

Forward

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Introduction

Our lead article in this issue, "The Sunbelt strategy and Chicano liberation," contributes to the effort of developing a strategy for the socialist revolution in the United States. The author, William Gallegos, studies the causes of the growing importance of the region for the U.S. He focuses on questions confronting the Chicano National Movement, which plays such a vital role in that region of the country. Gallegos estimates where struggle in the U.S. will intensify in the future and where capitalism is especially vulnerable. His conclusions have broad implications for the Chicano Movement as well as the revolutionary movement as a whole.

Gallegos emphasizes the importance of the national movements in the U.S., and our second article, "Nationalism, Self-Determination and Socialist Revolution" by Amiri Baraka, concerns the Marxist-Leninist view of nationalism and the self-determination of oppressed nations, in particular the African American Nation.

Our third article is written by an activist who has visited Nicaragua and wants to share what he has learned about the role of the Catholic Church there. "Nicaragua: The church in revolution, revolution in the church" by John Stark offers a perspective on what is happening in Nicaragua and contributes to the broader discussion about the relationship between the left and religion.

In our interview, "U.S. foreign policy and the world

today," Mae Ngai, speaking for the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L), discusses controversial aspects of U.S. foreign policy and presents a general perspective on the international situation. She concludes with some pointed observations about the effect of the Reagan administration's war drive on society.

Our cultural review for this issue, "Bruce Springsteen — Rockin' rebel in Reagan's U.S.A." by Joe Lambert, discusses Springsteen's popularity and the meaning of his music. Lambert addresses the question of whether Springsteen is progressive, and places his answer in the context of popular cultural trends.

A continuation of the evaluation of the history of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) (CPML) concludes this issue, with comments by J.R. Hammond and D. Wayne, two former members of the CPML, and a further analysis by Carl Davidson, who began the discussion in *Forward* #4.

All articles in *Forward* express the opinion only of the authors, unless otherwise noted. We solicit your opinions and criticisms of this issue and welcome contributions for future issues of *Forward*.

We hope that this journal contributes to advancing the struggle for socialism in the U.S.

Anne Adams
Carl Davidson
Michael Lee



The “Sunbelt Strategy” and Chicano liberation

William Gallegos

In the last quarter of a century, United States monopoly capitalism has undergone profound changes internationally and domestically, changes which may call for revolutionaries to rethink many long-held conceptions about the socialist revolution in this country. This article presents an initial analysis of some of those changes, looking particularly at what is often called the “Sunbelt Strategy,” and its effect on the southwestern U.S. Some ideas on the strategic implications of these changes are offered, indicating that while the U.S. bourgeoisie may look to the Sunbelt for salvation, they instead may have found their final graveyard.

The most important change in the situation of U.S. monopoly capitalism (or imperialism) is the erosion of its world empire. The United States has tumbled from its post-World War II pinnacle of unchallenged global economic and political dominance. Since the late 1940s it has suffered major setbacks in one country or region

William Gallegos is a member of the Chicano and Latino National Movements Commission of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) and a longtime activist in the Chicano Movement.

(Facing page) East Los Angeles, looking toward downtown

after another: China, Korea, Cuba, Viet Nam, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua and Iran, to name an incomplete list. In the last decade, Europe and Japan have grabbed large chunks of the U.S. world market, as well as chunks of the U.S. home market. The former colonies have developed into the powerful third world, with much greater control of important national resources and markets, and a much larger degree of political independence and clout. Finally, the U.S. has had to contend for world supremacy with a powerful and aggressive Soviet rival.

During this same period, U.S. capitalism has had to sustain an ever burgeoning, and largely unproductive, military apparatus and government bureaucracy, while its industrial plant — mainly centered in steel, auto and rubber — has aged and lost much of its edge to more modernized competitors.

The upshot of these and other factors is that *U.S. monopoly capitalism has to stake a large share of its future on the increased exploitation of its so-called Sunbelt — the southern and southwestern region of the country.*

There are many definitions of the Sunbelt, some of which include even parts of the Ohio Valley. The most common definition is the geographic region encompassing North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, southern Nevada and southern California. The Sunbelt area includes or is near the territories of the African American Nation in the South, and the Chicano Nation in the Southwest. Some Marxist-Leninists (and other revolutionary forces) hold that African Americans constitute an oppressed nation in the so-called Black-belt area of the South, and that Chicanos-Mexicanos are an oppressed nation in a part of the Southwest.

When I refer to a "Sunbelt Strategy," I am not referring to a conscious long-term plan hatched by U.S. monopoly capitalism. At the very least their cutthroat competition precludes the development of such a strat-



Peach picker, Fayette County, Tennessee

egy. I use the term strategy in a looser sense, to refer to the greatly increased economic and political importance of the Sunbelt to the capitalists. The shift to the Sunbelt is largely due to causes outside their control, and represents mainly their immediate reaction to those causes. It was only after much of this shift occurred that most bourgeois economists began to study it, and to explain it as a more long-term phenomenon.

During the past quarter century, the domestic industrial and economic foundation of U.S. monopoly capitalism withered and stagnated in the old factory centers in the Northeast and Midwest, and underwent rapid growth in the so-called Sunbelt area.

This article will show that much of capitalism's "base of operations" has shifted to the Sunbelt. This has tremendous implications for both the Black and Chicano liberation struggles as well as for the U.S. socialist revolution. The U.S. has undergone a massive demographic, industrial and political shift to the Sunbelt, a phenomenon not explainable simply as due to uneven economic development. The movement of population, capital and industry to the Sunbelt is not a temporary phase in U.S. monopoly capitalism. It is highly unlikely that the Midwest and Northeast will ever again occupy the predominant place in the U.S. economy they held in the past.

The "Sunbelt Strategy" of U.S. monopoly capitalism means a greater long-term reliance on the South and Southwest in order to assure energy resources, maintain significantly higher rates of profit, "protect" the border with Mexico, and facilitate investment and trade in the Pacific Rim. The "Sunbelt Strategy" represents an effort to counteract the decline of the economy in the older regions of the U.S., and offset the shrinkage of the U.S. market internationally.

For the purposes of this article, I will focus on the implications of these developments for the Chicano Nation. A more complete study needs to be done to examine the implications for the African American Nation, the Native American Indian nations, the Asian nationalities, and the multinational working class in the



Chicanos are the mainstay of the work force in the Southwest — Kelly Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.



Laid-off steel workers in Braddock, Pennsylvania

**The Sunbelt
Strategy of
monopoly
capitalism
means
greater
long-term
dependence
on the
South and
Southwest.**

Sunbelt. There also needs to be a more complete study of the implications for the Northeast and Midwestern regions of the country, the old industrial heartland. The economic decline of this area has created a terrible set of hardships for the proletariat and oppressed nationality peoples. This is bound to give rise to a powerful social revolt in those parts of the country as they become more of a "backwater" of the U.S. economy, with their industrial plants abandoned, inner cities decaying, and increasingly difficult social problems.

When the industrial heartland was king

From the end of the Civil War until the late 1950s, the bedrock of U.S. capitalism was in the eastern half of the country. The decisive centers of U.S. industrial and financial power were east of the Mississippi, where the large industrial corporations were located. These included the auto, steel and rubber industries, and all the spinoff industries which developed around them.

These giant industries dominated the economic and political landscape of powerful industrial cities such as Chicago, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Cleveland and St. Louis.

From these cities they spanned the globe, for many years exerting unchallenged dominance of the world market and employing a vast network of millions of workers.

To produce for and service this powerful corporate triad — auto, steel and rubber — the bulk of the U.S. population was centered in the Northeast and Midwest. Political power was clearly concentrated in this region as well: the great majority of Congress came from this area, as well as almost every elected president since Lincoln.

Before the 1950s, people did not migrate *out* of the industrial heartland; they eagerly moved *into* it, especially from the South. California was the one important exception. Following World War I, there was a massive migration from the South to the Midwest and East, as poor Black and white workers, farmers and sharecroppers sought to escape the grinding poverty and, for Black people, the pervasive oppression of the Southern plantation system. A similar trend was repeated, to a somewhat lesser degree, during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Most went north looking for jobs in the massive smokestack industries.¹

After the Civil War, the South was considered the economic basket case of the country (a historical irony, since the Southern cotton and tobacco industries had once been the economic backbone of the fledgling American nation), while the Southwest was considered (California largely excepted) an economic stepchild where tourism, agriculture and mining were the only real “growth” industries. The population of the South suffered a large and steady decline from the First World War until the 1970s, while that of the Southwest, except for California, was relatively small. There was some growth in the Southwest during this time, but it was quite slow.

It is no accident that a great many of the important working class and revolutionary struggles of the past 50 years took place in the East and Midwest. The great organizing drives of the auto and steel workers, the great urban Black rebellions, and other important social



Closed steel factory in New York

The enormous population shift to the Sunbelt cannot be overstated, either in its scope or significance. In the first half of the 1970s, 85% of the growth in the U.S. population took place in the Sunbelt.

movements largely developed in the industrial heartland. The great strength of the old Communist Party USA (CPUSA) was centered in these areas as well, since they contained large numbers of lower stratum workers in what were called the "trustified industries." Even the CPUSA's base among African Americans was largely in the East, although they had some base in the South with the Sharecroppers Union. It has long been a common conception among Marxist-Leninists that the "center" of the revolution would be in the country's industrial heartland, but the changes discussed in this article call for a reassessment of that view.

Over the last 25 years, the industrial plant in auto and steel aged, leading to declining productivity and quality. Vigorous competition from Europe and Japan quickly showed up the relative backwardness of many U.S. industries. Declining profit margins ultimately led to a prolonged series of plant closures and drastically reduced utilization of plant capacity. Millions of workers in the Northeast and Midwest were permanently thrown into the streets, and the entire region was reduced to a much smaller share of its former industrial power. These developments ultimately led to an increased migration out of the region and a relative decline in population.

Accompanying the decline in economic strength and population was a decline in political clout. In 1980, the Midwest and Northeast lost 17 seats in Congress, while the Sunbelt gained 11. While the industrial heartland retains an absolute majority in Congress, the trend is clear — political influence is rapidly shifting westward. Now, since 52% of electoral college votes come from the Sunbelt, it is not surprising that every elected president since 1964 has come from the South or Southwest.

Spectacular growth in the Sunbelt

The growth of the Sunbelt is reflected in every realm — economic, demographic and political. In the early to mid-1800s, the western frontier served as a "safety valve," allowing U.S. capitalism to partly defuse the class struggle by promising cheap land to disgruntled workers. In similar fashion, the Sunbelt is today seen as the new promised land for U.S. corporations; a place where land is cheap, labor even cheaper, and there are

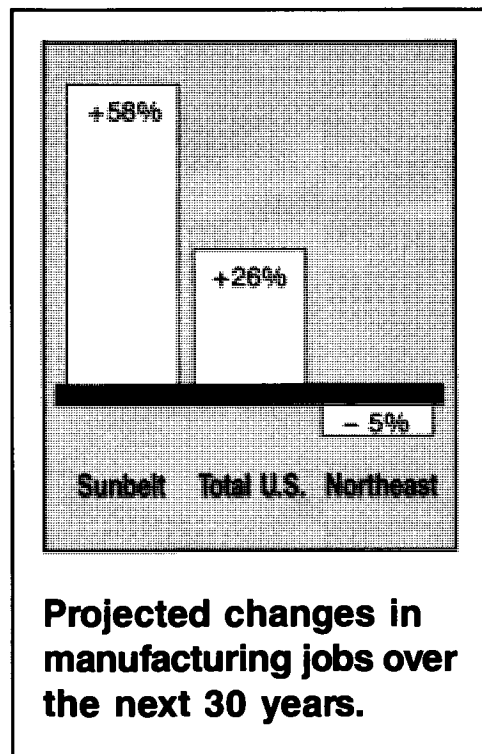
few nasty trade unions or "meddling" governments to restrict the pursuit of profits.

During the last 25 years, the Sunbelt experienced a gigantic growth in manufacturing jobs, military industry, and federal employment. The phenomenal development of the Sunbelt is not primarily due to the relocation of older industries from the Midwest and Northeast, but to a massive increase in federal employment, the spectacular growth of the military industry, and the development of new industries in the region. Industrial relocation from the Midwest and Northeast has been a more limited factor in this growth. For example, General Motors has based almost all its new plants in the South, including the Saturn facility to be built in Tennessee. This plant, to be the most modern manufacturing plant in the world, will produce GM's answer to high-quality Japanese compacts.

Many of the Sunbelt's new manufacturing industries are in the high-tech field, with the great majority of computer, microchip and electronics production centered in the South and Southwest. Federal employment also accounts for a large share of the increase in Sunbelt employment. Between 1960 and 1975, for instance, only 16,000 federal jobs were created in the Northeast, while the Sunbelt added 405,000 federal workers to its job rolls during the same period.

The increasing militarization of the economy, and the more aggressive posture of U.S. imperialism worldwide, also raises the relative importance of the Sunbelt. Most U.S. military installations, with large service industries around them, are in the Sunbelt. The South and Southwest are today home to over 140 military installations, whose payroll is greater than in all the military facilities in the rest of the country combined, including Alaska, Hawai'i, and U.S. bases in Puerto Rico.

The combination of these factors, as well as the rapid growth of the service industry, has produced jobs in the Sunbelt. From 1970-1980, the overall growth in the employment rate in the Sunbelt was twice that of the



U.S. as a whole. Over the next 30 years, manufacturing employment in the Sunbelt is expected to increase by 58%, compared to 26% for the U.S. overall, and a projected *five percent decrease* in such employment in the Northeast.

Looked at from another angle, 118 jobs were destroyed in the industrial heartland through plant closures for every 100 jobs created during the period from 1969-1976. In the Sunbelt during that same time span, 100 jobs were created for every 76 lost through plant closures. (The significance of these figures is that they are for the period *prior to the late 1970s*, when the great wave of auto, steel and rubber plant closings took place in the East and Midwest. Even though a similar wave of closings occurred in California, the overall loss of jobs does not begin to compare with those lost in the old industrial centers.)

Between 1960 and 1980, the population of the Sunbelt increased by 44% compared to an 11.4% growth rate for the rest of the country. The total population of the Sunbelt in 1980 was 118,515,000, or a little over 50% of the U.S. total population at that time. Of these, 93,829,000 are white (an increase of 14% since 1970), 16 million are Black (an increase of 19.5%), and approximately 14 million are Chicano and Latino (including estimates of the undocumented Latino population). The Chicano and Latino population in the South and Southwest has increased by 75% since 1970. Put another way, the population growth rate of the Sunbelt was over one-and-a-half times that of

the rest of the U.S.!

The enormous population shifts cannot be understated, either in their scope or their significance. In the first half of the 1970s, 85% of the growth in the U.S. population took place in the Sunbelt. A cursory look at the situation in some of the older power centers shows that between 1970 and 1980, St. Louis lost 28% of its population, Detroit lost 21%, and Cleveland lost 24%. In the newer power centers during that same period, Houston grew by 26%, Phoenix by 34%, and San Jose by 36%. We are not witnessing a phenomenon of simple



Utah International Inc.'s "Navajo" mine, on the Navajo Indian Reservation, Four Corners, New Mexico

uneven growth, but a more fundamental demographic and industrial restructuring of U.S. monopoly capitalism.

These changes in and of themselves have profound implications for the development of the U.S. revolution, but they take on even greater significance when we examine the population growth rates by nationality. Both the Black and Chicano-Latino populations have much higher growth rates than that of whites. Although whites constitute a large absolute majority of the Sunbelt's population, the minority nationalities are expected to constitute much larger percentages of the overall population within the next several decades. By the year 2000, Black people and Chicanos-Mexicanos in the Sunbelt could conceivably number 53 million people. The white population will number roughly 121.7 million.

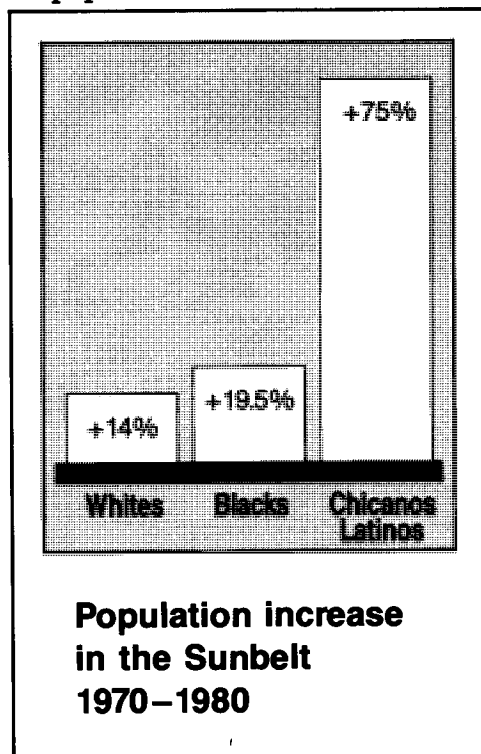
This means that the Black and Chicano-Mexicano populations would constitute over 30% of the total population in the region, concentrated in extensive territories in the Deep South and Southwest. These figures do not take into account other oppressed nationalities in the region, such as Asians and Native Americans. For Asians especially, the growth rates are quite high, in some areas surpassing that of the Latino population. Inevitably the Sunbelt will become more and more a "Third World" region in the next 20 to 40 years, which will exert a profound influence on the overall situation (i.e. for *all nationalities*) in the area.

Why the Sunbelt?

What accounts for the spectacular growth of the Sunbelt, and what are the essential conditions that make it of increasing strategic significance to monopoly capitalism?

Certainly one of the most important factors in the industrial development of the Sunbelt is what business analysts call "a favorable business climate." In plain words this means it is much easier to exploit the working class in the Sunbelt for higher rates of profit than elsewhere in the U.S.

The legal inducements for capital take the form of extensive "right-to-work" laws, lower rates of corporate





United Farm Workers' memorial for Rufino Contreras, killed during lettuce strike in California's Imperial Valley.

taxes, weaker government regulation of working conditions, and lower rates for unemployment insurance, workers' compensation and disability. Fourteen out of the 19 states in the country with "right-to-work" laws are in the Sunbelt. A large and fast-growing state like Texas (with Houston the shining symbol of Sunbelt glory) not only has a "right-to-work" law on the books, but also laws against mass picketing and secondary boycotts. It is not surprising that the United Farm Workers Union has been unable to win even a single contract in Texas after more than five years of organizing. Texas is truly a capitalist's dream come true.

The rate of unionization in the Sunbelt, and specifically in the Southwest, is lower than even the dismal figure for the country as a whole, which is currently about 18% of the work force. In New Mexico, only 12% of workers are unionized, in Colorado 15%, in Arizona only 13%, and Texas has a sad 11% figure. California is the only outstanding exception, with a union rate of 23%.

Corporate-minded state and local governments have also engaged in cutthroat competition with each other

to offer large corporate tax breaks. Corporate taxes in the Sunbelt are at least 13% lower than in the rest of the U.S., resulting in an annual corporate windfall in the hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars.

Federal spending in the Sunbelt has also played no small part in creating the "favorable business climate." The majority of federal dollars spent in the Sunbelt have gone towards the military, the military industry, farm subsidies, highway construction, and federal civilian employment. This is in stark contrast to federal spending in the Northeast and Midwest, where the bulk of federal monies go for welfare and social services. Obviously the capitalists prefer the Sunbelt type of federal largesse, which is much more profitable than feeding, housing, and taking care of "obsolete" workers who no longer have a useful (i.e. profit-making) social value.

Another critical factor in the growth of the Sunbelt is its lack of democracy. Bourgeois democracy, with all its severe limitations, is the form of government in the entire U.S. But nowhere is it so restricted as in the Sunbelt. The principal reasons for this are the existence of an oppressed Black Nation in the South and an oppressed Chicano Nation in the Southwest. From a historical point of view, these nations represent the legacy of slavery and the plantation system in the South, and the military conquest of Mexico's former territories in the Southwest.

Today, the African American and Chicano peoples are heirs to that legacy. They continue to bear the burden of the survivals of slavery and annexation in the form of the denial of democratic rights and the most brutal forms of national oppression. In the sphere of political power, this is expressed in the myriad of laws, "customs" and bureaucratic loopholes which operate to disenfranchise millions of Black people, Chicanos and Latinos. In a certain sense, the "move to the right" that everyone talks about began in the Sunbelt. The "conservative," that is, reactionary, politics of the Sunbelt have nothing to do with rugged individualism, a "frontier mentality," or the peculiar personal quirks of a James Eastland, a Ronald Reagan or a Barry Goldwater. It is a historical outgrowth, reflected in the political sphere, of slavery and annexation.

That is why, as more and more industrial and politi-

By the year 2000, the Black and Chicano populations may constitute over 30% of the total population of the Sunbelt. Inevitably, the Sunbelt will become more and more a 'Third World' region.

From a historical point of view, the Black and Chicano Nations represent the legacy of slavery and the plantation system in the South, and the U.S. military annexation of Mexico's former territories in the Southwest.

cal power develops in the Sunbelt, the entire country "moves to the right." The national politics of the United States are more and more being dictated by a monopoly capital centered in the most conservative region of the country. This explains why "right-to-work" laws are so pervasive in Sunbelt states, why corporations have such a free hand to exploit and destroy the environment, why employee health and safety protections are so minimal, and why spending on social services is so low compared to the rest of the U.S.

The monopoly capitalists have "moved to the right" in order to try to reassert their world domination, and to bolster the falling rates of profits occasioned by the erosion of their power and influence internationally. This has not occurred because of the shift to the Sunbelt. But that shift *facilitated* and *gave impetus* to that important change in bourgeois policy which began in the latter stages of the Carter administration and continues in the Reagan era.

The higher profit margins, derived partly from the weak democratic structures in the Sunbelt, are the underlying reason why the capitalists are so intent on preventing Black people and Chicanos from voting in large numbers; why there have been attempts to weaken the Voting Rights Act, attack Black voter registration drives in the South, eliminate the bilingual ballot, maintain discriminatory gerrymandering patterns, and deny immigrants the right to vote in local and state elections. The ruling class understands the implications of the rapid population growth among the minority peoples.

Of course, the existence of a large, politically powerless pool of Black and Chicano workers is itself an attractive inducement for monopoly capital to flow to the Sunbelt. The added "fringe benefit" is that this massive reserve army of unemployed and superexploited workers is used to force down wages *generally* in the region. Although the majority of the new industries in the Sunbelt are in the so-called "high-wage" category, the jobs largely went to white workers, and even those "high wages" are lower than in the old industrial centers because of the large numbers of unorganized and jobless workers, not to speak of the millions of workers without any rights at all — the undocumented workers.



On the U.S.-Mexico border

One further impact of these developments is the increased stratification of the working class in the Sunbelt. This can be seen most clearly in the new high-tech industries. The upper stratum workers in this industry are mostly white males and get high pay and excellent benefits. But the assembly workers, who are primarily oppressed nationality women, get low wages, poor benefits, and have the worst working conditions.

This stratification is the product of a very profitable wage differential between white and non-white workers in the Sunbelt. The average difference in wages between white and Black or Chicano-Mexicano workers is at least 12%. This wage differential operates to keep wages for almost all workers in the Sunbelt "in line" with the capitalist pursuit of maximum profits.

Geopolitics, energy, and the military factor

There are other important factors which make the Sunbelt such a key center for monopoly capitalism, having to do with geopolitics, militarization and energy dependency.



Farmer near Somerville, Tennessee

During the last 25 years, the United States has become increasingly concerned with its southern flank. It has viewed with great alarm the continuing upheavals in Latin America, and watched with a jaundiced eye as the tide of revolution has steadily moved towards Mexico. From the standpoint of U.S. imperialism, Mexico is the most important nation in Latin America, primarily because of its huge oil reserves and the large amounts of U.S. capital invested there, and because of its 2,000-mile border with the U.S. The oil is key because the U.S. realizes that its "access" to the Middle Eastern oil fields is becoming more and more problematic, and that in case of "emergency," say a prolonged war, it must be able to fuel its industrial and military machines. Mexico is the logical supplier — willingly or unwillingly.

The U.S. also worries about Mexico because the bulk of that nation's \$96 billion foreign debt is owed to U.S. banks and lending institutions, or to institutions in which the yankees have a dominant voice, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The United States simply cannot afford to allow a revolutionary situation to develop in Mexico, because

it would threaten U.S. investments, access to the oil fields, and, very importantly, because of the "spill-over" which could affect the southwestern U.S.

Mexico's population is expected to double by the end of the century, and its economy is already in deep trouble with no relief in sight. It presently suffers an unemployment rate of 40%-50%, and by the year 2000 the situation could reach a critical mass, resulting in a tremendous flow of Mexicanos into the U.S., where they will join with a Chicano-Mexicano population itself growing at a rate of more than 65% per decade, and themselves the victims of tremendous social problems. Certainly the 2,000-mile border with Mexico is an increasingly important factor in the "Sunbelt Strategy."

The growing U.S. dependence on Mexico for future oil supplies serves to illustrate its more general energy problems — problems which highlight the importance of the Sunbelt. Ever since the Arab oil embargo of 1973, the U.S. has sought to secure a stable energy supply for its domestic economy, its military machine and its key allies in Europe and Japan. The Sunbelt is the largest repository of many domestic U.S. energy resources. U.S. coal reserves in the South and Southwest are greater than anywhere else in the country. Large petroleum deposits are still to be found in the Sunbelt, as well as large deposits of uranium. It is not coincidental that the membership of the powerful and militant United Mine Workers Union has declined at the same time that many large coal operations have shifted to the South and Southwest. The net effect has been to weaken one of the strongest sectors of the U.S. labor movement, while at the same time the capitalists have reaped even higher rates of profit.

The importance of the Sunbelt is further accentuated by the increasing militarization of the U.S. economy, and the critical role the military plays in the pursuit of U.S. foreign policy objectives. The Sunbelt is truly a military bastion for U.S. imperialism, home not only to 140 military installations, but a great concentration of military-related industry. This is certainly another



Hanna Petroleum oil rig in the Southwest

reason the Sunbelt is so crucial to the long-term perspectives of monopoly capitalism.

An additional factor in the Sunbelt's strategic significance is its role as a gateway to the Asian-Pacific area, a region of growing importance for U.S. imperialism. The U.S. has billions of dollars invested in the Asian-Pacific area and sees it as a key source of raw materials for U.S. industry and trade. Militarily, the Pacific Rim holds a critical place in U.S. strategic planning, as the outer defense perimeter against Soviet expansion. The Sunbelt, especially southern California, serves as a major link to the Asian-Pacific region.

World and domestic events have combined in a remarkably short period to plunge U.S. imperialism into a difficult and protracted crisis. While this crisis has

ebbs and flows, the long-term decline of U.S. monopoly capitalism is both inevitable and irreversible. Never again will the U.S. grab Arab oil for \$2 and \$3 a barrel. Never again will the U.S. regain the many "lucrative" countries it has "lost" in the third world. Nor will the U.S. ever be able to dominate the world auto and steel industries as in the past. And of course history has proven that it is impossible for the United States to reverse the revolutionary tide sweeping through many parts of the world, including the U.S. "back yard" in Latin America.

U.S. monopoly capitalism has been compelled by events beyond its control to move to the Sunbelt, and to stake its survival on future developments there. This critical evolution must necessarily shape our conceptions of the revolution against monopoly capitalism, and our perspectives on the development of the strategic alliance between the working class and the oppressed nationality movements. Cer-

tainly it requires that due consideration be given to the role the Chicano Movement will play in the U.S. revolution.

The Chicano Movement: a flaw in the Sunbelt Strategy

While U.S. monopoly capitalism has probably given



Chicano drill sergeant, basic training



East Los Angeles

itself more breathing space with its "Sunbelt Strategy," it has also created a double-edged sword which could hasten its own destruction. One edge is an impoverished and decaying industrial heartland. As the capitalists close shop there and move their capital elsewhere, they leave behind dying inner cities, millions of jobless, hunger and misery.³ These conditions form the seeds of rebellion, especially for the large populations of Black people, Latinos and working class whites in the old industrial centers. The oppressed nationalities especially have a very recent tradition of urban revolt and uprising. We can expect more of the same in the future.

The other edge to its sword of self-destruction are the oppressed Black and Chicano Nations in the Sunbelt. The "Sunbelt Strategy" means increasing oppression for both those nations, as well as for the other minority nationalities who inhabit the region, and the large numbers of lower stratum white workers as well.

The Chicano Nation is already feeling the brutal imprint of U.S. monopoly capitalism's efforts to extend its life and maximize its profit margins. In the final analysis, one of the great "amenities" of the Sunbelt

In the final analysis, one of the great 'amenities' of the Sunbelt is the oppression of the Chicano Nation.



While the exact borders of the Chicano Nation remain to be determined, even publications such as the National Geographic recognize the uniqueness of the Southwest.

is the oppression of the Chicano Nation: monopoly capitalism's ability to exploit its labor (including the rapidly growing sector of immigrant Mexicano and Latino workers — part of the lower stratum of both the multinational proletariat and the Chicano Nation), the theft of Chicano resources, and the availability of large numbers of Chicano youth as cannon fodder for U.S. aggression.

The Chicano Nation refers to a vast expanse of land stretching across the southwestern United States. Its population includes the nearly 15 million Chicanos, Mexicanos and Latinos who inhabit the Southwest. This nation has historical roots going back more than four centuries, to the time of Spanish colonization of that region. The nation was formed following U.S. annexation, the consolidation of which forced Chicanos into permanent second-class status in U.S. society. The nation's territory stretches from southern Texas, through New Mexico and southern Colorado, including southern Arizona and a large part of California. Spanish is the predominant language of the Chicano Nation, and its culture has largely been shaped by its more than century-

long struggle against oppression.

Recent statistics help provide at least a beginning portrait of Chicano-Mexicano oppression — nearly one-third of the population living in poverty; continuing double-digit unemployment; high school drop-out rates over 50%; alarming increases in infant mortality; high rates of Chicanos living in what is euphemistically called “structurally inadequate” housing (when they can find housing at all); and the pervasiveness of sickness, drug abuse, and a vast array of social problems.

In the past several years we have also witnessed a growing brutalization of the undocumented by the *migra* (the Immigration and Naturalization Service), causing massive dislocation, family breakup, injuries and death. We have also seen the stepped-up efforts to crush Chicano-Mexicano culture through the suppression of the Spanish language — by steady and well-financed efforts to outlaw every language except English. And finally there is the daily toll of police brutality, causing dozens of deaths among Chicanos and Latinos in the Southwest each year.

These statistics and facts cannot really give a complete picture of Chicano oppression. They only scratch the surface of the suffering endured by *campesinos* who are not provided sanitary facilities or allowed to drink water on the job in the scorching agribusiness fields of the Southwest; the life span of farm workers is still just 49 years. It does not tell of the slow death of Chicano and Latino foundry workers who each day swallow or inhale critical amounts of silica, lead and mercury at their jobs. It does not reveal the millions of daily humiliations Chicanos suffer as they try to obtain employment with almost no ability to read, write or spell; skills made more and more critical even in “menial” jobs in a high-tech U.S.

This oppressive reality is the wellspring of the Chicano National Movement, a movement based on the fastest-growing population in the country. In the decade before 1980, the Chicano-Mexicano population grew by a rate of 65%. And this does not account for the one to two million undocumented Mexicano and Latino immigrants who live in the U.S., most as part of the Chicano Nation.

Demographics are critical to an assessment of the

importance of the Chicano Nation. We can expect a continuing rapid growth of the Chicano-Mexicano population in the Southwest. The average age of Chicanos-Mexicanos is 22. Forty percent of the population is under the age of 18, and 25% under the age of 12. This means that a Chicano baby boom lies ahead for the next two decades. There is also the high probability of continued high immigration from Mexico and Central America into the Southwest. As Mexico's economic and political situation worsens, immigration could conceivably increase beyond the one million per year now estimated to enter the U.S. And as the military situation in Central America intensifies, immigration from that region too is likely to grow.

By 1990, it is possible that the Chicano-Mexicano-Latino population in the Southwest could number 22 million. And it could very well top 30 million by the year 2000. The implications of this, for both the capitalists and the revolutionary movement, are staggering, especially given the volatile nature of the Chicano Movement.

The Chicano Nation has a long history of resistance to oppression, including armed revolts, urban rebellions, major strikes, and periodic calls for self-determination, independence, or secession. Given the importance of the Southwest to the future development of U.S. capitalism, it is essential that the ruling class crush, *in one way or another*, the revolutionary potential of the Chicano Movement, *and* prevent the unity of the multinational proletariat in the Sunbelt.⁴

The capitalists, recognizing the potential danger from the Chicano Movement to their long-term efforts to "secure" the Sunbelt, have undertaken different methods to defuse that

movement. The "stick" approach is represented most graphically by the activities of the hated *migra*. The ruling class utilizes the *migra* to terrorize the poorest and most oppressed sector of the Southwest, and create an anti-immigrant hysteria among other nationalities. (Even a fair number of Chicanos have been infected by this hysteria.) The capitalists realize that as long



San Diego, California

as they can keep millions of Mexicanos and Latinos terrorized and deprived of even the most elementary human rights, they will be able to strictly limit the revolutionary potential of the Chicano Movement as a whole.

The "carrot" approach is what I call "Hispanismo." In a certain sense, Hispanismo represents an effort to buy off a small stratum of the Chicano middle and upper classes. Economically this occurs through some limited promotion into middle and even a few upper management positions in the corporate and government sectors, and the limited expansion of Chicano business. Politically, Hispanismo negates the interests of the working class within the Chicano Movement, or, more precisely, identifies those interests entirely with those of the middle and bourgeois classes. Its thrust is to dull any sense of heightened national awareness and identity, and to push the entire movement to the right.

1980 Census figures reveal that in the past decade the Chicano bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie gained some small measure of economic, social and political ground in the Southwest. These gains form the material basis for the development of Hispanismo. But, and this is an important "but," these gains are extremely small and very, very fragile. Already the Chicano middle class is learning just how fragile their progress has been as they watch Chicano Studies programs being gutted, as affirmative action becomes only a fading memory, as Chicano businessmen find credit increasingly hard to obtain, and as markets become difficult to penetrate because of domination by monopoly corporations. It is very likely, given an expected increase in the level of mass struggle in the Chicano Movement, that we will see an erosion of the influence of this trend in the next period.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to underestimate the influence of Hispanismo as a political and ideological trend. It will continue to be essential for revolutionaries to seek unity with Hispanismo-oriented leaders and organizations around concrete issues of Chicano oppression, while maintaining an independent perspective, striving to exert as much initiative as possible, and steadily creating the conditions for the working class to develop its leadership of the movement. In opposition to the



Jesse Jackson campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, 1984, which inspired widespread Black voter registration.

narrow reformism, assimilationism, and blind faith in capitalism which the Hispanic forces advocate, revolutionaries must creatively promote an outlook of revolutionary struggle, internationalism, national pride, and conscious opposition to monopoly capitalism as the fundamental source of Chicano oppression.

The Chicano Movement is in a position to play a decisive and strategic role in the struggle against monopoly capitalism, more so than most revolutionaries ever imagined in the 1960s and '70s. The Chicano Nation is in a position to "hit it where it hurts," and, along with the multinational working class and other national movements, help achieve socialism in the U.S. The role of the Chicano proletariat will be especially critical in forging the revolutionary unity needed to win socialism. The Chicano proletariat has the dual role of being the staunchest fighter for Chicano liberation and a detachment of the multinational proletariat, the most revolutionary class in U.S. society.

The Black and Chicano Nations could be an Achilles heel of U.S. imperialism. They have the potential, in alliance with the working class, to jeopardize the capi-

talists' creaky house of cards in the Sunbelt — their tremendous superprofits, their energy supplies, their border with Mexico, and their best access to the lucrative Asian-Pacific region. And, what is very important from a revolutionary point of view, it even threatens their military capacity.

Important arenas of struggle

The experience of the last several years points to certain key areas of struggle in the Chicano Nation which can serve as rallying points for the further revolutionary development of that movement. I offer the following as a beginning point for future discussion in the movement, to define the most important issues and the best methods for developing unity and for building up the revolutionary forces.

Any discussion of critical areas for organizing must begin with the Chicano-Mexicano workers. The Chicano-Mexicano proletariat (working class), is the largest sector (85%) of the Chicano population, and the great majority of Chicano workers are in the lower stratum of the multinational working class. Because of these factors and the severity of the oppression and exploitation they suffer, they are in a position to play an important and even leading role in both the working class and Chicano National movements.

Unfortunately, the rise of the Sunbelt has been accompanied by a decline in the organized labor movement. This is largely because the labor bureaucrats have not considered it important to organize low-paid Black and Chicano-Mexicano workers. Now they are being compelled to do so, for the sake of the survival of the union movement, and to try to regain their clout within the Democratic Party.

This means that the ground today is very fertile for organizing Chicano-Mexicano workers. We can see evidence of this among the farm workers, where active organizing drives are taking place in every Southwestern state except Colorado, among service workers, and among the so-called "bucket shop" foundry and manufacturing workers. For example, last year in California's San Fernando Valley, 1,200 Mexicano and Latino workers at the Superior company, maker of automobile rims, brought in the UAW. This was the largest UAW organiz-

Any discussion of critical areas for organizing must begin with the Chicano-Mexicano workers. They form more than 85% of the Chicano population and are its most oppressed and exploited sector.

ing victory (and possibly one of the largest union organizing victories) of the entire year. Witness also the strike of the mostly Chicano Phelps-Dodge copper miners in Arizona — where several thousand workers waged a long and extremely bitter strike in spite of mostly terrible misleadership by union officials.

Of critical importance to *our* “Sunbelt Strategy” is increased organizing among Chicano-Mexicano workers, especially the unorganized workers. A strong labor movement, which in the Southwest presumes a well-organized sector of Chicano workers, would be a tremendous blow to the “Sunbelt Strategy” of the capitalists, which is predicated in large part on the lack of united labor in the region.⁵

The struggle for immigrants’ rights will be another key arena in this next period. The capitalists are counting on a continued supply of low-wage and terrorized Mexicano and Latino labor in the Southwest. This is critical to their agriculture industry, to the fast-growing service sector, and to the garment and “bucket shop” industries. Denial of basic democratic rights to immigrants is also crucial to their denial of democracy to the entire Chicano Nation. The cutting edge of the bourgeoisie’s terror tactics, as stated previously, is aimed at the undocumented Mexicano and Latino. But make no mistake about it — their impact is meant for the whole Chicano Movement.

The immigrants’ rights movement has picked up quite a bit of steam in the last ten years, and the potential for it to develop as a major component of both the labor and Chicano movements is very good. However, to restrict this movement solely to the question of immigrants’ rights would be a mistake. There is a much larger question involved for the Mexicano immigrant. He is coming to land which his Chicano brethren have built, suffered, died and fought for. Their struggle is for much more than a green card or the right to organize. It is for the right of self-determination — for land and political power.

This is the perspective which should guide work among this sector. The monopoly capitalists may finally be willing to concede some rights for immigrants, as have many bourgeois governments in Europe. But what gives them nightmares is the idea that Chicanos-



Opposition to anti-immigrant legislation, Los Angeles, June 30, 1984.

Mexicanos may demand control of the oil in Texas, the coal in Colorado, the uranium and copper in New Mexico and Arizona, and the lush and highly profitable agricultural lands in California. They fear even the slightest *possibility* that the demand for self-determination will become popular, because they realize that it could mean the final bell has begun to toll.

But as critical as the immigration question is to the future of the Chicano Nation, the electoral issue may be even more so. The capitalists' "Sunbelt Strategy" depends in no small degree on the lack of democracy for Chicanos-Mexicanos. It allows them a much freer hand to exploit the labor and resources of the Chicano Nation and to more freely exploit workers of *all* nationalities who live in the region. Therefore the struggle for democracy in the electoral arena will assume a greater importance in the Southwest as time goes on.

We have already seen evidence of this in the past few years, in the great mobilizing power and impact of the Henry Cisneros mayoral campaign in San Antonio, the Federico Peña mayoral campaign in Denver, and several others throughout the Southwest. Electoral

struggles almost immediately illustrate the narrow confines of capitalist "democracy," and point out the need to struggle to "change the rules." This means progressives should fight not simply to get more Chicanos into office, but to expand the field for mass participation. We must fight to defend the bilingual ballot (which has been eliminated already in Los Angeles County, home to the largest number of Spanish speaking people in the country), fight against gerrymandering and at-large elections, and fight for the right of immigrants to vote in local and state elections.

While this demand may seem unrealistic in the midst of the prevailing anti-immigrant hysteria, it is essential to fight for, at least as a long-term objective. Otherwise millions of members of the Chicano Nation will be unable to participate in this arena of struggle, the movement will never realize its full potential or win important gains, and it will be even more difficult for the working class to place its imprint on this critical sphere of political action.

And finally I want to make at least brief mention of an important, but often forgotten, part of the Chicano Movement — the land struggle.

Given the capitalists' increasing energy dependence on the Sunbelt, the land struggle of Chicanos and Native American Indians assumes greater importance. These struggles, because they frequently involve lands rich in key minerals and resources, often include a wide variety of spirited resistance — from petitions to the United Nations, from lengthy court battles, to violent forms of combat. They not only threaten the capitalists' easy and highly profitable access to many resources, but also bring out in sharp relief the whole question of

self-determination.

The well-known struggle which is unfolding between the federal government and the Native American Indians at Big Mountain in Arizona proves just how important this issue is to big business. The government is threatening to launch a full-scale military action against the *Indios* to remove them from their land,



INS Western Regional Commissioner Harold Ezell calls arresting illegal immigrants "fun," and says, "If you catch 'em, you ought to clean 'em and fry 'em yourself."



Denver rally, January 1986, opposing government's proposed forced relocation of thousands of Navajo and Hopi Indians in Big Mountain, Arizona.

so they can exploit the mineral resources. This struggle has gathered tremendous support from the Chicano-Mexicano people, because they can identify very closely with the whole issue of the land. When Chicanos and *Indios* demand land, they want more than a small plot on which to plant beans or raise sheep. In the final analysis they are demanding the return of national territory and the right to govern that territory themselves.

The fight for socialism

The socialist revolution will finally be the result of a powerful mass movement and uprising led by the working class in alliance with the oppressed Black and Chicano Nations. Only these critical social forces are powerful enough to unite all other anti-imperialist forces and effect the defeat of monopoly capitalism. For the Chicano Nation to help fulfill this destiny, communists must be in the forefront as advocates and fighters for that nation's right to self-determination.

By the right to self-determination, I mean the right of the Chicano Nation to political independence — for

the Chicano-Mexicano people to freely *choose* whether they want to form an independent state, maintain the status quo, federate with Mexico, or choose some other national form, such as regional autonomy. The kernel of the demand for self-determination is to be found in many of the demands of the Chicano Movement, such as community control, for recognition of the rights of the land-grant heirs, for greater political representation, etc. Ultimately the slogan "Chicano Power" is a demand for self-determination. It is essential that communists, representing the most advanced perspectives of the working class, uphold this democratic demand among all nationalities as a way to forge the equality and unity of the proletariat.

And for those communists whose roots are from and who work in the Chicano Movement, this demand is important to help link together all the diverse aspects of that struggle, give it orientation and a common focus, and help unleash its full revolutionary potential. This demand poses one of the great threats to the basic structure of U.S. monopoly capitalism and exposes its fundamental vulnerability to an organized, aroused and politically conscious Chicano Movement. Ultimately, to achieve full self-determination, the victory of socialism in the United States is necessary. As long as monopoly capitalism exists, the bourgeoisie will do everything in its power to deflect, undermine and erode any and all democratic gains won by the Chicano people. It is only when the multinational working class itself runs the country that the Chicano people, and other oppressed nationalities, will be guaranteed the freedom to exercise their national rights in a thoroughgoing way.

The "Sunbelt Strategy" can bode well or ill for the socialist revolution. It will ultimately work against the revolutionary cause if we fail to analyze its meaning and draw out its full political implications. But it can work in our favor if we seriously study these important new developments in the structure of monopoly capitalism and recognize especially the increasingly important role that the Chicano and Black Nations can play in the effort to develop a strategy for overthrowing monopoly capitalism and establishing socialism. Capitalism rests on a fundamentally weak and crumbling foundation; in the third world, in the decimated areas of the



Phelps-Dodge strikers, Clifton, Arizona. (Center) Dr. O'Leary, head of the People's Clinic, and Anna O'Leary, president of the Morenci Miners Women's Auxiliary.

Northeast and Midwest; and in the volatile oppressed nations of the Sunbelt. But there is no escaping the fact that if we want to organize a successful revolution, our political center of gravity must shift south and westward. This is the most important implication of the "Sunbelt Strategy." It presents new and exciting challenges for the communist movement, challenges which they can meet only through a break with outmoded conceptions of strategy, and with a creative eye towards the new possibilities arising from the Sunbelt.

Notes:

¹ The tremendous concentration of capital in the Northeast and Midwest made that region (specifically New York City), a financial center as well. The most powerful U.S. banks — Chase Manhattan, Morgan Guaranty, Manufacturers Hanover, etc. — are still based in New York. Some economists hold that because the financial center is still in the East, the importance of the Sunbelt analysis is greatly overstated. But no important capitalist economic trend ever develops smoothly and evenly. To say that the industrial heartland

has lost much of its former economic position is not to say it has no importance at all. The Sunbelt analysis merely shows the undeniable development of industry and employment, population, and political influence in that region of the country. Inevitably, these developments have their impact on the financial centers as well, as more and more investments, both domestic and foreign, become linked to the Sunbelt economy.

² Of the 3.8 million *legal* immigrants who entered the United States between 1975 and 1980, nearly 60% settled in the Sunbelt.

³ Even though the basic trend for U.S. capital flow is to the Sunbelt, this does not mean that capitalists will not also try to take advantage of the traumatized Northeast and Midwest as well. Governments in these areas are practically giving away the store to try to induce companies to set up in their cities and states — promising lower corporate taxes, tax moratoriums, “special economic zones” with cheap labor, no unions, etc., etc. This will probably result in some sporadic economic upturns in some regions in the former industrial centers as a scavenger capitalism moves in to pick the bones of the region it has destroyed. But it will not mean, at least for the foreseeable future, that the heartland will ever be restored to its former dominant position.

⁴ The Sunbelt may also be the Achilles heel in another sense. A large percentage of the U.S. military is composed of African Americans and Chicanos-Latinos. They constitute a very shaky military foundation for U.S. monopoly capitalism, for they too suffer national oppression. Sectors could very well vacillate, especially given good organizational efforts among them, when it comes to shooting down their brothers and sisters in cases of urban uprising, strikes, etc. This is exactly what happened in the 1960s during the great Black rebellions, when quite a number of Black soldiers and guardsmen refused to go into action against their own people.

⁵ An important factor to consider in this regard is the differentiation among the multinational proletariat in the Sunbelt. The economic growth of the Sunbelt, insofar as it has “benefited” the workers at all, has only done so for whites. As more and more “high-wage” jobs opened up in the Sunbelt, they usually went to white labor. This is true in the military industry, in the large auto plants in the South, and in the high-tech industry. This had the impact, along with other factors, of sharpening the divisions within the working class, and setting conditions for racism and chauvinism to flourish. One of the key tasks for communists is to help white workers understand the critical importance,

for their long- and short-term benefit, of supporting the struggle for self-determination of the Black and Chicano Nations. This work is essential to unite the class, and to establish its strategic alliance with the Chicano Movement.

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Nationalism, Self-Determination and Socialist Revolution

Amiri Baraka

In the following article, Amiri Baraka addresses the topics of nationalism, national consciousness and internationalism. This essay originally appeared in the Fall/Winter 1982 issue of The Black Nation. Forward is reprinting this because these topics are of continuing importance for the progressive movement in the U.S.

Although the right of Self-Determination is a democratic demand, a political *reform*, obviously it must be upheld by people calling themselves Marxists. Lenin said, social democrats who refuse to uphold the right of Self-Determination should be denounced as social imperialists and scoundrels.

The reason for this is that how can one be fighting for socialism and not even uphold democracy? But also it is part of the approach of building all around proletarian unity, upholding democracy for all nations and nationalities; so that proletarian unity is embodied by

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New York City mass rally denouncing police repression.



African Americans march for justice and political power in 1980, Wrightsville, Georgia.

To talk rationally of internationalism, one must understand and fight for the freedom of all nations!

the joining together of workers of all nationalities in order to smash imperialism and monopoly capitalism, and all the ills these scourges bring with them such as national oppression, racism, the oppression of women and the like. This is what we mean by proletarian internationalism.

Marxists are internationalists. And even if they are Marxists of an oppressed nationality, they seek to join with workers of other nationalities in smashing their oppression and all oppression and exploitation even with workers of the oppressor nation! Ultimately genuine Marxists know that "no nation can be free if it oppresses another nation." They also understand that national oppression cannot be ended until the elimination of class exploitation and that their own national oppression is just one particular aspect of the outrages of monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

Marxist revolutionaries understand that the national oppression of the African American Nation, for instance, is based economically on the system of monopoly capitalism (that is its material base), and that the only beneficiaries of this oppression is that minute percent-

age of the U.S. population that makes up the white racist monopoly capitalist class, plus those relatively small sectors of the working class and petty bourgeoisie who have been bribed with some of the spoils of imperialism, particularly the robbery and denial of rights of the African American masses.

A Marxist is an internationalist, but also as Mao pointed out the Marxist of an oppressed nation must also be a *patriot*. The fight against that nation's national oppression is "internationalism applied." Marxists cannot be so involved with theoretically upholding internationalism that they dismiss their own nation's concrete national liberation struggle — that would be a caricature of Marxism. This is precisely why Mao wrote this essay, to counter those people disguised as Marxists who wanted to "liquidate the national question." Lenin fought the same battle with Rosa Luxemburg and the Polish and Dutch Social Democrats, among other Marxists in the early 20th century who wanted to deny the right of Self-Determination as an exercise in reformism or nationalism.

But to talk rationally of internationalism, one must understand and fight for the freedom of all nations! In the U.S., one of the main deterrents in really multinational communist organizing has been incorrect political positions on the national question, particularly the Afro-American National Question. For a long time the liquidationist and chauvinist positions held sway in the CPUSA, and actually it was Lenin and Stalin and the weight of the Third International, plus the agitation and struggle of correct comrades including several Afro-American cadre, that forced the CPUSA to take the correct position upholding Self-Determination for the Afro-American Nation in the Black Belt South.

The question of Self-Determination is a question of the extension of all around democracy to all nations; it is not Marxists winking at nationalism. Marxists oppose nationalism, a bourgeois ideology which promotes the privilege, primacy and exclusiveness of the nation. Nationalism is not the same thing as patriotism which



Amiri Baraka, 1984



People of all nationalities rally to support a United Farm Workers boycott in Chicago.

Mao said was applied internationalism in the case of oppressed nations, and is not the same as national consciousness which we will talk more of later. Lenin said that even the bourgeois nationalism of an oppressed nation has elements of democracy in it, to the extent to which such nationalists fight against imperialism. So Marxists support "the nationalists in the sense of a negative support," that is we support nationalists to the extent to which they fight imperialism, but there is no support whatsoever for nationalism, per se!

It would seem obvious to any advanced observer of a society like the U.S., for instance, that nationalism has been one of the greatest assets the U.S. ruling class has possessed. The class struggle inside the oppressor nation that the imperialist U.S. is, in relationship to the African American or Chicano Nations, is consistently repressed, diverted, fragmented and held off by the white racist monopoly capitalist ruling class having infected sectors of the white working class with the drug of white supremacy. Chauvinism, Lenin called, opportunism in its most developed and finished state, where the bourgeoisie could use "its workers" to fight against

the workers of another nation! Such chauvinism has the same economic base as opportunism, the bribe of a small section of the workers and petty bourgeoisie with the spoils of imperialism. And in the U.S. those spoils are literally ripped off the Blacks and other oppressed nationalities. This is that sector which is paid for collaborating in the superexploitation of African Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Asians and so forth.

It is nationalism that can divide the workers so that the workers of one nationality are struggling against the workers of another nationality for a few illusory crumbs the rulers throw out exactly for that purpose! It is nationalism that can pit groups of workers against each other with the most hideous rage, while their mutual oppressors skip off with both their purses for a little sun and fun.

Nationalism is a bourgeois ideology which developed with the emergence of nations and the rise and development of capitalism. Nationalism serves the bourgeoisie in the sense that they are seeking a market for their goods, and their national market is always primary as capitalism develops. And nationalism serves to help that bourgeoisie secure its national market. Joseph Stalin writes, "The market is the first school in which the bourgeoisie learns its nationalism." (page 31, *Marxism and the National Question*)

Black national oppression, based as it is on the slave trade and the enslaving of African Americans, has created an obvious and even "justifiable" ground for Black nationalism. The fact that white supremacy has been the most easily defined instrument in that national oppression creates a situation where Black nationalism can flourish. But even so, the majority of African Americans are not nationalists. In fact, part of the struggle to strengthen the BLM must be in creating a stronger *national consciousness* among the African American people, *i.e.*, an awareness of the Afro-American Nation and of the political necessities of Black survival and development.

The BLM, the national liberation struggle of Black people in the U.S., must include the heightening of national consciousness, identity and self-respect. But these are *not* the same as *nationalism*, an ideology, a world

**In today's
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outlook, promoted by the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie that advocates the primacy, exclusiveness and privilege of "their" nation.

The masses of the oppressed peoples want national equality, democratic rights for their nationality equal with all other nations. This is why in essence the Black struggle, the struggle of the African American Nation for Self-Determination is a *national democratic* struggle, the struggle as an oppressed nation for liberation.

Nationalism, though, means exclusivism and isolation. Any nationalism finally implies that those people are better than all others. The Black struggle is for equality, in essence, not "superiority." We are the victims of a nationalism that preaches superiority and inferiority. We have seen its obscene terror and oppression. We are not fighting so that we can put these on somebody else.

And further. Bourgeois nationalism ultimately does not serve the real interests of the masses of that nationality. As ironic as this sounds, nationalism does not ultimately serve the nation. This is true and has been proven correct time and again. Bourgeois nationalism after a certain point isolates the oppressed masses from their mass allies and delivers them into the hands of the exploiters and reactionaries of their own nationality. In today's world, imperialism must be destroyed to destroy national oppression and certainly this couldn't be more true than here in the heartland of the U.S. superpower.

Zionism should teach us at this moment more forcibly than anything else, how even the most "justifiable" nationalism, taken to its logical conclusion, can end up justifying the slaughter of almost anybody else outside the nation. Certainly, the slaughter of six million Jews by Nazi fascism (rule by the most nationalistic sector of finance capital) made Zionism seem attractive and reasonable to many people who had never taken it seriously before. Now we see the Israelis, themselves turned into fascists, slaughtering the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples, justifying it with Israeli nationalism.

Within the BLM, the nationalist sector is small, but admittedly very vocal and active. There has also emerged from out of that sector some of the fiercest fighters against Black national oppression. (The fact



Nelson Mandela, shown here in 1961 before he was jailed, and other leading African revolutionaries were often heavily influenced by Marxism.

of white supremacy and chauvinism even on the Left, made multinational organizing difficult and kept Black fighters in organizations isolated, contributes to this fact.) However, in the mid-70s a great many of the younger generation of erstwhile Black nationalists and Pan-Africanists took up Marxism-Leninism in a stunning development created perhaps by more exposure of their generation to an atmosphere of international struggle against imperialism made more familiar by modern communications media and the fact that some of the leading African revolutionaries like Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Samora Machel, Mangaliso Sobukwe, Augustino Neto, Nelson Mandela and liberation organizations like the PAIGC, MPLA, PAC, ANC, ZANU, SWAPO did not take bourgeois nationalist lines and were often heavily influenced by Marxism.

Plus struggles in Black communities had in quite a few cases risen to a level where some aspect of partial political democracy was won and the electing or appointing of Black politicians to office quickly revealed that nationality is not the same as political correctness. This was made clear in places like Newark, Detroit,

Los Angeles and Atlanta, where Black activists had to go up against Black political infrastructures with many of the same characteristics of neo-colonialism in the third world.

Unfortunately, since that incendiary crossover of many of the most active and informed members of the BLM into the M-L movement, that movement generally has bogged down and been victimized by a general move to the right of U.S. society. The anti-revisionist M-L movement is a young movement, but it has had to survive the shallow, often idealistic enthusiasm of the mid-70s and its virulent "left" and right opportunism, just as it has to survive the wave of disillusion and right opportunism that now beset it. The large number of petty bourgeois cadres in the U.S. Marxist-Leninist movement help account for some part of these extremes and political vacillation.

But what is obvious is that the M-L movement has not given leadership to the mass movement in the U.S. as it must if a genuine M-L communist party is to be built. Certainly this is true in the BLM. Too often, not only is the M-L movement not giving the overall guidance and leadership that the mass movement needs, it is tailing the various sectors of the mass movement whether it is the Black Democrat sector or the Black nationalist sector or the Black Christian sector.

In the same way that the old RU (Revolutionary Union, now RCP) tailed the most reactionary sectors of the white working class movement, screaming "smash busing" along with the racists, we also have would-be M-Ls tailing cultural nationalists or Christian nationalists, or elected officials or union leaders or "community leaders" or "reverends" and legitimizing it by saying that this is their mass work. The role of communists is to represent the working class and to ensure working class leadership in the mass movements. A communist organization must lead by its stance, viewpoint and action.

One example of what I would call "a militant tail" is when the so-called M-Ls like the RCP and CWP (Communist Workers Party, now called the New Democratic Movement — *ed.*) showed up at an NBUF (National Black United Front) rally in Brooklyn called to protest the murder of Luis Baez by police. These two



Black workers and supporters, in the heart of the African American Nation, march in Tupelo, Mississippi. National consciousness is not the same thing as nationalism.

“super” revolutionary groups then staged separate little demonstrations off the side of the main body of people, because they said the leadership of the NBUF was reformist. So the NBUF calls the rally, organizes the people, and then the RCP and CWP show up being super revolutionary off to the side with their small coteries of cultists denouncing the mass movement — not the police, but the mass movement. The Black nationalists had a field day denouncing “white folks” obstructing a Black rally and the masses thought both these groups were some kind of hippies.

But this tailing from the right or “left” is one of the reasons that the mass movement is often led by nationalists or social democrats or revisionists. Another reason is the failure to mount consistent and principled struggle with the various non-Marxist organizations and leaders. Certainly, in the BLM there has been no consistent criticism of the various Black organizations by M-L organizations. They have usually treated these organizations, certainly the nationalist ones, as if they didn’t exist, only to tail them in real life. Going to their rallies, programs, conventions, and not taking the

lead in organizing these events themselves.

Too many so-called M-Ls even think the mass movement is the nationalist sector of the BLM. Certainly RWH revealed this in their recent pamphlet on the Afro-American national question. But go to any large program or event given by nationalists and so forth and you'll find all kinds of M-Ls there, but where are the forums and the rallies and the marches and the mass movement organized and led by the M-Ls?

Tailing the mass movement, "everything through a united front" as Mao put it, failing to struggle principledly with various trends within the BLM only supports the less advanced sectors of the movement, such as nationalism. These are clear right deviations and instead of "winning the advanced to communism" too often the M-L movement, through its own present right errors and some "left" errors as well, leave the leadership of the mass movement to the nationalists and make them stronger than they would be if we waged consistent and principled ideological struggle against them. The relationship of Marxists to the mass movement is unity and struggle, not just unity!

The BLM for democracy and Self-Determination exists in the U.S. not only alongside other National Liberation struggles, *e.g.*,

the Chicano and Native American movements for Self-Determination, there are other oppressed nationalities (not necessarily nations in the U.S.) fighting for equality and against racism, such as the Puerto Ricans and Asian Americans. Yet, at the same time the masses of African Americans and these other oppressed nationalities are also, along with white workers, members of the multinational U.S. working class.

The working class recognizes and supports all the various struggles against National Oppression, but the struggle that unifies that class completely must be the struggle to smash monopoly capitalism forever. Therefore the class-conscious African American workers must fight consciously not only for Self-Determination for the Afro-American Nation but for the victory of the whole work-



Outstanding African American communist Harry Haywood in 1976. Haywood devoted his life to fighting for the right of self-determination for the African American Nation in the Black-belt South.



The alliance between the working class and the oppressed nationalities is critical. (Above) A contingent in a Black human rights demonstration in New York City.

ing class. Such a class-conscious worker must support all the just struggles of the various oppressed nationalities, but also see as *primary* the collective struggle of the multinational working class.

Actually, the Afro-American struggle for Self-Determination is fought against the same enemy that the multinational working class fights against, that is, the white racist monopoly capitalist class which rules the U.S. and is the chief beneficiary of U.S. imperialism. So that a well-organized and fighting multinational workers movement must attack the same chief enemy of the Black Nation — the white racist monopoly capitalist class — the U.S. imperialist class.

This is why the *strategic alliance* between the multinational working class and oppressed nationalities is so critical. It is the creation of a *conscious* fighting unity, a revolutionary unity, that monopoly capitalism cannot withstand. This is also why nationalism is so divisive and destructive and ultimately only serves the bourgeoisie.

The successful national liberation movement, unless it is led by the working class, only defeats foreign

Black workers must fight not only for self-determination, but for the victory of all workers.



The Black masses are often up against political infrastructures which have aspects of neo-colonialism. Philadelphia Mayor Goode ordered this assault on the Black community, 1985.

domination, it does not eliminate class exploitation within that nation. We've seen liberation movements defeat foreign domination only to become neo-colonial states governed by a domestic bourgeoisie who are absolutely in collaboration with the ex-rulers (see M. Babu, *African Socialism or Socialist Africa*, Zed Press).

A national liberation movement led by the working class not only will take the revolution through to the end, it then continues without pause into the phase of eliminating class exploitation and building socialism.

The struggle for Black Self-Determination, objectively, is a struggle against the U.S. imperialist class — its monopoly capitalist state has *always* been based on Black slavery. It would be a caricature of Black concerns to say, "All right, the multinational working class is fighting the monopoly capitalist class for a socialist society but we Black people are fighting for a Black capitalist society." The Black bourgeoisie and the less advanced sectors of the petty bourgeoisie might co-sign such a statement, but Black workers would not willingly remain the doormats for yet another exploitive regime. Our struggle is to end exploitation — ours as

To push nationalism in the 1980s is to narrow our struggle rather than broaden it. Genuine revolutionaries need allies to strengthen their fight.

well as everyone else's.

Even such a fantasy Black capitalist state would see civil war as item number one on the workers' agenda (or have you read the news from Kenya, Zaire, etc., recently?) Black people are not fighting white imperialism so they can find themselves under the brutish rule of domestic Arap Moi's, Mobutu's and Amin's, and believe me, brothers and sisters, we have quite a few of them telling us how bad white folks are — but ask them do they want to smash class society and capitalism forever? Some of these nationalists already exist in organizations whose narrow, oppressive structures and ideologies are chilling projections of what they have in store for all of us.

The BLM is not directly a struggle for socialism, it is a struggle for democracy. But it's just these struggles for democracy, in all areas of U.S. life that will bring the masses of all nationalities to revolutionary positions. In the '20s, Lenin pointed out that after the Soviet socialist revolution the national liberation struggles should no longer be termed "bourgeois democratic" struggles but "national democratic" or "national revolutionary." As these struggles aided the proletariat's struggle against imperialism and led by the working class, these struggles did not have to create a capitalist state controlled by a domestic bourgeoisie but could move uninterruptedly to socialism. The first socialist revolution had pointed the way past capitalism! The victory of the People's Republic of China proved this thesis brilliantly.

In a multinational state, such as the U.S., to isolate the African American people or their liberation movement is to do the imperialist bourgeoisie's work for them. Segregation has, in the main, been the way that the rulers have kept people outside the mainstream of democratic struggles in this country. Segregation has enabled us fewer allies, fewer links with the collective workers movement and other oppressed nationalities. To push nationalism in the 1980s is to narrow our struggle rather than to broaden it. Genuine revolutionaries need allies, and they must have allies to strengthen



Martin Luther King and Malcolm X represented two wings of the African American united front.



Black self-determination must be supported by class conscious workers of every nationality.

their fight. The Israeli fascists prefer to fight the Palestinians with as few allies as possible — keep the struggle narrow with all information hard to come by — with only the modern U.S.-supplied Israeli war machine in state power versus the less well-armed and stateless Palestinians. The fact that the Palestinians are fighting a national liberation struggle is unquestionable, to suggest that they become narrow nationalists pushing some metaphysical and exclusivist Palestinian “superiority” would not only be bizarre, but Israeli foreign policy. The Israelis would love it. So too, any movement to give the BLM fewer ties with other advanced and fighting forces would be made in Ronnie Reagan’s heaven.

The movement for Black Self-Determination must be supported by class-conscious workers of every nationality. That must be the strategic line in the BLM. Nationalism is opposed to this. The BLM is part of an unbreakable fabric of anti-imperialist struggle. Black liberation can only genuinely exist with the destruction of monopoly capitalism. The destroyer of monopoly capitalism is the collective workers struggle, the victory of the multinational working class in alliance with the

oppressed peoples and socialism!

The principal task for advanced forces, revolutionaries and class conscious workers in the U.S. is the creation of a multinational revolutionary M-L communist party. A party that can tie the various national, democratic and workers movements together and give them collective leadership. In many cases, nationalist movements among the various nationalities will oppose the creation of such a party. Communists working in the various mass movements must fight for such a party and they cannot do this without consistent criticism of and struggle against nationalist forces within the mass movement. Not only struggle against nationalism but against every deviation from revolutionary theory and practice — not in the spirit of Pharisees, critical but abstract, but with the spirit of living Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Tung Thought, criticism and struggle for the sake of creating a higher level of unity. It is just this kind of class struggle that makes the movement go forward!



Nicaragua: The church in revolution, revolution in the church

John Stark

According to the Nicaraguan government, the contras retain the ability to inflict pain and suffering on the Nicaraguan people, but they have been strategically frustrated. That is, they have been denied their original aim of controlling a significant portion of Nicaragua's territory and people and, on that basis, proclaiming an alternative government. The U.S. government is shifting its anti-Sandinista campaign into the arena of "low-intensity warfare" where economic, psychological, political and ideological weapons will strike as hard as the contras' bullets. The battle for Nicaraguans' understanding of their revolution — and their loyalty to it — has thus become decisive. This battle rages on many fronts. Most spectacularly, it is propelled by fierce contradictions within the religious life and structures of Nicaragua.

Why has the revolution split the Nicaraguan church? What roles does this divided church play in the revolution and the counterrevolution today? How do the U.S.

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(Facing page) Pope John Paul II in Managua, 1983



Young Nicaraguan girls at Catholic mass.

government and the Sandinistas, who gained power in 1979, clash over religion in Nicaragua? And who is winning the ideological war? During a recent trip to Nicaragua, I talked with many people to find answers to these questions.

Incredibly patient, five thousand people shuffle under gray lamplight eight long blocks to the crèche of the Holy Mother, most hallowed of Nicaraguan icons. Parents who have stood since mid-afternoon with children in hand finally reach the crèche at seven and eight o'clock. Music floods the night air. Riding their fathers' shoulders, the children move past the Virgin. I watch her devotees hand them candies and trinkets. The youngest look awestruck; older children crunch their candy with delight. All Managua rocks to the thunder of fireworks.

For ten days the city stirs with preparations for this December 7 climax of "La Purísima," Nicaragua's premier holiday, a sort of blend of Christmas, Halloween and the Fourth

of July. Neighbors build community altars to Mary, families personal ones; each night they gather to pray, sing, exchange gifts and shout, "What causes us so much mirth? Mary and the Virgin Birth!"

Local Sandinista Defense Committees and members of the Sandinista Youth are among the most enthusiastic shrine-builders. At a Casa de Gobierno crèche, revolutionary comandantes, including President Daniel Ortega, hand out sugar cane, candy and toys. "As long as the Sandinista revolution exists," says Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge, responding to fears raised by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, "there will be Purísimas in Nicaragua."

Overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, Nicaraguans are more serious and less fanatical about religion than many *yanquis*. They do not wear it on their sleeves or rave about it like a thing apart, for it is woven into their everyday lives. In Nicaragua the sacred and the profane, the religious and the cultural, penetrate one another routinely — witness "La Purísima."

Recognizing this, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) guarantees Nicaraguans the right to worship as they see fit and to organize for religious purposes. It funds church schools run by the same evangelical sects and Catholic hierarchy that seek its overthrow. And it has greeted hoary festivals like "La Purísima" with far more enthusiasm than the Somoza dynasty ever did.

But the government's support for religious freedom has not softened the Roman Catholic bishops' stony hatred for the revolution. They know the revolution has invaded their social domain, weakened their hold on the masses and inspired the rise of a radical clergy and laity. For all these reasons the bishops will never forgive the Sandinistas.

The bishops' rigid attitude stems from nearly 500 years of loyalty to the oppressors of the Nicaraguan people. During that time the church hierarchy served Spain against the colonial revolt, the large landowners against the peasants, the big bourgeoisie against the workers, the Somozas against most Nicaraguans, and

the United States against Sandino and his revolutionary heirs.

Relations between the hierarchy and the Sandinistas temporarily brightened between 1978 and 1980, however, when the Nicaragua Bishops' Conference under now-Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo joined the revolutionary march of the Nicaraguan people and the FSLN.

That brief moment coincided with the rupture between Somoza and a sector of the bourgeoisie which joined the liberation movement because it saw the old regime was doomed and hoped to position itself to control the outcome. The bishops, tied to the bourgeoisie, followed suit. They issued a pastoral letter in November 1979 which gave a stirring endorsement to the revolution and the triumphant Sandinistas.

That endorsement was quickly withdrawn. After 1980, when most of the wavering bourgeoisie turned against the FSLN, so did the bishops. The bourgeoisie repaid them by suddenly becoming religious. On one Sunday I saw scores of fancy cars outside Obando y Bravo's Managua church, and this scene is repeated every weekend. The cars' owners are inside, devoutly praying the revolution dead. The bourgeoisie does not like the revolution's large and growing sector of "people's property" or the state-owned fisheries, farms and factories. They do not like the workers' councils that help plan production in private and public enterprises. They do not like these hints of a socialist future.

The church hierarchy has followed the big bourgeoisie out of the revolution because it always follows the bourgeoisie everywhere. This time, moreover, it has been flattered with an extraordinary assignment: demolishing the reputation of the FSLN. Neither the bourgeoisie nor its organ, *La Prensa*, nor its sponsor, the Reagan administration, has the credibility for that task. But all three believe, or at least hope, that Obando y Bravo will discredit the Sandinistas among the masses.

Meanwhile, the church hierarchy has its own axes to grind against the FSLN. For centuries the traditional church was sole dispenser of what we call "welfare" — it fed and clothed the poorest poor out of charity and to bind them to itself. The FSLN and the pro-Sandinista religious and secular organizations have taken over much of this work, threatening the church with



Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega shaking hands with Monsignor Andrea Cordero Lanzo. At left is Archbishop Obando y Bravo.

diminished importance.

“To the degree that the revolution becomes an alternate source of ideology, creativity, authenticity, and generosity,” writes Luisa Maizal in the independent socio-economic journal *Pensamiento Propio*, “it is natural for religion to occupy a smaller space in people’s lives.” This retreat has taken place at the very moment when the hierarchy has lost its chief political prop inside Nicaragua — the Somoza dynasty. Feeling itself backed into a corner, the hierarchy deprives radical priests of their churches, exiles them to remote regions, and lashes out at the FSLN.

The hierarchy’s counterattack is blatant. Some priests engage in sabotage. The cardinal himself, believing the Sandinistas an illegitimate regime despite their clear-cut victory at the polls in November 1984, urges young Nicaraguans to refuse military service. He never criticizes the contras, not even when they kill workers, nurses and progressive priests. Obando y Bravo’s conscience rests easy in the service of hired assassins because he seems to believe the litany he hears from Reagan and tirelessly repeats: the Sandinistas are communists,

destroying communism is God's work.

Pope John Paul II summons Obando y Bravo to Rome and, on May 25, 1985, anoints him cardinal. Ronald Reagan hails the promotion, sending Nicaragua's cold warrior a warm salute. On his way home Obando y Bravo celebrates mass in Miami. Among those taking Holy Communion are contra leaders Adolfo Calero and Eden Pastora. The audience of 4,500 unites officers of Somoza's National Guard, Somozan functionaries, agents of the Somozan paramilitary White Hand, out-cast members of Somoza's bourgeoisie, and anti-Castro Cubans. The cardinal's sermon reaches Nicaragua via Radio Católica; he pleads for a "reconciliation" of all Nicaraguans. In Miami, the last Somozan president, Francisco Urcuyo Maliaños, is overjoyed. The cardinal, he says, has shamed the bogus radical priests who "serve the interests of tyranny in my country."



Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo

Obando y Bravo returns to Managua amid hosannas from the anti-Sandinista newspaper La Prensa, Radio Católica, the contras and the coalition of opposition parties known as the Nicaraguan Democratic Coordinator (CDN). The CDN calls 150,000 faithful to the cardinal's first Nicaraguan mass; 30,000 attend. Obando y Bravo begins a whirlwind tour of the country, leading anti-FSLN marches organized by the CDN and thinly disguised as religious processions. In his homilies he calls for a "national dialogue" between Sandinistas and contras, veiling this Reaganesque demand in the language of "love thine enemy."

The Nicaraguan government breaks up several sabotage plots in the months following Obando y Bravo's return. One, launched by the CDN and the contras, is designed to create a wave of urban terrorism and erode confidence in the government. Meanwhile, the growing evangelical sects, which congregate nearly 15 per-

cent of Nicaragua's population, begin to follow Obando y Bravo's lead.

But not all religious figures oppose the Sandinista government. Nicaragua's revolution is one of the first in which large numbers of Christian clergy and laity have played an organized, radical and effective role. To do so, they have had to oppose not only Somoza and the bourgeoisie, but, reluctantly, their own church hierarchies. Their alienation from the bishops and from the evangelical Protestant high command has been slow, painful and decisive.

The controversial council known as Vatican II, called two decades ago by Pope John XXIII, watered the seeds of "liberation theology" by committing the Roman Catholic Church to limited lay activism and social change. These seeds sprouted in Medellín, Colombia, in 1968, when the more radical Latin American bishops condemned the "institutionalized violence" of right-wing regimes and called for their "transformation." Eleven years later, in Puebla, Mexico, the radical bishops declared a "preferential option for the poor" despite mounting resistance from Rome and many of their own colleagues.

Medellín and Puebla galvanized the faithful in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Brazil more forcefully than in Nicaragua, but they stirred Sandino's people as well. In the 1970s, poet-priest Ernesto Cardenal, now Nicaragua's minister of culture, returned from Kentucky where he had been studying in a Trappist monastery and founded a Christian community, Solentiname. Here, meditation tempered by poetry and art, by the collective works of laity and clergy, and by their engagement with the lives of local people, broke new ground for liberation theology. This experiment inspired others. Soon "base communities" of progressive clergy and laity cropped up all over Nicaragua. Simultaneously, the shortage of priests gave rise to thousands of "delegates of the word" — rural lay leaders who administered sacraments and taught the catechism.

These delegates and base communities revolutionized



Father Ernesto Cardenal

the grass-roots church. Increasingly they challenged the Somoza dictatorship. They formed secret support networks for the FSLN and fought the *Somocismo* of the hierarchical church, which at first ignored and then tried to cool the fires down below. Many delegates, community members and priests took up arms. On Christmas Day 1977, Father Gaspar Garcia-Laviana, a naturalized Nicaraguan missionary, wrote friends that he had joined the guerrillas "as a soldier of the Lord and as a soldier in the FSLN." He died fighting for the revolution.

The Sandinistas took power, then, having experienced religion as both a friend and an enemy of the people. They knew the hierarchy had fiercely opposed them until 1979, but they also knew tens of thousands of Nicaraguans had joined the revolution because of their religious faith. "Between Christianity and revolution there is no contradiction," the Sandinistas say. This view has served the Nicaraguan people well during the current stage of their revolution.

Interior Minister Tomás Borge calls the alliance described above not just a convergence between Marxists and Christians, but "a convergence of Marxists and Christians with the people." In this light the Sandinistas have socialized the church's "option for the poor" through literacy, education, health and other programs, whose mass line shows a strong commitment to the people.

In November 1985, evangelical ministers Félix Rosales and Ignacio Hernández return to Nicaragua from the United States with a large sum of dollars which they fail to declare at customs. They are apprehended. In their possession is found a series of instructions on using the Bible to subvert the military draft. These come from the CIA-sponsored Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD), kissing cousin of another CIA-sponsored front, the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). After their exposure, Rosales and Hernández are released.



10,000 people demonstrate in front of U.S. Embassy in Managua after contras shoot down government helicopter, December 1985. Sign says, "Yankee, no one here is giving up."

Photo: John Stark



U.S. religious workers demonstrating in front of U.S. Embassy in Managua on Thanksgiving Day, 1985.

Photo: John Stark

A key link between AIFLD and IRD is J. Peter Grace, U.S. monopoly capitalist who has built a fortune in Central America. "I'm against communism," he says. "If I were a religious in Nicaragua I'd definitely try to put an end to the situation the government is creating there." A founder of the AIFLD, Grace sends Obando y Bravo \$25,000 in 1984 with help from AIFLD and IRD. One of his aides says the archbishop wants the money so he can train Catholics "to oppose the Sandinistas and their program."

The FSLN has patiently sought a truce with its enemies in the Christian churches, especially the Catholic hierarchy. But every attempt has foundered on the bishops' redbaiting, their hatred for the pro-Sandinista grass-roots church, their subversion of the military draft and their unyielding call for a dialogue with the contras.

This call is the key point of attack against the FSLN by the "internal front" in which *La Prensa*, the labor federation CUS which is backed by the AFL-CIO leader-

ship, the CDN and the business association COSEP rally behind Obando y Bravo. Each of these institutions parrots his "reconciliation" line, just as he echoes Ronald Reagan's. In the low-intensity war against Nicaragua to which Reagan has now turned, the campaign for a "dialogue" is the key ideological weapon.

Its propaganda value stems from the melding of three lies: Nicaragua faces not U.S. aggression but a civil war, the contras are "brothers" of all other Nicaraguans, and the Sandinistas have prolonged the bloodshed by refusing to negotiate.

Oft repeated, these lies have confused some Nicaraguans who think a dialogue might stop the fighting. But the revolutionary church and the main labor unions are educating people about the real content of Obando y Bravo's call for "reconciliation."

"The church hierarchy has opposed the draft since it began in 1983," said Margarita Lane, an Adrian-Dominican nun who helps 15 women run a sewing co-op in the poor Managuan barrio of Acahualinca. She put the issue to me bluntly: "It's like saying you must not defend yourself. Telling this to people tired of fighting for 20 years, a people who have already lost many sons, can do a lot of harm."

I found a similar reaction to the reconciliation argument in *Amanecer*, journal of the Antonio Valdivieso Ecumenical Center. "It justifies the armed rebellion and intervention," declared a recent issue. "It's a call for capitulation. Our political dispute with this view is total, but what interests us most is the attempt to impose it in the name of religion." The Valdivieso Center, founded shortly after "the triumph," unites priests, pastors, nuns, scholars and laypersons of many Christian tendencies in "critical support" for the revolution.

A typical labor view of Obando y Bravo's reconciliation line is held by Edgardo Garcia, secretary-general of Nicaragua's large farm worker union. "Often, under religious cover, the internal front tries to disarm our workers and the Nicaraguan people in general," Garcia told me. "The church hierarchy says we are all 'brothers' of the contras. By these devices they'll send



Residents of Managua beneath a portrait of Sandino.

Photo: John Stark

us all to heaven!"

And the Sandinistas' response? "We explain that a dialogue of this type would negate the very existence of the revolution," says Borge. "We will enter into a dialogue when the gentlemen of COSEP count all the grains of sand in the ocean." Borge recalls how the first Somoza lured Sandino into "negotiations" only to murder him. The FSLN will not repeat that mistake. It considers the contras a completely alien and artificial element, unrepresentative of any sector of Nicaraguan society.

On rare occasions, the Sandinista government has moved with force against the church hierarchy. It has expelled over a dozen foreign priests, closed down a church journal, and censored sermons, *La Prensa* and Radio Católica when they incited draft resistance or flouted other laws. In one recent case, it drafted several young "seminarians" for military training. They weren't pursuing religious careers at all, but had been dubbed "junior seminarians" by their bishops to sabotage army recruitment.

"We have no interest in attacking the bishops," explains President Daniel Ortega, "but when representatives of the church speak or act politically, they must expect a political response."

Three American election observers speak with Episcopal Conference president Monsignor Pablo Vega in November 1984 after the contras murder six children in Nueva Segovia. They ask why the hierarchy does not condemn the contras for killing thousands of Nicaraguan workers and peasants.

"A bomb planted in the soul is graver than the death of seven thousand Nicaraguans," replies the Bishop of Juigalpa.

Will the church ask the U.S. government to stop meddling in Nicaragua? the three Americans persist.

"That must also be asked of the Russians and Cubans."

But the Russians and Cubans haven't killed seven thousand Nicaraguans, the Americans say. How can you compare Cuban medical aid

to the murder of six children?

Vega sighs: "Killing the soul is worse than killing the body."

Last October the government took its most decisive step to date against the "internal front." Declaring a yearlong State of Emergency, it required permits for public marches and rallies, lifted the right to strike, abridged the freedom from arbitrary searches and arrests, curbed the right to travel and suspended *habeus corpus*.

These measures, universally denounced as "draconian" by the American press, are far softer than those imposed under states of siege in Latin American countries backed by Reagan — countries, it must be added, that do not face constant armed attacks by U.S.-sponsored mercenaries.

The emergency decree is aimed mainly at disruptive strikes by CUS and counterrevolutionary plotting by the bishops and evangelicals. It has had no effect on the lives of most Nicaraguans. They still demonstrate, preach, hold religious processions, travel, publish, organize work places and go about their daily business as they please.

A passionate defense of the State of Emergency — and of the revolution — has come from the 115 ecumenical priests, nuns and laypersons who issued a public statement through the Managua press in late November 1985:

"There are those who, from positions of religious responsibility, would turn the people against their own revolution. This aim coincides with the strategy of the Reagan administration and the old privileged classes who never served the true God, only the idols of exploitation and death.

"The State of Emergency cannot be understood or judged by anyone who doesn't take into account the following circumstances: a popular revolution only now completing its sixth year; a revolution that paid a huge economic and human price (50,000 dead); a generous revolution that eliminated the death penalty instead



Cartoon from Nicaraguan paper Barricada. Figure at left is a Catholic priest, in the middle a contra, at right a Nicaraguan worker. Translation: top panel — "Christmas, a time for gift-giving, for forgiveness . . ."; middle — "... a time for reconciliation . . ."; bottom — "... among brothers . . ."



"For the nation, for peace, for the future we shall continue fulfilling our duty."

Photo: John Stark

of its enemies; a war of aggression across our borders — financed, armed and publicly sustained by the United States — that has inflicted kidnappings, massacres, rapes and over 10,000 deaths on our civil population; and now a blockade imposed by the United States. To ignore all this and to judge the State of Emergency by a single 'universal' standard insults all Nicaraguans who have given their lives for the revolution."

* * *

It is no misfortune that the church in Nicaragua is divided, it is a very good thing. When the church was united, it was Somoza's church.

The revolutionary storm gathering in Latin America growls a distant thunder, yet its lightning has split the church like an oak. The larger fragment is the bourgeoisie's; the smaller, rooted in the people, is the living trunk. In Nicaragua this new, revolutionary church grows from the people's tenacious struggle; in turn it shelters their revolution against the ideological war waged by Reagan, Obando y Bravo and the bishops.

Could this process be set back? Certainly. Two critical

factors which could drive a wedge through the revolutionary alliance are pressure from Reagan's war of attrition or a policy change by the heirs of Medellín, who currently support the Sandinista government. The alliance could also be weakened by mistakes made by the Sandinistas, like their arrest of right-wing labor leaders when the need to do so was not clear, a move which alarmed some of the revolution's supporters. So far, however, the points of collision have been few. Both parties continue to work in tandem with and for Nicaragua's people. The FSLN and the popular church are winning the ideological war with a strong assist from the workers' and peasants' unions.

Nicaragua is testing the role of the church in the revolution and revolutionaries in the church. The outcome may change the course of both the church and revolution in Latin America, and perhaps the world. The pope knows it, Obando y Bravo knows it, J. Peter Grace knows it, Ronald Reagan knows it, the FSLN *comandantes* know it, and, at a gut level, millions of Latin Americans know it.

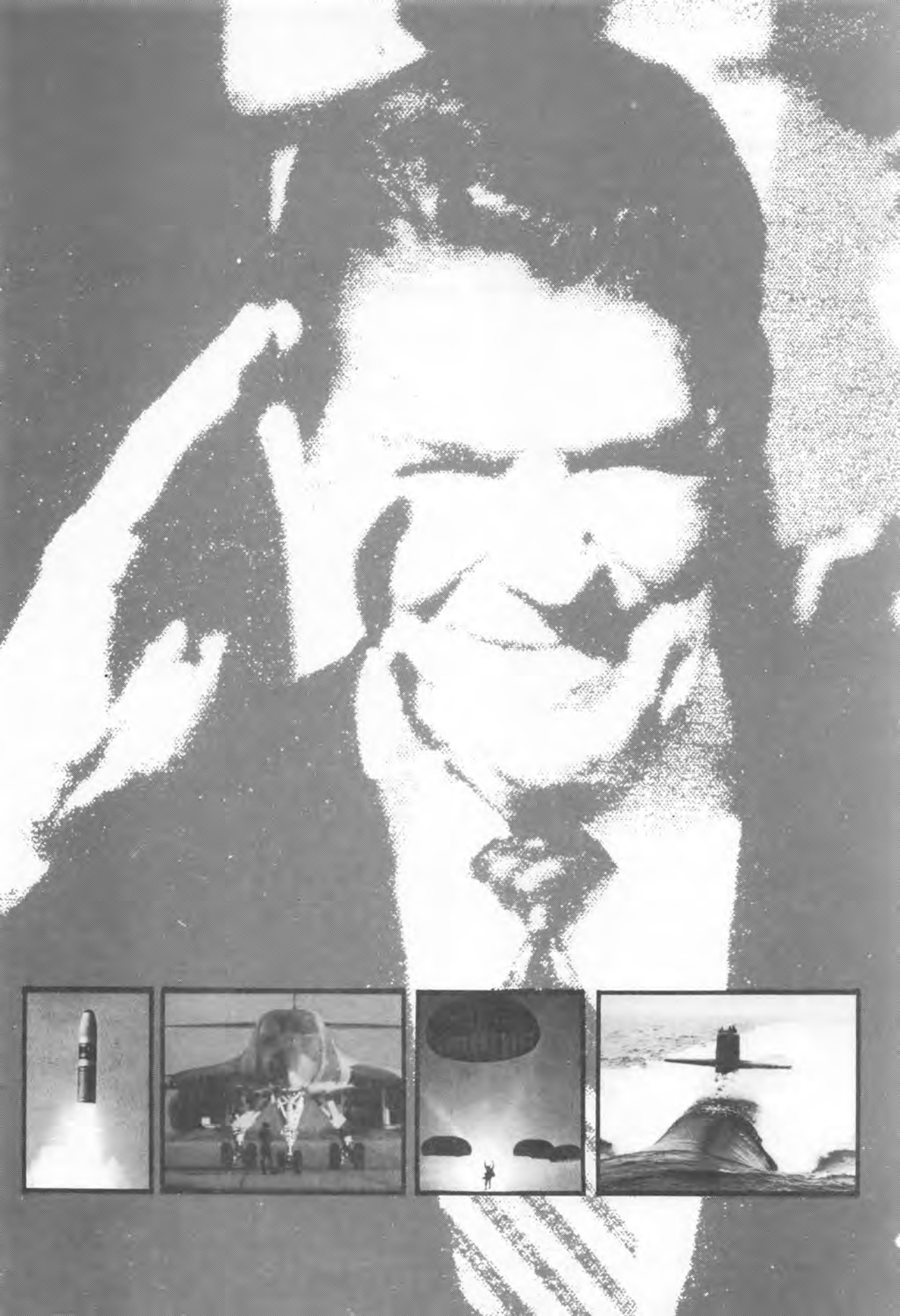
Nicaragua also challenges U.S. revolutionaries to

Workers in government-owned textile mill in Managua.

Photo: John Stark



examine afresh our assumptions about religion, the Christian theology of liberation, and its relationship to social class and the stages of a particular revolution. During the pluralistic, mixed-economy stage of Nicaragua's revolution, the radical clergy have fought shoulder to shoulder with the Sandinistas. Will they continue to do so if, and as, the revolution matures?



U.S. foreign policy and the world today

Interview with Mae Ngai of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)

The Philippines, Haiti, the arms race, South Africa — these are some of the issues that Mae Ngai discusses in the following interview conducted by editors of Forward. Her views represent those of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist). The interview was conducted in New York City at the end of February 1986.

What is your view of the Reagan administration's foreign policy, especially in light of the events in the Philippines and Haiti?

When Duvalier of Haiti and Marcos of the Philippines learned that they had lost the backing of the U.S., they knew their dictatorships had come to an end. The U.S. was heavily involved in engineering their escapes. Now Reagan and many political forces are congratulating themselves about how the U.S. has helped the cause of democracy in the world.

But their memories are rather short. It was U.S. support for these dictators that enabled them to reign so brutally for so long. The U.S. changed its position only *after* the people in Haiti and the Philippines had made it virtually impossible for Duvalier and Marcos to continue in power. What the U.S. was concerned about was not democracy, but in preventing the situations from becoming further "destabilized."

But the *way* that the U.S. handled these crises was more sophisticated than how it dealt with similar

challenges in the past, such as in Iran. This time, the U.S. did not get caught sticking with the old reactionaries and alienating the new forces. Rather, it worked to try to ensure that U.S. interests in Haiti and the Philippines would continue to be protected.

These events show that Reagan has refined his tactics, but we don't think his policies have changed in essence. We think he is still trying to pursue an aggressive foreign policy to regain U.S. global supremacy.

What do you think will happen now in the Philippines?

The overthrow of Marcos was a tremendous victory for the Filipino people. The millions who rose up to force Marcos out and put Corazon Aquino in power were showing their deep desire for democracy.

Although Marcos is now gone, the situation is still volatile. It remains to be seen what Aquino's government will do, especially now that millions of Filipinos have been activated and have high expectations. The U.S. is also very worried about the growing power of the revolutionary forces under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army. The Philippines is too vital to U.S. military and economic interests to risk any weakening in U.S. influence there.

We here in the U.S. must continue our struggle against U.S. interference in the Philippines and support the Filipino people's struggle for democracy and self-determination.

Do you think that the events mentioned above and the activity around arms control talks with the Soviets reflect a change in Reagan's foreign policy?

There has been no basic change. Reagan's foreign policy is still aimed at making the U.S. the number one superpower in the world. Reagan, with his arms buildup, including his "Star Wars" project, hopes to achieve military superiority over the Soviets. He also continues to threaten to send U.S. combat forces into the third world, such as in Nicaragua. The U.S. is now



Filipinos rise up to overthrow Marcos, February 1986.

the more aggressive of the two superpowers.

The present situation is especially dangerous because he has succeeded in rallying substantial portions of the U.S. ruling class around his aggressive foreign policy. He has also built an extensive social base of support for that policy. These give him considerable flexibility and power.

What do you think are the prospects for arms agreements between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. in the foreseeable future?

We may see some sort of arms agreement in the next several years since the current arms race is so costly for both sides. The military budgets of both the U.S. and Soviet Union are huge and wasteful. Neither side is really interested in peace, but both may want to make the arms race more orderly without jeopardizing their respective military advantages.

The Soviets would like to be able to devote more resources to their domestic economy, which is in trouble. Also, the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan is proving quite costly. These factors explain in part why

Gorbachev and Reagan meet in Geneva, November 1985.





Afghan village at Doubandi after attack by Soviet helicopters.

Gorbachev has advanced several dramatic proposals to control the arms race.

The U.S. government also has its own budget problems and is under pressure from the public to cut back on military expenses. Public sentiment strongly favors arms reductions. So it's possible that U.S. and Soviet negotiators may find some common ground. The key thing, however, is that the people have to continue to put pressure on the superpowers to get them to change their policies.

What is the League's view of the Soviet Union today? At one time you believed that capitalism had been restored there. In light of China's present view that the Soviet Union is a socialist country, has the League changed its position?

Let me just briefly answer the second part of your question first.

The League develops its views independently of the Chinese Communist Party or any other foreign country or party. We respect the views of communists in other countries, but our opinions are based on our

own analyses.

We have a study commission that is studying the class nature of the Soviet Union. That commission's work is not yet completed, so at this time the League has no formal position on the Soviet Union's social system. Nevertheless we are very critical of many of the Soviet Union's foreign and domestic policies.

We believe that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, like its earlier invasion of Czechoslovakia, is an act of overt aggression. We do not accept Soviet rationalizations for such actions. They say that their occupations of Eastern Europe and Afghanistan are simply defensive measures against Western imperialism and constitute "internationalist aid" in furthering the revolutions in those countries. But these claims are groundless.

First of all, the people of each country must make their own revolution. No genuine people's revolution is "imported." Secondly, even though U.S. imperialism meddles in Eastern Europe and in the Soviets' border areas, this does not justify invading a sovereign country. The presence of the Soviet Union in those regions far outweighs that of the U.S.

The Polish people's opposition to the Soviet Union has indigenous and historical causes which cannot be dealt with by pointing the finger at the U.S. and by armed occupation and intimidation. Likewise, the Afghanistan problem cannot be solved through an occupation by tens of thousands of Soviet troops.

The recent Soviet pitch to Marcos when the U.S. was abandoning him is further evidence of the Soviets' self-serving foreign policy. The Soviet Union quickly announced its acceptance of the legitimacy of the Marcos vote count and congratulated his "re-election." They also expressed sympathy for Marcos at the hands of what they characterized as U.S. bullying. But their opportunistic ploy collapsed when Marcos had to flee the Philippines.

Domestically the Soviet government maintains a bloated and repressive bureaucracy. Minority nationalities are restricted, and the democratic rights of the people are severely limited. In our view, a country that is socialist should not do these things, at least as we understand socialism.

Certainly the socialist society we seek to build in

The socialist society we seek to build would not carry out invasions of other countries and deny democracy to the people.

the U.S. would not carry out invasions of other countries and deny democracy to the people.

What is your opinion of the political changes in the Soviet Union?

The congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has just started so I can't comment on that, but it appears that Mikhail Gorbachev wants to implement a number of important changes in Soviet economic policies. He has begun to address some problems that have plagued the Soviet Union, including alcoholism among workers and lack of enthusiasm for work, slow growth, low productivity, bureaucracy, corruption, and a weak and unstable agricultural sector. The Soviet leadership is considering experimenting with less centralization of decision-making and the use of more market forces. It remains to be seen what the impact of these steps will be.

In the foreign policy arena, Gorbachev has not yet taken any drastic steps, although he has given a somewhat better appearance to Soviet foreign policy. For example, Gorbachev dropped some hints that he may be open to a political settlement in Afghanistan, and I've already mentioned the arms proposals.

There is ferment in the Soviet Union, and we will have to watch closely what will happen. We hope that the Soviet Union will turn its attention to improving the living conditions of its citizens, withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, and adopt a different policy in South-east Asia and Eastern Europe.

How does the League view the national liberation struggles going on in the world today? Does the League think the U.S. will directly intervene in Central America?

We support national liberation struggles against U.S. imperialism because we have the same enemy, U.S. monopoly capitalism.

Because U.S. imperialism recognizes its vital stake in the third world, it intervenes in those struggles. Spokesmen for U.S. imperialism have said that if revolution sweeps Central America, the repercussions will be felt through Mexico all the way into the U.S. These predictions are right to a certain extent.

We have to take Reagan's threats to intervene directly

in Central America seriously. He ordered the invasion of Grenada and is already conducting massive military operations on the border of Nicaragua. U.S. "advisers" are throughout Central America, and of course the contras in Nicaragua are completely bankrolled by the U.S.

At the same time, we should recognize that U.S. imperialism will send U.S. troops into combat in Central America only as a last resort. Some U.S. policy analysts believe that U.S. policies have been relatively successful. They believe that these policies have caused some problems for Nicaragua and have bolstered the government of El Salvador. The U.S. thinks it is achieving its objectives without the use of U.S. troops for the time being.

Progressives in the U.S. must build a powerful movement to oppose U.S. interference in Central America. We must build broadly and with sophistication since it is unlikely that the U.S. bourgeoisie will again engage in an undeclared war, as happened during the Viet Nam War, and allow a vigorous peace movement. Any U.S. invasion of Nicaragua would probably be preceded by a declaration of war or some form of legal restriction on domestic dissent. Once an invasion has begun, the U.S. will make it extremely difficult to protest. That is why it is imperative that activity to stop U.S. intervention in Central America be stepped up now.

What is the League's view regarding the situation in South Africa?

The struggle of black people in South Africa for the overthrow of apartheid and the establishment of black majority rule has intensified greatly over the last year. The Botha regime has used every trick in the book to try to quell the liberation struggle, but has failed.

The liberation struggle is developing in many different arenas, including in the black townships, among black workers and, increasingly, in military actions against the government. And as the struggle unfolds, it is becoming more organized and more coordinated.



U.S. Marines on joint U.S./Honduran/Salvadoran maneuvers.



South Africa 1985

A measure of the strength of the struggle is that the South African economy has recently begun to suffer. Some Western banks and corporations are pulling out of South Africa, not out of any support for the black masses, but out of fear that South Africa is no longer a safe place to make money.

The black people of South Africa will liberate themselves, but the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. can render valuable assistance. We in the U.S. must try to force the U.S. government to withdraw its support for apartheid. Our stand must be to respect the liberation struggle in South Africa and build support for it.

What is the League's relationship with China? What are the League's views of China's present domestic and international policies?

The League is an independent Marxist-Leninist organization. We receive no financial support from any foreign country or party, directly or indirectly. Neither the League nor its predecessor organizations were formed or encouraged to form by the Communist Party of China or any other group.

We understand that for a short time in the 1960s and 1970s China conducted extensive relations with many Marxist-Leninist organizations that formed in opposition to the line of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. These relations were part of the split in the international communist movement. In the United States, groups such as the Progressive Labor Party, the Revolutionary Union/Revolutionary Communist Party, and later the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) were a part of this. The League and its predecessor organizations, however, were not.

We believe that the communists of each country understand best the conditions of their own country. Their revolutionary struggle succeeds or fails on the basis of their own efforts and analysis. Communists therefore should respect the efforts of Marxist-Leninists in other countries and should not make sweeping pronouncements about the practice of other Marxist-Leninists. This is the attitude we take towards China today.

The Chinese people are trying to construct socialism according to their conditions and have been experimenting with many economic reforms. Many of these are new to the experience of socialist construction, and it will take some time to evaluate them. Some things are encouraging, such as the tremendous growth of the economy and improvement in the living standards of the people. Other aspects warrant some concern, such as the growth of corruption and bourgeois thinking. Overall, however, our opinion, based on study and first-hand reports, is that the situation in China has improved over the past several years.

With regard to its foreign policy, we believe China is playing a positive role in the world. It supports national liberation struggles, such as those of the Palestinians and South Africans. For example, during the Israeli siege of Lebanon, China gave the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) an extra million dollars in gold, a considerable sum for a developing country as poor as China. After the U.S. attacks on Nicaragua, China stepped up by several fold its trade with Nicaragua.

China opposes U.S. interference in Central America and elsewhere. It calls for the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and Vietnamese troops from



U.S. troops in Grenada, November 1983

Kampuchea. China also vigorously condemns the nuclear arms race.

At a time when most other countries are increasing their military budgets, China has actually cut its expenditures and is reducing the personnel in its standing military force by about 25%. This sets a positive example for other countries.

What is the League's view of Cuba?

We have always supported the Cuban revolution. Some people now in the League were among the first to go to Cuba in the 1960s in various work brigades. We believe the Cuban revolution was one of the great revolutions of this century, taking place on the doorstep of U.S. imperialism.

We condemn U.S. hostility towards Cuba and the refusal to develop normalized relations with the Cuban government. One of the demands in our political program calls for normalized relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

While we are critical of some aspects of Cuban foreign policy, we feel it is important to see the problems that

the U.S. and Soviet Union have created for Cuba. The U.S.'s unending hostility toward Cuba has led it to seek aid from the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union has gained a lot from this relationship. We are critical of the role of Cuban troops in Ethiopia who are objectively supporting the Mengistu regime's suppression of the Eritrean people's struggle. It is not in the interests of the people of Cuba to send its young people to fight and die in a foreign land against other oppressed peoples fighting for liberation. Cuba's one-crop economy and lack of industrialization are also due in part to Soviet pressure.

But we place much of the blame on the U.S. Under U.S. economic, political and military pressure, Cuba suffered severely and made the choice to seek aid from the only source open to it — the Soviet Union. That the Soviet Union had its own reasons for aid and exacted a price for its aid is to be expected. The most important thing for U.S. progressives to do is to demand that the U.S. end its attacks on Cuba and normalize relations.

What are the League's views of the Middle East?

The Middle East is the most volatile region in the world today. Civil war is destroying Lebanon. Israel continues to terrorize the people of Lebanon and deny the Palestinian people their homeland. War is still going on between Iran and Iraq.

People in the U.S. must condemn the U.S. government's policy of supporting Israeli aggression and terrorism and opposing the Palestinian people. The denial of a homeland for the Palestinian people is one of the root causes of the turmoil in the Middle East.

U.S. imperialism wants to control the region and deny the ability of the Arab people to control their own lands, which is why the U.S. tries to keep the area in upheaval. Because of the strategic location and natural resources of the Middle East, all the industrialized countries of the world, especially the two superpowers, are actively involved in the area. With so many different local forces and external powers involved, the situation is complex and dangerous.

Relatively speaking, the U.S. is now in a weakened position in the Middle East. The danger is that the

Progressives must demand that the U.S. end its attacks on Cuba and normalize relations.

U.S. will provoke conflicts or try to intervene in an effort to rebuild its position.

What is the League's view of terrorism?

We oppose terrorism. This past year a number of horrible terrorist acts have taken place that took the lives of many innocent people. Acts such as the hijacking of airliners, the *Achille Lauro*, or the airport attacks are contemptible, no matter what the avowed purpose. Such acts have been universally condemned, including by Yasser Arafat and the PLO, which makes a distinction between actions against military targets and innocent civilians.

In fact, several of these terrorist acts were aimed at discrediting the PLO and its efforts to find a solution for the Palestinian question. The PLO has been the target of terrorist acts by Israel, as with the bombing of its headquarters in Tunis. The PLO has also been attacked by Arab splinter groups, such as that of Abu Nidal, who is said to be responsible for the assassination of a number of PLO officials.

While opposing terrorism by individuals or small groups, we also oppose "state terrorism," such as that conducted every day by Israel against Lebanon and the Palestinians, or the U.S. against Nicaragua.

How do the League's views on the international situation differ with those of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), Line of March (LOM), and assorted Trotskyists?

I can only speak generally about some of the differences, but before I do I want to stress that the League's position is that all groups on the left, including those you mentioned, should try to work together when we can. At times we have unity, such as in opposing U.S. intervention in Central America or in supporting the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. The left needs to be more united and less sectarian in its practice.

Most groups on the left oppose U.S. imperialism's policies of militarism, intervention, subversion, anti-communism and anti-revolution. We should be able to work with one another around many issues and struggles.

Nevertheless, some major differences do exist. With

regard to the CPUSA, we do not agree with their strong support of the Soviet Union and whatever it does in the world, from the invasion of Afghanistan to interference in Poland. We believe the CPUSA should maintain a more independent line and oppose what clearly are not socialist acts.

The Line of March is more extreme in its pro-Sovietism. The LOM maintains that the Soviets should be even more aggressive in spreading their influence around the world. The LOM identifies the spread of socialism with the expansion of the power of the Soviet Union. The LOM calls for the increase of Soviet armaments, identifying them with the strength of "socialism" in the world.

Furthermore, the LOM belittles the importance and strength of the struggles of the third world. The LOM believes the third world cannot do much without relying on the Soviet Union and criticizes those who want to pursue an independent and self-reliant path. We do not agree with this view.

The LOM also believes it has a responsibility, even duty, to develop a "correct line" for other struggles. The LOM has done this for the Palestinian struggle, the Middle East as a whole, El Salvador and elsewhere, pointing to some forces as revolutionary forces and others as incorrect. The LOM seems to have come up with a class analysis of the domestic situation for just about every major struggle in the world. This is quite a feat, but one which is not based on reality and is sectarian and splittist. Doing this from here in the U.S., the LOM is guilty of a "left" form of great nation chauvinism, *i.e.*, that they know what is best for the third world.

The LOM also has the view that support of the Soviet Union should be an implicit, if not explicit, principle of unity for the anti-interventionist struggles in the U.S. and engages in sectarian maneuvers in order to have a "smaller but purer" movement. This is clearly wrong and we oppose it.

The League's view is that we should respect the struggles of the people of other countries and oppose foreign, especially imperialist, interference in them. Our responsibility is to make the revolution in the U.S., not to decide who is more revolutionary than whom in other countries. The left should strive to build the

The Line of March is guilty of a 'left' form of great nation chauvinism, *i.e.*, that they know what is best for the third world.

Opposition
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perialism's
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here . . .

broadest possible movement to oppose U.S. interference, aggression and intimidation of the third world, and oppose specific policies and threats as they arise.

There are many different Trotskyist groups, but they share some views. The Trotskyists generally belittle the national liberation movements under the guise of supporting "workers' revolutions." They do not support revolutions that are broadly national democratic in scope. For example, the Trotskyist Spartacist League calls for a "workers' revolution" for South Africa and attacks "non-proletarian" elements in the struggle. They deny the revolutionary power of the anti-apartheid, democratic movement now sweeping the country and actually attack the national democratic struggle.

The Trotskyist groups take similar positions on many of the struggles now taking place in the third world. Because they attack the mainstream of the world revolutionary struggle, they often play a destructive role under "leftist" rhetoric. Because of their slogan-mongering, the Trotskyists frequently make it difficult to build a broad movement against U.S. imperialism.

What does the League view as the internationalist tasks of the left and progressive forces in the U.S. today?

The left and progressive forces in the U.S. have an urgent responsibility to oppose the escalating danger of U.S. intervention abroad and its insane nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union. We need to build a broad movement against intervention, for peace, and against the threat of war.

We must take seriously the dangers of fascism and war. The aggressive posture of U.S. imperialism abroad affects us domestically. The strong social basis for Reaganism in the U.S. has provided a powerful backbone for Reagan's aggressive foreign policy. In turn, Reagan has used international developments to build up chauvinism and a right-wing climate in the U.S.

This does not mean that we should stop our efforts to change policy, or that our efforts have been in vain, since broad dissatisfaction with Reagan does exist and the opposition to his policies can suddenly spread. The student divestment movement is an example of this. But it does mean that Reagan and the right are in

a strong position, and there is continued danger of a further move to the right.

Any move to use U.S. troops in extended combat overseas will directly result in stronger repression at home. If the U.S. further pursues its interventionism, it will clamp down on popular forces at home. And by popular forces, we should be clear that this means not just the organized progressive forces, but the *social* forces that would be opposed to war, *i.e.*, the African American and other oppressed nationalities, sectors of the labor and working class movement, students and intellectuals, and women.

Therefore, it is necessary to see that the opposition to U.S. imperialism's aggressive foreign policies is a component part of the struggle to defend and expand democracy in the U.S. And likewise, the struggle to broaden democracy here, such as through the Jesse Jackson campaign, strengthens the social base which would oppose aggression.

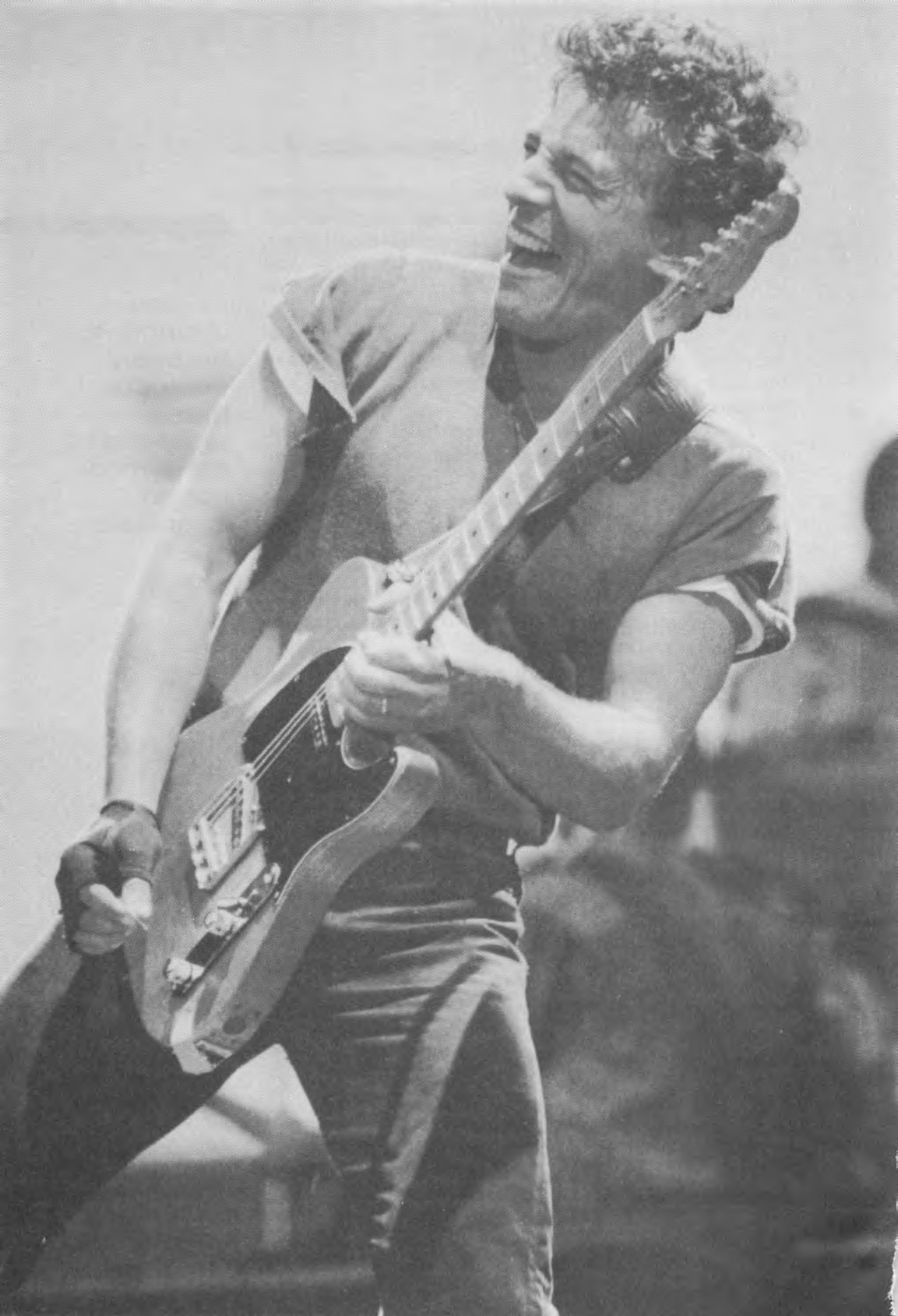
In this context we must see the fight against war and intervention as one front in the overall struggle against Reaganism and the right.

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tion to
aggression.

Newark, New Jersey, statewide rally against apartheid, November 9, 1985.

Unity Photo





Bruce Springsteen – Rockin' rebel in Reagan's U.S.A.

Joe Lambert

This country is dying.
What I mean to say is that what this country was, or thought it should be, is dying. And as much as Reagan may want to return to the "glory days" of big cars and cheap invasions, the golden era of U.S. imperialism is now history.

This decline is seen in the way that TV, film and music are gasping for air, for someone, or something to resuscitate the fading empire. Reagan's public relations image is the best example of this, the great resuscitator.

In 1985, the cultural industry's solution was to go back to the future. For the film industry, John Wayne was resurrected as Rambo, Sylvester Stallone's fearless grunter. This cartoon fascist's appeal to jingoism was a signal to the world that the U.S. was not only ready to forget the lessons of Viet Nam, but was willing and able to fight it again.

In music, the images of James Dean and Elvis Pres-

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**Who is the
real Bruce
Springsteen?
Is he a new
voice con-
cerned for
the working
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Nam period?**

ley were evoked in the orgy of fanfare surrounding Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the U.S.A.* album and tour. Because the publicity focused on Springsteen's patriotic imagery, some progressive people saw Springsteen tailing Reaganite xenophobia as the "Rambo of Rock."

But at the same time, Springsteen helped to usher in a whole wave of celebrity social concern as he began his tour in 1984 with large donations at each of his concerts to unions, food banks and other causes. His attacks on the cruel hoax of Reagan's "New Prosperity" during long speeches made at his concerts, his participation in the *Sun City* anti-apartheid record, and his growing outspoken concern about racism and right-wing nationalism, put him at odds with the "Rambo" mentality.

So who is the *real* Bruce Springsteen? If he is a new voice concerned for the working class, how do we explain his emergence as a major media figure in the era of Reaganomics? And if he is part of the media industry's attempt to divert the public to the blind patriotism of the pre-Viet Nam period, how can we explain the message of his concerts and music?

The rock 'n' roll rebel

Springsteen's popularity comes from many sources. For some it is his skill as a performer, writer and band leader. For others it is his celebratory rock anthems — along the standard lines of cruising down the highway, partying hard or girl-chasing. But most of all it is his ability to recreate in song the world of his own youth, and that of the vast majority of his audiences.

The style of performance and music, the thematic concerns, the language within his lyrics, even his dress, are all genuine representations of white working class youth. For most of his fans, he simply is telling it like it is, without compromising to the glossy slickness or lyrical vacuity of many, if not most, of today's rock stars.

Springsteen's working class persona grew from his own experiences. He was born in the small town of Freehold, New Jersey, in 1949. His father was a worker at various jobs, including a long stint as a bus driver. Like many working class kids in the industrial belt, Springsteen felt his options were limited; and he would

likely follow in his father's footsteps in a life of drudgery and exploitation.

He started playing in various small bands in his high school years as a way of dealing with the frustration and alienation he felt. And for the years following his graduation, Springsteen avoided the draft and focused all his efforts at becoming adept at guitar playing and song writing. He put together several bands, including one called Steel Mill, which toured California on a small nightclub circuit in 1970. His unique performance style and song writing ability gained him increasing recognition, and he was soon "discovered" by record producer John Hammond Sr. and signed his first recording contract with CBS in 1973.

Springsteen's music

Springsteen says he traces his musical influences to the straight ahead rock 'n' roll of the '50s, particularly Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley, the early heavy blues-oriented work of the Rolling Stones and the Animals in England, and the folk influences of Bob Dylan. The bands and individuals he hung out with were also heavy into Motown artists like the Temptations, Martha and the Vandellas, and Marvin Gaye.

His presentation, and the strengths of his E Street Band, reflect those influences. Saxophonist Clarence Clemons is Springsteen's main musical front man, whose blazing solos carry the same punch as the great heavyweight of R&B sax, David "Fathead" Newman. The rhythm section, Max Weinberg on drums, Garry Tallent on bass and Danny Federici on organ, can pull off complex arrangements or wall-of-sound tightness as called for. Pianist Roy Bittan has provided Springsteen a broad range of influences to draw from, including jazz, country and western, even classical elements as well. Finally, Little Steven Van Zandt, of *Sun City* fame, always provided Springsteen with the power guitar leads and skillful production sense to give the band its rock 'n' roll signature.

But what stands out, as poet/playwright/social critic



Chuck Berry — major influence on Springsteen

Springsteen's style of performance and music, thematic concerns, and lyrics are all genuine representations of white working class youth.

Amiri Baraka has written (*SPIN Magazine*, November 1985), is Springsteen's "ability to translate both the form and some of the content of the blues. Springsteen is an American shouter, like the black country blues shouters from Leadbelly on, with an ear to James Brown and Wilson Pickett." The full-throated shouting, passionate and honest in its powerful delivery, has become Springsteen's musical forte, most evident in the *Born in the U.S.A.* title track, and his contributions to "We are the World" and "Sun City."

He divides his concerts, and to some extent his albums, between two styles. The ballads, about the degradation and desperation of working people, are often accompanied with his pitches for political activism and social consciousness, and stories about the closing of plants or laid-off, hungry workers.

*I had a job, I had a girl
I had something mister in this world
I got laid off down at the lumber yard
Our love went bad, times got hard
Now I work down at the carwash, where all
it ever does is rain
Don't you feel like you're a rider on a downbound
train*

"Downbound Train"
from *Born in the U.S.A.*

His more upbeat, rocking numbers are aimed at complete release, blowing off the steam that builds up after each day of drudgery. Exploding with the energy of a man possessed, Springsteen hammers out these songs in the second half of his concerts until late into the night. His tireless performance and marathon concerts have earned Springsteen recognition as the finest rock performer around.

Rock 'n' roll politics

Springsteen's attraction exists in the general context of rock as a musical form. People listen to rock because of its general stance; it is youth music, danceable and iconoclastic. Rock music style and concerns often portray youth and the alienated as society's heroic underdogs. Since the time it became the culture of the youth



The original E Street Band (left to right) Miami Steve Van Zandt, Max Weinberg, Danny Federici, Springsteen, Clarence Clemons, Roy Bittan, Garry Tallent.

rebellion in the '60s, rock 'n' roll has been seen by its fans as providing the means for finding purpose, redemption and salvation from their alienation.

Rock traces its roots to African American music. It emerged from country blues turned rockabilly and swing, and from various urban blues forms. In fact rock 'n' roll in the early and mid-'50s was synonymous with rhythm and blues and almost all its performers were Black. Greats such as B.B. King, Arthur Crudup, Bo Diddley and Little Richard wrote and performed the rock standards which would become the first million sellers of Elvis Presley and other white rock performers who appeared in the late '50s.

Having come from the people and their folk traditions, rock has always had a positive aspect of being linked to the desire for a democratic culture, where common people have creative control and access to their cultural expressions. Many rock musicians, like Springsteen, see their music as the best means of expressing a personal or social viewpoint in an accessible way, a way that their voices will be heard and make a difference.

But rock also is used as a means of escape, and

the counterculture surrounding the rock scene often glorifies drugs and a self-indulgent lifestyle. It is the pleasure-seeking aspect of rock that has made it a huge part of the American leisure industry.

For the commercial rock artist, technical innovation and artistic integrity are allowed only within tightly controlled parameters. The most important thing is a "hit," and record companies pay their Artists and Recording people hundreds of thousands of dollars to "discover" songs and artists who can produce this "magical" quality. For obvious reasons, the A&R people tend to be conservative and formulaic in their tastes, wanting to ride on popular trends rather than take a chance on an unknown product, regardless of their skill. This is why for each superstar or hit song, there are at least a dozen spinoffs.

If by chance an artist finds a market, a well-tested system of promotion and distribution will invest and support them. But because this process is heavily monopolized, even the successful artist finds his work constantly compromised. The economic status and interests of the record company and producing moguls preclude

Springsteen with members of Steelworkers Local 1397 in Pennsylvania. Springsteen donated \$10,000 to the union food bank.



risk-taking or sponsoring artists whose appeal runs counter to the prevailing political climate. In the long run, bucking formula and established ideas usually leads to being outcast and ignored.

Who's the boss?

Springsteen discovered in his own career how resisting the market strategies of the record companies leads to rapid demise. At the beginning of his career, for example, Springsteen refused to produce singles of appropriate length for radio air-play. He insisted on playing in small nightclubs, where he could maintain the intimacy with his audience that he felt was an essential part of his music. Because this did not promote rapid record sales, CBS basically ignored his second album, refusing to pay for even the most basic promotional expenses.

Were it not for his skill as a concert performer, Springsteen, like many emergent artists before him, would have faded into obscurity. The critical acclaim given his concerts not only saved Springsteen, but helped to create one of the largest promotional efforts in rock history. With the release of the *Born to Run* album in 1975, Springsteen made the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines in the same week. The overblown hype, however, actually led to a critical backlash as fans and critics were turned off by the media glut. Springsteen was pushed out of the limelight almost as quickly as he had entered it.

According to his biographers, Springsteen came out of these experiences with an even firmer commitment to avoid the traps the record industry would make for him. He sued for and won control over his production contract in 1978. His next albums, *Darkness on the Edge of Town* and *The River*, were less commercially (in terms of radio play) accessible than *Born to Run*; and *Nebraska* was totally outside of commercial standards. *Nebraska*, a haunting portrait of workers depressed and driven to desperate actions, featured Springsteen on solo guitar and harmonica off his original home recordings. Springsteen also demanded the finest in concert sound, so even though his concerts expanded to large halls and arenas, he attempted to maintain the "feel" of the nightclub performance with its close

Record companies do not want to sponsor artists whose appeal runs counter to the prevailing political climate.

Springsteen's music is limited to the alienation and material conditions of a mainly white sector of the working class.

interaction between audience and performer.

Springsteen's commitment to maintain the essential spirit of his music with as little compromise as possible made him in the eyes of his fans the consummate maverick, a genuine rock 'n' roll rebel. So when *Born in the U.S.A.* was released in 1984, hundreds of thousands of fans already viewed Springsteen as his own "Boss."

Springsteen's message

From his first album, Springsteen has maintained a working class rebel persona. The tough, sharp street rap lyrical stance of *Greetings from Asbury Park* was mixed with a funky rhythm style that punctuated a "view from the bottom" perspective.

*With my blackjack and jacket and hair slicked sweet
Silver star studs on my duds like a Harley in heat
When I strut down the street, I could hear its
heart beat*

*The sisters fell back and said "Don't that man
look pretty"*

"Saint in the City"
from *Greetings* ...

His early characters want a way out of their alienation and oppression, even for a single night. Their struggle to achieve some kind of liberation, through driving fast cars, or sex, or the power of rock 'n' roll, is always daring, if not always triumphant.

Springsteen returns to this romanticized theme throughout all his work, although his perspective has broadened and matured over the years. On the *Born to Run* lp, the characters have moved out of their adolescence, and the opportunity actually to break away from their parents, their small towns, and find happiness seems possible.

*Baby this town rips the bones from your back
It's a death trap, it's a suicide rap
We gotta get out while we're young
Cause tramps like us, baby we were born to run*
Title track from *Born to Run*

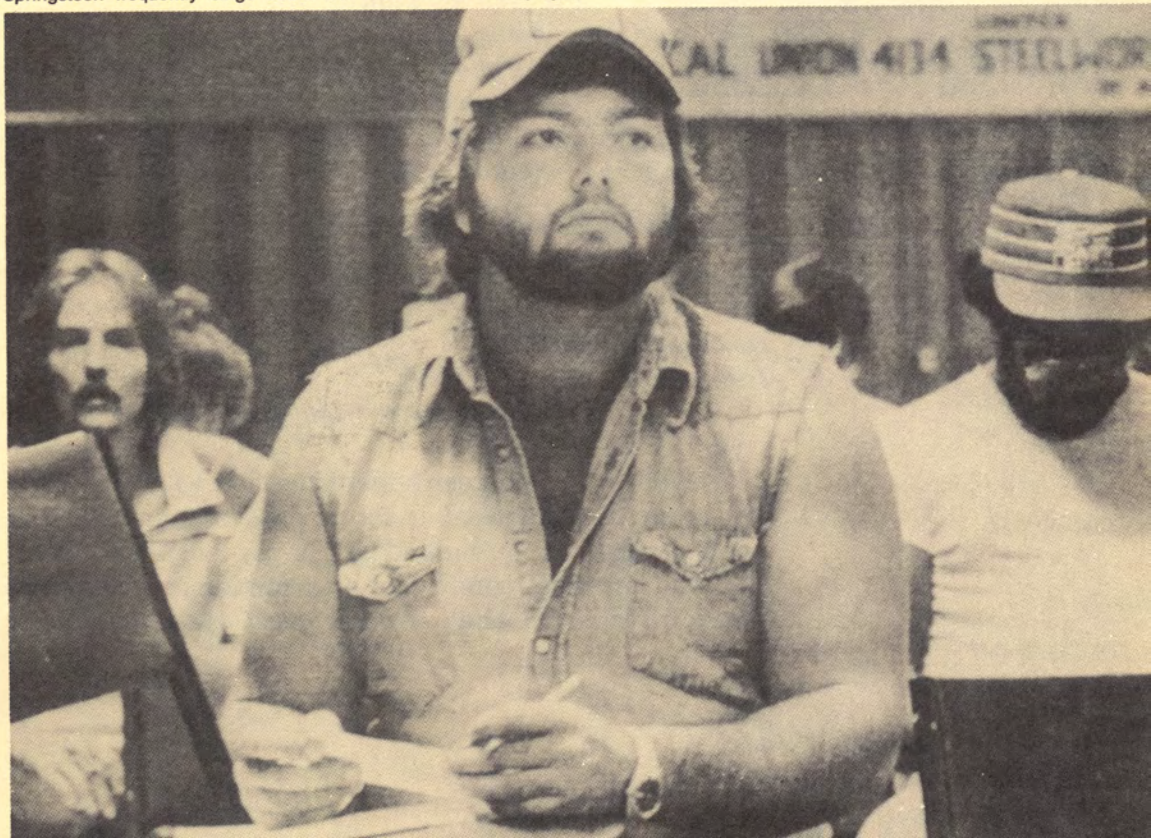
But Springsteen came to realize that his own ability to escape from the mills and factories, from the life of a worker, was a rare exception. By *The Darkness on the Edge of Town* and *The River* lps, his characters have become adults, and what dreams they have are buried underneath the pain of reality.

*I got a job working construction for the
Johnstown Company
But lately there ain't been much work on
account of the economy
Now all them things that seemed so important
Well, mister they vanished right into the air*
Title track from *The River*

In the vein of American blues, the people that inhabit Springsteen's songs use what they can to survive, to keep their dignity against the odds. If they can only grasp for a dream, then that's what they will do.

*I've done my best to live the right way
I get up every morning and go to work each day*

Springsteen frequently sings about the lives of the unemployed.



But your eyes go blind and your blood runs cold . . .
(Chorus)

*The dogs on main street howl, 'cause they understand,
If I could take one moment into my hands
Mister, I ain't a boy, no, I am a man,
And I believe in a promised land.*

“Promised Land”

from *Darkness on the Edge of Town*

With the *Born in the U.S.A.* lp, Springsteen continued his concern for the angry, downtrodden worker. And the progression from an emphasis on the language and locality of the Jersey street kid, to the national scope implied in the title, is a reflection of his broader political perspective. The title cut, for example, focuses on the self-destruction of a Viet Nam veteran whose life has been twisted not by the forces of the local plant, but by the forces of an entire society that led to fighting a useless war.

*Got in a little hometown jam so they put a
rifle in my hand
Sent me off to a foreign land to go and kill
the yellow man . . .
Come back home to the refinery
Hiring man says “son if it was up to me”
Went down to see my V.A. man*

*He said “son don't you understand now . . . ”
Down in the shadow of the penitentiary
Out by the gas fires of the refinery
I'm ten years burnin' down the road
Nowhere to run ain't got nowhere to go*

Born in the U.S.A.

I was born in the U.S.A.

Title track from *Born in the U.S.A.*

For all of Springsteen's identification with the working class, his progressive sentiments are limited. His words and music are limited to the psychological alienation and material conditions of a predominantly white sector of the industrial working class. He romantically



Springsteen played to sold-out audiences at every stop in his 44-city North American tour in 1984-85.

sees people as either victim or outlaw, struggling for dignity and self-worth, but with little direction.

The problems with this kind of perspective are evidenced by glaring weaknesses in an understanding of racism and sexism. In "Crush on You" from *The River* lp he refers to an Asian woman as "a Hong Kong special," and many of his descriptions of New York Puerto Ricans and other Latinos in his early albums are almost exclusively in "street gang" or "Latin lover" stereotypes.

But most of the chauvinism is more subtle, and reflects a perspective common among many progressive whites in this society. There is a recognition of some of the cultural and political contributions of Black and other Third World people, but there is a tendency to downplay the special oppression they face. For Springsteen's work, this weakness is seen in his inability to address the particular situation and concerns of minorities, or create a musical style which demonstrates an understanding of Black influences on contemporary culture in the U.S. As a result, his music and message has little appeal to Black people or other people of color.

Springsteen in Reagan's America

At many of his concerts, Springsteen speaks of his disappointment that the U.S. is not living up to the promise of its historic ideals. He speaks with passionate idealism about a democratic tradition which has never truly existed in this country. In doing so, he makes a noble attempt to give the U.S. flag and patriotic symbolism some progressive context, but this attempt also plays into the right-wing chauvinism which increasingly permeates American culture.

The media was more than happy to latch on to this imagery and present Springsteen as the "Rambo of Rock." To some extent, the personas are similar. Rambo is the broken down vet, who lashes out against the Washington bureaucrats who kept U.S. soldiers from winning the Viet Nam War and earning the respect of their country. Springsteen's persona strikes out



against the government which has abandoned the common man and stifled the American dream. And while Rambo wants to strike at the external enemies of the U.S., Springsteen is presented as part of the forces who see rebuilding the U.S. from the inside.

In this context, Springsteen's weaknesses become much more serious. Failure of Springsteen to break completely with the media's "Born in the U.S.A." image could leave him as an unconscious promoter of dangerous, anti-working class views in society. Patriotism in the context of Reagan's America means racism, means warmongering, means anti-communism, means union-busting.

But Springsteen may already be starting to make the break. In one of his final concert appearances in Los Angeles in early October 1985, he made a point of addressing the danger of blind patriotism, whether it be by a Russian soldier in Afghanistan or a U.S. soldier in Nicaragua. He confronted a resurgence of the glorification of war as represented by Rambo, and for the first time did a rendition of Edwin Starr's popular song, "War" ("What is it good for, absolutely nothing!"). And on *The Making of Sun City* video he made a point of addressing how the struggle against South African

The closing of factories — a key theme in many of Springsteen's ballads.



apartheid is linked to the struggle against racism here.

The rise in social consciousness, best exemplified by the growth of the anti-apartheid and student movements in the last year, has caused many celebrities to take a more active political stance. Jackson Browne's and Martin Sheen's militant activism around the Central America issue, the many mainstream artists represented in *Sun City*, and the growing political slant of the Springsteen rock peer, John Cougar Mellencamp, and the newcomer populist rockers like The Long Riders and Green and Red are only a few examples.

Springsteen has a dream we all share of a promised land, where exploitation and oppression are replaced by dignity and equality. But to reach this land, we must define clear alternatives to Reagan's fading empire.

This country is dying.

*There's a dark cloud rising from the desert floor
I packed my bags and I'm heading straight
into the storm*

*Gonna be a twister to blow everything down
That ain't got the faith to stand its ground.*

"The Promised Land"

from *Darkness on the Edge of Town*

Failure of Springsteen to break completely with the media's "Born in the USA" image could leave him an unconscious promoter of dangerous anti-working class views.

Artists United Against Apartheid, which included a wide spectrum of progressive musicians, cut the *Sun City* album and video.



Continuing discussion on the history of the CP(M-L)

In Forward issue #4, Carl Davidson, once a member of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) (CPML), contributed his analysis of the demise of that organization. Two other former members of the CPML have responded to Davidson with their own perspective, contained in "Dogmatism, Social-Democracy and the Destruction of the CPML," which is printed below.

D. Wayne was a founding member of the October League (M-L) and a leading member of the CPML auto commission. J.R. Hammond was elected to the CPML Central Committee at the Second Party Congress and was a member of the steel commission.

Davidson continued his assessment of the CPML and the current tasks of Marxist-Leninists in a talk given in several cities in 1985. Parts of that speech also follow.

Dogmatism, social-democracy and the destruction of the CPML

**J.R. Hammond and
D. Wayne**

In the January 1985 issue of *Forward*, Carl Davidson developed some views on the struggles which led to the disintegration of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist). The dust of that dissolution having settled, we agree that it's time for Marxist-Leninists to sum up the lessons. The CPML was one of the largest communist organizations to

emerge out of the '60s, an organization which had developed fairly deep roots in the working class and in minority communities. A clear understanding of how it came to an untimely end should help keep others from repeating its errors.

Davidson's view of this struggle, however, reflected a poor understanding of what was primary and what was secondary. We believe it was the inability of the CPML's leadership to understand the mass line and the relationship between theory and practice that was at the heart of the organization's destruction. To understand how this inability led to a series of irresolvable struggles it's necessary to briefly review the CPML's development, its political line and its organizational structure. Rather than doing an in-depth analysis of every major event and document, we wish to focus on what we view as the primary

errors in theory and methodology.

The formation of the October League (ML) in 1972 (the predecessor of the CPML), and its subsequent growth as a national organization served as a rallying point for many Marxist-Leninists who had developed in the struggles of the '60s. We threw ourselves into numerous areas of work, many of which were new to us. It's important to remember that we possessed no roadmaps; we had only the general guidelines of Marxism-Leninism.

Rich internal life

While our early organizational structure was fairly weak and loose, our internal political life was rich. Internal bulletins were filled with the views and summations of rank and file comrades, and in the main, a thoroughly democratic approach of "seeking truth from practice" prevailed. Yet from the beginning there were problems with dogmatism, which led to ultra-leftism. Most of our comrades, and virtually all of our leadership, came to Marxism from intellectual backgrounds. It was much easier to define reality according to preconceived (and often poorly understood) theories, than to develop theories from reality.

As our work expanded, the need for organizational structure increased, and a political center and Standing Committee were established. Our concepts of Party organization were based almost entirely on a weak understanding of the Bolshevik model, with little consideration for the conditions here. So it's not surprising that more and more of the organization's political life and resources were given over to the center. By 1977, our early democratic ways had disappeared. Political and organizational structure became highly overcentralized, our bulletins contained only the views of the leadership, and comrades in the various areas of work were often denied direct communication with each other. Work was not summed up by those doing it, but by comrades

in the center who were far removed from it. Differences of opinion became equated with "bourgeois vs. proletarian lines."

For the most part this went unchallenged. We knew our leadership was dedicated (and they were), and our organization was growing and seemed to be developing. It was in this context that the Founding Congress of the CPML was held in 1978.

CPML program

The CPML's founding documents, the Political Report and Program, showed a good political understanding of the general features of American capitalism. But the analysis of current conditions was characterized by dogmatism and idealism. We severely overestimated the extent of capitalism's decay and the level of mass consciousness. The Political Report found the following quote from Stalin to be applicable: "The masses of the people have not yet reached the stage when they are ready to storm the citadel of capitalism, but the idea of storming it is maturing in the minds of the masses." Thus, forces which should have been viewed as allies were placed in the camp of our enemies. Reformist trade union leaders, for example, were viewed as the "most dangerous," and were to receive the "main blow." We set ourselves on an ultra-left path of isolation from the real struggles of the people.

By 1979, the comrades in the field were beginning to understand and sum up the serious problems in our work which this analysis had led to. A rank and file revolt on the political and organizational fronts was fomenting. Politically, dogmatism and sectarianism were being rejected. As a result our mass work began to surge ahead in a manner unknown since the earliest days of the October League. This was especially true in areas of concentration such as auto, steel and the Afro-American work. In these areas comrades began to throw off the bureau-

cratic stranglehold, took control of the work and established functioning networks and commissions. We were once again beginning to play leading roles in important struggles. For the first time, CPML cadre were developing theory from the actual conditions of the American class struggle, rather than following a dogmatic line based on books and formulas.

Bureaucratic errors

Unfortunately, the leadership was so mired in bureaucracy that they were unable to consolidate these gains. Rather than applying the mass line and using this impetus to build functioning democratic-centralism, they attempted to squelch the struggles. When the struggles grew too strong, the leadership simply stayed on the sidelines. It was under these conditions that a major debate about the relevance of Marxism-Leninism began to unfold within the Standing Committee (SC). Although the changing orientation at the base sparked this debate, the SC's discussion was isolated from the real struggles being waged by our cadre.

The report of Dan Burstein, *The Call* editor, to the Central Committee in the spring of 1979 was the opening salvo. (*The Call* was the CPML's newspaper.) This report was a rejection of Marxism-Leninism on the part of Burstein and the half of the SC which united with him. They saw the failure of their own dogmatism as the failure of Marxism-Leninism. The other half of the SC, the "left" faction under the leadership of CPML Chairman Michael Klonsky, saw this developing social-democratic tendency as the main danger facing the Party. Therefore, they viewed the defense of the general principles of Marxism-Leninism as their main task. Were Burstein's views to reach the ranks, the "left" feared these ideas would tear the organization asunder.

"Left" vs. right

Both factions continued to ignore

the major concerns of the cadre and the real advances taking place in our work. Instead they focused full attention on their own viewpoints. To make matters worse, they attempted to hide the debate from the rank and file! As late as the fall of 1980, many comrades knew of the split in the SC only through rumours.

As the leadership failed to respond to the needs and advances of the organization, the question of internal democracy became a critical issue. The confidence of the cadre was being destroyed. These problems were intensified by a serious tactical blunder of the "left" faction. They believed that allowing an open debate on the questions raised by the social-democratic faction would lead to confusion and vacillation. They concentrated their efforts on preventing this from taking place. This lack of confidence in the rank and file was a slap in the face to many comrades.

Instead of an organized debate, the very questions they didn't want addressed were spread through rumours and informal contacts. The "left's" resistance intensified and the struggle grew more sharp and bitter. The right used this to attack the concept of democratic-centralism and gain sympathy for their views. Organizational paralysis and disintegration grew.

Need for debate

Rank and file comrades, particularly those in the more advanced concentrations, were becoming increasingly alarmed. An organized opposition to the SC deadlock began to develop. This included some non-SC members of the Central Committee. As this force stood with neither the "left" nor the right SC factions, it became known as the "center." Containing a broad range of views, it soon came to represent the majority of the rank and file comrades. Its basis of unity was the desire for an open debate and a functional organization.

At this point it is important to draw

a major lesson from the unfolding struggle. Once questions arise and are seen as significant by a major section of a Marxist-Leninist organization, they must be confronted in an open and timely manner. This is true even — perhaps especially — if they question the basic tenets of that organization's existence.

The "left" faction in the CPML saw an open debate as a no-win situation. They thought it the "wrong" debate, in which cadre would become hopelessly confused.

It may have been the wrong debate, but it had to be addressed. We believe that the majority of our cadre would have rejected social-democracy. The "left's" fear of this debate exposed their lack of confidence in CPML cadre. They became trapped by the methods of commandism upon which they had relied.

"Center" vs. "left"

The center, on the other hand, saw many confused comrades who, only a few months before, had been staunch Marxist-Leninists. It took the position of no taboo subjects; it believed that in an open and organized debate, the rightist arguments could be defeated in the course of correcting the organization's real problems. The "left" confused the center's support for democracy with support for social-democracy, and this confusion led them to increase their opposition to democratic reforms. These tactics added fuel to the fire and opened the door wider for the rightist attack.

For the center, the main thrust had become the democratic reformation of the internal organization. Many of the questions over the direction of the mass work had been resolved in our day-to-day practice; we had been correcting this work for almost two years. The inability of the "left" to deal with the issue of democracy, and the right's ability to seize this opening, played a key role in disrupting the rectification. It was, perhaps, the basic issue which

separated the "left" and the center, and the issue upon which the liquidationism of the right made its greatest gains.

A different approach to unity had emerged on the part of the "left" and the center. The "left" believed it could maintain unity only by preventing an "incorrect" debate; the center viewed this as arrogant bureaucratic maneuvering. The center believed it could maintain unity through an open debate and winning over wavering comrades; the "left" viewed this as a cover for rightism. Perhaps imbedded in these views are basic conceptions of the Party: a view based on monolithic unity where centralism is stressed, versus a view of unity based on a voluntary association where democracy is stressed. We believe that during periods of bourgeois legality the second view is most appropriate.

With all these questions in the air it began to appear that the SC deadlock was going to doom the Party. For over a year, the leadership had been unable to call the Second Congress. In a last-ditch attempt to save the organization a number of Central Committee members, including some on the SC, organized an Emergency Conference early in 1981.

New leadership emerges

At the Emergency Conference, the entire Central Committee (CC) was removed and a new leadership was elected. This included a number of previous CC members. The removal of the CC reflected anger and frustration over the inability of the leadership to guide the Party in rectification. But this move also led to the further disruption of the organization.

At the same time, there was hope among many in the rank and file that things could now move forward. Over the next several months the Congress was organized, with the mass work summed up in Congress documents. But in reality the CPML was already in a process of growing disintegration. Many saw the Congress as a final show-

down, rather than a time to pick up the pieces and move ahead. By now the majority of the SC had resigned from the organization and didn't even attend. Although the center won most of the votes on organizational and political matters, it turned out to be an empty victory. The remaining "left" and right factions were getting ready to leave the Party. The struggle had become so bitter that all sides had used sectarian and anti-democratic methods of struggle. The new Central Committee was largely inexperienced, consisting mostly of cadre from secondary leadership positions in the districts.

Dissolution sets in

Thus, a number of major problems now confronted the CPML organizationally and politically. Neither the "left" nor the right had any intention of following democratic-centralism. Both saw themselves as losers, and rather than unite behind a new majority, both left the CPML over the next four-month period. When the old SC quit they simply walked away; there was no orderly transition of power or responsibility. The lines of communication between cities was largely disrupted, and there was no one to help break in new people with national responsibilities.

Even more significantly, the Party no longer had real meaning to its best organizers. It had ceased to play a role in guiding their work. Cadre were now faced with the choice of pursuing their mass work (which was going very well), or putting time and effort into rebuilding commissions, districts and units. There was a general anti-organizational reaction, a rightist disregard for collective effort and a disillusionment which built upon its own energies. Entropy had taken hold, and this situation led fairly quickly to the CPML's complete unraveling. Although *The Call* was put out for another year (with the help of the Revolutionary Workers' Headquarters), the structure continued to spiral

downward with more and more cadre dropping away. Eventually only a few districts were active on any meaningful level; these took on the characteristics of local collectives. In other cities a handful of active people remained with no organization. The demoralization was as deep as our previous illusions had been high.

Understand lessons

Many of our comrades remain bitter over these events and the earlier struggles which led to them. Yet most remain active in the struggle for social change and most retain a Marxist world view. For their sake, as well as the sake of those comrades who are emerging out of the struggles of today, it is important to understand this history.

We believe that the CPML was destroyed because those responsible for summing up the organization's work, for developing theory and strategy, had been isolated from the Party's front-line struggles. This isolation led to errors of both rightism and ultra-leftism, as they attempted to fit our mass experience into preconceived formulas. The right fought to discard the baby with the bathwater; the "left" couldn't see how filthy the bathwater had become.

If the scientific socialism of Marxism-Leninism is ever to become a real force in this country, more than mere lip service will have to be paid to the concept of *democratic-centralism*. Strategy and theory must be based on the real world and those who are fighting to change it. The death of the CPML proves that arrogance and self-delusion lead only to defeat.

The CPML and the tasks of Marxist-Leninists today

Carl Davidson

My topic is what happened to the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist (CPML), and the tasks of Marxist-Leninists today.

I believe this topic is important to discuss because the CPML represented, in many ways, some of the best of a generation of young people who came to political consciousness in the mass revolts of the 1960s.

The 1960s was a tremendously positive experience in our lives and the life of the country. Millions of people rose up in righteous rebellion against war, racism and the suppression of democracy. Thousands rallied to the cause of revolution and socialism, and some of these joined or organized communist organizations.

The story of the CPML is also a story of this generation. In this sense, it cannot be understood and *should not be judged* outside the context of its time.

Our movement began in the 1960s, at the height of the postwar prosperity. The corporate liberal circles of the ruling class were in charge. Many believed that the future was full of promise for major reforms and changes in our country and around the world.

But by 1977, when the CPML was formed, the country had hit the hard rocks of economic recession, the retreat of the liberals and the rise of the conservative right. The left movement had also been weakened by over ten years of repression, including assassinations and the organized disruptions of the Red Squads and the FBI's

COINTELPRO operations.

By this time, a fundamental redrawing of our tactics, especially those developed during the upsurge experience of the 1960s, was long overdue. In fact developing an all-sided tactical program is part and parcel of what it means to build a revolutionary party.

But the CPML pushed ahead and declared itself the party without having accomplished this and other tasks. It claimed the title of vanguard leadership of the working class without having won it in real life. This was wrong, and the events that have taken place since then have proved it to be wrong.

Still, having made this declaration, we were faced with the need to make it come true. In doing so, we painted an unrealistic and idealistic scenario of what we expected to happen in the next few years.

Errors

The picture we put forward was that there were tens of thousands of advanced workers "standing on the doorstep" of our party. We believed "propaganda was decisive" in reaching out to these forces — thus requiring work around our newspaper and other literature to be the center of organizing factory cells.

To present ourselves as revolutionaries, we believed we had to aim our main blow at the reform forces, especially the more dynamic and militant reform leaders in the unions. Through various exposure campaigns, we hoped to distinguish ourselves from them and the CPUSA revisionists. In this way, the advanced workers would see the light and quickly join our ranks.

The plans we drew up on the basis of this posture and scenario were, to say the least, overly ambitious. We set up an over-extended press, publishing house and system of bookstores. We set up our own mass organizations with us in the leadership. We tried to build a communist youth organization that we hoped would soon be three or four times

the size of our party.

It was amazing that we accomplished as much positive work as we did. Our newspaper, *The Call*, came out weekly for several years. It had a top circulation of about 12,000.

Our members were involved in a wide variety of mass struggles on the local level. We began to secure some positions of leadership in the unions and other organizations. In many ways, this was a tribute to the persistence, good sense and fighting spirit of the vast majority of our rank and file.

But despite this good work, we were unable to meet our expectations and goals. There were many disappointments and setbacks.

A crucial factor was that the central leadership of the CPML repeatedly failed to concretely solve the real problems arising in the actual work of the local cadres. We became separated from this work. While we in the center worked long and hard on our newspaper and publications, this became a substitute for giving guidance to the mass struggles. Being separated in this way rendered our general pronouncements about the work abstract and bereft of real understanding.

Also crucial were failures in democratic centralism, in a dynamically functioning internal life. This combined with unfulfilled expectations produced a vacuum of real leadership. In frustration, many would drift away to make their contributions to the movement elsewhere. Some became confused and bitter, and others would be won over to various incorrect views.

Ultraleftism and rightism

By the time of its second congress, the CPML had ceased to function as an effective national organization. Only about 400 of nearly 1,000 members remained. While some intellectuals left because their ideas changed, many workers and minority nationality comrades left as the liquidationist line appeared.

We did not see that making revolution would be a much longer and more drawn-out process. In addition to wrong assessments of the right, we also almost totally ignored the social democrats. In this way, we failed in that aspect of party building that requires of anyone claiming to be the vanguard that they put forward a strategic and tactical alternative to social democracy and revisionism that is both clear and viable.

For the most part, these were "left" errors. By this I mean they overestimated the consciousness of the masses and the possibilities in the objective conditions. We tended to substitute our subjective desires for what was actually possible. We especially overestimated ourselves and our capabilities.

In the beginning we had waged a phony war against rightism. But while doing so, we also grossly underestimated the danger of the real right within the movement, especially the social democrats. These forces and tendencies could not be declared out of existence. They were reinforced by our country's status as an imperialist superpower. Through the superprofits plundered from the third world, the U.S. ruling class was able to maintain national inequalities and certain concessions to sectors of the U.S. working class.

This underestimation proved fatal, especially as our members became disgusted with ultraleft errors. A faction formed in our leadership that openly rejected ML and embraced social democracy. Some in the faction had previously been the most ardent of the ultralefts.

Weak concrete analysis

Although we flip-flopped from left to right and vice versa, what was consistent was that our line was not adequately rooted in a concrete analysis. In fact it was often arrived at without investigation and by taking historical texts as the starting point.

This instability was reinforced by the

class character of most of the CPML leadership and most of the white sector of the new communist movement. The intellectuals and the petty bourgeoisie had a preponderance of influence over those from working class origins.

A certain amount of this instability was understandable, even inevitable. There were many turbulent and confusing events happening in the world which made it difficult for some to hold on to socialist goals.

But it would be a big mistake if we think that what was happening in our sector of the movement was something inevitable for the movement as a whole. In particular, it was not true for many communists who came from the minority nationalities and the working class.

Some in the CPML's leadership argued towards the end that our problems and our collapse were inevitable because the basic premises upon which we were founded were wrong. They pointed to problems with socialism in the Soviet Union, mistakes made by the Chinese, setbacks in Southeast Asia and problems in our own work. They rolled this up into a theory — that socialism and Marxism-Leninism were no longer necessarily the wave of the future. Perhaps all the things we thought were true — such as the need for revolution, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for a disciplined vanguard party — were not necessarily so. But these new ideas turned out to be the same old social-democratic dogmas that had been around for decades.

I remember a long argument I had with a writer on *The Call* who claimed that one of the things that was so great about our government was its independent judiciary. I found myself in liaison meetings with supposed MLs who claimed we had to develop a “democratic foreign policy” for the bourgeoisie in order to unite with them.

At one liaison meeting we were told that liquidationism wasn't so *bad* — one group claimed to have gone over

to it and now subscribed to what they called the “three levels of federationism” — their organization was a federation of districts, the district was a federation of units and the units were a federation of individuals.

Ultimately these were disorganizing ideas. It was at bottom an anti-revolutionary viewpoint that was reinforced daily by what the bourgeois media and society was telling us — that socialism was bankrupt and irrelevant.

Paralysis of the organization

This view, held within our leadership, was what paralyzed our central headquarters and leading bodies. In retrospect, what we should have done was to unfold a firm and clear struggle against this line throughout the CPML. Those of us in the center who opposed this view should have fought it out. Instead we were diverted by a one-sided fight against ultraleftism. If we had unfolded this struggle and accompanied it with self-criticism and corrections of commandist styles of leadership, and real rectification of our internal life, I believe at least a sizable minority could have been won over to affirm Marxism-Leninism, the need for revolution, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the need to continue the CPML as a Marxist-Leninist organization.

Ultimately, the inability of the left grouping in our leadership to rally the organization around Marxism-Leninism was directly traceable to incorrect methods of work and leadership as well as different errors in line. In fact the two are connected; it would have been far easier to correct some of our line errors if we had had a correctly functioning organization.

Need for “mass line”

A good method of leadership is what Marxist-Leninists call “practicing the mass line.” This means taking the experience and ideas of the masses of party members and the people we are working with as the starting point for

developing our analysis, rather than taking abstract doctrine or principles as the starting point. From there, real leadership is given by helping to summarize this experience, to evaluate it in view of other experience and the general science of Marxism, then to take it back to the masses in a more advanced and concentrated form.

I do not blame our problems or setbacks on any inherent bankruptcy of Marxism or crisis in Marxism. If anything was worthwhile in these past 20 years, it has been that we stood up for Marxism-Leninism, for revolution and the belief that it was both possible and necessary, even here in the United States.

Going back to that period in the late '60s and early '70s, many of us turned to Marxism-Leninism because, of all the outlooks on the left, it gave us both a vision of a new society and a means for achieving it. In a general way, it indicated how to approach organizing ourselves and the masses, how to unite the many to defeat the few, how to make revolution here in the U.S.

One problem was that we had no practical guides. We were new and inexperienced; we had no ties to the old Communist Party except for a few notable individuals. We were called the new left and, later, the new communist movement, to distinguish us from the old left or the old communist movement.

What especially distinguished us in those years was our fervent commitment to the equality of nationalities, to an end to national chauvinism, racism and imperialism. Some of us had been through a baptism of fire in the Black Belt of Mississippi and the civil rights struggle. Inspired by the Black Liberation Movement, we were appalled by a CPUSA which called Malcolm X a police agent and attacked militant Black fighters as lumpen criminals.

Revolutionary outlook

In seeing the need for revolution, we

correctly pointed out the violent nature of the capitalist state. Those of us who worked in Chicago will never forget the bloody night in December when the police and FBI pumped their bullets into the body of our friend and comrade, Black Panther leader Fred Hampton, as he lay sleeping in bed. Anyone who believes in the peaceful transition to socialism should first explain why his murderers, whose names are public knowledge, are walking the streets unpunished to this day.

We learned from other costly defeats. The CIA-inspired overthrow of Salvador Allende, the democratically elected Marxist president of Chile, taught us two things: In order to make revolution you needed the broad support of the people. And second, that there could be a peaceful transition was a foolish, even criminal illusion promoted by the CPUSA and other revisionists.

We knew that the bourgeoisie would never give up without a vicious fight. The assassinations of John Kennedy and Martin Luther King attested to the vicious nature of the bourgeoisie even against some of their own more liberal leaders or moderate forces among the masses.

We believed in a disciplined party because we knew that the bourgeoisie was organized. Given the wide-ranging efforts of the FBI, CIA and other agencies to disrupt and derail our movement, we knew that if the working class was not consciously, seriously and meticulously organized, we would have no hope of ever being able to bring capitalism down.

We believed in internationalism and the fight against imperialist war. We were inspired by the struggles of the third world countries, especially by the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism. A firm commitment to national liberation, to the right of national independence and sovereignty, to the right of self-determination of all oppressed nations — this led us to consistently oppose not

only U.S. aggression, but also the international adventures of the Soviet Union.

No regrets

I still believe in these views. I have no regrets. This is how we distinguished ourselves from opportunism and reformism and became, in the process, a new communist movement. I believe they are still applicable today. And the weaknesses of the CPML, which led to its end, still do not diminish the contributions that it made.

One of the things I liked best about the CPML was its militant, fighting spirit. We used to say that the main reason our party existed was to wage class struggle — and we certainly did a lot of it, even if we did not always fight wisely and well.

The dissolution of the CPML should make us even more aware of a number of things — the necessity to base communist organizations in the working class, to pay attention to the correct functioning of democratic centralism, to practice the mass line, to combat male chauvinism, individualism, posturing, arrogance and get-rich-quick schemes.

Need to move on

Our errors were our own. We can't blame Marx, Lenin, China or anyone else. We can only own up to them, look them square in the face, seek their roots and move on.

After all, the new communist movement did not end with the CPML. While important, it was still only one component. Many members of the CPML and the groups preceding it have gone on to make contributions in the mass struggle and in the communist and left movements. Other communist organizations with their roots in the '60s and '70s have continued and developed to the present.

The League of Revolutionary Struggle is one of them. It has a particular legacy, coming predominantly out of the movements of the oppressed na-

tionalties. This was the other major sector of the new communist movement, and the League, founded in 1978, united several of the major communist organizations coming out of it.

Coming from this background also meant that a majority of its cadres were from the working class. Combined with a generally correct Marxist-Leninist line, this has helped the League avoid most of the errors which befell our sector of the movement. The League prudently never declared itself "the party."

When I joined the League a while back, I was struck by some of the differences in its functioning and methods of work. To tell you the truth, I was somewhat surprised at the size, breadth and depth of its work in many areas. The League is one organization that has not puffed itself up. In fact, it is probably the only organization on the left that suffers from a public image which projects it as quite a bit less than it actually is.

To be sure, the League has made errors. But it has also been able to sum these up in good time and to correct them.

I was particularly struck by its attitude towards correcting errors in line. When I first joined, some people in the leadership of the League had just resigned — and were upholding a basically nationalist line. The report and summary of what happened was essentially a self-criticism from the leading bodies. There was no effort to attribute everything wrong to the departing people. Instead there was a sincere effort to sum up what was wrong in both the line and practice of the League which led to this kind of error developing and the inability of the organization to save these comrades.

The method of leadership in the League is modest, down-to-earth and focuses on solving the problems which come up in the mass work of the cadres.

Methods of LRS leadership

I feel that this approach to leader-

ship is partly due to the preponderance of women in the leadership. I don't know of any other ML organization where the leading core was mainly women — and women from the minority nationalities at that.

I believe it has resulted in a reduction of needless posturing, arrogance and commandism. Those of you who had any contact with the CPML can probably appreciate that, having seen the male ego do its legendary thing any number of times. It has also meant greater sensitivity not only to the needs of the mass work, but to the personal and particular situations of individual members as well.

I have been through one Congress of the League. There was a period of democratic discussion and debate within the organization beforehand. At the Congress itself, opposing views were aired in a principled, respectful and comradely fashion and were voted up or down. In one case, what had started as a minority position became a majority position and won out in this process.

The League practices an internal system of collective child care for its cadres with young children. This along with other policies regarding women have helped women develop in the League and assume positions of leadership in great numbers. The same down-to-earth approach that has helped women has also made the League an organization in which working class comrades generally can develop and play leading roles.

I say these things about the League because when I joined I didn't know quite what to expect. I believe the League is far from perfect and has a ways to go in many areas, especially in developing its theoretical work. But I believe that in the League, there is the basis to build a communist organization which can grow and learn along with the development of the mass struggle.

The League is not the only com-

munist organization in the U.S. today, but I believe it has a unique contribution to make. It has a regular press capable of presenting Marxist-Leninist analysis in a timely fashion. It has some relatively strong concentrations in major sectors of the people's struggles — the oppressed nationality movements, among youth, among lower stratum workers. When this is combined with a genuinely multinational membership and a positive internal life, I think that its future growth and success is something which all of us who believe in communism want to see.

While I have mentioned the CPML's strengths, I have especially stressed the weaknesses so we can learn lessons for the future. I feel it is important not to gloss over these errors, but to look at them honestly and objectively. After all, this is the main reason for summing up the past — to help chart the path for the future.

We on the left have tremendous responsibilities in the rest of the 1980s and beyond. The mass movement is stepping up, but what direction it will take is still an open question. The ruling class is obviously concerned. It is strengthening its ideological control as well as other, more direct means, to put a damper on the developing resistance.

The left must face this challenge — and not let the mass movements down. We need to deepen our ties with the masses. We need to be involved in the major struggles against the right and provide the best leadership we can. We need to keep our sights clearly on the enemy, and avoid the bickering and divisiveness which have plagued the left movement for too long. If we are both modest and optimistic, we can be successful. With that perspective, we can look forward to the future with confidence.

Tasks today

My last point is connected to this issue. What should be our main emphasis in party building and combating

liquidation and disorganization today? Is it recruitment or regroupment? I believe we must make every effort to regroup the activists from the 1970s. We must keep every door open.

But I also believe that we cannot look backward primarily. The main forces for today's party-building activities must be the new generation of activists, the young people in the factories, schools and communities who are newly awakening and full of energy and desire to change the world.

This is as it should be. Every successful revolution has been made mainly by the youth. When they took power in Cuba, the average age of the central committee was 26. Fidel was the old man at 35. The Chinese people's army was essentially millions of teenagers, led by a party in its 30s. Chu Teh was the oldest general, at the age of 50. Or think about this — when Lenin wrote *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, a classic in organizing the Bolsheviks, he was only 24 years old.

Our struggle requires incredible amounts of discipline, experience and organization. For those of us who have this experience, it is a duty to bring it to the new generation. This is how we will win. We may not see socialism, but those after us certainly will. We will fight from one generation to the next.

If we can bring some experience, it is the youth who bring audacity. And revolutions are not made without audacity. We made many mistakes in the past, but you should not worry about making mistakes. You can always correct your mistakes. What you have to avoid at all costs is the biggest mistake of all, to do nothing out of fear of losing. Then you have surrendered before the fight has begun.

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