally and march was called for the day after the ground war started. The Emergency Coalition, which was dominated by reformist forces, decided to call off this march and just hold a rally. About

1/2 the demonstration was very upset with this and decided to march anyway. The MLP thought that we should, of course, not kowtow to those who first supported "sanctions not war" and then bowed down to the "support our troops" propaganda. These forces opposed a march because they wanted to keep the movement acceptable to bourgeois politicians like Danny Davis. (a candidate in the Democratic primary for mayor-the primary was being held at the time). Nor should we get away from the aim of wanting to have a militant demonstration which got out our message and helped to build a broader really oppositional movement among the masses. Thus we supported and participated in the breakaway demonstration.

This breakaway demonstration made one attempt to take the streets. This attempt was repulsed and the march regrouped. A section of anarchists and others felt quote strongly that the march had to take the streets. It became a moral issue. The second attempt to take the streets pretty much led to the break up of the demonstration. It was fairly clear that this tactic did not come from any assessment of the situation but from "higher principles," from a certain moralism. This tactic seemed to come from a feeling of alienation, from seeing that the movement became smaller when the war was clearly underway, and from feeling a need to act out of moral outrage.

### What do Marxists think?

Communists think that the level of the development of the productive forces and the type of class relations determine the type of society we live in. Thus one level of the development of productive forces gave rise to feudal society. With the development of industry and commerce came the bourgeois revolution and the rise of bourgeois society. Modern bourgeois society is also outgrowing itself. It has brought into being massive forces of production. It has developed the possibility through science and industry and the breakdown of feudal relations among people of developing a society based on rationalism and materialism. However, bourgeois society can not bring this into being. But it has also brought into being a class that can only liberate itself by eliminating all exploitative class relationships. It has brought into being a class that can only liberate itself by turning bourgeois property into common property, that can eliminate the class interests behind racial discrimination, the oppression of women, etc. and provide the conditions for these struggle to reach fruition.

By turning bourgeois property into common property held by society as a whole, communists would eliminate the situation where industry and science are run for the

profit of the few. Industry and science would be run in the interests of the oppressed, thus in the interests of the majority of society.

The solution is not to go back to pre-industrial society as the present conditions of extreme exploitation would only be engendered again. We can only go forward through large-scale socialized production.

The exploitation of the working class and oppressed and the brutal racism, oppression of women, etc. engendered by capitalist society by the establishment of a revolutionary government organized by the working class and enforcing revolutionary rules against exploitation, racism, national oppression, the oppression of women, etc. and which plans large-scale socialized production in a rational, scientific and non-exploitive way.

### Notes:

1. The National Organization for Women frequently demanded that activists sign non-confrontation pledges while defending clinics from the anti-abortion fanatics. These included pledges not to carry picket signs identifying who the pro-choice activists were, not to denounce or respond to the antis in any way, not to be involved in actually stopping anti blockades of clinics, etc. NOW sometimes asked for the I.D. and wanted to require that pro-choice activists be over 18 to be on clinic defense lines.

2. Referring to the conviction of some of the police officers involved in the Rodney King beating in federal court. ◊



# Reviews of two books on Mexican Politics

by Jack Hill, *Chicago Workers' Voice*

To continue the coverage of Mexican political issues in the *CWV Theoretical Journal*, I would like to discuss two recent books on Mexican politics, *Zapata's Revenge, Free Trade and the Farm Crisis in Mexico* by Tom Barry, and *Democracy in Mexico* by Dan La Botz. Both books are well worth reading if you want more in depth information about the political and economic issues in Mexico today. Neither will give you a perspective of the revolutionary overthrow of monopoly capitalism in Mexico or the world as the goal of the struggle or as the only through solution to the problems of the poor peasants and workers of Mexico. Both do have useful ideas and information

concerning parts of the solution.

Issues in contemporary Mexican politics that we have been dealing with in the *CWV Theoretical Journal* include how to analyze the problems of the campesinos, what was the role of Lázaro Cárdenas and what relevance does his politics have today, how to evaluate the EZLN, and what is the path forward for the poor of Mexico. I have written on these issues in previous articles in the *CWV Theoretical Journal*, on Lazaro Cárdenas in issue no. 8, and on general issues of Mexican politics in issue no. 7. I won't repeat all my views here. Instead I will try to explain my views in relation to the stands taken by these two authors.

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## **Tom Barry: *Zapata's Revenge, Free Trade and the Farm Crisis in Mexico*** South End Press, Boston, MA 1995

As his title indicates, Barry concentrates on the problems of the Mexican peasants and Mexican agriculture. The book presents detailed information the economics and politics of food production in Mexico.

Barry is a liberal, sympathetic to Zapatistas, but thinks the problems of the peasantry in Mexico can be improved greatly under the present capitalist, imperialist system.

### **Zapata and Lazaro Cárdenas**

Barry stresses two points on Zapata's program: 1) the demand of the peasants for the return of land stolen from them by the big landlords, and 2) the demand for local self-government. The peasants wanted their land back, lands that had been stolen particularly during the rule of Porfirio Diaz. But further, Barry emphasizes that the peasants did not trust the federal government to protect them, that the peasants wanted power to be in the hands of the local villages. Of course, it doesn't take a Marxist to realize that government structure is necessary above the village level, at least until long after the revolution. Zapata's reluctance to take national political power was an important factor in the ultimate defeat of the movement he led. In any case, the point is that the original Zapatista program included the demand for the return of power to the local Indian peasant communities.

Lázaro Cárdenas on the other hand, was not interested in returning power to the local villages. Barry stresses that Cárdenas's program was to incorporate the peasants into

the structure of the national political party. The peasants were made dependent on the support and aid from the national government. This mechanism became an important key in the long term survival of the PRI.

Barry analyzes Cárdenas, "The populism of Cárdenas was two-edged. It proved an effective weapon when used to dismantle the haciendas and to reduce the influence of the agrarian elite. But because it was so closely linked to the expansion of state power, Cardenista populism—and agrarismo as its main manifestation—had a sharp revolutionary impact when used against the regional landholding caudillos and on behalf of landless campesinos. But Cardenismo also had a pacifying, counterrevolutionary character that contributed to the formation of a powerful, centralized state and allowed little room for autonomous organizing by either workers or campesinos. With the masses of workers and campesinos unable to represent their own interests, government-sponsored sectoral organizations like the CNC (the National Campesino Federation) served to strengthen the authoritarian state." (p.24)

Barry also mentions that Cárdenas suppressed campesino organizations that he could not control. "To restore the social peace necessary for economic development, he further strengthened the centralized state and rid the provinces of militant campesino organizations that challenged the new federal order." (p. 25)

Barry agrees with other sources in saying that Cárdenas reduced the power of the rural landed aristocracy, making way for the rise of a powerful Mexican capitalist class. Barry's main critique of Cárdenas is the co-optation of the

peasants into the political structure of the state. Barry is not for social revolution so he is not critical of Cárdenas for striving to preserve the exploitative economic system in Mexico.

### After Cárdenas

The PRI governments since Cárdenas have used bureaucratic control of the peasants as a base for expanding capitalist development of agriculture and industrialization. Mexican agriculture developed into what Barry calls a "tridmodal" system: "1) capitalist producers, 2) medium- and small-scale farmers who are surplus-producing but rely primarily on family labor, 3) infrasubistence or subsistence farmers together with the landless, many of who regularly work as jornaleros, or wage farmworkers." (p. 28) The Mexican government policies have helped expand the large capitalist export-oriented agricultural enterprises, and have neglected or damaged the small scale producers. These small scale producers have historically been the main producers of the staples of the Mexican food supply, corn and beans.

It was a powerful symbol of the crisis in Mexican agriculture when Mexico lost self-sufficiency in corn production in the 1970s.

The only seeming swing in the official policy of the Mexican government in the direction of meeting some of the needs of the poor campesinos was in the term of Echeverría (1970-76). Barry sums him up this way, "Agrarismo under Echeverría was an adulterated version of Cardenista agrarianism. One Mexican analyst described the Echeverría government's policies as "technocratic populism". Its focus was on providing government services to campesinos producing for the market, while the 30 percent to 50 percent who existed on the margins of the market were largely ignored by Echeverría's populism. Moreover, the rural reforms did not directly challenge the concentration of land, water, and capital in agribusiness. The polarized structure of agricultural production that had taken shape from 1940-70 was left untouched." (p. 38)

When Echeverría ended his term, these populist gestures were abandoned. The Lopez Portillo presidency (1976-82) was a period of vacillation between the populist and nationalist rhetoric of the previous period and the neoliberal politics of the following period. It ended with a huge debt crisis which left the World Bank and the IMF with a decisive role in directing the Mexican government economic policy. The watchwords ever since have been privatization, deregulation, free trade, and opening up the world market. Barry does point out that, "The PRI

technocratic elite is at least as committed to the liturgy of privatization, deregulation, liberalization, and international market solutions as are the World Bank planners." (p. 45)

The Mexican state has now officially abandoned the campesinos to whatever fate the free market holds for them. One big signal of this was the amending of Article 27 of the Mexican constitution to allow members of ejidos to sell the land they farm. NAFTA was another big symbol of this.

Barry says, "By opening up the farm sector and the food distribution system to international market forces, the Mexican government turned its back on the nationalist and populist policies of the past and embraced the agroindustrial imperative of today's globalized economy." (p. 56) The point that I would emphasize is that the nationalist and populist policies which the PRI proclaimed in the past, in fact, led to a steady deterioration in the conditions of the campesinos and to the massive penetration of the Mexican economy by U.S. capital. These PRI policies did develop a Mexican capitalist class which has become an ever more important junior partner of U.S. imperialism. Barry actually notes many of these facts at various points in his book. He just seems to vacillate about whether any credence should be given to the PRI demagoguery.

For example, in talking about how the U.S. used the food dependency of various third world countries to control politics of these countries, Barry asserts in contrast, "Unlike many food dependent nations, Mexico was able to maintain an independent foreign policy." (p. 57) Here he is referring to the period up through the 70s when Mexico was still relatively self-sufficient in grains. I think that, in spite of the appearance that Mexican foreign policy was in contradiction to the U.S., Mexican foreign policy dovetailed nicely with that of the U.S. The PRI made some rhetorical points appearing to be independent of the U.S., while playing the "good cop" to the U.S.'s "bad cop" to try to bring certain countries into line with the U.S. desires.

Barry has a very interesting section detailing the big investments of U.S. monopoly capital in Mexican agroindustry. U.S. corporations don't generally own the land. (Until the "reforms" of Salinas, they weren't legally allowed to.) Rather they contract with big Mexican producers for their agricultural produce, and they own many of the food processing plants. Barry claims, "An estimated one-third of Mexico's total food-processing capacity is in the hands of U.S.-based TNCs. ... U.S. firms account for most foreign investment in Mexican agroindustry, although two of the largest TNCs, Unilever



and Nestle, are European-owned (Appendix 1)." (pp. 63-64)

In spite of NAFTA's eliminating barriers to Mexican agricultural exports to the U.S., Barry does not expect big increases in such exports. "Generally only Mexico's low-cost labor, its counter-seasonal production cycles for vegetables and its tropical and subtropical climates—not any greater productivity—create a niche in the U.S. market for its export offerings." (p.70) Along with everyone else who has looked at this, he predicts a very harsh impact on the campesinos. "Most dramatic will be the impact on small farmers who have traditionally sold corn on the domestic market and benefited from guarantee prices more than double the international market price." (p.71) Barry also points out that the internationalization of agriculture in Mexico tends to further impoverish the masses of the rural poor. "The areas of Mexico where modernized cash-crop and agroexport is most advanced are also the areas where rural poverty is most dehumanizing." (p. 81)

Barry raises time and again throughout the book that Mexican agriculture is going into deeper and deeper crisis, that rural poverty and hunger is increasing, that production of food grains is decreasing, that the environment is suffering greatly from poor management of water resources, too many pesticides and commercial fertilizers, etc., etc. He just hopes against hope that something can bring the rulers of Mexico to their senses to realize that the path they are following is just making the crisis worse. For example, at the end of the chapter on agricultural exports, he says, "If free trade and prioritizing agroexports prove unable to provide at least part of the solution to the rural development crisis in Mexico, campesino-based rural development strategies and more coherent government agricultural policies may eventually receive more favorable consideration." (p. 92)

### Left debate about the peasantry

This is how Barry describes this debate. "In the 1960s and 1970s, the debate on the left over the peasantry's future revolved around positions put forward by proletaristas or descampesinistas, who espoused a Marxist, class-based analysis, and the campesinistas, who were dedicated to promoting, protecting, and organizing the peasantry." (p. 132)

"One of the main contributions of the proletarista critique was its highlighting of the mixed identity of Mexico's campesinos. Although most campesinos have not yet assumed a clear identity as wage laborers, they at least can be safely categorized as semiproletarians be-

cause of their seasonal work on cash-crop farms." (pp. 132-133)

"... campesinistas generally hold that the peasantry is an enduring social sector in a dependent capitalist country, a sector that can play a progressive economic and political role. ... Rather than dismissing campesinos as a backward force [as the proletaristas do, according to Barry], the campesinistas look to the peasantry to become the basis of a dynamic agricultural system capable of meeting Mexico's food needs and to serve as a leading force for social change. They advocate state support of the campesino economy and campesino organizations to enable them to put forward their own demands." (p. 133)

I think it is obvious that basically Barry leans towards the campesinista viewpoint.

### The New Campesino Movement

After Cárdenas coopted the leadership of the peasant movement in the 30s, it was not until that late '60s and early '70s that a new wave of widespread campesino militancy arose. Barry discusses two factors pushing this development. One factor was the outburst of antigovernment organizing by leftist students and intellectuals after the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre. The other main factor was "the deteriorating social and economic conditions in the campo. The expansion of the cattle industry, shrinking of the agricultural frontier, the mounting population pressures, the mechanization of northwest agribusiness, the switch to less labor-intensive crops such as sorghum, and the deteriorating terms of trade for campesino agriculture were among the main reasons for the explosion of land invasions and conflicts with local elites in the early 1970s." (p. 142) He leaves out discussions of other political conditions which lead to the big expansion of the left movement in general, such as the long term agitation for releasing jailed railroad workers.

Barry discusses two types of peasant organizations that developed in this period, both independent of the PRI. One tendency was based among the subsistence and subsistence peasants, was militantly antigovernment, agrarian in the Zapata sense. The other was based among the small and medium sized surplus producing ejidatarios and was more pragmatic, concerned with production, prices, services and marketing. Barry emphasizes the advances this second type of organization has brought to some groups of small producers.

Barry does not discuss the most radical tendencies of the period which carried out armed uprisings of the peasants in Guerrero particularly.

By the 1990s the peasant movement as a whole was in

disarray. "By the end of the Salinas sexenio (i.e. 1994), a dizzying array of political and economic changes had left the campesino movement disoriented and searching for new directions. The campesino movement, together with most Mexican farmers, was affected by six major changes: 1) the withdrawal of government-subsidizing inputs, 2) high interest rates and lack of access to credit, 3) the end of land distribution and the new status of ejidal land, 4) an increased flow of cheaper food imports, 5) inadequate government measures to upgrade productivity and competitiveness, and 6) a widely criticized new subsidy program called Procampo." (p. 145)

But since Jan. of 1994 the Zapatistas have revived the issue of land distribution. The basic call, "land to those who work it," strikes a deep resonant chord among the impoverished peasantry especially in the South and South-east of Mexico.

### **Barry's Program**

While Barry is sympathetic to the Zapatistas, he does not simply echo their program. This is how he evaluates the call for "land to the tiller."

"It is certainly the case that Mexico needs more equitable land distribution. However, renewed land distribution will do little to improve production or the lot of the peasantry in Mexico unless it is accompanied by a campesino-oriented agricultural policy. While agrarian injustices need to be resolved, the main focus of struggles of the peasantry must necessarily be on the economic issues of increased productivity, better marketing, improved government services, and its role in the emerging world trading system." (p. 149)

"For the campesinado to persist, it must continue to adapt and evolve. Elements of traditional peasant agriculture remain not just because of inherited cultural patterns but because they make sense as individuals, family, and community survival strategies. These same elements could also become important components of national economic, social, and environmental strategies. Rather than blindly pursuing economic modernization projects based on the experience of more industrialized nations, Mexico's leaders might do well to consider the important productive, labor-absorption, and environmentally sustainable attributes of the small farm and cooperative agriculture of its campesinos, the people of the land." (p. 151)

### **Sustainable Agriculture**

NAFTA pays lip service to the goal of sustainable

agriculture, as do all the politicians in Mexico and the U.S. However, Barry questions what this really means. The fact is that modern agricultural methods, which Barry points out were mainly developed for use in temperate climates, are damaging the environment in Mexico. Barry also points out that the desperation of impoverished peasants can lead to environmental destruction. If the only place they can farm is the rain forest, they will cut down trees and try to grow food to keep from starving. So, both the growth of modern agricultural practices and the growing impoverishment of the campesinos is contributing to environmental destruction. Barry uses these facts to argue for sustainable development strategy based on the small farm sector. It might not be quite as productive as modern, large scale, pesticide- and artificial fertilizer-based agriculture, but it won't harm the environment, it could provide self-sufficiency in basic grains, and it would employ many of the campesinos who would otherwise move to the cities.

However, he does recognize that the odds are stacked against this strategy being adopted. "Without state support in the form of better access to capital, land, water, and technical assistance and within the framework of free trade that pits them against growers throughout the world, campesino-based projects are likely to fail." (p. 227)

### **Barry's Conclusion**

He accepts that globalization of agricultural markets is irreversible, but he does advocate that the Mexican government undertake policies that will protect campesinos and promote self-sufficiency in basic grains. In his model the Mexican government targets aid to the campesinos, assists them in improving productivity, provides them loans, improves education, helps the small producers get the same access to the market as big agribusiness. As a complement and a check and control on the government, he wants organizations of campesinos and generally of civil society to be actively involved in the planning and implementation of these programs. He emphasizes that the campesinos themselves do not want a return to the era when they were dependent on PRI bureaucrats.

"For the campesinado to persist, it must continue to adapt and evolve. Elements of traditional peasant agriculture remain not just because of inherited cultural patterns but because they make sense as individuals, family, and community survival strategies. These same elements could also become important components of national economic, social, and environmental strategies. Rather than blindly pursuing economic modernization projects based on the experience of more industrialized nations,

Mexico's leaders might do well to consider the important productive, labor-absorption, and environmentally sustainable attributes of the small farm and cooperative agriculture of its campesinos, the people of the land." (p. 151)

He grants that, "Campesino-based food production systems are probably structurally incapable of being competitive in the world market or providing the same standards of living enjoyed by modern (unsustainable) agribusiness.

"Nonetheless, until the economy can provide other productive employment, the peasantry merits government support in its attempts to diversify production and increase self-provisioning." (p. 252) He suggests ways that the Mexican government could find the money to do this.

### My comments

Barry's ideal of a kinder gentler globalization of agriculture under monopoly capital is not possible. The Mexican government represents the Mexican capitalist class. Neither the Mexican capitalists nor the U.S. imperialists are going to sacrifice their money or profits to help the Mexican campesinos out of the goodness of their hearts. I don't think the Mexican capitalists are going to buy the argument that everyone will benefit if the capital-

ists will refrain from completely impoverishing and ruining the campesinos.

A determined struggle of the masses can force some government measures to relieve the situation of the campesinos. Some of the measures that Barry advocates could be forced on a hostile state machine by the mass movement. The struggles of Mexican campesinos for land, for money from the government, for protection against devastation are just.

But capitalism is destroying the peasants. The effects of this can be eased, but this is the natural tendency this system. Barry shows a lot of examples of how this is happening at the present time. The only real solution for the campesinos is socialism, the same solution which is necessary for the working class in Mexico and all the poor and oppressed. This is the same solution which the workers and oppressed in the U.S. need to aim for. This article is already too long for me to go into this in detail. I have tried to develop this point in previous articles, so I refer to them.

My main point here is that Barry is hoping he can get the capitalist system to operate in a way which is not capitalist. Barry advocates that peasants should continue as an important social class for the indefinite future in Mexico. Barry recognizes that there are a lot of forces and trends against this happening.

## **Dan LaBotz, *Democracy in Mexico, Peasant Rebellion and Political Reform*, South End Press, Boston, MA 1995**

This book has a broader scope than Barry's. It deals with the whole spectrum of political issues and forces in Mexico. I learned some things I didn't know from this book, but you do have to be aware of the social democratic bias of the author.

La Botz considers himself a socialist, but in this book he stresses his view that the main struggle in Mexico is for democracy. "The focus of this book is Mexico's struggle for democracy. By democracy, I mean not only free and fair elections, but also human rights and civil rights, as well as the rights of workers." (p. ix)

La Botz also gives his main conclusion in the introduction. "In my view the working class constitutes the all important absent factor in present Mexican politics. Controlled by the PRI and its "official" unions, faced with economic crisis and severe repression, workers have so far failed to create either independent unions or their own political party." (p. x)

In the most general terms I think he is right about the working class. Organizing the Mexican working class as an independent political force is key to political progress

in Mexico. However, La Botz presents only a very vague idea of how this would come about or what kind of a party the workers should organize or how to organize it. He points out all kinds of flaws in Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and the party he organized, but he still hopes that something good might come out of the PRD. I also found it interesting to note that although he mentions something about nearly every other left political force in Mexico, he doesn't say a word about certain of the more radical left groups in Mexico, such as the newspaper *El Machete*, the MPI (Movimiento Proletario Independiente, and the Frente Popular Francisco Villa.

### Evaluation of Lázaro Cárdenas

La Botz pictures him as a sincere if misguided defender of the peasants and workers. "Nationalist, vaguely socialist, and inspired by the communitarian values of the Mexican village, Cárdenas was, as Adolfo Gilly says, a Mexican Narodnik who intended to create an agrarian socialist utopia in Mexico. Cárdenas was an idealist who

believed that, under the guidance of the revolutionary state, Mexico could develop its national economy while avoiding the problems of industrial capitalism. Cárdenas believed that it was possible to have capitalist economic development without capitalist control, and capitalist business ventures without exploitation and oppression. This was, as Gilly suggests, his utopia, both an ideal and an illusion.” (p. 54)

La Botz admits that Cárdenas was mistaken in believing that the needs of the workers and peasants could be resolved under capitalism. However, La Botz lavishes praise on the programs of Cárdenas and doesn't mention any of the actions that Cárdenas took against workers or peasants.

This assessment of Cárdenas is wrong and harmful. In an article in issue no. 7 of the CWV Theoretical Journal as well as in the above discussion of Barry, I have discussed the evaluation of L. Cárdenas. Uncertainty about whether Cárdenas was on the side of the poor and exploited or for the rich exploiters is very harmful to the struggle of the oppressed.

Lázaro Cárdenas did sharply curtail the power of the old-style semi-feudal landowners in Mexico, the haciendados, and the lot of the peasants improved under Cárdenas. Both La Botz and Barry point this out. Cárdenas used the peasant movement to do this, but he served the interests of the wealthy classes.

As I mentioned previously, La Botz has many interesting facts in his book, and one of them concerns Lázaro Cárdenas and the peasant and farmworker movement in Chiapas. La Botz recounts how Lázaro Cárdenas took over the leadership of the this movement in the late 1930s from the Communists and other leftists. Further he shows how the 1939 agrarian reform in Chiapas converted wage earners and union members into peasants working their ejidos, which had the effect, intended or unintended, of destroying the farmworkers union movement. It looks like another example of how Lázaro Cárdenas put himself as the savior of the poor, used their movement to reduce the power of one section of the ruling class, and ended up with himself and his party in firm control of the organizations of the poor and in control of the state machinery. La Botz doesn't discuss it, but I think it is reasonable to assume that the Mexican Communist Party made it easy for Cárdenas to do this. According to Cockcroft (James D. Cockcroft, *Mexico, Class Formation, Capital Accumulation, and the State*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1990), the Mexican CP collaborated with and supported Cárdenas in that period.

#### Evaluation of the EZLN

I think La Botz raises an important and very true point about the key role that the Zapatista rebellion has played in Mexican politics. “The indigenous rebellion in Chiapas was reviving the Mexican left.” (p. 8) You don't have to think that the EZLN is the answer to all of Mexico's problems to recognize that with their heroism and sacrifice, the Zapatistas have altered the political climate in Mexico. They have inspired other sections of the oppressed to intensify their struggle. The possibility of completely doing away with the oppressive system is more real to the masses.

La Botz discusses the political trends which became organizational sources of the EZLN. One is Maoism which was quite important in Mexico from 1968 through the 1980s. Some of the Maoist activists were organizing in Chiapas in the mid to late 70s. Somewhat less important, but also present in Chiapas were Trotskyists (PRT, Revolutionary Workers' Party), who had a base in the teachers' union, and supporters of the pro-Soviet revisionist Mexican Communist Party. Liberation theology was another major ideological current leading into the EZLN. La Botz says that Castroism per se was not an important organized trend in Chiapas or in Mexico. He says Castroism as an ideology had wide sympathy, but that the Castroite trends did not organize oppositional groups. La Botz attributes this to Castro not wanting to alienate the Mexican government with which he had active relations.

Other activists think La Botz may be understating the importance of the Castroite trend in Mexico. However, his point about Castro not wanting to alienate the Mexican government is obvious.

La Botz sums up the EZLN program:

\* local democracy (Although La Botz suggests that the community empowerment that the Zapatistas advocate may leave the real power in the hands of political cadre, just as he claims the Maoists do.)

\* renewal of the ejido, land to the tiller

\* women's rights

\* a secular movement which has some of the themes of liberation theology

\* nationalism

\* rejection of guerrilla warfare as their long term strategy

“In sum, the EZLN's strategy can be referred to as armed populism or revolutionary reform.” (p. 41) La Botz considers the EZLN's program inadequate, “But those words [the main demands of the EZLN] do not add up to an economic and political program for the transformation of Mexico on the eve of the twenty-first century.” (p. 42)

## Some of my points in response

I feel as if La Botz is both too supportive of the EZLN and too critical at the same time. I would emphasize even more strongly than he does that the EZLN through their heroism and sacrifices has opened up the question of radical social change as a national political issue in Mexico.

Another huge contribution of the EZLN is the impulse it gives to the break up of the PRI. The stranglehold the PRI has had on politics in Mexico for 60 odd years is disintegrating. The blows from the EZLN and from the mass movement in defense of the Zapatistas have been a major factor in this. This opens up a space for the working class to develop independent class politics. It also opens up more space for the right wing to organize, and this they have been doing. How this will ultimately play out is not clear yet. However, there is a big enough mass movement in Mexico led by forces to the left of the PRD that the right wing has serious opposition.

The break up of the PRI can be a major step in the direction of "democracy", and I agree that "democracy" is an important partial goal in the struggle for liberation of the workers, peasants and poor in Mexico. La Botz is correct to point out that the EZLN's goals are not complete. They do not lead to the complete transformation of society and the establishment of socialism which is what is needed to destroy the roots of the problem.

La Botz fudges on the issue of socialism and he is vague about how struggles for democracy can open up space for struggles for working class political power. He wants to call all struggles, struggles for democracy in one sense or another. I think it makes more sense to understand the distinctions between struggles for democracy and struggles for the economic and political power of the working class. Being clear that the goal of democracy is an important but partial goal gives one the chance to give strong support to struggles for this goal without having to say that this is the whole answer for Mexico.

Another question to deal in relation to the EZLN is to evaluate their tactics in relation to the goals they have set. In particular what should we make of the EZLN's maneuvers with the PRD? La Botz doesn't deal with this much. He is only mildly critical of the PRD. I don't agree with La Botz's evaluation of the PRD, and I think there is a need to question the EZLN's tactics in relation to the PRD. I have dealt with this some in prior articles, so let me try to save space by referring to them.

In sum I would say that La Botz fudges on the need for a working class led revolution in Mexico, tries to make the struggle for democracy the only issue and on this basis,

criticizes the EZLN for not having broad enough goals, and misses questions of the EZLN's tactics in relation to other political forces in Mexico.

## Civil Society

This phrase has a definite meaning in Mexican politics which La Botz explains in some detail. He gives some useful information on the this important political and social movement which has grown vigorously since the earthquake in Mexico City in 1985. Basically it is a social movement of ordinary people apart from and against the government. "Civil society in Mexico came to mean a non-partisan, multi-class movement fighting for human rights, civil rights, political reform and social justice against the domination of the one-party state." (p. 72) The Zapatistas have looked to such movements for potential allies, as well as the PRD, and the Mexican left. These movements can be very militant, involve large numbers of people, and pose a serious challenge to the PRI.

## Organizing the workers

For decades the workers' organizations have been controlled by the PRI. Then, Salinas de Gortari's programs of cutbacks and privatization endangered this alliance, but Salinas broke the spirit of unions (at least the PRI dominated ones) to resist his program. He jailed the leader of the petroleum workers' union, used police against miners in Cananea, and bought off the leadership of the telephone workers union. Salinas made sure that there would be no serious opposition to neoliberalism from the PRI-controlled unions.

In Chapter 8 La Botz discusses a variety of approaches that different groups are using to organize workers in the maquiladora region along the U.S. border. He talks about the American Friends Service Committee cross-border support work, the links between the FAT (Authentic Labor Front, an organization independent of the PRI) and the UE (United Electrical workers, an independent U.S. union), the links between the FLOC (Farm Labor Organizing Committee, U.S. farmworkers) and the CTM farmworkers union, and El Alacrán, a semi-underground organizing center. This information is very interesting. La Botz shows his liberalism by indicating that all of these approaches may have validity.

## Organizing women

This is another interesting chapter. La Botz contrasts two approaches to organizing women. The more left wing

trend focuses on poor peasant and working women, for example, the "Rosario Castellanos" Group which organized a caravan to take food and medicine to the women and children of Altamirano in Chiapas when the army had it blockaded. On the other hand, Women in Struggle for Democracy is oriented mostly towards the middle class, electoral reform, and parliamentary democracy. La Botz shows his sympathy for the left wing orientation.

One thing I would question in his description of WSD is what tactics does this middle class women's movement use against the more radical women's organizations. In the U.S. we are well aware that NOW does not just go about promoting rights for upper class women, but also tries to stifle militancy in the women's movement. One might guess that something like this takes place in Mexico, but La Botz does not discuss such a thing.

### Electoral Reform

La Botz is sharp with the Mexican reformers who wanted a clean election in 1994 because they took money and political support from the U.S. government. "In its own terms, how would Mexican civil society expect to fulfill its own lofty ideals by turning to the United States?" (p. 196) These Mexican NGO's were becoming a vehicle for the U.S. government to control the politics of Mexico.

La Botz points out that the political issues debated in the election campaigns had shifted between 1988 and 1994. "In 1988, the FDN (National Democratic Front, C. Cárdenas's organization then) campaign had been a massive, amorphous movement not only for political democracy, but also for fundamental social change. In 1944, civil society's struggle for democracy tended to focus attention on political democracy to the exclusion of social democracy." (pp. 197-8) In effect, although La Botz doesn't quite say this, the social base for the opposition to the PRI was narrowed.

### The solution

La Botz finished the book shortly after the May Day, 1995, demonstrations in Mexico City. He points to the huge political, economic and social crisis which has been gripping Mexico and asks who has the solution. Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas doesn't. Neither does civil society nor the EZLN. The workers are the key. For one thing they are the majority of the population now.

La Botz takes hope from the mass demonstration on May Day in opposition to the PRI. This was the first year in decades that the PRI did not organize a pro-government rally in the Zocalo (the central plaza in Mexico City).

Instead the Zocalo was filled with opposition groups, including perhaps 50,000 people organized by SUTAUR-100, the militant independent union of transportation workers who had been locked out of their jobs by the government and their leaders put in jail. La Botz fails to mention the coalition of independent left groups which organized this demonstration, CNOSI. Perhaps these groups are too militant for his taste.

La Botz believes the PRI is disintegrating. The future can hold either "a radical movement from below fighting for socialism" or "economic crisis, disintegration, or right-wing military coup". (p. 237)

La Botz concludes, "There exist today in Mexico two contrary forces, two antithetical principles. On the one side— supported by the United States government, U.S. banks, and corporations—stands Mexico's authoritarian state-party, the PRI with its powerful political apparatus, its patronage army, and its dependent masses. On the other side stand those several populist and democratic movements described here: the peasants struggling for land, the workers demanding decent wages and working conditions, the indigenous people and women demanding social equality, and the members of all social classes calling for political democracy. Today the Mexican state-party confronts a broad, multi-class movement, an elemental and inchoate force, a society in search of democracy and social justice, a people in quest of a new government. The Party remains in power, the people remain in struggle, and the future of Mexico will be decided by the contest." (p. 237)

I can think of a couple main comments. For one thing, activists must deal with the fact that these existing oppositional movements contain political forces who are dedicated to maintaining the rule of capitalism and imperialism in Mexico. These forces undermine the struggles from within. La Botz does show a little sign of understanding this in his description of the movements for electoral reform and of the women's movement. I would emphasize that for this "elemental and inchoate force" to actually overturn the existing order, political struggle has to be waged against those who undermine the movement from within.

Which leads to my second point, I don't see how this movement could have any chance to make it to socialism without the revolutionary activists and workers forming a genuine revolutionary party, a party of the working class, a party based on the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism. La Botz does mention that workers need a party, but he doesn't say what kind or how it should be organized. Perhaps he means a party of dedicated revolutionary activists, but I think it is more likely that he means

*Continued on p. 10, see LaBotz*

# Two articles from *El Machete* in Mexico, More on the Debate on Marxism

## *Introductory Note by Anita*

*The following are two articles reprinted from El Machete newspaper in Mexico City. The articles appeared in August and November, 1995 in the section of the newspaper called, "For the Debate". The article by Ricardo Loewe is a response to a previous "For the Debate" article which appeared in the Chicago Workers' Voice Theoretical Journal last issue. The other article is unsigned and from the newspaper staff.*

*El Machete newspaper is published in Mexico City as the voice of a number of independent organizations affiliated with CNOSI (Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Sociales Independientes) and of other left-wing forces that are active in mass struggles and the revolutionary movement in Mexico. The "For the Debate" column is open to individuals and organizations and does not necessarily reflect the views of the El Machete group; those views appear in the Editorial column. Translation is by Chicago Workers' Voice.*

*A note of caution to readers: Since these articles were published time has rushed on in Mexico, bringing many changes in conditions. The political crises of the ruling party, the PRI, has exacerbated with every revelation of narcotraficante ties to government officials, every assassination, and the growing challenge to their legitimacy from the mass movement and other political forces. Alliances and ideological struggles among trends (marxist, liberation theologians, left reformism, et al) are in continuous flux. In particular, it appears that debate between the left liberation theologians and Marxists (reflected in these articles) has sharpened. However, an uneasy truce also exists, largely due to the influence of the liberation theologians in Chiapas, the influence of the left in Mexico City, and the repression that has hit all the opposition forces.*

## **DON'T DEFEND ME, COMPADRE**

by Ricardo Loewe

August 4, 1995

Political debate is the order of the day. It is an absolute necessity in the rebuilding process, as much plural as contradictory, in which we "leftist" organizations are living. Within this framework, as a collaborator of *El*

*Machete*, I want to comment on the contribution of Tono Garcia in issue No. 63, entitled "In defense of Marxism". At the same time I would like to inaugurate, with this contribution, a section for fraternal debate in our newspaper, if there is a consensus for it.

I am in agreement with the companero when he affirms the necessity of using imagination to win the sympathy of the non-organized masses, also that we must break with localism and narrow trade unionism with the aim of creating regional and national programs.

Of course all of this is possible in Latin America and in Mexico through Marxism, or better said, through Marxism-Leninism....and maybe some other "isms" which derive from the first [marxism....translator], particularly the ill-named Guevarism which should be clearly differentiated from lazy-ism [a pun using the word guevarismo which means laziness—translator] which is a well aided and very lazy left trend. In any case, it seems that we're also in agreement that marxism has become a trend — very cheap — routine [una corriente—muy corriente—translator], linked to what Tono calls "immediate petitionism" which in Mexico is nothing more than the collective verbalization of hunger, a question very different from the "narrow unionism" so criticized by Marx and Lenin in their time and in their concrete situation.

What is not very clear is how to win the sympathy of 91 million Mexicans (minus the members of the Mexican Businessmen's Council and the PGR), if we do not include their immediate demands, such as housing, land, work, education, healthcare, justice, liberty, independence, the right to a culture and to information, democracy and dignity.

Neither do I understand why there is a "need for a proletarian party". Why not - right now and here- a mass class front. A mass party or a mass party? A party the same as or different from the old Communist Party of Mexico, or those of all the "marxist-leninists" who have existed in our country? Undoubtedly to respond to these questions requires a scientific rigor of marxism applied to the concrete situation of Mexico today, which has its long history.

And now that I write the word "party", I want to get to the depths of this debate. Lenin wrote (in *Socialism and Religion*, December, 1905, *Collected Works Volume III*, ed. Progress, Moscow, 1976) that Christians could be members of the party because, "The unity of this true

revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class to create paradise on earth is more important for us that unity with proletarian criteria about paradise in the sky". On the other side, Catholic theologian, Helio Gallardo writes, "The people of the third world(...) have, at the present moment (referring to the failure of real socialism), the necessity and the possibility to take charge of their own history. It is almost uneludable that a creative developed marxism, will be one of the bases which will permit them to complete this defiance" (Crises of Historic Socialism, ed Dei, Costa Rica, 1990, page 80).

Meanwhile, compadre Tono, without further ado, links the Jesuits with the CIA. Precisely, the same Jesuits who have carried on in recent times a combat as tough as it has been silent against the regime, against Salinas as well as Zedillo. It is clear, that among the followers of Ignacio Lopez de Loyola there are "good" and "bad, also "worse". However, to say that the Jesuits are this or that, is as if to say that the communists, or the serbs or the tonos (with all respect compadre) are this or that. Why was it those frail Jesuits, for example, who were the six sacrificed by the Salvadoran dictatorship for having accompanied the people in their revolutionary struggle. And the frail Jesuits built an honest defenses of human rights, or the good people who have moved into the most inhospitable zones of Mexico with the aim of putting the Evangelical to the service of the Indian and popular struggles.

With respect to the CIA, why place it in the Ibero [Iberoamericana University—translator] or only in that university? Why not, for example, in the Universidad de las Americas de Puebla, where it is known that there is an agent who participated in the creation of the Chilean dictatorship? Why not speak of the possible infiltration of the CIA in the Colegio de Mexico, now so interested in making studies of "governability" in our country. Why not mention ITAM of the Universida Anahuac, cradles of the intellectuals organic to the Bourgeoisie? All the universities in Mexico, not only the Iberoamerican are far from the people, which doesn't mean, again, that all their students or professors are no-good rascals?

A final question, in light of the despotic revolt against the Spaniard Felipe Gonzalez, against the NGOs and organizations in defense of human rights in Mexico, which are generically classified as promoted by aventurists and high-livers (de quienes calla sus nombres). To whom is this article directed? [the article written by Tono—translator]. Because Marxism, that which has to be defended, has to break with petty bourgeois and bourgeois ideological positions, has to develop revolutionary political work to educate and sensitize the masses. This is like the work of ants, daily and difficult. It is this work which

*El Machete* is trying to perform, for example with the article in the same issue #63 titled "Socialism or Neoliberalism?" Surely, it is not the editors of our newspaper which compadre Tono refers to as carriers of confusion and petty bourgeois pretensions that don't call things by their real name.

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November 15, 1995

**FOR THE DEBATE:**

We have placed this article in this section not because we may be in disagreement with what it puts forward, but rather in order to respond to the following question: How can we contribute to the development of a creative Marxism-Leninism which conforms to the science of the struggle for liberation in Mexico? —*El Machete* [As the article is unsigned, and given its introduction, it can be assumed that it was written by someone from the *El Machete* staff —translator]

**Theory, Theoretical Struggle and Theory for Action**

We are living through a process of human, physical and mental degradation in proportion to the high level of concentration of wealth in the hands of a tiny number, smaller all the time, of capitalists and to the impoverishment of millions of people throughout the world.

Capitalism, which has us living under its present form of world imperialism, not only has concentrated the wealth produced by the toilers in the hands of the big monopolists, but has created the means to impede the working class and the people from gaining consciousness of their reality and taking the necessary action to eliminate the dominant class.

The millions of entertainment magazines, newspapers and other publications, and, especially television, provide a systematic and permanent bombardment of banal, diversionist information or information that openly hides the reality in which we live, creating an extraordinary mental confusion which benefits the dominant class. At the same time the collapse of the parasitical state monopoly capitalism of Eastern Europe which maintained a corrupt bureaucracy in power and never turned over the ownership of the means of production to the toilers, has provoked also —fortunately— the crumbling around the world of the revisionist bureaucracy which they called "communist and socialist" parties and which in reality had renounced all revolutionary change and which benefited from the Soviet money just like the electoral parties receive from each government.

These two events have filled with joy all the adulators  
*Continued on next page, see El Machete*



## Regarding Mexico:

### Some Points in Reply to Mark and Joseph

by Jack Hill (Oleg), *Chicago Workers' Voice*

#### *Editorial note:*

The article below refers to the journal *Communist Voice* and two of its authors, Mark and Joseph. *Communist Voice* (like *Chicago Workers' Voice*) is put out by former members of the Marxist-Leninist Party. In fact they were supporter of this journal until a year ago. They launched their own publication as the end game in a very sectarian split. For a discussion of the issues and circumstances in that split see the article "Anatomy of a Split" in *CWVTJ* #7.

Nearing the anniversary of its first year, *Communist Voice* (available from P.O. Box 13261, Harper Station, Detroit, MI 48213) devotes most of its ink to attacking *CWV* and *Los Angeles Workers' Voice*. While we are flattered by all the attention, we do resent their method. Mark and Joseph frequently misrepresent the views presented in *CWVTJ* and then, following a classic prescription, they knock down the straw men that they set up. In the article below Jack exposes some of the distortions of his views carried out by Mark and Joseph. As well, he corrects a few of their other mistakes.

In issue number 5 of the *Communist Voice*, Joseph and Mark make all kinds of charges against me. I don't have the time to reply in detail to all of their charges, nor do I think most of the readers of the *CWVTJ* would be that interested in long polemics. Nevertheless I did go through that issue and note a number of points where they are

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#### *El Machete, Continued from p. 32*

and well paid ideologues of the bourgeoisie, who, from the universities and massive means of communication, gloat that the "end of the class struggle" has arrived, and that now we live in a "post-industrial" society in which technology predominates and the only thing that remains to all of us is to resign ourselves and assimilate the information that the epoch of the "end of ideologies" and the "end of history" has arrived, among other tivialities.

Today, fortunately, the false communists, socialists and revolutionaries that created so much confusion, have been disintegrating from country to country, en la medida that they feel that to be a cafe "revolutionary" is no longer a business nor does it give one any prestige - in this same medida- they take to the embrace of the bueracratc local bourgeoisie, but now openly as "democratic" "social-

wrong about my stands on issues of Mexican politics.

1. They keep raising that Julie (Sarah) or I are for more aid to the ejidos. In fact I didn't tie the issue of demanding and fighting for relief for the poor peasants to the specific form of the ejido. As far as I understand it the ejidos are rapidly dying. The "reform" of Article 27 did that.

2. Who said that reforms to alleviate the plight of the Mexican peasants are socialism? I don't think I said any such thing.

3. Joseph and Mark continue to claim that the EZLN program is basically the same as that of Lazaro Cardenas. I don't think they have proven this, and I don't think you can prove that much about the EZLN by showing that Lazaro Cardenas was no good. The EZLN program is not a program for socialism, but it is also not the program of L. Cardenas. It is not a program to coopt the peasant movement into the structure of the party-state. It is a program to return democracy to the local level. You may not think this is possible or good, but it is not Cardenas's program.

4. Neither can you dismiss the EZLN on the basis that the son, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas is no good. Does the EZLN try to make deals with and use the PRD? Yes. Have they got much out of this? Not really. C. Cardenas maintains a distance and submits to the right wing in his own party.

5. Mark makes a generic call. "The revolutionary education of the workers and activists in the U.S. who want to unite with the Mexican toilers requires a discussion of

*Continued on p. 34, See Mark and Joseph*

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democratic" and other strange names even less compromising.

Not only have they renounced marxism (whose essence really they never assimilated, bureaucrats that they were), and proclaimed its nth burial, but they have abandoned all theory and are limited to creating a coarse phraseology that today, by luck, doesn't differentiate them in any way from the bourgeois parties which have always played the game of the dominant classes, through the electoral farce and the false democracy which annuls participation as a class and creates the expectant illusion that getting rid of a president and putting another from the same dominant class in place, will change the situation for the impoverished and oppressed masses. WITHOUT REVOLUTIONARY THEORY THERE CAN BE NO REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE. ◊

# Theories and Evolution of the Middle Strata -- Part I

by Peter Tabolt, Boston Communist Study Group

## *Editorial Note by Jake*

*Sometimes a journal will print an article along with a caveat along the lines of "although there are some things we disagree with, we are publishing it anyway..."*

*Well, not this time. We are publishing an article by Peter Talbot from the Boston Communist Study Group even though we dispute its statistics, argue against its conclusions and reject its class orientation. Why then are we printing it?*

*Because dramatic changes have taken place in the workforce, including a decrease in the number of manufacturing workers along with an increase in service sector employment. Moreover these changes in the workforce are taking place in the context of the general demoralization in the left. Some Marxists question or challenge the traditional view that the industrial proletariat will be the leading and/or the main force in a socialist revolution. Still others argue that now revolution and socialism are unattainable.*

*We are interested in debating these questions as part of the process to answer them. Thus along with Peter Tabolt's article, we include a reply by Jake on page 35. Please note that the following article is only the first half and the second half of Tabolt's article will appear in the next issue of CWVTJ.*

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## **Mark and Joseph, Continued from p. 33**

the stand of the various political trends and important issues in the Mexican movement." (C.V. #5, p. 23) I don't disagree with this as a general statement. However, I think a serious discussion is more than just saying that every political group in Mexico is fatally flawed.

6. Joseph implies that I think that land reform "can guarantee that the poor peasants can prosper on their small plots" (p.24) This is an outrageous distortion of my views. He doesn't give a quote for this because he can't. This is typical Joseph, give a wildly distorted interpretation of your opponents' views, disprove that and think you have done something.

7. Joseph puts words in my mouth. "Oleg would be careful to say that these measures [reforms in agriculture] are not the full liberation of the working class and peasantry, not can they provide a permanent solution. But he

## **Theories and evolution of the salaried middle strata — part I**

by Peter Tabolt

### **Authors' Note:**

*The following is an investigative report produced by a member of the Boston Communist Study Group. This study group was formed after the dissolution of the Marxist Leninist Party by former members and supporters of that organization in the Boston area to continue the investigation and discussion changes in the world economy and political systems and class structures that have given rise to the crisis of revolutionary theory. The present work is part of a continuation of a study of changes in the class structure in the US that was originally published in the Workers' Advocate Supplement of March 20, 1993.*

### **Introduction**

#### **Changes in Class Structure**

The twentieth century has seen huge changes in the class structures of the US and the other Western capitalist countries. The industrial workers reached the zenith of  
*Continued on page 36, see Middle Strata*

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seems to think these measures are not an impulse to capitalism, but a step in the other direction." (p. 27) Same technique as I mentioned above.

8. Joseph says I am against Cardenas because those reforms give rise to capitalism. Joseph proves that these reforms inevitably give rise to intensified capitalist relations and differentiation. In fact, my point is the top down political control by Cardenas and the PRI, the stifling of the independent movement of the workers and peasants.

9. Another distortion by Joseph, "The CWV glorifies its own program by implying that, if it were carried out on a large-enough scale, it would bring prosperity." (p. 29) He can't give a quote for this because this interpretation of our stand is a figment of his imagination.

10. The thrust of Joseph's article is to try to prove that I am wrong because my stand is as in no. 7. <

# Reply to Tabolt's "Theories and Evolution of the Middle Strata"

by Jake, *Chicago Workers' Voice*

Please note that we have only published half of Part One of "Theories and Evolution of the Salaried Middle Strata." The second half of part one will appear in the next issue of CWVTJ. This reply will focus on the material published here but it is helpful to look at some earlier comments.

The Feb. 5, 1994 "Statement of the Boston Communist Study group" highlights their position on the middle strata:

"At the 4th Congress [Tabolt] presented a report (see *Workers' Advocate Supplement*, March 20, 1993) based on our local research which raised a number questions about changes in class structure in the US and other advanced capitalist societies in Europe and Asia.

"One of the most troubling issues raised in this report is the growth of the professional/managerial strata. Together these two strata make up 25 per cent of the workforce in the US and slightly lower percentages in Canada, Europe and Japan. This is more people than all the production workers in manufacturing, all the transport workers and all the unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers in the service industries such as restaurants, hospitals etc., put together. And the professional/managerial strata are growing faster than any other section of the workforce and have been for decades."

So the professionals and the managers are growing rapidly and they already outnumber the working masses, or so it seems from the statement "more people than all the production workers in manufacturing, all the transport workers and all the unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers in the service industries... put together."

If this is true, then we are faced with a very large and growing section of the masses that has no interest in revolution. The implication then is that it will be tough sledding for revolutionaries. Maybe we should just give up?

No, we should not give up revolution but we should take a better look at the changes in the composition of the workforce and what it means for the working class and our prospects for a socialist revolution.

In past issues of CWVTJ we have accused our former comrades of the BCSG of liquidationism, i.e. of denying the need for revolutionary work or revolutionary organization and, in particular, of denying the possibility of a proletarian-led socialist revolution. Tabolt has replied

that we judged his views unfairly, that our polemics against him and other members of the former majority of the Central Committee of the MLP amounts to knocking down straw men, and that the BCSG has not given up revolutionary politics.

We shall see. For the moment, I stick by our original accusations.

The latest article from the BCSG summarizes the theoretical outlook of Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lenin and three German academics (Lederer, Marshak, Speir) toward the "middle strata." This is helpful but I will take issue with some important points in later articles in CWVTJ.

The article also makes an analysis of the evolution of the "middle strata," in particular of the professional/managerial strata. Unfortunately this analysis is wrong. It draws wrong conclusions from some valid statistics while some of the other figures it cites are questionable. Overall, I believe it winds up with the same pessimistic outlook that afflicts a great deal of the left today.

Whatever the right and wrong in Tabolt's article, every Marxist must recognize that there have been changes in class structure. Not only the composition of the working class but of the "middle strata" and peasantry. Significant changes are taking place in every country around the world. Communist revolutionaries have to consider these changes and deal with them in terms of Marxist-Leninist theory and in their practical organizing.

For example, it is a fact that the industrial proletariat has decreased dramatically in relative percentage of the population. In absolute terms, the number of manufacturing jobs in the U.S. has declined.

Further, Tabolt is right in pointing out that the middle strata vacillates between bourgeoisie and proletariat, leaning toward the strongest side. At times, the "middle strata" has become a bastion of fascism. In this heyday of Gingrich and Limbaugh, in the convergence of Clintonian neo-liberalism in the Democratic Party with Reaganism, in the continued defeats of industrial strike struggles and the continued weakness of working people in the face of the capitalist offensive, there is certainly a lot to be worried about. The prospect of further rightward motion by the "middle strata" is likely unless some opposition emerges from the "lower strata".

*Continued on p. 43, see Reply on Middle Strata*

### *Middle Strata, continued from page 34*

their weight in the economically active population about mid century in the US and 15 to 25 years later in other advanced capitalist countries. Since then there has been sharp decline in the weight of the industrial workers while the weight service workers and workers in retail trade have grown dramatically. Meanwhile there has also been a change in the composition of the middle classes and strata in advanced capitalist societies.

In 1900 small farmers were the majority of the middle classes and strata in the US accounting for about 28 percent of what the Bureau of Labor statistics calls the "workforce" today. The categories of managers, professionals and office clerical workers accounted together for about 15 per cent of the workforce. (the figures on managers and professionals include small owners who manage their own business and self employed professionals. In 1900 of course the small owners and self-employed professionals constituted a much larger portion of this middle

strata than today.) Today the small and not so small farmers are less than 2 per cent of the workforce, while the white collar workforce has grown to 60 per cent. But this growth has been accompanied by a proletarianization and feminization of the office and retail clerks on one hand and the steady growth of a strata of managerial/professional employees who account for about 25 per cent of the workforce and who form the bulk of the modern middle strata.

Today the middle strata produced within large scale production, within wage labor constitute the bulk of the middle forces in society as compared to the decaying classes of small producers.

In 1992 I wrote a report on the changes in class structure in the US and the changes in stratification of the working class for the 4th Congress of the Marxist Leninist Party. This report was published in the Workers' Advocate Supplement of March 20, 1993. This current effort is a continuation of that effort which focuses on new middle strata which has emerged during the past century. Other members of the Boston study group which was founded to continue research after the demise of the MLP are working on other aspects of the changes in class structure.

### **Middle Strata as Stabilizer of Capitalism**

Analysis of the new middle strata is important for a number of reasons. First the development of this strata has major implications for the stability of capitalism. While its emergence shows the capitalist owners have become superficial to production, its conservatism is a

factor for capitalist stability and theoreticians of reformism from Bernstein on have pointed to this strata as a factor proving that Marx's prognosis for a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat was wrong.

### **The Effect of the Growth of the Professional/ Managerial Strata and White Collar Work in General On Working Class Cohesion**

Secondly the huge growth of this strata relative to the industrial workers has had a major impact on the working class itself. The rapid relative growth opened up opportunity for probably the majority of the best and brightest young workers to move on up into the managerial or professional ranks in the post WWII period, thus dramatically blurring class boundaries and undermining the workers sense of being a hereditary class. This avenue of upward mobility has narrowed in recent years but it has far from disappeared. In addition unlike the small farmer the members of the professional/ managerial class live in close proximity to the worker and they work in the same large scale industry, trade, and services as the lower worker. More over unlike the small farmer or small shopkeeper, they have superior education, and they make a lot more political noise in the urban areas. As sections of this strata sink lower into proletarian status as the clerical workers have, they continue to work in occupations that have vestiges of middle class prestige, ways of doing things and thinking. Even after they have given up fighting to maintain their former privileges they do not yet think like factory workers.

Thus this middle strata has enormous impact on the mood and cohesiveness of the working class. (Note the growth and decay of the middle strata is not the only objective factor affecting the mood, cohesiveness and confidence of the proletariat by any means. The welfare state, the changes in the structure of world markets, fragmentation of the workers due to

the change from manufacturing to service and retail trade etc. have at least as great an impact.)

### **The Effect of the Salaried Middle Strata on the Political Mood and Movements**

Finally with the relative quiescence of the working class in the Post WWII world, members or aspiring members of various sections of the middle strata, working intelligentsia, have largely dominated and populated most of the oppositional movements in the West from the ecological movements to the women's and gay rights movements. In the US major exceptions to this rule were

the later stages of the movement against the Viet Nam war and the peak of the black and Latino movements where the energy and class instincts of the lower masses showed a certain influence (though not dominant) for a while. In large part the narrowness of today's movements and lack of any class edge or theme unifying them into a movement for a new society is due to this situation of weakness of the lower mass and the political features of the middle strata.

At the same time this strata has shown differences from the old middle strata in that it has a greater interest in democratic questions affecting lifestyle, intellectual freedom etc than the old small producers. It worries more about global questions such as environmental issues, but it still tends see itself above a class struggle for desired changes.

In mainstream politics a large section of this strata has tended toward economic conservatism (squeeze the lower masses) and social liberalism (abortion rights, gay rights, opposition to book burners), the Liberal Democratic Party in Britain, the Clinton to Weld spectrum in the US. In present situation of economic insecurity it has provided the main support to Perotism.

As the stagnation of Western capitalism continues significant numbers of the lower sections of the professional, managerial strata as well as sections of the formerly more privileged white workers who are seeing their privileges and security erode have been attracted to racist and right wing movements in a desperate attempt to cling to their former position.

Hence an analysis of the dynamics of this strata, how it is evolving, how its different strata can be expected to react to economic and political changes, what influence it brings into the political climate, and what influences the lower layers it sheds into the working class proper bring with them, are important issues facing any future class politics and movement in the Western world (and the third world countries too as they evolve into more complex capitalist societies).

#### **What this Paper Covers and Where Investigation needs to go**

Having looked at the statistical and occupational breakdown of this strata and being familiar with the political life of the US we felt it necessary to deepen our understanding of this question by carrying out a review of the historical theoretical literature on this strata from Marx to the present, and a review of the motion of this strata as reflected in that literature. The present work will review the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Bernstein, Kautsky, and the debate and social investigations carried

out by German academic circles on the nature and extent of the new middle strata. We have also done some work reviewing the Post WWII research and debate on class structure and the middle strata in British and American academic circles as well as the attempts of the academic Marxists, Poulantzas, Carchedi, Carter etc to develop a theory on a New Middle Class based on various pieces Marx's views on the role the capitalist in production and in society.

We also feel a complete investigation of this field would require dealing with the literature that is emerging on the "knowledge economy" and "knowledge workers" and the role of knowledge in the creation of wealth as well as the insights of Marx on the question over 100 years ago. At what pace and whether we will finish and publish these other parts of investigation of historical literature on the middle strata we cannot guarantee. Our time is limited and we are pulled in many directions in analyzing the changes in class structure. But we offer this part of what we have accomplished so far in hopes that it will be useful to those who feel a need to update a class analysis of modern society.

#### **The views of Marx and Engels**

Marx and Engels actually had very little to say on the subject and quite understandably since this strata was very little developed in their day. The process Marx and Engels were observing and dealing with was the transition from small scale patriarchal production of goods to large scale industrial production of goods. They saw that the greatest social product of this economic revolution was the industrial proletariat which they saw must inevitably seize power, abolish capitalist private property and build socialism. They saw the development of industry leading to the demise of the old middle classes, the peasantry, the handicraftsmen, the small urban shop keepers the small producers, the classical petit bourgeoisie and the growth of an overwhelming proletarian majority which at some point must realize that it was the majority and could easily dispense with the capitalist parasites. But in fact they saw that the crises of capitalism would most likely lead to an even earlier overthrow of capitalism, forcing the proletariat to act earlier with the greater or lesser support of sections of the ruined old middle classes to overthrow the rule of the industrial bourgeoisie.

The Communist Manifesto and Engels' Condition of the Working class in England most clearly outline the above scenario.

"But assuming that England retained the monopoly of manufactures, that its factories perpetually

multiply, what must be the result? The commercial crises would continue, and grow more violent, more terrible, with the extension of industry and the multiplication of the proletariat, the proletariat would increase in geometrical proportion, in consequence of the progressive ruin of the lower middle class and the giant strides with which capitalism is concentrating itself in the hands of the few; and the proletariat would soon embrace the whole nation, with the exception of a few millionaires. But in this development, there comes a stage at which the proletariat perceives how easily the existing power may be overthrown and then follows the revolution”

“Neither of these supposed conditions may, however, be expected to arise. The commercial crises, the mightiest levers for all independent development of the proletariat, will probably shorten the process, acting in concert with foreign competition and the deepening ruin of the lower-middle-class.” F. Engels *Condition of the Working Class in England* p.331-332 Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973.

Marx and Engels clearly expected the process of industrialization going on before them to culminate in socialist revolution. They did not expect capitalism to last beyond the point where industrialization of the production of goods was the main thing going on and the growth of the weight of the industrial proletariat in society had reached its peak. As prophets in the narrow sense they failed. Of course they never claimed to be prophets, but rather social scientists and revolutionaries. And the tendencies they observed in society have been confirmed—the replacement of petty production with large scale production, the conversion of the majority of society to wage workers, the rise of the proletarian movement which reached its peak with the Russian Revolution and proletarian movements between the two World Wars and into the late 40’s.

In Marx and Engels epoch the main issue of middle forces was the small producers the peasants, handicraftsmen, the classical petit bourgeoisie. And they paid considerable attention to the forces pushing this old middle force in various directions and the tactics that should be used toward it. They spoke much less about the small strata of professional/managerial/clerical employees who were then emerging.

Yet it cannot be said that Marx and Engels were oblivious to the emergence of this strata. As early as the Communist Manifesto they say:

“...a new class of petty bourgeoisie has been formed, fluctuating between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and ever renewing itself as a supplementary part of bourgeois society. The individual members of this class, however, are constantly being hurled down into the prole-

tariat by the action of competition, and, as modern industry develops, they even see the moment approaching when they will completely disappear as an independent section of modern society, to be replaced, in manufactures, agriculture, and commerce, by overlookers, bailiffs, and shopmen.”

In this quote the new petty bourgeoisie that Marx and Engels are talking about is actually what we would refer to as the old petit bourgeoisie—the small producers and shopkeepers. They will be replaced by supervisory employees of the bourgeoisie (bailiff here does not refer to the court officer who handles the prisoners and ejects people from the courtroom, but to British farm manager and overseer.) Thus Marx and Engels see in the future the replacement of the old petit bourgeoisie with trusted employees of the bourgeoisie.

During Marx and Engels lifetime the joint stock company emerged and the owners of capital began to hire managers to administer their enterprises. This was still a far cry from the massive managerial and professional organizations of today, but Marx and Engels took note of this development. Primarily they noted how this signified that the capitalists were losing any useful social function.

“Now the economical function of the capitalist middle class has been, indeed, to create the modern system of steam manufactures and steam communications, and to crush every economical and political obstacle which delayed or hindered the development of that system. No doubt as long as the capitalist middle class performed this function it was, under the circumstances, a necessary class. But is it still so? Does it continue to fulfill its essential function as manager and expander of the social production for the benefit of society at large? Let us see.

“To begin with the means of communication, we find the telegraphs in the hands of the Government. The railways and a large part of the seagoing steamships are owned, not by individual capitalists who manage their own business, but by joint stock companies whose business is managed for them by paid employees, by servants whose position is to all intents and purposes that of superior, better paid work people. As to the directors and shareholders, they both know that the less the former interfere with the management and the latter with the supervision, the better for the concern. A lax and mostly perfunctory supervision is, indeed, the only function left to the owners of the business....The social function of the capitalist has been transferred to servants paid by wages; but he continues to pocket in his dividends, the pay for those functions though he has ceased to perform them.” (F. Engels “Social Classes—Necessary and Superfluous” 8/1-2/81 as quoted in *On Historical Materialism*—Marx,

Engels, Lenin Soviet edition.)

Thus Engels notes the emergence of a strata of managerial employees — “superior, better paid workpeople”, “servants paid by wages” who perform the “social function of the capitalist”.

In volume III of *Capital* Marx makes a number of points.

a. “The labor of supervision and management, arising as it does out of an antithesis, out of the supremacy of capital over labor, and being therefore common to all modes of production based on class contradictions like the capitalist mode, is directly and inseparably connected, also under the capitalist system, with productive functions which all combined social labor assigns to individuals as their special tasks. The wages of an *epitropos*, or *regisseur*, as he was called in feudal France, are entirely divorced from profit and assume the form of wages for skilled labor whenever the business is operated on a sufficiently large scale to warrant paying for such a manager.” (*Capital* Volume III p 386, Progress Publishers 1966)

Here Marx notes that labor of management combines exploitation with necessary productive functions. Here Marx also seems to be saying that managerial work is simply a form of skilled labor at least economically speaking. However as we shall see Marx also points to another social dimension.

b. “The industrial capitalist is a worker compared to the money capitalist, but a worker in the sense of capitalist, i.e., an exploiter of the labor of others. The wage which he claims and pockets for this labor is exactly equal to the appropriated quantity of another’s labor, and depends directly upon the rate of exploitation of this labor, in so far as he undertakes the effort required for exploitation; it does not, however, depend on the degree of exertion that such exploitation demands, and which he can shift to a manager for moderate pay.” (*Capital* Volume III p 387, Progress Publishers 1966)

Here Marx in the course of refuting the argument that profits equal wages of supervision, brings out the aspect of management that is the exertion of effort necessary to realize a certain rate of exploitation thus bringing out the second side of the work of management whether done by the capitalist or by skilled labor hired by him.

c. “The wages of management both for the commercial and industrial manager are completely isolated from the profits of enterprise in the cooperative factories of the workers, as well as in capitalist stock companies...In a cooperative factory the antagonistic nature of the labor of supervision disappears, because the manager is paid by the laborers instead of representing capital counterposed to them. Stock companies in general...have an increasing

tendency to separate this work of management as a function from the ownership of capital... the functionary remains and the capitalist disappears as superfluous from the production process.

“It is manifest from the public accounts of the co-operative factories in England that —after deducting the manager’s wages, which form a part of the invested variable capital much the same as the wages of other laborers—the profit was higher than the average profit...” (ibid. pp. 387-388)

The point of interest here is that Marx says the wages of the managers in the cooperative factory come from variable capital rather than being deducted from surplus value. He seems also to be suggesting that the same is true in the joint stock company although this is not entirely clear with regards to the whole of the payment of managers as he has drawn out the distinction of cooperative factory being one where the antagonism between the workers and the manager as a representative of capital disappears.

d. “...This was further promoted by the apologetic aim of representing profit not as a surplus-value derived from unpaid labor, but as the capitalists wages for work performed by him. This was met on the part of socialists by a demand to reduce profit actually to what it pretended to be. And this demand was all the more obnoxious to theoretical embellishment, the more these wages of supervision, like any other wage, found their definite level and definite market price, on the one hand, with the development of a numerous class of industrial and commercial managers,(78) and the more they fell, like all wages for skilled labor, with the general development which reduces the cost of production of specially trained labor power.(79)” (ibid p.388-389.)

For our investigation the most important point here is the reference to managers as a class. One might take it to mean that Marx was referring to managers loosely as a category with the term class, but foot note 78 indicates that he views them as a social class with a special contradictory position between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In Footnote 78 he quotes from Hodgkins:

“Masters are laborers as well as their journeyman. In this character their interest is precisely the same as that of their men. But they are also either capitalists, or agents of the capitalists, and in this respect their interest is decidedly opposed to the interests of the workmen...” ( p.27). (Hodgkins, *Labor Defended Against the Claims of Capital*, etc., London, 1825.)

The second point of somewhat less interest is the assertion that the general social development including especially the spread of education in the working class

tends to reduce the wages of managers. (In actual fact this narrowing of gap between the wages of the mass of skilled workers including managers and the unskilled has been long term development of capitalism. Since the late 70's there has been some reversal of this. But the differential is still far lower than 70 or 100 years ago. Generally you can gauge a country's level of capitalist development by looking at the differential between skilled and unskilled laborers wages. And of course here we are eliminating the upper managerial levels from consideration who frequently share in the surplus value through stock options and bonuses and extremely high wages and who merge with the bourgeoisie.

So we have the beginnings of an analysis of the vast managerial strata by Marx and Engels but what did they say about the specialists, the professionals etc who have no direct managerial role? Here we find less detailed observations.

In the Manifesto Marx and Engels say:

"The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage laborers."

Note here that Marx and Engels are referring here mostly to the pre existing "free professions" but indicate a tendency to proletarianization.

In Volume II of Capital Marx discusses the role of the commercial clerk who is involved in wholesale buying and selling of the product of the industrial or agricultural capitalist. (While we are considering the issue of the professional strata, I have included this observation because many of the people who are considered professionals would share the same level of status as clerks in Marx's time. And clerks in Marx's time were universally considered part of the middle strata.)

Marx says:

"The commercial clerk produces no surplus value directly. But the price of his labor-power, its exertion, expenditure, and wear and tear, is as in the case of every other wage laborer by no means limited by its value. His wage therefore is not necessarily proportionate to the mass of profit he helps the capitalist to realize. ... He creates no direct surplus value, but adds to the capitalists income by helping him reduce the cost of realizing surplus value, in as much he partly performs unpaid labor. The commercial worker in the strict sense of the term, belongs to the better paid class of wage-workers-to those who labor is classed as skilled and stands above the average labor."

Thus from the economic stand point Marx includes these skilled clerks of his day in the working class.

But he seems to qualify this with the statement "in the strict sense of the term". Thus there are other factors to examine to look at the outlook of this strata.

Certain sections of the professional strata such as engineers, computer programmers in the software industry, registered nurses, etc play a role in production, produce value and surplus value while their managerial functions of helping exploit other workers are often very small. (With nurses and engineers this varies according to their use by the employer from nil to quite large. Thus a large section of professional workers would fall under the category of skilled members of the working class, technically speaking. As producers who are exploited and whose higher wages are a result of their higher skill and the higher value of their compound labor. Yet while Marx and Engels clearly see proletarianization as trend for the future and the underlying economics already taking place for this strata, they are still "technically speaking". There is more to the relationship of this strata to the workers and the capitalists that Marx and Engels did not examine in the detail that they examined the role of the worker and the capitalist.

In addition to these brief passages giving some partial glimpses of an economic analysis of the professional strata there are some comments giving an overall assessment of the strata at particular times.

"...The patronizing and errant lecturing of our so called intellectuals seems to me to be a far greater impediment. We are still in need of technicians, agronomists, engineers, chemists, architects, etc. it is true, but if worst comes to worst we can always buy them just as well as the capitalists buy them, and if a severe example is made of few of the traitors among them — for traitors there are sure to be—they will find it to their own advantage to deal fairly with us. But apart from these specialists, among whom I also include school teachers, we can get along perfectly well without the other "intellectuals". The present influx of literati and students into the party, for example, may be quite damaging if these gentlemen are not properly kept in check." Engels, letter to Otto von Boenigk, August 21, 1890.

"In order to take possession and set in motion the means of production, we need people with technical training, and masses of them. These we have not got, and up till now we have even been rather glad that we have been largely spared the "educated" people. Now things are different. Now we are strong enough to stand any quantity of educated Quarks and to digest them, and I foresee that in the next eight or ten years we shall recruit enough young technicians, doctors, lawyers, and schoolmasters to en-



able us to have the factories and big estates administered on behalf of the nation by Party comrades. Then, therefore our entry into power will be quite natural and will be settled up quite quickly—relatively. If on the other hand, a war brings us to power prematurely, the technicians will be our chief enemies; they will deceive and betray us wherever they can and we shall have to use terror against them but we shall get cheated just the same. It is what always happened, on a small scale, to the French revolutionaries; even in ordinary administration they had to leave the subordinate posts, where the real work is done, in the possession of old reactionaries who obstructed and paralyzed everything.” (F. Engels, letter to Bebel, October 24, 1891)

From these quotes from Marx and Engels we can develop a general impression of their view that they saw a long term epochal tendency in capitalism to turn the professionals and educated people into proletarians, but that it by no means had yet happened. The educated specialists were still part of a bourgeois or petit bourgeois intelligentsia. A section of this strata they felt would be won over to the side of the proletariat and Engels in his letter of 1891 even expresses wild optimism at the immediate prospects for such a thing happening. Nevertheless it is clear that in the concrete, the present Engels regards even the working intelligentsia with caution as something separate from the proletariat. With regards to the managers Marx and Engels show in the production process a basis for their contradictory social position. But no where is such analysis developed to any extent for the non managerial professional strata.

This may partially be due to the fact that even by Engels latest writings on the subject the conversion of the mass of professionals into employees was still little developed. Doctors and lawyers were still independent professionals, A large portion of engineers were junior partners of the capitalists or capitalists themselves. The mass engineering schools that produced the engineer employees were just coming into being in Germany and US.

### **Kautsky and Bernstein**

Nevertheless within a few years of Engels death a discussion did develop in German socialist circles of the position and role of professional and office workers. Such was the pace of capitalist development.

Karl Kautsky was the first Marxist to deal in any extensive matter with the question of the salaried professional, managerial, and clerical workers. He wrote a series of articles on this emerging strata and its significance in *Neue Zeit* in 1895. We have not been able to find this

original work but we have found his summary of those ideas in his polemic vs Bernstein as published in *Karl Kautsky: Selected Political Writings* by K. Kautsky Jr.

Kautsky assigned the rapid growth of the intelligentsia, the new middle stratum, to the fact that the functions of the dominant and exploiting classes were increasingly being taken over by paid skilled workers, who sell their services either piecemeal like doctors and lawyers or for a salary, like officials of every kind. Kautsky points out that while the clergy and the aristocracy which had carried out the functions of state and culture in the Middle ages had been pushed aside, the tasks of the state, of the municipal authorities and of science and culture continued to grow with the complexity of capitalist society and a salaried labor force to carry them out also grew from year to year. Kautsky after Marx and Engels also noted that the growth of this strata was connected to the capitalists handing more and more of their functions in industry and commerce over to paid skilled workers, tradesmen and technicians. Initially, Kautsky noted, these people were only assistants to the capitalist, entrusted with organizing, initiating and supervising the labor process, with purchase of the means of production and sale of products: in other words, with functions which, due to the growing demand for specialized skills the capitalist is incapable of carrying out himself. Eventually even the management of the firm is handed over to a subordinate and the capitalist himself becomes superfluous. The development of the joint stock company contributes to the growth of this strata—by creating greater demand for employees to run larger scale businesses, not as Bernstein was arguing by splitting up the capitals. The white collar worker is a wage laborer not a capitalist. Private property in the means of production is not important to this strata.

But Kautsky noted, it would be equally mistaken to regard this new middle class as part of the proletariat. Kautsky distinguished the new middle class from the proletariat on the following grounds:

1. It has emerged from the bourgeoisie, and is connected to it through family and social ties and shares similar values.

- (a) Certain sectors such as managers have taken over the functions of the capitalists are extremely close to the bourgeoisie, and share its values and hostility to the proletariat.

- (b) Other professions require a specific political stance, such as political journalists, legal officials, policemen. The state, capitalist publishers and the clergy will employ only those people who share the outlook of their employers or are willing to adopt an alien outlook for money. That is another reason why the intelligentsia is generally opposed

to the proletariat.

2. The greatest contrast between the intelligentsia and the proletariat is that the former constitutes a privileged class, due to the fact that it has the privilege of education.

Kautsky noted that the intelligentsia favored enough education for the masses that they could understand what the intellectuals were saying and stand in awe of their knowledge, but that they vigorously fought extension of access to professional education to the masses as part of their fight to

maintain their privileged position. In this sense Kautsky says that this strata was more backward than the bourgeoisie itself which needed to expand professional education to meet its needs in production for skilled professional employees. But Kautsky says that with the advance of capitalism professional education will expand, various artificial barriers will be broken down and one layer of the new middle strata after the other will be forced to recognize its proletarian position no matter how much they may resist their decline. Thus eventually one layer after another will take an interest in the proletarian movement and eventually join it.

Kautsky pointed out that those who use the growth of the new middle strata to tout the stability of capitalism are failing to see that its growth is accompanied by *proletarianization* of increasing strata.

In between the strata most closely linked to the bourgeoisie and the strata being proletarianized is a broad section that views itself above narrow class interests, as alone capable of expressing the interests of the whole society. This strata vacillates like the old petit bourgeoisie between sympathy for the proletarian and his condition and denouncing the bourgeois greed one day, and condemning proletarian bad manners the next.

Kautsky notes however 2 differences between the old petit bourgeoisie and the new intelligentsia.

(a) on the positive side it has a far greater intellectual culture

(b) on the negative side, in comparison to the old petit bourgeoisie, it lacks fighting ability.

Kautsky says,

“... Few in number, with no unified class interests or proper form of organization, without any property, but nevertheless demanding a bourgeois standard of life,... The middle strata of the intelligentsia, the cultural aristocracy, could afford to be in the opposition so long as the bourgeoisie itself was; but now since the bourgeoisie has established itself it has become submissive and lost its capacity and desire to fight.... Certainly there are some genuine supporters of the proletariat among the knights of the spirit, but they do not come out into the open until the

proletariat is actually victorious. It cannot expect the intelligentsia to provide it with reinforcements for the struggle, but it need not fear any fierce opposition from them either.”

Kautsky held that the growing intelligentsia is a class that the proletariat could not ignore. It would be asking too much according to him to convert the intelligentsia to the proletariat, but an even greater mistake to lump them in with the propertied classes. Kautsky held that the new middle strata held in concentrated form all the contradictions of capitalist society, yet even in this microcosm the proletarian seed was growing.

Kautsky developed his views on this strata very early in its development as the modern new middle strata. It was very small and was still mainly recruited from the bourgeoisie. Much of the way he characterizes the various sections of this strata still rings true today. Yet with nearly 100 years of hindsight he seems overly optimistic about the pace of proletarianization of this strata. Nor does he deal with the problem of what sort of sector of the proletariat the proletarianized sections of the new middle strata become, what characteristics they bring with them and what influence this has on the character of the working class, its class consciousness and fighting capacity, especially as these sections have now become the largest sections of the working class. ( Here I am speaking of clerical workers, and technicians and possibly the very lowest levels of professionals.)

### Bernstein

The issue of the new middle class was part of the debate with Bernstein.

Bernstein, reflecting the criticism of Marx in academic and Fabian circles argued that capitalism was not polarizing as Marx had predicted in the Manifesto. Mainly he cited the continued existence of the small farmer, the growth of retail trade and small shop keepers and the spread of share holding to a larger section of the population. He stated:

“Social contradictions have not reached the acute tension which the Communist Manifesto predicted. Not only would it be useless, it would be the height of folly to conceal this from ourselves. The enormous increase in social wealth is accompanied not by a shrinking number of capitalist magnates but by a growing number of capitalists of all ranges of wealth. The middle classes change their character, but they do not disappear from the social scale.” (Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism* 1899)

Bernstein prefigured many subsequent attempts to refute Marxism with his emphasis on shareholding and the

growth of income levels. In addition he added a theoretical argument for the growth of middle classes under capitalism. He argued that the vast increase in productivity and hence wealth meant that the capitalists could not consume it all. Nor could it be exported. Hence he argued:

“Where does this mass of commodities go which is not consumed by the magnates and their stooges? If it is not to go to the proletarians in one way or another, it must be absorbed by other classes. Either relative decrease in the number of capitalists and increasing wealth of the proletariat, or a numerous middle class— these are the only alternatives permitted by the continuous increase of productivity.” (Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism* 1899)

In a certain way Bernstein prefigures the Left wing of the Socialist movement and the Bolsheviks on the issue of bribery of certain strata of society, except Bernstein actually gives it a reverse reformist twist as we shall see in a bit. He also gives an under consumptionist theory in the process, but that is not the issue we want to deal with here.

It should be noted that mainly Bernstein is talking about small proprietors, small to mid sized capitalists, and upper independent professionals i.e. doctors and lawyers when he speaks of middle classes. But he also notes the growth of the number of technical, office, and sales personnel and government employees whom he sees as developing ‘a strong community of interests with the workers’. He argued that ‘the majority of them identify more and more with the working class and should be added to it along with their dependents.’

Now this view on the new middle class is not so different from Kautsky’s except that it is a bit more optimistic about the pace of change. But Bernstein draws different conclusions from tendency toward proletarianization of the new middle class of office and professional workers. He argues against the idea that the unity of the two classes could or should be achieved by the acceptance of the new middle class that they were sinking to the level of the proletariat and hence joining its movement. In stead he argued that:

“Social democracy does not wish to dissolve this society and make proletarians of all its members. Rather it labors incessantly at lifting the worker from the social

position of the proletarian to that of a ‘bourgeois and thus to make bourgeoisie or citizenship universal.” (The above quotes of Bernstein from Carter’s book, *Capitalism Class conflict and the new middle class*. Carter cites Peter Gay’s book *The dilemma of Democratic Socialism* as the source. We have been unable to get this book as of yet. Although we have read *Evolutionary Socialism*, we have not yet looked into any other works from Bernstein of this period.)

Essentially Bernstein’s view on how the interests of the proletariat and the new middle class would merge was by a process of proletarianization of the new middle class and embourgeoisement of the workers and a tendency to intermarriage between the two classes. Thus Bernstein’s views were a system of views for a reformist path for the workers and socialist movement. The near future was to prove Bernstein quite wrong. Society was indeed heading for great class upheavals. In the long run social development has wiped out a very large section of the small property owners. But in the prosperity of the Post World War II world an outcome of embourgeoisement of large sections of the working class combined with a great degree proletarianization of sections of the office and technical workers has materialized. However over the last 15 to 20 years embourgeoisement part of the equation has again been undermined. But the fact of blurring of the line between the new middle strata and the proletariat by the dual action of the process of proletarianization of the lower layers of the new middle strata and the relative embourgeoisement of the later, the process of intermarriage between the two sectors and upward mobility from the proletariat still remain although each of these factors has been undermined to a degree by the continuing stagnation in the west. A certain aspect of Bernstein’s predictions has been verified for the time being, but of course his main point of evolving to socialism has not been proved at all. In fact the opposite.

*[To Be Continued Next Issue. Remaining sections: Lenin on Bribery, Lenin overestimates the lower office workers, Research and Debate in German Academic Circles 1900-1940 (Lederer, Marshak, Speir), Some concluding thoughts.]* ◊

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### *Reply on Middle Strata, continued from p. 35*

The question raised then is can the proletariat lead the rest of the working masses into battle against capital? Further, can the proletariat and the working masses succeed in overthrowing capitalism?

In a word, yes. The industrial proletariat is and will continue to decline in relative numbers in the advanced

capitalist countries. On the world scale however, the industrial proletariat is still increasing. This may halt once the developing world becomes “developed” but for now at least the proletariat (especially industrial) is growing at the expense of the peasantry. Landlessness is a huge problem for the peasantry in the developing world, notably

*Continued on p.44, see Reply on Middle Strata*

### *Reply on Middle Strata, Continued from p. 43*

India and Latin America. And where do landless peasants go? Into the cities where they become wage laborers! An interesting footnote to this appeared in the Chicago Tribune, Jan. 19, 1996. The growth of Latin America's "mega cities" is tapering off. The rural migrations continue as the poverty in the countryside deepens but the level of misery is such in Mexico City and Buenos Aires that the landless peasants are settling in mid-sized cities Tijuana, Mexico and Cordoba, Argentina.

Even where the industrial workforce is declining in absolute numbers due to automation, the number of people we can scientifically call working class is increasing, not decreasing.

More importantly, the issue for Marx was never the numbers. The success of a socialist revolution does not rest on the industrial workers being the majority or the plurality or such. The issue is that the industrial workers, as those most socialized by socialized production, as those with greater potential power due to their position in the economy, will rally and lead the rest of the working class in a revolution against capitalism.

Lenin said that the only weapon the workers have is organization. Today when the working class is disorganized it is clearly unarmed and powerless. The issue is not how weak we are but how to get organized.

Service workers, non-industrial proletarians, are part of the class and can be just as revolutionary as factory workers. The Bolshevik revolution demonstrated this. As well, it showed that a small industrial proletariat can lead a larger number of service workers and together, they can rally around themselves a great number of the "middle strata" (e.g. peasants) to overthrow capitalism.

Industrial workers are used to organization. Service workers are not but that is changing. Janitors, hospital workers, and teachers have waged some of the biggest strikes in recent years. Data processors and other computer related workers are organizable. As their work becomes more rationalized, more automated, they will become more "proletarianized." What is today a salaried position may soon be an hourly position.

Tabolt's report focuses on the "salaried middle strata." Unfortunately, it is never precisely clear who this is. At times the report seems to mix up service workers like janitors with managers and professionals. Then there is the problem of defining salaried professionals.

School teachers are considered professionals but today many teachers work on an hourly basis. In the Chicago city college system and several of the private colleges the vast bulk of the teaching is done by part time teachers who work several jobs in order to get a full time wage. They are

paid by the hours spent in the class room and are not compensated for prep time. They get no benefits at all. As for their politics and class consciousness, some of them have organized into unions and they can be militant. This is also a section that has contributed some activists to the political movements against the Gulf War and for women's rights.

I want to stress that there are deep divisions within the "middle class." We are not concerned with organizing well-paid professionals at this time but with organizing service workers and low-paid "professionals" like teachers and social workers (who often do appear in statistics with doctors, lawyers and engineers).

Service workers are the up and coming in terms of percentage of the workforce. For many however, especially industrial workers forced into a career change, the turn to a service economy means a lower standard of living. Service workers are usually lower paid than factory workers. This does not imply added stability for capitalism.

Moreover, in the modern economy some of these service jobs have been socialized to the maximum degree (postal workers, for example, were once considered "white collar"). Others are headed toward a degree of socialization rivaling factory assembly lines (clerical work, bill processing, data processing and computer-related work)

The recent general strikes in France show the proletariat is still decisive. It wasn't lawyers and engineers that shut down France. It was industrial workers and service workers. The French bourgeoisie understands this, even if the BCSG does not.

Lets look at some specific problems in Tabolt's article.

### **What is the Middle Strata anyway?**

As mentioned earlier, one of the biggest problems with this article (and with much of the literature on the subject) is the use of the terms "middle strata," "white-collar" and "blue collar." This is not entirely the authors' fault, however, as economic statistics and the labor census is conducted by the US government which, at the moment, does not employ Marxist viewpoint and methodology in gathering data. Until they do, we will have to deal with the unscientific terms and mixed class groupings. Thus, we have to be very specific about who we are talking about and what the problems are in the government and academic statistics.

Tabolt states that the "middle strata" has grown significantly and now the Professional/Managerial strata amounts to 25% of the workforce, the highest it has ever been. This is true but it is misleading.

**PROFESSIONAL/MANAGERIAL, PERCENT OF WORKFORCE**

	1900	1920	1950	1960	1970	1992
Managers, proprietors (proprietors includes farm owners)	25.6%	21.9%	16.1%	15.5%	12.7%	11.0%
Professional, technical	4.3%	5.4%	8.6%	11.1%	14.4%	17.2%
Combined	29.9%	27.3%	24.7%	26.6%	27.1%	28.2%

**OCCUPATIONAL BREAKOUT 1970 AND 1992**

(Numbers in thousands)

	1970	Percent	1992	Percent
Managers, proprietors, farm owners	9,998	12.8%	13,284	11.0%
Professional & technical	11,322	14.4%	20,874	17.2%
Independent	1,200	1.5%	1,620	1.3%
Salaried	10,100	12.9%	19,254	15.9%
Clerical and sales	18,548	23.7%	35,342	29.2%
Service	9,724	12.4%	19,358	16.0%
Craftsmen	10,027	12.8%	13,580	11.2%
Operatives & Laborers	17,425	22.2%	17,942	14.8%
Farm Workers	1,400	1.8%	849	0.7%
<i>Total</i>	<i>78,408</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>121,099</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

It turns out that when you include proprietors, especially farm owners, in the category of managers, then the total of Professional/technical along with Managers is nearly constant from 1900 to 1992! See Table above.

Further, the breakdown of Professional/managerial shows how diverse this strata is and implies that it is weighted toward the low-paid salaried "professionals."

Note that "teachers, librarians, counselors" make up the largest section of professionals (36%). See table below.

The BCSG article gives the impression that the num-

**DETAILED PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS 1992**

Engineers	1,354	8.2%
Architects	214	1.3%
Life scientists	182	1.1%
Computer, math, operations research	758	4.6%
Physical scientists	197	1.2%
Social scientists	258	1.6%
Social, recreational & religious	1,130	6.8%
Lawyers	716	4.3%
Teachers, librarians, counselors	5,984	36.1%
Health diagnosing	875	5.3%
Health assessment & treating	2,436	14.7%
Writers, artists, entertainers	1,606	9.7%
All other professionals	883	5.3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>16,592</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Source: Mario Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest*, p. 146; George Silvestri, "Occupational employment," *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1993.

ber of managers (bosses) and high-paid doctors and lawyers is increasing rapidly.

One final point on this, the trend towards mergers and "corporate downsizing" along with advances in computers has led to white collar layoffs. That is, a lot of middle management has been canned and many office operations combined and automated. These statistics have to be analyzed carefully before any definite conclusions can be drawn but increasing stability for capitalism through the growth of the "professional/managerial" strata is not apparent.

### What role does the "Middle Strata" play?

In this article Tabolt states:

"Finally with the relative quiescence of the working class in the Post WWII world, members or aspiring members of various sections of the middle strata, working intelligentsia, have largely dominated and populated most of the oppositional movements in the West from the ecological movements to the women's and gay rights movements. In the US major exceptions to this rule were the later stages of the movement against the Viet Nam war and the peak of the black and Latino movements where the energy and class instincts of the lower masses showed a certain influence (though not dominant) for a while. In large part, the narrowness of today's movements and lack of any class edge or theme unifying them into a movement for a new society is due to this situation of weakness of the lower mass and the political features of the middle strata."

I think Boston has extrapolated our more recent experience in the Pro-Choice and anti-Persian Gulf War movements to be a general feature from WWII on. It is true that factory workers were not the biggest force in recent movements, however, the activists coming from the "middle strata," at least in the mass movements of the late 1980's and early 1990's, were students and lower level office and technical workers. You could call them "middle strata" but not "managerial/professional." Moreover, there was a proletarian presence in these movements, including factory workers.

In our polemics against the ex-MLP majority, we accused Boston of heading for the "swamp", that is, by aiming to organize the "middle strata" they would inevitably accommodate themselves with reformism. The professional/managerial strata is well represented in the pro-choice movement by NOW and NARAL. We charged that their ideas on the middle strata were leaving them to abandon the lower mass for the yuppies and the wannabe's.

Boston defends themselves by claiming that we miss

what they are talking about, which is organizing among service workers, office and clerical workers, the lower sections of the "middle strata."

It is possible that our criticism of them was too harsh. However they have been consistently pessimistic about the prospects for organizing any section of the masses. So far as we know, they are not doing any practical organizing of the masses. Thus, I still hold that their position is liquidationist.

### Organize service workers or warn about the white collars?

More of what was previously the "middle strata" is now working class and often it is more impoverished than large sections of the industrial proletariat.

If industrial workers are decreasing and service workers are increasing, doesn't that argue for organizing service workers instead of pessimism about revolutionary prospects in the changing economies?

Although Tabolt's article at times mentions the need to organize the service sector, it misses that this strata is potentially revolutionary and that on the whole, working people are being squeezed by the bourgeoisie.

In the second half of his article (to be published next issue) Tabolt speaks about the professional/managerial strata as a right-wing force. The overall tone, then, is very pessimistic.

### Capitalist Stability?

Recently Secretary of Labor Reich expressed concern that while productivity is increasing wages are not. Even with factory employment at a high level, (employers are complaining of a shortage of skilled, semi-skilled and even general laborers for factory work), manufacturing workers still can't get raises. If the conservatives were right, then market forces alone would drive wages higher. Of course market forces are not all there is to capitalism. The bourgeoisie is holding wages down. In real terms factory wages are still going down. While the reduction in factory wages is dramatic enough the service sector jobs pay worse.

If the shift to a service economy is going to stabilize capitalism it will have to offer a higher, not a lower, standard of living. The growth of the middle strata by itself does not stabilize capitalism nor create more love for the profit system.

As the budget cuts jack up the misery index, the rich get richer. The concentration of wealth has accelerated bringing the U.S. to a new record. Recent articles in the

bourgeois press have highlighted that 80% of the wealth is now controlled by 20% of the population. This is a dramatic shift since WWII and The New York Times indicated that it compares with the concentration of wealth in the British Empire at its peak.

I think Tabolt wrongly assesses the present capitalist stability. It may seem that U.S. imperialism has had an easy time of it lately. The bourgeoisie has kept economic crises at bay with increasing the exploitation of the proletariat, lessening its tax obligations and loosening government regulations. Internationally they are faced with no large anti-imperialist movements nor are they bogged down in a bloody war (yet).

Still none of the bourgeois experts will paint a rosy picture of the future. When the next recession hits, it will be serious. With the "social safety net" shredded, with deregulation removing the emergency controls from the U.S. and other economies, with a "world economy" a reality, with the workers already pressed to the wall, with

reactionary nationalism and racism surging up around the globe, every small downturn has the potential to develop into something serious.

As if all this were not bad enough, we have the crisis in public education and extremely high costs for college education. Where other generations had a choice of getting a job or going to college, many working class youth today will do neither. Tabolt I believe is right to say that class mobility has hampered class consciousness but he seems to underestimate the degree to which class mobility was undermined by Reaganism and that it faces worse from Gingrich and Clinton.

Today the condition of our class deteriorates, the future of our children looks bleak but worst of all there seems to be no immediate prospects for a class struggle against a powerful enemy. It is not surprising then to see liquidationist views and pessimism widespread in the left. Capitalism, however, continues to demonstrate that it is generating its own gravediggers and heading for serious crises. ◊

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# Luxemburg, "Semi-Anarchism" -- and Trotsky

## Part II

by Barb, *Chicago Workers' Voice*

*Authors Note: My apologies to readers regarding the endnotes to Part I which are in the correct order but misnumbered in the text. Thanks to Joseph for pointing out a mistake in endnote (21). I did indeed confuse Louis Blanc and Louis-Auguste Blanqui. See endnote (12), Part II.*

The ABC of dialectics...tells us that there is no such thing as abstract truth, truth is always concrete (Lenin, CW, 1961, Vol. 7, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back (Reply to Rosa Luxemburg)," p. 476).

### Internationalism

Truly an international figure, Luxemburg seemed to be a woman without a country. She was chiefly identified with the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), and was a founder of the oppositionist Spartakusbund and the German Communist Party (KPD). But she was also a founder of the Polish/Lithuanian S-D Party (SDKPiL), which joined the Russian Social Democrats. Like Trotsky, she defined herself foremost as an "internationalist":

The world brotherhood of workers is the highest and most sacred thing on earth to me; it is my guiding star, my ideal, my fatherland. I would rather lose my life than be untrue to this ideal! (SPW, "Either/Or," p. 344 (1).

While this is a noble communist sentiment and turned out to be tragically true in real life, the important point is to investigate what Luxemburg's "internationalism" meant in practice. It seems to me that both Luxemburg and Trotsky held a mechanistic view of the relationship between "internationalism" and the "nation", as if one concept excluded the other. That is to say, in their views, recognizing the realities of the "nation" led to "nationalism", and therefore became the opposite of "internationalism". This erroneous reasoning led to utopian theoretical "leaps", i.e., skipping over dialectical stages in the revolutionary process (see Part I), and was a chief source of the anarchistic elements in both of them.

### Permanent Revolution

In his autobiography *My Life* Trotsky stated: "On the question of the so-called Permanent Revolution, Rosa took the same stand as I did" (p. 203). I have not found that she used the term "permanent revolution" or explicitly applied this theory to the revolutionary process, yet there is historical evidence to substantiate Trotsky's claim. Stalin accused Luxemburg of being co-author of the theory, and in the 1930s, concocted a "counter-revolutionary" trend called "Luxemburgism", which he associated with "Trotskyism" (2). Stalin did his best to destroy the reputation Luxemburg had held among the early Bolsheviks because she would have mightily opposed the kind of regime which he used the theory of "Socialism in One Country" to justify. But even as the devil can quote scripture to his own purpose, there is a foundation for his association of the two figures and their views.

My understanding of "permanent revolution" is that essentially it skips over the bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution and proposes the immediate going over to socialism through the dictatorship of the proletariat (3), thereby depreciating the role of the peasantry. Yet at the same time, it asserts that socialism is not possible in "one country" (specifically Russia) because this would necessitate the simultaneous revolution of a large portion of the world (or European) proletariat. So in the end, "permanent revolution" proposes a utopian theory of "socialist revolution" which, in reality, defeats the creation of socialism.

On the basis of this definition, then, the essence of "permanent revolution" did underlie much of Luxemburg's theory and accounted for many of her inconsistencies. It informed her views on the self-determination of nations; her revision of Marx and her concept of imperialism; her assessment of the Bolshevik Revolution, particularly in matters of the transitional period related to democracy and the peasantry; and her program for revolution in Germany.

### The Self-Determination of Nations

Luxemburg's view on this matter amounted to a sweeping generalization: the self-determination of nations is impossible under capitalism and superfluous under socialism. Not that it was expressed in such crude terms,



but this is what it boiled down to. Her position was officially set forth in "The National Question and Autonomy" (1908-09), but she had formed these views in the 1890s, asserted them in 1903 through the Polish delegation to the 2nd Congress of the Russian S-Ds which saw the Bolshevik/Menshevik split, reasserted them during WWI in her Junius Pamphlets, and remained faithful to them in her criticisms of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The question first came up for Luxemburg around the matter of independence for Poland, which was partitioned among Germany, Austria and Russia. She opposed the call for independence as part of the program of the Polish S-D party (in the Russian controlled area) because she saw it solely as a nationalistic aim of the Polish intellectual bourgeoisie, as manifested in Pilsudski's party, the PPS. She thought it not only "impractical" but "anti-revolutionary". Agitating for independence would divert the Polish proletariat from their struggle for socialism and prevent them from uniting with the Russian proletariat to defeat czarism. It would retard the unification of the international proletariat:

The marriage of a utopian pipe-dream for the restoration of Poland with the struggle for Socialism leads the working class astray into the blind alley of nationalism...weakens Socialist action, causes internal dissension and frustration, demoralizes the workers' organizations, reduces the moral authority of Socialism, and finally condemns Socialist agitation to complete sterility" (Nettl, Vol. I, p. 270).

Avowing the right of all nations to self-determination, Marx and Engels had supported Polish independence because, at that time, they had seen the Polish bourgeoisie as a progressive, democratic force and feudal, czarist Russia as the chief reactionary force in Europe. At the same time, they had opposed other national struggles, i.e., the Czechs. Luxemburg correctly reasoned that the era of imperialism had changed the situation; however, she thought Marx and Engels were inconsistent. While Lenin acknowledged that Luxemburg's stand on Poland was at this time correct, he regarded both her reasoning and her conclusions as wrong. She had misinterpreted Marx and drawn an unwarranted generalization which was, in fact, harmful to the cause of proletarian "internationalism", and therefore to the revolution (4).

Lenin proceeded from the exact opposite position, based on the declaration of the London Congress of the 2nd Internationale in 1896: The right to self-determination must be upheld under capitalism, under the transition to socialism, and under socialism. He answered each of

Luxemburg's arguments in three major polemics: "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (1914), "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (1916), and "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up" (1916). He found it imperative to do so because of the rising "crusade of opportunists" – liquidators, Bundists and national-socialists – who were violently attacking Clause #9 of the Russian program (self-determination), supported by Luxemburg's reasoning.

Lenin characterized Luxemburg's article as "a collection of errors in logic that could be used for schoolboy exercises"! (CW, 1972, Vol. 20, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," p. 404). His analysis concentrated on three major errors: (1) She had confused the right to self-determination with the actual self-determination of individual nations. And she had not applied a dialectical historico-economic analysis. Therefore, she had (2) not considered support for self-determination (up to and including secession) as a corollary of the doctrine of proletarian support for the bourgeois revolution and democratic rights. By not doing so, she had failed to recognize the reality that (3) the proletariat thus acted as an "accomplice" to the oppressor nations who denied the right to self-determination to the oppressed nations, thus flouting the principle of equality among nations. She had unwittingly given support to Great-Russian nationalism, the position not only of the Russian bourgeoisie, but of the reactionary Black Hundreds.

Luxemburg had derived an "absolute" from the particular case of Poland; she had lapsed into "abstraction, metaphysics and generalities":

Although Rosa Luxemburg's point of view could at first have been excused as being specifically Polish, "Cracow" narrow-mindedness, it is inexcusable today...when policy is being shaped by this Great-Russian nationalism...[and] being seized upon by the opportunists of all nations (p. 452).

No Russian Marxist has ever thought of blaming the Polish Social Democrats for being opposed to the secession of Poland. These Social Democrats err only when, like Rosa Luxemburg, they try to deny the necessity of including the recognition of the right to self-determination in the programme of the Russian Marxists (p. 430).

Luxemburg's stand was based on a wrong economic argument. She argued that just as Poland's economics were inseparably bound up with Russia's, so no small states could be "economically independent". Lenin

answered that in the age of imperialism, no states, large or small, were “economically independent”. Moreover, she had separated economics from politics. She had substituted the false question of economic independence for the political independence of states. She had missed the fact that it is the economic element, which strives for the victory of commodity production, that impels the political or national movement. Therefore, the national state is typical and normal for the capitalist period, especially when that nation is striving to realize its capitalist role by freeing itself from a semi-feudal or backward oppressor nation. Lenin maintained:

For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market and there must be politically united countries whose population speak a single language...therein is the economic foundation of national movements (p. 396).

Luxemburg had not acknowledged the categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question...that it be examined within definite historical limits, and, if it refers to a particular country...that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch (pp. 400-401).

Lenin agreed with Luxemburg that Marx’s standpoint on Poland had been derived from a correct historico-economic analysis in its day, but that now Poland had ceased to be partly feudal and was already a bourgeois capitalist nation. However Luxemburg had not applied a correct historico-economic analysis to the nature of the oppressor nation, in this case Russia, nor to its relationship to the oppressed peoples. That is, other prospective nations were still struggling to realize their capitalist potential. This could only be achieved through separation from Russia, which was “more feudal than bourgeois, and is the principle obstacle to democracy and to the proletarian struggle” (p. 412). It was because it had only been since 1905 that Eastern Europe and Asia (including Russia) had been “passing through this period (of bourgeois-democratic revolutions) that we must have a clause in our programme on the right of nations to self-determination” (p. 406).

Lenin explained that upholding the right to self-determination was not the same as supporting every specific example or attempt at secession or nationhood. Many factors had to be considered: the balance of world forces, the stage of capitalism obtaining in the nations concerned, the nature of both nations’ bourgeoisie, whether

such a move would be progressive, i.e., establish conditions favorable for the proletariat, etc.

Luxemburg had gone so far as to almost deny the existence of states under imperialism:

This “best” national state is only an abstraction, which can easily be developed and defended theoretically, but which does not correspond to reality....The right to self-determination’ of small nations is made illusory by the development of the great capitalist powers and by imperialism (p. 398).

As Lenin pointed out, this is merely a restatement of the old anarchistic ideas of Proudhon and Stirner that Marx and Engels had exposed over 50 years ago (p. 436). [Luxemburg’s theory of Imperialism will be discussed in Part III.]

Luxemburg had argued that by supporting the right to secession, one supported the bourgeois nationalism of the oppressed nations, and aided the formation of new class states:

It cannot be the task of a proletariat to create new class states, and if the London resolution [of the International] mentions self-determination of oppressed peoples, it means the right of self-determination in a Socialist society, not the creation of a new class state on a capitalist basis (Nettl, Vol. I, p. 182).

The converse is that if you do not support the right to self-determination, Lenin answered, you are supporting the nationalistic bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation:

To the workers the important thing is to distinguish the principles of the two trends. Insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anyone else, in favour, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression. But insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for its own bourgeois nationalism, we stand against. We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressor nation, and do not in any way condone strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation....A bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support” (“Self-Determination,” pp. 411-12).

Well and good, but Luxemburg had objected that “[Clause #9] gives no practical lead on the day-by-day

policy of the proletariat, no practical solution of national problems” (p. 409). In other words, what is the proletariat to DO in a situation where the national bourgeoisie is agitating for independence? How is the proletariat of the oppressed country to unite with the proletariat of the oppressor country? Lenin said self-determination is only “practical” for the bourgeoisie. That was not the criteria to be employed. Instead,

The working class supports the bourgeoisie only in order to secure national peace...in order to secure equal rights and to create the best conditions for the class struggle....they always give the bourgeoisie only conditional support....That is why the proletariat confines itself, so to speak, to the negative demand for recognition of the right to self-determination, without giving guarantees to any nation, and without undertaking to give anything at the expense of another nation”...To the workers the important thing is to strengthen its class against the bourgeoisie and to educate the masses in the spirit of consistent democracy and socialism (pp. 409-10).

This is the proletariat’s “principle practical task”. And the way to achieve this is for the proletariat of the oppressor nation to join with the proletariat of the oppressed nation in upholding the right of all nations to self-determination. Lenin’s solution for the Polish Social Democrats was:

There is a way out in which all participants would remain internationalists: The Russian and German Social Democrats by demanding for Poland unconditional “freedom to secede”; the Polish Social Democrats by working for the unity of the proletarian struggle in both small and big countries without putting forward the slogan of Polish independence for the given epoch or the given period (p. 351).

Luxemburg had particularly balked at the extreme of “secession”. For Poland she had proposed a “full freedom of cultural development” or a kind of “cultural autonomy”. Lenin argued that the right to self-determination must mean up to and including secession because “cultural autonomy” did not guarantee 1) the full equality of nations, or 2) freedom of political separation. “Autonomy” was merely a (default) condition for an area of mixed composition which did not have a common language or geographical features which enabled it to secede as a separate nation. She had lapsed into the position of the Russian bourgeois liberals, the Cadets: Under capitalism, Lenin asserted, “autonomy is a reform; the right to

secession is revolutionary” (CW, 1964, Vol. 22, “The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up,” p. 344).

As well, Luxemburg advocated strongly that the Polish Socialist Party of Prussia be subsumed into the German S-Ds for fear that it would emulate the bourgeois Polish PPS in demanding Polish independence. The Prussian PPS rejected this. It was the German S-Ds’ view also that Polish Independence not be a part of their program. Nettl calls this “the seamier side of Rosa’s internationalism. For with the denial of all national solutions went a monochrome universality which even obliterated national distinctions” (Vol. I, p. 196). There is a more than a grain of truth in this. Much as Luxemburg advocated the retention of cultural, educational and linguistic freedom for Poland, what passed for “internationalism”, in practical terms, ended up to mean that “the whole world was Germany” (p. 196). For Germany had forcibly annexed this area, and Luxemburg was justifying the status quo. And there was a certain feeling that it was only the European, more specifically the *German*, parties and proletariat which mattered. In many letters she expressed sentiments such as this: “I personally could not care less about the Russians” (p. 253).

Lenin was particularly worried about the repercussions of Luxemburg’s stand for the revolution in Russia:

Opportunists of various nationalities....all spoke in favour of Rosa Luxemburg’s arguments against self-determination! What for Rosa Luxemburg, the Polish Social Democrat, had been merely an incorrect theoretical generalization of the specific conditions of the movement in Poland, became objective opportunist support for Great-Russian imperialism when actually applied to more extensive circumstances, to conditions obtaining in a big state instead of a small one, when applied on an international scale instead of the narrow Polish scale” (“Summed Up,” p. 359).

What was Trotsky’s stand on the self-determination of nations and Polish independence? What was his role in this opposition between Luxemburg and Lenin? As usual he occupied his “centrist” position; in Lenin’s view, he acted as a splitter and a liquidationist. In Trotsky’s assessment of the 1903 controversy, he had implied that all the Polish S-Ds had agreed with Luxemburg’s position and had wanted the “right to self-determination clause” stricken, when in reality they had chosen not to oppose the resolution on self-determination of the London Congress (#9 in the Russian program). Lenin felt Trotsky was inventing contradictions where none existed and, in effect, promoting a split among the proletariat:

The obliging Trotsky is more dangerous than an enemy! Trotsky could produce no proof, except 'private conversations' (i.e., simply gossip, on which Trotsky always subsists), for classifying 'Polish Marxists' in general as supporters of every article by Rosa Luxemburg. Trotsky presented the 'Polish Marxists' as people devoid of honour and conscience, incapable of respecting even their own convictions and the programme of their Party. How obliging Trotsky is! When in 1903, the representatives of the Polish Marxists walked out of the Second Congress over the right to self-determination, Trotsky could have said at the time that they regarded this right as devoid of content and subject to deletion from the programme. But after that the Polish Marxists joined the Party whose programme this was [in 1906], and they have never introduced a motion to amend it. Why did Trotsky withhold these facts from the readers of his journal? Only because it pays him to speculate on fomenting differences between the Polish and the Russian opponents of liquidationism and to deceive the Russian workers on the question of the programme. Trotsky has never yet held a firm opinion on any important question of Marxism. He always contrives to worm his way into the cracks of any given difference of opinion, and desert one side for the other. At the present moment he is in the company of the Bundists and the liquidators ("Self-Determination," pp. 447-48).

In 1913, the Party had reaffirmed the London policy. In 1914-15, Trotsky was still holding the position of a "centrist"; a "centrist" was described by Lenin as one who "recognise[s] self-determination verbally and hypocritically as Kautsky in Germany, and Trotsky and Martov (leader of the Mensheviks) in Russia" ("Self-Determination, Summed Up, p. 349). Trotsky refused to take a clear stand. His articles were "evasive", "eclectic" and a muddle of:

on the one hand, the economy unites nations and, on the other, national oppression divides them... The conclusion is that the prevailing hypocrisy remains unexposed, agitation is dull and does not touch upon what is most important, basic, significant and closely connected with practice -- one's attitude to the nation that is oppressed by "one's own" nation (p. 359).

Finally, once again, despite the sincere good intentions of Luxemburg, the opportunists all had spoken in favor of her arguments against self-determination, and despite the "subjective 'good' [Lenin's quotes] intentions

of Trotsky and Martov..., their evasiveness objectively supports Russian social-imperialism" (p. 360).

Even though earlier Luxemburg had given lip-service to self-determination under Socialism, after the Bolshevik Revolution, she railed against the Bolshevik policy of self-determination as "hollow, nationalist, petty bourgeois phraseology and humbug," a mere expedient that "has served to bring the greatest confusion into socialist ranks and has actually destroyed the position of the proletariat in the border countries and enabled the counterrevolution to triumph" (RLS, "The Russian Revolution," pp. 379-82)

The nationalist movement, just because it tore the proletariat loose from Russia, crippled it thereby, and delivered it into the hands of the bourgeoisie of the border countries. Instead of acting in the same spirit of genuine international class policy which they represented in other matters, instead of working for the most compact union of the revolutionary forces throughout the area of the empire, instead of defending tooth and nail the integrity of the Russian Empire as an area of revolution and opposing to all forms of separatism the solidarity and inseparability of the proletarians in all lands within the *sphere of the Russian Revolution* as the highest command of politics, the Bolsheviks, by their hollow nationalistic phraseology concerning the 'right of self-determination to the point of separation,' have accomplished quite the contrary and supplied the bourgeoisie in all border states with the finest, the most desirable pretext, the very banner of the counter-revolutionary efforts (p. 382).

Now what was Lenin's position on self-determination under the dictatorship of the proletariat? Lenin based his argument on Marx: "No nation is free if it oppresses other nations", and on Engels: "The victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing" ("Summed Up, " p. 352). He directed the thesis of the Russian S-Ds: "We have affirmed that it would be a betrayal of socialism to refuse to implement the self-determination of nations under socialism" (p. 311) against the Polish [really Luxemburg's] thesis that "the right of self-determination is not applicable to a socialist society" (p. 321) -- a statement which has gone down in history as the "Polish heresy". This "heresy" argued that socialism would abolish every kind of national oppression since it would abolish class interests, i.e., economic prerequisites. The Poles advocated "socialist cultural zones, cultural and linguistic units only" or "federation", i.e., mutual, or joint determination.

Lenin reiterated his previous arguments about “autonomy”. On the other hand, “federation” implied a bilateral contract between nations that were already equal; how could an oppressed people agree on joint determination? Therefore, the right to either federation or autonomy was a contradiction in terms. He added, however, that either “autonomy” or “federation” might very well become the reality under a proletarian regime if nations were first given the right to secede. [This, in fact, was the situation under the U.S.S.R.] He made great fun of Luxemburg’s unhappy phrase the integrity of the Russian Empire, reminding her of Engels’ characterization: “As to Russia, she could only be mentioned as the detainer of an immense amount of stolen property” (p. 342). In this context, he also pointed out the blatant contradiction between the Polish stand against annexations and their stand against self-determination. He characterized it as: “We oppose annexations in general but we...tolerate them once they have been made” (p. 333).

In effect, the arguments of both Luxemburg and Trotsky ignored (“leaped over”) the transition period between capitalism and socialism, where there obviously must be both national “states” and class relations. It was utopian and anarchistic to ignore this. The Poles had insisted wrongly that nations exist by “economic” (and therefore political) borders; and so since under socialism, *there will be no economic borders, therefore, there will be no political borders, therefore no “states”*.

Lenin called this an extension of Luxemburg’s “Imperialist Economism,” i.e., when socialism would be victorious, political questions would be a waste of time (5). Lenin interpreted this as ignoring of the reality of the “state” (the anarchistic skipping over the state). But as he argued in *State and Revolution*, directly from Marx, the dictatorship of the proletariat assumes the presence of the state. And precisely because it is a “state”, it cannot be allowed to oppress other “states”. It seems to me that Luxemburg made the same error as Trotsky: confusing the dictatorship of the proletariat with socialism per se, and that this is fall-out from the “permanent revolution” theory.

I have not been able to find any theoretical writings of Trotsky on “self-determination” or the “nationalities” question under socialism dating from this time. Trotsky’s wavering, centrist positions before the Revolution, as Lenin said, lent support to Great Russian chauvinism. His theory of “permanent revolution” denigrated the peasantry, who composed the mass of the (eventual) Eastern republics and we know he had a low opinion of their culture and little faith in their ability to manage their own affairs. His “administrative” overbent and his propensity

to “coerce” are other factors which support what many have noted as his lack of enthusiasm over the secession of the nations which had been oppressed under czarism, especially his homeland, the Ukraine. Trotsky didn’t write much about this matter, until later when, of course, most of his early views were altered to coincide with Lenin’s!

There are hints, however, of Trotsky’s views in his ambiguous stands on the matters of the Ukraine and Georgia. His tolerance of the reactionary Ukrainian Rada representatives at the Brest-Litovsk negotiations can be viewed as enabling the German-Ukrainian deal and as damaging future Ukrainian solidarity with the Soviet Republics [see Carr, vol. III, pp. 37-41]. During Lenin’s illness in 1922, Stalin, Dzerzhinsky and Ordzhonikidze were carrying out a devious plan for a “new Russian Federated Republic”, i.e., a (very Luxemburgian!) plan for autonomization” of the independent Soviet national republics by which they would become “autonomous” parts of the Great Russian Republic. On his deathbed, Lenin had implored Trotsky to conduct a defense of the “Georgian case” against the “persecution” of Stalin. For whatever reasons, Trotsky refused to do so. Lenin’s plan for a free and equal Union of Soviet Socialist Republics eventually, of course, won out (Medvedev, pp. 70-72; Lenin, CW, Vol. 45, “Letters,” p. 607) (6). As usual, in retrospect, Trotsky insisted that his views and Lenin’s had been of a piece.

But this is quintessential Trotsky. When Trotsky didn’t want to take a stand, he “muddied up the waters” by proposing complications or contradictions where they didn’t exist, or evaded or omitted issues by words or non-actions. In trying to occupy a stand between Luxemburg’s “semi-anarchism” and Lenin’s dialectical Marxism, he still ended in what Lenin termed a “Kautskyite” stand, centrist and opportunist. In doing so, he lent support to the enemy in the same way that anarchists, often to their genuine horror, find their positions lend support to the enemy.

## War and Revolution

I have spent a lot of time on Luxemburg’s (“semi-anarchistic”) theories on self-determination because the mechanistic approach revealed therein informed what Lenin regarded as her potentially harmful analysis of the relationship between the imperialist war and revolution.

To set the background briefly. At the 1907 Stuttgart Congress of the Internationale, a radical amendment submitted jointly by Lenin and Luxemburg, had won out over a rather “mealy-mouthed” statement pushed by the Right Wing of the German S-D Party. The Lenin/Luxemburg

version stated that since the war was between major imperialists, the proletariat of each country must adopt an anti-war stance and oppose their own bourgeoisie. In the event that war could not be prevented, the duty of socialists was to end the war and turn the crisis into class struggle. This then became the official position of the 2nd Internationale (7).

Then in 1914, the unthinkable happened. The German S-D deputies to the Reichstag voted en masse to support government war credits. The lone opponent was Luxemburg's comrade, Karl Leibknecht. The S-Ds of the other major countries followed suit. No matter how it was colored, it amounted to social-chauvinistic "Defense of the Fatherland" (8). The shock of this move cannot be overestimated. Lenin at first refused to believe it. Luxemburg had suicidal thoughts. The German Party was the oldest and largest party in the Internationale, its guiding light. Now it had revealed its rottenness to the core. Even Kautsky, its leading theorist (the "Pope of Socialism"), had adopted a "centrist" wavering position. He too had become a renegade, an opportunist. The 2nd Internationale immediately folded like a house of cards; the future of social democracy itself was in imminent peril (9).

Out of this situation arose the Spartacists as an oppositional faction within German Social Democracy to fight this sickening capitulation. This gave the Bolsheviks a hope of support for their position. The Spartacists also held promise of becoming a truly revolutionary party which could lead the proletariat. This was crucial because at this time it was believed that the success of the Russian Revolution would depend on a revolutionary upsurge in Germany (10).

In 1915, the revolutionary Social-Democrats (the "internationalists") met in Zimmerwald (International Socialist Conference) to fight the Right capitulation, to assess the war situation, and to clarify a revolutionary position. Again, a split resulted between the "left" (Bolshevik) forces and the "centrist" (Kautskyite) forces regarding the radicalness of the statement to be issued. In order to maintain unity against the Right Wing social-chauvinists, the Zimmerwald group accepted some of Lenin's amendments, but the final result was, in Lenin's words, "timid and inconsistent" (11). From prison, Luxemburg (with Leibknecht) had sent a Spartacus manifesto, which did not arrive in time. It was not so much a program as a statement of socialist principles, and was issued as an appendix to the famous Juniusbrochure (Junius Pamphlet).

Although at the time Lenin did not know the author, he seized upon this document with great hopes. However, the

analysis therein was disturbing; Lenin considered it "a step backward" from the Zimmerwald Left position. Luxemburg spoke for the Spartacists in the essay "The Crisis of Social-Democracy" and in the appended statement of principles, "Theses on the Tasks of International Social Democracy". The crux of her argument lay in these passages:

5. The World War serves neither the national defense nor the economic or political interests of any people... In an era of such unrestrained imperialism there can be no more national wars. National interests serve only as means of deceiving, making the working masses serviceable to their mortal enemy, imperialism (SPW, *Either/Or*, pp. 347-48).

6. No suppressed nation can reap freedom and independence from the politics of imperialist states or the imperialist war (p. 348).

7. Under these circumstances, every defeat as well as every victory in the current World War means a defeat for socialism and democracy (p. 348).

Lenin concluded that this pamphlet was a "splendid Marxist work" [whose] defects are... to a certain extent accidental" (CW, 1964, Vol. 22, "The Junius Pamphlet," p. 306). He praised her analysis of the war among imperialists and her assessment of the Right social chauvinism in the German Party. However, he criticized Junius for not drawing the connections between the "centrist", opportunist trend of Kautsky and the blatant social-chauvinists. He excused this defect as owing to the "lack of an illegal organisation that would systematically pursue its own line, educate the masses... [by taking] a definite stand on opportunism" (p. 307).

It was in the statement of principles where Lenin saw two major errors. She had, again, made sweeping, oversimplified generalizations in presenting imperialism as a monolithic, all-powerful force. Junius' first error was to assert that "National wars are no longer possible in the epoch of this unbridled imperialism". Lenin pinpointed the fallacies in her argument: (1) it "ignore[d] the national movements against imperialism", and (2) it denied that "a national war might be transformed into an imperialist war and vice versa" (p. 309).

Lenin elaborated: "Every war is the continuation of politics by other means. The continuation of national liberation politics in the colonies will inevitably take the form of national wars against imperialism" (p. 310). In addition, "[Imperialism] by no means precludes national

wars on the part of say, small (annexed or nationally-oppressed) [European] countries against the imperialist powers” (p. 311). “National wars against the imperialist powers are not only possible and probable; they are inevitable, progressive and revolutionary....” (p. 312). It is obvious how Luxemburg’s thesis against the right to self-determination (up to denying the reality of the nation-state), and her inconsistent views on annexation had given rise to these errors.

Lenin called her theory “sophistry”. He contended that “it gives rise to the absurd propaganda of ‘disarmament’, since it is alleged that there can be no wars except reactionary wars,” and to a “downright reactionary attitude of indifference to national movements” (p. 312).

Another of Junius’ fallacies had to do with “defence of the fatherland”. Junius was correct in supporting the Zimmerwald Left tenet which affirmed:

The Proletariat is opposed to defence of the father land in this imperialist war because of its predatory, slave-owning reactionary character, because it is possible and necessary to oppose to it (and to strive to convert it into) civil war for socialism (p. 313).

But despite this agreement, Lenin marvelled that Junius “makes the very strange mistake of trying to drag a national programme into the present, non-national war” (p. 313).

Her argument around “defence of the fatherland” was very convoluted. What she meant was that “the class struggle is the best means of defence against invasion,” but she argued superficially from the past (the French Revolution) that once the revolution was victorious in Germany, then the slogan of “defence of the fatherland” was correct. But as Lenin pointed out, because the German S-D program at the time was essentially a bourgeois program, “to proclaim” the programme of a republic, a permanent parliament, election of officers by the people the “armed nation”, etc., would have meant “in practice, ‘proclaiming’ a revolution (with the wrong revolutionary programme”!) (p. 317). This would have been no different from the present “defence of the fatherland” proclaimed by the renegade S-D party which had voted for war credits. Lenin called her analysis “half-way dialectics” (p. 316).

Junius’ final error was her view that victory or defeat was equally bad for the proletariat. Lenin answered that “defeats [can] help the cause of the revolutionary class”, i.e., in that proletarian revolution can arise out of defeat of one’s own “fatherland” (p. 319). He concluded that her views led to “petty bourgeoisie pacifism” or “national chauvinism”. Luxemburg had fallen into what was essen-

tially an “absolute” and “moralistic” anarchist position of being against-war. From her correspondence, it is clear how the horrors of war appalled Luxemburg, and indeed her accounts of the senseless destruction of war on the German proletariat are among some of her most compelling writing.

And unintentionally, once again, Luxemburg had rallied the Mensheviks to applaud her and, moreover, to use her arguments as support for their position. Nettl’s thesis is that Luxemburg was not pro-Menshevik as much as she was anti-Lenin, but in practice, it amounted to the same thing. Her flaw was, once again, to over-generalize, to apply a mechanistic formula, to “leap” to an “absolute” conclusion which was not derived from a concrete analysis of the situation in a truly Marxist materialist fashion. This “absolute” was expressed most blatantly in her guidelines for the reconstruction of the Internationale:

The ultimate goal of socialism will be realized by the international proletariat only when it stands up against imperialism all down the line and with its full strength and the courage to make extreme sacrifices makes the slogan “War on war” the guideline of its practical politics (SPW, “Appendix to Junius Pamphlet,” p. 313).

Now how could the proletariat conduct a revolution with the slogan “war on war”? The negation of the revolution in such a slogan is an absurdity.

And what was Trotsky’s position toward the war, the revolution and “defence of the fatherland”? Having left the Mensheviks only in 1914, Trotsky had refused to join the Zimmerwald Left, and had again represented the “center” at the Conference. Up to the eve of the Revolution, Lenin had hesitated to call Trotsky a “chauvinist”, and optimistically predicted that “little by little he is moving to the Left”. However, Trotsky would not state whether he wanted unity or a break with the “Chkheidze faction” in the Duma, i.e., the Menshevik “defense of the fatherland” faction, and in December, 1916, Lenin expressed his exasperation:

His attitude is unknown. There has been no definite indication of it in the 500 issues of the Paris Russian-language newspaper *Nashe Slovo*, of which Trotsky is one of the editors” (CW, 1964, Vol. 23, “Open Letter to B. Souvarine, pp. 203-04).

In a letter to Kollontai of February, 1917, while Trotsky was still in America, Lenin was outraged over Trotsky’s manipulations:

What a swine this Trotsky is -- Left phrases, and a bloc with the Right against the Zimmerwald Left!! He ought to be exposed.... (CW, 1973, Vol. 35, p. 285).

Again, in a letter to Inessa Armand of the same period:

Trotsky arrived, and this scoundrel at once ganged up the Right wing of Novy Mir against the Left Zimmerwaldists!! That's it!! That's Trotsky for you!! Always true to himself = twists, swindles, poses as a Left, helps the Right, so long as he can....(CW, 1973, Vol. 35, p. 288).

So how "left" did Trotsky move? A concrete manifestation of Trotsky's "centrist" position revealed itself around Brest-Litovsk. First, he based his vague proposition ("Neither peace, nor war") on the immediate ("utopian") intervention of the international (German) proletariat. On the other hand, while he evaded outright support for the (ultra-left or anarchistic) "revolutionary defence of the socialist fatherland" position of Bukharin and others, his delaying tactics and ambiguous stand in effect backed up this position. We have seen that Lenin regarded the two stances as little different. So here we have a wonderful example of how "centrism" between "ultra-left" (anarchism) and "left" (Lenin's position) can result in an objectively "right" position. For if Lenin had not stepped in, Trotsky's actions could have destroyed the socialist beginnings in Russia and done much to halt the course of proletarian revolution.

While publically supporting Lenin's policy, Luxemburg, too, regarded Brest-Litovsk with private misgivings. Her analysis of the situation showed little understanding of the complexities of the historical forces involved. The one presumably published Spartakusbrief betrayed her point of view:

This peace was in reality nothing else but a capitulation of the Russian revolutionary proletariat before German imperialism. Naturally Lenin and his friends deceived neither themselves nor others. They openly admitted their capitulation. Where they did deceive themselves was with the hope of buying a real respite, the hope of escaping once and for all from the hell-fires of the world war. They did not take account of the fact that Russia's capitulation at Brest-Litovsk would stiffen the hopes of the German militarists, which in turn could not but weaken the chances of a revolutionary rising in Germany; far from bringing about the end of the war with Germany, they merely hastened the beginning of a new phase of it....Any and every political defeat, even the ruin of the Bolsheviks

in honest struggle against superior forces and in the teeth of the historical situation, might be preferable to such moral collapse (Nettl, Vol. I, pp. 696-97).

This very interesting excerpt betrays not only traces of "revolutionary defensism" but also traces of, what Nettl termed, her "sleazy" attitude, a disguised German chauvinism. [This will become much clearer in Part III when her attitude toward the Bolshevik Revolution is discussed.] Moreover, there is something offensively naive in her phrase "moral collapse". She revealed this same "moral" approach when she castigated the German proletariat for failing to live up her expectations:

It was only the pertinaciously slavish attitude of the German proletariat which compelled the Russian revolutionaries to make peace with German imperialism.... (Frolich, pp. 240-41).

We see this attitude again expressed in regard to the Revolution in Germany:

The revolution followed four years of war, four years during which, schooled by Social Democracy and the trade unions, the German proletariat had behaved with intolerable ignominy and had repudiated its socialist obligations to an extent unparalleled in any other land (SPW, "Our Program and the Political Situation," p. 388).

Never did Marx, Engels or Lenin scold or denigrate the proletariat as if revolution were a matter of will. The idea of "good will" or "moral righteousness" as the motive force behind social transformation runs like a "black thread" back to the very beginnings of the anarchist-utopian trend.

Lenin was generous toward "Junius". He regarded his [her] errors as representative of the German left which could not make a complete break with Kautskyist centrism, as the genuine mistakes of a

lone man [sic] who has no comrades in an illegal organization accustomed to thinking out revolutionary slogans to their conclusion and systematically educating the masses in their spirit ("Junius," p. 319).

Lenin's view was that Luxemburg was a real revolutionary and a committed Marxist who unintentionally adopted positions of "centrism" due to faulty reasoning. Lenin was not generous with Trotsky who, he saw all too clearly, adopted positions of centrism out of egoism, spinelessness, and opportunism.



[Part III will conclude with a discussion of Luxemburg's erroneous analysis of imperialism in her critique of Marx and in her relationship to Kautsky, her conception of the Internationale, her analyses of the German and the Russian Revolutions, and her programme for proletarian revolution in Germany.]

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#### NOTES

(1) Luxemburg subordinated everything to "the world brotherhood of workers". Although of Jewish ancestry, she refused to deal with the Jewish question in Poland or Russia. In addition, she only half-heartedly supported Clara Zetkin around women's issues because she also thought all these matters would be resolved with the victory of socialism. [Any attempt, such as by Dunayevskaya, to interpret Luxemburg as a chief figure in the women's liberation struggle seems to me a stretch.]

Trotsky's group, which joined the Bolsheviks just prior to the October Revolution, was the Mezhraiontsy, Unity or The Internationalists. This "centrist" group refused to take a stand between Menshevism and Bolshevism.

(2) As mentioned in Part I, Stalin attributed the theory of "permanent revolution" to Luxemburg, Parvus (the Russian, Alexander H[G]elphand), and Trotsky: "Not Trotsky, but Rosa Luxemburg and Parvus were the authors of the theory of the 'permanent' revolution. Not

Rosa Luxemburg, but Parvus and Trotsky advanced the theory of the 'permanent' revolution, in 1905, and actively struggled for it against Lenin. Subsequently, Rosa Luxemburg also began to struggle actively against the Leninist schema of revolution...after 1905" (*Bolshevik*, No. 16, Aug. 30, 1932, reprinted in *The New International*, March, 1935, pp. 74-75).

Luxemburg did have an early working relationship with Parvus, especially around the exposure of Bernstein's revisionism. They also had a close personal relationship. Similarly, Trotsky also had both a close working and personal relation with Parvus. The three were regarded as a like-minded "ultra-radical" trio. Trotsky attributed the creation of "his" slogan, "No Tsar, but a workers' government" to Parvus. Parvus replaced Trotsky as head of the St. Petersburg soviet. They later fell out over the definition of "workers' government" and the course of the revolution.

Parvus was a mysterious and devious figure. He was accused of embezzling funds, [supposedly] turned out of the German party, and became a rather shady millionaire businessman. His rationale was to financially support the Russian Revolution. His logic led him to support German militarism against the czar, and to recruit Turkey, Bulgaria and Rumania to the German side, which earned him the reputation as a national patriot. He attempted to be both a liaison between the German militarists and the Bolshevik Party and between the German and Russian proletariat. Both Luxemburg and Trotsky repudiated Parvus around 1914. However, Parvus was instrumental in effecting the "sealed train" exit of the Bolsheviks from Switzerland through Germany, and continued to funnel funds to the Bolsheviks, and to Trotsky. His evaluation of the Bolshevik Revolution echoed Luxemburg's (Zeman, p. 251). He later supported it, but Lenin denied Parvus entry back into Russia, stating: "The cause of the revolution should not be touched by dirty hands," (p. 246). See Lenin, *CW*, 1964, Vol. 21, "At the Uttermost Limit" for his evaluation of Parvus as an adventurer.

Nettl maintains that "Luxemburg [only] went part of the way with Trotsky...his scientific 'must' -- remained for Rosa Luxemburg a strongly urged 'should' and 'ought'." He says "publicly both Rosa Luxemburg -- and Leo Jogiches -- emphasized that they did not accept the validity of Trotsky's theory," that the [conception of the Poles] "differed sharply from the daring projection of permanent revolution on a moving belt worked out by Trotsky 'supported by' Parvus." "The Poles acknowledged Trotsky's work...but admitted that they could neither fully understand it nor agree with it" (Vol. II, pp. 504, 567).

(3) Trotsky usually used the term “workers’ government”. The implications of this will be discussed in Part III.

(4) Marx’s statement: “Poland...became the revolutionary part of Russia, Austria, and Prussia....Even the Polish nobility, although their foundations were still partly feudal, adhered to the democratic agrarian revolution with unparalleled selflessness. Poland was already a seat of East-European democracy at a time when Germany was still groping her way through the most platitudinous constitutional and high-flown philosophical ideology....So long as we [Germans]...help to oppress Poland, so long as we keep part of Poland fettered to Germany, we shall remain fettered to Russia and Russian policy, we shall be unable completely to smash patriarchal feudal absolutism at home. The creation of a democratic Poland is the primary prerequisite of the creation of a democratic Germany” (Lenin, CW, 1961, Vol. 6, “The National Question in Our Programme” (1903), pp. 455-56).

(5) Taken from the older definition of Economism which argued: capitalism is victorious, therefore political questions are a waste of time (“Summed Up,” p. 322).

Carr points out that Luxemburg’s stand echoed that of the leading anarchist theoretician, Arshinov: “the anarchists also stood for self-determination ‘not in the sense of self-determination of nations, but in the sense of self-determination of the workers’,” (Vol. I, p. 267).

(6) Carr presents a different version, i.e., the issue was that Stalin et al. were forcing Georgia to “federate” with Armenia and Azerbaijan into a Caucasian federation in order to enter the Union as a combined republic. He agrees, however, that Stalin’s original plan was for “autonomization”. [The Georgian situation has been notoriously difficult for historians to puzzle out.] Be that as it may, Trotsky excused his inaction on the grounds of being “home sick” (Vol. I, pp. 393-98). [See Part III, Luxemburg, Trotsky and Kautsky, re: Georgia.]

(7) “If the outbreak of war threatens, the working classes and their parliamentary delegations in the countries concerned, supported by the unitary action of the International Bureau, are obliged to use all means that they think most effective to prevent the outbreak of war. These means naturally differ according to the intensification of the class war and the general political situation. Should a war break out in spite of this, it is their duty to intercede

for its speedy end, and to strive with all their power to use the violent economic and political crisis brought about by the war to rouse the people and thereby to hasten the abolition of class rule” (SPW, p. 310).

There were two successive conferences, the Copenhagen (1910) and the Basle 1912), which had more specifically set out a course of action for socialists in the event of imperialist war.

(8) On the first [war credit] vote (on the infamous August 4th), all the deputies, including Leibknecht, voted in favor. On the second [war budget] vote (December), Leibknecht stood alone in opposition. [See Lenin’s footnote to “The Collapse of the Second Internationale” (CW, 1964, Vol. 21, p. 148).] The only other S-Ds who opposed war credits were the Bolshevik caucus in the Russian Duma and two Serbian delegates. Interestingly, Lenin felt that Serbia was one oppressed nation which could be liberated through the outcome of the imperialist war. He used this example to argue against Luxemburg.

(9) The “logic” behind “defense of the fatherland” by the S-D social chauvinists (and opportunists) ranged from the concept of Russia as the “worse” imperialist, to Germany had been “invaded”, to “liberating” German populations from Russia, to a German victory would bring down the czar and bring about the revolution in Russia, to a victory in Germany would confirm capitalism and escalate the class struggle there, to the Internationale is a “peacetime” organization, not a “war-time” organization. It therefore must be suspended in time of war and there must be a temporary “class peace”, to the theory of “ultra-imperialism” which could bring about world peace in the future (theses last especially attributed to Kautsky).

(10) The Spartacists broke away from the German S-D Party (SPD) in 1916 and formed the Spartakusbund. In April, 1917 the Spartakusbund joined with Kautsky’s centrist Independents (USPD) which had also split. After the November, 1918 Revolution, the Spartakusbund broke from the USPD, and in December-January founded the German Communist Party (KPD).

(11) Trotsky actually drafted the compromise manifesto. Of course, he puts it, “I did not formally belong (to the Zimmerwald Left), although I was close to it on all important questions (My Life, p. 250).

For the text of the Left Zimmerwald manifesto, see Lenin, CW, 1964, Vol. 21, “Draft Resolution Proposed by

the Left Wing at Zimmerwald.” Basically, the compromise Zimmerwald manifesto omitted the ideas that conditions were ripe for socialism and that revolutionary class war was on the agenda, and failed to trace the roots of opportunism in the 2nd Internationale. See Lenin, CW, 1964, Vol. 21, “The First Step.”

(12) Both Blanc and Blanqui represented forms of anarcho-socialism. Louis Blanc (1811-1882) was a French utopian socialist, who advocated worker-controlled “social workshops” financed by the state, which would gradually take over production until a socialist society would come into being. His political orientation was, however, as a left-wing Republican; and after the Revolution of 1848, he was a member of the provisional government of the Second Republic, where he advocated labor reforms. He refused to join the Paris Commune but sought amnesty for the Communards. “Blancism” came to stand for the betrayal of proletarian interests in favor of petty-bourgeois “illusions”. Lenin equated the Mensheviks, Kautsky, et al. with “Blancism”. See his article, CW, 1964, Vol. 24, “Blancism,” pp. 34-37.

Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881) was a French

theoretician of revolution and practitioner of insurrection. While recognizing the necessity of class struggle and revolution, “Blanquism” came to be regarded as a kind of “anarchism”, i.e., secret societies, a revolutionary elite with few ties to the masses, the irresponsible coup, skipping over stages, etc. Blanquist philosophy proposed the taking of power by this minority-elite, which would then form a temporary dictatorship and establish “communism”; somehow, the masses would concur in this! In 1870-71, Blanqui had led two unsuccessful insurrections against the government. The Blanquists played an important role in the Paris Commune; Blanqui, himself, was elected President, even though he was at the time imprisoned. He subsequently led the struggle for amnesty for the Communards. Blanquist followers remained active after his death. See Lenin’s CW, 1966, Vol. 31, “‘Left-Wing’ Communism -- An Infantile Disorder,” esp. pp. 66-67; CW, 1964, Vol. 24, “Letters on Tactics,” esp. pp. 48-49; and Marx/Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 516-30 and 473-74.

Therefore, in endnote (21), line 3, “Louis Blanc” should have read “Louis-Auguste Blanqui”. Paragraph 2, line 4 to end, “Lenin defined...”, should be deleted. Sorry.



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