

REVOLUTION

75¢

Organ of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

May 1979

Vol. 4, No. 5



RCP



You can't know the line of the Revolutionary Communist Party unless you read its weekly national newspaper the Revolutionary Worker.

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As you probably know, the RCP has taken an important step forward by publishing a national weekly newspaper as the voice of the Party to the broadest numbers of workers and other sections of the people. This new newspaper will mercilessly rip away the veil of deception and deceit that the capitalist system throws over every political, social, cultural and scientific question in society. The Revolutionary Worker will report on and put forward the view of the Party on all the important struggles of the people. While concentrating on agitational articles—articles that seize upon and expose a single glaring contradiction of capitalist society—the weekly Revolutionary Worker will also carry in-depth articles analyzing particularly important questions facing the masses of people and taking up key points of Marxist-Leninist theory.

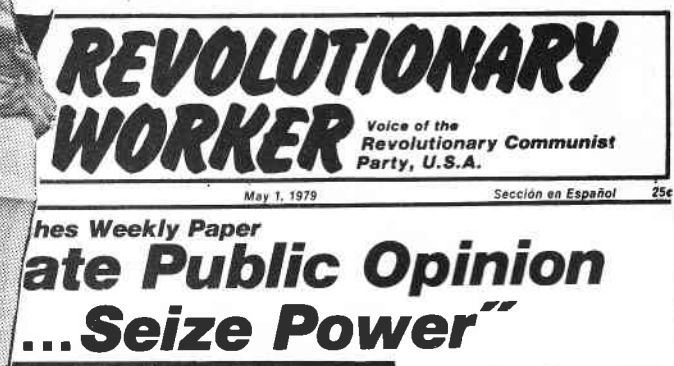
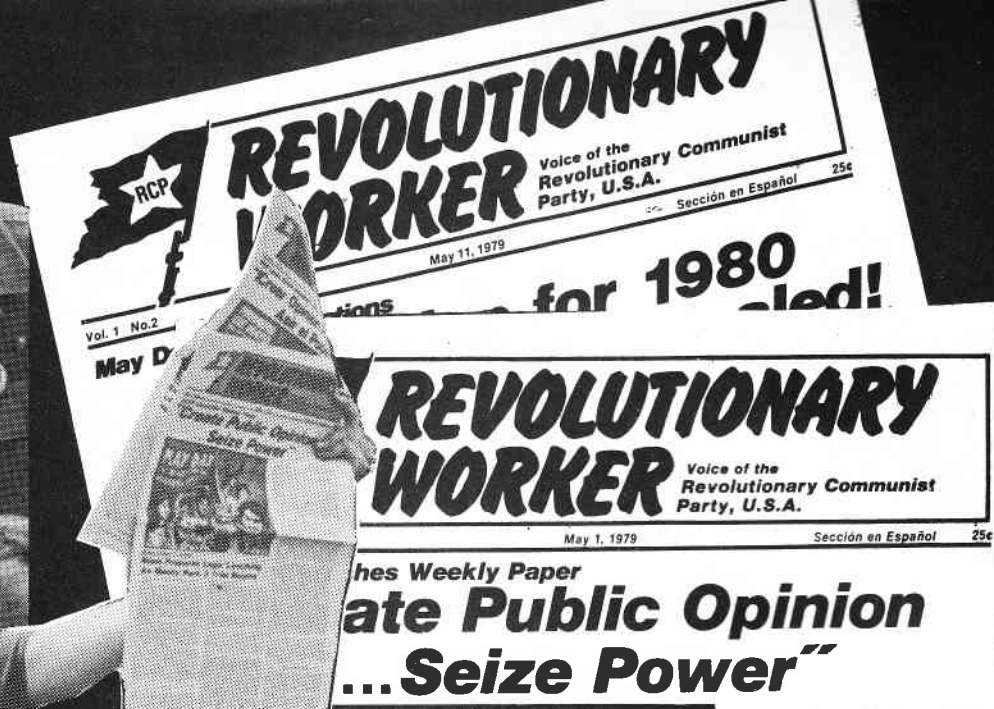
The Revolutionary Worker is the main vehicle for the Party to carry out its revolutionary work—its most vital tool in heightening class consciousness and preparing public opinion among the working class and all the oppressed for making revolution and advancing to socialism and communism.

For all these reasons, all who want to know the line of the RCP on the vital questions of the day, everyone who truly wants to make revolution in the United

States must read the Revolutionary Worker. Revolution will continue to be published as the Party's monthly magazine and will continue to play a key role in arming Party members and other revolutionary minded people with a deep and all-sided view of major social questions and problems confronting the revolutionary movement. But it cannot and will not try to duplicate the Revolutionary Worker. That is, Revolution will no longer comment on as many of the developments in the struggle in this country and abroad as it has in the past—this function was always limited by the fact that it came out monthly, and now is no longer necessary with the publication of the Revolutionary Worker. Thus we strongly encourage all readers of Revolution to also subscribe to and read the Revolutionary Worker. Further, we hope that the readers of Revolution will also help to distribute the Revolutionary Worker and help to strengthen it as a weapon that can reach to every nook and cranny of the country—from the coal mines of Appalachia to the garment shops of New York, from the steel mills of Cleveland to the fields of California and in every struggle from the movement against nuclear reactors to the struggle in Houston to defend the Houston Rebellion and free the Moody Park 3.

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We are not talking about a newspaper in the hands of a relative few revolutionary agitators. We aim to make this paper a driving force for revolution among the workers and the masses of people, a weapon in the hands of millions, creating revolutionary public opinion and founding the bourgeoisie—those exploiters



REVOLUTION

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Cover—The red flag hoisted on a bayonet and bearing a star is the new symbol of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. It will be everywhere there is exploitation and oppression in this country and everywhere the masses are in struggle, symbolizing the armed revolution and the communist future.

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Mass Movement Prevents Maximum Sentence

Outrageous Moody Park 3 Conviction

The trial of the Moody Park Three has come to an end. The state got the guilty verdict it wanted—a political verdict against the Houston rebellion—but for now at least it has not been able to throw the Moody Park Three into prison as it so viciously sought to do.

On May 11 Travis Morales and Mara Youngdahl were found guilty of felony riot. Tom Hirschi was convicted of misdemeanor riot. Travis Morales and Mara Youngdahl were sentenced to five years' probation and a \$5000 and \$4000 fine respectively. Tom Hirschi was fined \$1000. The same jury that found the Three guilty of these charges also did the sentencing and their decisions reflect the powerful impact of social forces which pulled the jury in opposite directions—the power of the state and the power of the people's movement—and in the face of that the jury's own vacillation.

Five years' probation is that many years for the state to try to throw Travis and Mara back in prison, to serve out a five-year sentence. Since Travis has been arrested more than half a dozen times and the other two several times each since this case began, since they have been constantly harassed and threatened by the authorities, there is certainly no reason to think that now the bourgeoisie will leave them alone. Travis Morales still faces two more felony trials—one for a spray-painted slogan which appeared on an expressway wall and the other for "tampering with a witness" for brushing off an undercover pig who was harassing him in a courtroom. After the sentencing the prosecutor bitterly denounced it to the press as too lenient. Certainly the capitalists are not through with their attacks on the Moody Park Three.

The state was out for blood. In the final days of the trial the authorities were smacking their lips as they prepared to feast like ghouls on the flesh of these three revolutionaries. The judge—that "neutral arbitrator of justice"—was so filled with vengeful rage after the jury brought in the sentence that a young woman who stood up to protest the conviction and sentence was herself sentenced on the spot to six months in jail for "contempt of court."

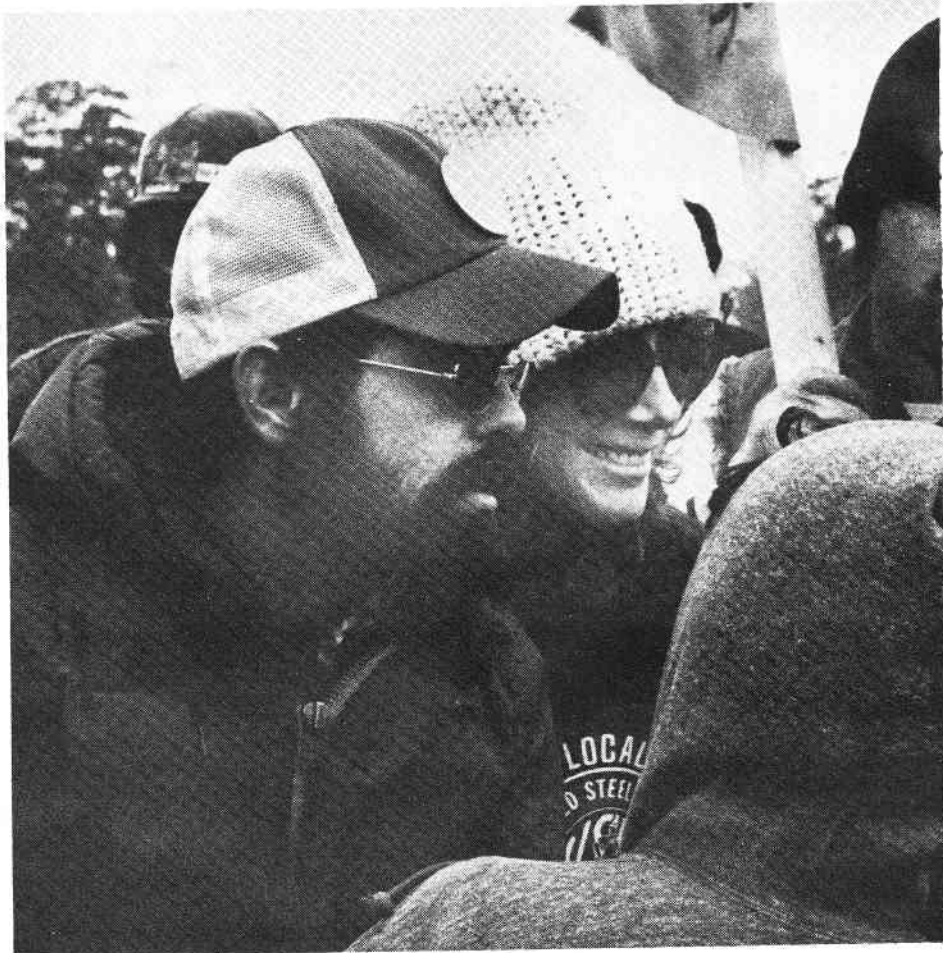
In his closing argument to the jury the prosecutor had warned, "These people are dangerous. They can influence people. They and their followers are like a rattlesnake. To kill it, you have to sever the head, Travis

Morales is the head and you must send these three to prison." He demanded the maximum penalty, 20 years for the two convicted of felony riot.

What was this mysterious power "to influence people" that they consider so dangerous? All along the prosecution tried to paint the Three as communist hypnotists who somehow compelled the Chicano people of Houston's Northside to hate that oppression and rise up and fight the police. Under the law which they were convicted of violating, everyone present in a crowd that does anything illegal is equally guilty. What was the main evidence against the Three, presented again and again by a parade of cops and snitches? That they led people in chanting "Justice for Joe Torres."

Two years ago the Houston police murdered Joe Torres in cold blood and got off with a \$1 fine. Now in this trial they tried to use the fact that a mass struggle had grown up against this outrage and that the Three had helped to lead this movement as its Exhibit A to throw them into prison.

That the judge and the prosecutor weren't able to deliver all the blood the bourgeoisie was after in this case is no thanks to them nor their stinking capitalist "American system of justice." It was the political atmosphere that was created through the year-long struggle for Justice for Joe Torres that preceded the rebellion and the year-long campaign to defend the rebellion and free the Three that followed it that made it difficult for them to get just what they wanted from the jury. The



Travis Morales and Mara Youngdahl

bourgeoisie finds real advantages to using a jury because that way they can hang people and still say "the people" did it. Since the prosecutor and the judge have so much to say about who gets on the jury and what they see and hear or not, the authorities can usually get what they want out of a jury. They did their best to hand pick a bunch of willing tools of reaction for this one—the prosecutor openly excluded every single Black candidate and one of the two Chicano candidates in hopes that there would be no one who hated the oppressors' whip to interfere with his plans.

But they got interfered with anyway. When the sentencing came down, the spectators in the courtroom refused to stand in respect for the legal rigamarol—but they all stood up in unison when the defendants were asked to stand. That was a good example of the kind of political atmosphere the defense had created in the courtroom. More important was the overall political atmosphere which had been created in Houston especially, but also around the country, which did not prevent the Three's conviction but did create a situation in which for at least a part of the jury the contrast between the \$1 fine for the killer cops and 20 years in prison for the Three "guilty" of leading people in chants against that outrage was more than they could really swallow.

Thousands had come forward to stand beside the Moody Park Three in this battle. People from all walks of life helped out in some way. In the factories many workers signed telegrams and banners and gave money. In the Chicano barrios the trial became a sharp and well-known issue. Many came out to march and picket, and new people became active organizers through this campaign. In Houston, as many Chicanos and others literally risked everything to testify in favor of the Three or to stand with them in some other way despite the almost certainty of official retaliation, it became clear that politically the city would never be the same.

At the same time there were some cowardly, cop-loving "communists" who stepped forward in this campaign to join with the bourgeoisie in lashing out at the Moody Park Three and the RCP. The Communist Party Marxist-Leninist and their junior running dog partners the League of Revolutionary Struggle went around saying that the Three were "isolated adventurers" who just wanted to use the Chicano people. They even reprinted slanderous accusations from the Houston daily press that a spokesman for People United to Fight Police Brutality, an organization initiated by the RCP to fight for justice for Joe Torres, had said "We don't care how many Chicanos get hurt in this struggle." These despicable sectarians were so blinded by their own selfish interests that they denied right up till the end that the bourgeoisie had singled out the Moody Park Three, and instead attacked the RCP for building a broad defense for them.



Tom Hirschi

The bourgeoisie has had to pay a political price for this case. Through the many attacks and constant harassment against the Three and their supporters and especially through this outrageous trial many more people than before got a strong whiff of the stench of the "American system of justice." In their mad-dog rage to stamp out the sparks of revolution that revolutionaries have been fanning in the defense of the Houston rebellion, the capitalists have actually stamped out many illusions that there is any other way out of this state of oppression except by mass armed revolution. They went on the offensive to attack the rebellion, discredit it, extinguish the sparks it ignited in the hearts of the oppressed and crush revolutionary leaders, but instead they have been more discredited, the at-

tacks have been thrown back in their faces, the sparks have been spread—and so far they have not been able to rip off these revolutionary leaders.

The struggle around the Moody Park Three is not over. The defense has announced that it will appeal the verdict. It is necessary to snatch away from the capitalists this weapon of probation that they intend to use to keep the Three in their clutches. And it is necessary to expose the outrage of the attack that has come down in the name of "justice" and to continue to uphold the stand embodied in the slogans raised around this trial: Free the Moody Park 3! Drop the charges against all those arrested! Stop police terror—Justice for Joe Torres! Down with national oppression! ■

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"... We must not be drugged by the illusions that they spread and that living in this imperialist country has built up... They are shedding our blood every day and they are preparing to incinerate tens of millions of people in a world war... But we are determined that the blood will not flow only one way and that ours will not flow for nothing... We will shed the blood of the enemy in order to bring about the overthrow of its dictatorship and the emancipation of the working class and the people..."

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Messages of Solidarity To the RCP On the Occasion of May Day Union of Iranian Communists

To: The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, Headed by Comrade Bob Avakian; And To: The Heroic Working Class and Revolutionary Masses of the United States of America.

COMRADES:

Please accept our warmest communist greetings on this May Day, the day of the International Working Class.

Today, as in every year, communists, revolutionaries and progressive masses throughout the world celebrate their day; it is with great pride that we, along with the revolutionary masses of Iranian people, take part in this holiday of the oppressed. For, this marks the first time in nearly three decades that the Iranian working class has been able to openly take part in these revolu-

tionary festivities.

Comrades,

As you well know, Iran has gone through unprecedented revolutionary change in the past two years. Our heroic people, having suffered long years of oppression, exploitation and national subjugation under the terrorist heels of the reactionary puppet monarchy of the Shah, owned and operated by the U.S. imperialist ruling class, rose in a mighty upsurge of revolutionary struggle, culminating in a mass armed rebellion, that toppled the blood soaked rule of the King of Kings and established progressive rule in its place. Our revolution has taken giant strides forward yet it is far from complete.

There still remains the task of complete annihilation of the remnants of the old ruling classes and the pernicious influence and

penetration of imperialism; there still remains the task of consolidating the achievements of the anti-imperialist and democratic revolution and deepening its gains in the face of attempts by the backward and reformist forces who are trying to stop the revolution half-way; there still remains the task of transition to socialism and from there to building communism.

These are not tasks that can be taken lightly; the very life of our struggles depend upon their fulfillment. And no force, other than the working class, headed by its vanguard, the communist party, in unity with the revolutionary peasantry and masses of people in our country, can achieve these lofty aims.

The great advances of the revolutionary movement in Iran, and its particular development, have given rise to a certain erroneous

tendency among honest revolutionaries and even some communists that there may be a way out of the hell-hole we live in without a revolutionary party of the working class in the leadership, without the revolutionary guidance of Marxism-Leninism. This is a great error. Much to the contrary, the course of revolution in Iran has once again proven the great theory of Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung that no revolution in our era, the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, can win final victory without working class leadership.

It is based on this truth that in the course of fighting to push our revolution forward, we, in the Union of Iranian Communists, consider our main task at present to be the struggle to build a genuine party of the working class of Iran.

For this party to be genuinely revolutionary, first and foremost it must unite on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, and while upholding and defending the great contributions of Comrade Mao Tsetung, it must resolutely break from and oppose all forms of revisionism and opportunism.

It is in this context that the Union of Iranian Communists has come to believe that in order for Iranian communists, as well as revolutionaries throughout the world, to remain on the Marxist-Leninist path they must

not only repudiate the revisionist trash of the Soviet social-imperialists, but they must also expose the present ruling clique in revisionist China.

Having trampled on the most fundamental principles of revolutionary theory, and having turned renegades to the correct revolutionary course charted by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung, the ultra reactionary right wing revisionist gang of Hua Kuo-feng—Teng Hsiao-ping are today carrying out a blatant bourgeois revisionist line both within China and in its foreign policy as well.

Following their reactionary coup d'état in October 1976, the Hua-Teng clique has usurped party and state power in China, turning that once proletarian state into a reactionary, revisionist country that is selling out China to the highest bidder in the international imperialist marketplace.

Comrades,

As the international situation is developing amidst great and increasingly deepening crisis, and as the two superpowers and all imperialists are gearing up for a new war to redivide the world among themselves and to crush revolution, the people of the world are faced with the great task of rising, undaunted, to wage revolution and to overthrow the imperialist system.

The old line imperialists, the social-imperialists and the Chinese revisionists each in their own way are threatening the people to put away their hopes of revolution and a dignified life for one of lining up behind this or that imperialist warmongering bloc and one of turning into cannonfodder for profits.

But, as the great upheaval in Iran has proven, the people of the world will not heed the reactionary advice of the international robber-barons, but will instead wage revolution. For if we are going to fight, let it be the fight for our emancipation.

It is in this spirit, comrades, that we pledge to you our everdeepening solidarity on this fighting holiday of the working class.

Let this May Day be a springboard to deepened revolutionary struggle, a struggle that will be led by the working class and that will enable the people of the world to celebrate the May Days to come in a world free of exploitation, in a communist world.

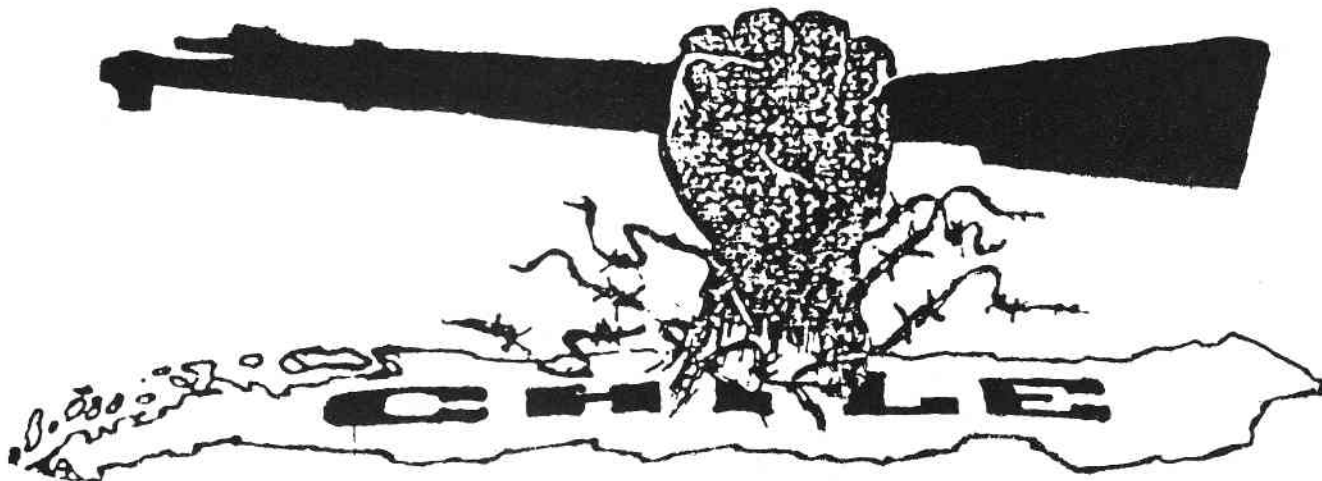
**LONG LIVE THE INTERNATIONAL
SOLIDARITY OF THE WORKING CLASS
AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES!**

LONG LIVE MAY DAY!

LONG LIVE COMMUNISM!

The Union of Iranian Communists

People's Front of Chile



**MESSAGE FROM THE PEOPLES FRONT
OF CHILE TO THE RCP, USA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE 1ST OF MAY**

The People's Front of Chile, an organization of the Chilean Resistance, in this opportunity brings fraternal and revolutionary greetings to the comrades of the RCP in this day of struggle.

We join this celebration where the workers give deserved homage to the martyrs of Chicago, assassinated by the bourgeoisie who

feared the advance of the working class, who were fighting for better working conditions and an eight-hour work day.

Today the peoples of the world celebrate this day of struggle and rise in protest against the oppression, exploitation and imperialist intervention; our people in Chile have also realized a great unfolding of agitation on this date, through the organizations of the Resistance, and openly demonstrate against the fascist dictatorship in spite of the repressive conditions that exist, demonstrating with that the combative spirit

of the working class and its resolute desire to destroy the fascist dictatorship, and also give a strong blow to yankee imperialism and expel it from the country once and for all.

On this first of May we salute the just struggles of the peoples of the world that struggle to free themselves from all types of domination.

**FOR A FIRST OF MAY OF STRUGGLE!
LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF THE
PEOPLES OF THE WORLD!**



Forward to Revolutionary May Day, 1980!

National Announcement by Chairman of the CC of the RCP



Not only is it the historic mission of our class—the proletariat, the propertyless class of wage-slaves—to make revolution. Not only must we carry out the armed uprising of the working class and its allies, uniting all who can be united against the hated capitalist enemy, to defeat and shatter it and begin the struggle to build a whole new kind of society and a whole new world, on the ashes of the old and over the stubborn, desperate resistance of those who would drag us back. Not only is it necessary to make revolution to eliminate the evils of this society and move society forward in a great leap for mankind. But more than that, it is *possible* to do so.

It is possible to increasingly raise the consciousness of the mass of workers and others ground down and degraded by this system, to develop and strengthen their revolutionary understanding and sense of organization as this system sinks deeper into its own slime and its parasitic, cannibalistic nature is more and more exposed. It is possible, when the time is ripe, to strike with the iron-like force of millions and deliver the decisive and crushing blows. It is possible even up against a force as powerful as our ruling class, for its power rests on the blood and bones of those it has devoured and on the backs and necks of those it has sunk its fangs into today, and it is therefore bloated and rotting with fatty degeneration. When those on whose blood this beast lives straighten their backs together, millions and hundreds of millions strong, here and throughout the world, when they resolve to devote their life-strength no

longer to reproduce the conditions of their own enslavement, but to cast off and into the dust their enslavers, when they determine to shed the blood of these vampire-istic tormentors in order to be free, then our force will be overwhelming and will finally triumph. And that time will surely come!

But to bring this about, we have work to do and struggle to carry out. Not just in the future, but in an on-going way—and from today forward. Work and struggle to bring closer and to prepare the revolutionary ranks and the broadest numbers of the people for that day of reckoning.

And in the face of the situation right before us, with the stinking decay and jolting crisis of this system, with its dark shadow of world war cast ever larger and ever more menacing before us, and on the other hand with the sparks of revolution flaring now here now there into flames, we must intensify our efforts, strain against the limits and advance in giant strides. We must draw forward all those, throughout this land, who do dare to dream the dream of revolution—and make them activists for the great cause of revolution. We must rally their ranks and concentrate them into a powerful force, raising an uncompromising banner, the bright banner of revolution, awakening and influencing the millions who today hate the way this system forces them to live and how it corrupts every pore of society, and the millions more in whose minds the tremors and the death-rattle of this system are sounding ever more serious alarms and raising ever more profound questions. We must arouse, mobilize and marshal the great potential strength of all those who say they agree but that it will never happen—move them from mere agreement to concrete action to expend their energy and combined force to *make* it happen! And we must do so now, for great trials, great upheavals, and also great possibilities are looming before us.

Therefore,...

Here today, at this May Day demonstration, 1979, the Revolutionary Communist Party calls for a one-year campaign to build a mass, revolutionary May Day next year—on *May Day, Thursday, May 1st, 1980*—which will sound the first powerful salvo of revolutionary mass struggle in the '80s. This is not a call for a general strike—as yet our movement has not reached that level—but it is a call nonetheless for all people who have their minds set on revolution *not* to go to work or to school, and not to remain passive, on that day, but instead to take history into their hands, to act in the revolutionary tradition of May Day and more than that to take a bold, far-reaching step toward the future.

On that day, one year from now, in major cities all over this country, class conscious workers, and together with them all others who burn with rage at oppression and with the desire to tear out oppression's cause at its roots, will gather not only to proclaim this stand but to make it a living, driving

force that will shake this country politically, on that day and afterward; that will echo and reverberate to the four corners of this country and beyond, and into every factory, neighborhood and home, in every region, city and town. On that day the enemy and the people alike will have no choice but to direct their attention to the awesome occurrence of *revolutionary May Day*, as thousands and thousands stride in unison through the streets, in step with the millions throughout the world fighting for the same goal, backs straight and eyes cast to the broadest and farthest horizons, holding high the standard of revolution, striking terror into the breast of the heartless rulers and quickening the pulse and arousing the imagination of millions more of the oppressed in this country, who that day will watch and listen but in the future will surge forward themselves to hold aloft this banner of revolution and finally carry it forward into battle and on to victory.

Forward with the Glorious Task of Preparing the Revolutionary Future!



Part of the march of 600 people which went through the streets of the Black ghetto in Washington D.C. before meeting in an auditorium to listen to Comrade Bob Avakian's speech and his announcements of major plans for the coming year (above). The program included other speeches and cultural activities. In Oakland, Calif. about 500 people took part in a march and program to celebrate May Day, including a simultaneous broadcast of the announcement and speech. These events took place on May 5, with May 1st events in many cities building for the nationwide events. During the coming year, we must go forward from these successful actions, forge a core of active fighters to unite even broader sections of the people, to celebrate in mass revolutionary action on Thursday, May 1, 1980, which will mark a fundamental change in the political situation in this country.

RCP Message to Union of Iranian Communists

To the Union of Iranian Communists, and In Solidarity with the Communist and Revolutionary Movements and the Heroic Working Class and People of Iran, on the Occasion of the Celebration of May Day, 1979:

Comrades,

It is with great joy that we greet the powerful celebration of May Day held in Iran this year under the leadership of genuine communist and revolutionary forces and involving altogether 2 million workers and other revolutionary and progressive people in your country.

This May Day celebration in Iran, the first time in three decades that the heroic working class and people of Iran have been able to openly take part in this historic revolutionary festival of the international proletariat, is the result of the magnificent revolutionary struggle of the Iranian people, especially over the past two years. And, further, this May Day celebration itself represents a powerful political and moral force, giving tremendous impetus and direction to the continuing struggle of the Iranian people to consolidate and further advance the gains of their revolution, to complete the task of carrying through the anti-imperialist democratic revolution and then advance to socialism and, together with the working class and oppressed people worldwide, to the ultimate goal of communism.

Over the past two years, the revolutionary storm of the Iranian people's uprising has not only won monumental victories, especially with the overthrow of the fascist monarchy of the Shah, that butcher of the Iranian people and puppet and gendarme for U.S. imperialism; but further, the Iranian people's revolutionary struggle has struck a profound blow for the emancipation of the proletariat and oppressed people around the world and dealt a shattering blow to the U.S. imperialists and all other imperialists and reactionaries. It has taken place at a time when the international proletariat has suffered a severe and bitter setback—the seizure of power by revisionist traitors in China, after the death of Mao Tsetung, the greatest revolutionary of our time, and through the bloody suppression of revolutionary masses and the revolutionary leadership in China that was carrying out Mao's Marxist-Leninist line, headed by the so-called "gang of four" (Comrades Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao, Chiang Ching and Yao Wen-yuan). The usurpers Hua Kuo-feng, Teng Hsiao-ping & Co. who have stolen power from the working class in China have shamelessly reversed the revolution in China and perverted it from a beacon and bastion of world revolution into a base of reaction. They have trampled on the revolutionary line of Mao Tsetung in all spheres—replacing the dictatorship of the proletariat with a fascist bourgeois dictatorship over the working class and masses and proceeding at a feverish and dizzying pace with the restoration of capitalism in China, while at the same time offering up China to the highest bidder among the imperialist powers, joining with imperialists and all manner of reactionaries in the international arena, and playing a vicious role for reaction in attempting to misdirect, subvert and set up for slaughter the people's revolutionary struggle throughout the world.

In the face of this, including its effect and manifestation in Iran itself as well as internationally, the Iranian people's revolutionary upsurge, erupting on an unprecedented scale in that country and engulfing society in a thoroughgoing way and with awesome strength, has forcefully exploded the lying propaganda of the rulers of the USA and all reactionaries, who, in addition to all their other degenerate deception, are attempting to use the reversal in China and the treachery of the new Chinese rulers to demoralize and intimidate the people into believing that there is no way out of the misery and degradation of imperialist domination and exploiting class society and that revolution is an impossible dream—or worse, a nightmare for the masses. The Iranian people's revolution has therefore not on-

ly knocked from its throne one of the powerful bastions of imperialism and reaction in the world and opened the way to firmly establishing Iran as a bastion of revolution, but has provided a brilliant example and inspiration for the working class and oppressed people on every part of the globe. It has proven, once again, with the volcano-like force of millions, that wherever there is oppression there will be resistance and that sooner or later, and especially as the crisis of the reactionary system deepens, the people will rise in revolution. This has been a great force educating and tempering the masses as well as the revolutionaries, including our Party, in the USA as well as in other countries. It has heightened our determination to further educate, arouse and mobilize the working class and masses of people in this country to prepare for and finally carry out the revolutionary struggle for socialism and ultimately communism, and as a crucial part of this to unite with and support revolutionary struggles worldwide, including as a decisive component in that process the heroic and continuing struggle of the Iranian people.

We are aware that right now the Iranian people's revolutionary struggle is at a critical juncture. The hated Shah and the regime of the reactionary forces he represented has been overthrown, casting off a tremendous weight from the backs of the Iranian people and opening the way to their complete emancipation. But such complete emancipation remains to be fully achieved.

The U.S. imperialists and the domestic reactionaries aligned with them in Iran have not been thoroughly uprooted and they are today carrying out subversion and plotting to outright attack the Iranian people's revolution and drown it in blood. And not only must the Iranian people carry through the complete annihilation of these forces in their country, but they must also oppose and defeat all attempts by other imperialists and reactionaries, including the Soviet social-imperialists and their lackeys in Iran, to sabotage and pervert the struggle and subject the Iranian people to a new form of imperialist subjugation and exploitation. For all these reasons, as the genuine communist and revolutionary forces of Iran have consistently pointed out, the attempts of vacillating and reformist forces in Iran to compromise with U.S. imperialism, or other imperialist and reactionary interests, and to call a halt to the revolution at this stage, must be resolutely opposed and overcome, while continuing to unite all who can be united to carry forward the great struggle in which the Iranian people have already fought and sacrificed so heroically—to rid themselves and their country of all forms of reactionary domination, exploitation and oppression.

That such a great and historic task can only be carried out under the leadership of the working class is a fact which has been powerfully indicated by the decisive and central role played by the Iranian workers in the overthrow of the fascist monarchy and the continuing struggle to advance the revolution in Iran. But, of course, to fully realize its leading role, and to fully mobilize and unite the broadest ranks of the people to win their complete emancipation, the working class and the revolutionary struggle as a whole must have the leadership of the proletarian vanguard, the Marxist-Leninist Party. It is therefore with the greatest interest and encouragement that we learn of and hail the intensifying efforts of the genuine communist forces in Iran to forge the communist vanguard Party at the earliest possible time. We firmly support this struggle to build the Party in the crucible of the ongoing Iranian revolution, and we are confident that, on the basis of striving for unity around the correct, Marxist-Leninist line and through the determined fight against various forms of revisionism and all other kinds of opportunism, the struggle for the genuine Party of the working class will be crowned with victory in the near future, answering the most urgent requirement of the revolution at this time.

In this light, we are especially gladdened by the recent victories won by the Union of Iranian Communists in further consolidating its ranks around its revolutionary line and defeating the sabotage of op-

portunists—specifically those who have supported the revisionist rulers of China who usurped power there through their reactionary *coup d'état* in October 1976, and would have imposed their revisionist line on the Union of Iranian Communists and the communist movement as a whole in Iran. In this struggle, as well as in other ways, the Union of Iranian Communists and other comrades in Iran have made important contributions to the cause of the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples of the world in the fight against imperialism and reaction, including the struggle in the communist movement internationally to unite on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, uphold the great contributions of Mao Tsetung and his development and enrichment of Marxism-Leninism, and expose and defeat revisionism and opportunism of all stripes. And we further rejoice at and draw inspiration from the advances being made in building the unity of the genuine communist forces in Iran and extending and deepening their influence among the working class and broad masses—advances powerfully demonstrated in this year's May Day celebrations in Iran—which strengthen the basis for establishing the Marxist-Leninist Party and propelling the Iranian revolution forward in great strides in the decisive period ahead.

Comrades,

As we have proclaimed on May Day this year, not only in Iran, but around the world and here in the USA as well, flames of revolution are spreading. The imperialist system is sinking deeper into crisis and this is awakening and activating growing numbers of the working class and broad ranks of the people in every country in struggle against imperialism and reaction. At the same time the imperialists and reactionaries are not only stepping up their vicious attacks on the people but, headed by the two superpowers, U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, they are solidifying their rival blocs in preparation for an unprecedentedly destructive world war, in their desperate drive to redivide the world, protect and expand their empires and "spheres of influence" and prolong their blood-soaked rule and their predatory system.

The coming years will hold great trials, great upheavals and great possibilities for the working class and oppressed peoples of the world. It is the urgent duty of the communists in every country to intensify their work to prepare for and lead the masses in revolution and to unite the ranks of revolutionaries and the masses on the basis of the world-emancipating interests of the international proletariat and in resolute struggle against the common enemies of the people of the world—the two superpowers, the imperialist system, and all imperialists and reactionaries. Wherever the opportunity arises, wherever the objective and subjective conditions develop, through the operation of the laws of the system and the untiring work of the revolutionary forces, they must unhesitatingly seize the opportunity and lead and carry forward resolutely the decisive battle to overthrow the rule of the reactionaries and replace it with the rule of the working class, together with its allies, and advance to socialism. Our unwavering stand and consistent practice must be to prepare for and finally to wage revolutionary war, not imperialist war. And if world war is unleashed by the imperialists, then our response must be to once again intensify our work to oppose imperialist war and reactionary rule with revolutionary war, and hasten the extinction of this barbarous system and all forms of exploitation.

May Day this year, in Iran and in a less developed but significant way in the United States, as well as on every continent, has demonstrated the growth and tempering of the revolutionary movement and the Marxist-Leninist forces and the further awakening of masses of the people. It has itself constituted an important part of the overall struggle against imperialism and reaction and has played an important part in preparing for even more momentous and truly earth-shaking struggle in the years ahead. Next year in the USA, as announced at the May Day celebrations this year, for the first time in many, many years, May Day will be held on a work day and will mobilize on that day, May 1, 1980, thousands of workers and other oppressed people in this country around the revolutionary banner of the international proletariat. And in the future, May Day will continue to play a vital role all over the world in rallying the forces for

revolution and in the growing revolutionary struggle of the broad masses. We fervently hope that, in the near future, May Day in Iran will not only witness the working class and its allies unfolding its banner openly, as it has seen this year for the first time in three decades, but that it will be celebrated in an Iran in which the banner of the working class flies over the whole country, signalling the advance of the Iranian people's struggle to the complete defeat of imperialism and reaction in that country and the establishment of the rule of the working class, together with its allies, and the triumphant march into the socialist future. And we are confident that the day will come when, not only in Iran, but also in the USA and around the world, the red flag of the international proletariat will fly over every land, marking the advance to socialism and ultimately the achievement of the historic mission of communism. It is in this spirit and with this determination that we send our warmest greetings and stand in the firmest solidarity with you on the occasion of the celebration of May Day, 1979.

HAIL TO THE IRANIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION, ONWARD TO ITS COMPLETE VICTORY!

FULL SUPPORT TO THE GENUINE COMMUNISTS IN IRAN IN THE STRUGGLE TO BUILD THE MARXIST-LENINIST VANGUARD PARTY AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME!

LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTIONARY UNITY OF THE IRANIAN AND AMERICAN PEOPLES AND THE WORKING CLASS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD!

LONG LIVE PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!

LONG LIVE MAY DAY!

FORWARD TO THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM AND ULTIMATELY COMMUNISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD!

The Central Committee, on Behalf of the Entire Membership, of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA



Revisionist Pipe Dream Goes Up in Smoke

The Destruction of China's Socialist Economy

"The 'four modernizations' ... has flopped"

Recently, reports have filtered out of China describing how peasants in some places have divided up land and tools. Along with this have come major pronouncements from the government ministries calling for a reassessment of production targets and foreign equipment purchases on account of dislocations and implied financial difficulties. The "four modernizations" has already come on hard times; more to the point, already it has flopped. The party press which only months ago had been singing praises to the "new long march" has since been sounding a new theme in editorials: "First retreat, then advance." These developments and others—to be examined—bring into sharp relief the political and economic strains tearing at the Chinese economy.

Underlying all of this is not the reputed over-zealousness of central planners eager to get on with modernization or some sort of peasant backlash to years of "deprivation" in the fields. Least of all does this "retreat" mark a return to Mao's policies. The revisionists, intoxicated by their visions of grandeur, have run straight up against China's real productive base—which cannot sustain their hopes for superpower greatness. Now they appear to be settling in for a more mundane program of capitalist restoration and one which will more clearly and directly head China back to domination by imperialism. Ever the pragmatists, they think maybe something else will work. The substance of what is happening in China is, on the one hand, the systematic dismantling of the socialist economic base as the economy is restructured according to capitalist principles of putting experts in command, reliance on material incentives and profitability as the key yardstick of investment decisions and, on the other, the unleashing of spontaneous capitalist tendencies as the economy is unhinged from a revolutionary political line. As was pointed out in our Party's Central Committee Report on the 1976 revisionist coup in China: "It is impossible to carry out such reversals in the superstructure [referring to the reversals in the realm of education and culture] without this being a part of the reversal in the economic base, in the realm of production and the nature of how the economy is run." (See *Revolution*

and *Counterrevolution*, Chicago, 1978)

It is extremely important to recognize that given China's generally backward economic state—something, by the way, which is neither a curse nor an excuse for revisionist "get-rich-quick" schemes—any line other than Mao's basic orientation towards developing China's economy on the basis of socialist relations and according to her particular conditions (which involves in large measure her overwhelming peasant and agricultural base) and any line which does not put politics in command will lead back to dependency on imperialism as well as exploitation of the working people. Relying on her own efforts, mobilizing the workers and peasants to master technology and management, dispersing industry throughout the country, and linking economic development with the overcoming of those obstacles—organizational and ideological—which prevent the masses from consciously transforming society and reducing the differences between mental and manual labor, town and country, and worker and peasant on the basis of continuing the revolution—these were not policy options or tinkering of the Cultural Revolution. They were the only guarantee that China would lift herself out of backwardness while expanding the scope of initiative and participation by the masses. In short, Mao's line (which was upheld and fought for by the Four) was the only guarantee that China would remain socialist and develop in a socialist direction.

"four modernizations" ... no more in the people's interests than the Shah's vaunted modernization efforts.

That this orientation has been abandoned is by now universally admitted. There is still some discretion exercised in attacking Mao directly, but his policies have been thoroughly criticized as outdated or hopelessly idealist. But what is now becoming increasingly apparent is that, again, owing to China's particular conditions, the disintegration of her economy would be very rapid, indeed, once certain forces were set in motion. It also becomes clearer that the so-called "four modernizations," far from being a practical

and down-to-earth approach to China's economic problems or an ambitious and far-reaching vision of the future (depending on what species of apologetics and sycophancy one chooses) is, in point of fact, a recipe for disaster—no more realistic and no more in the people's interests than the Shah's vaunted modernization efforts. And if one wants to speak of idealism (of the most reactionary sort) then the assumptions which are the brick and mortar of these plans are well worth summarizing: somehow the imperialists are going to aid China in developing an independent and comprehensive industrial base; China will at the same time beat them at their own game—playing banking syndicates and suppliers off against each other for loans and technology; and once China lays hold of all this wondrous technology, it will cut these backers loose, break free of any entanglements and with this technology change what Teng Hsiao-ping, in one of his characteristically blunt statements, called the "ugly face" of China. There are no production relations in this fantasyland, no imperialist power politics. Beneath all the trappings of this futureworld nonsense is the classical comprador contempt and fear of the masses taking society into their own hands and awe and fright at the imperialists.

5th NPC and 1978

A wrecking operation has been underway since the revisionists consolidated political power, and it has been accelerated as they fight among themselves—all while they hypocritically proclaim their unswerving concern for the wellbeing and material welfare of the masses. Some of the key developments in this process can be traced out roughly dating from the 5th National Peoples Congress held in early 1978. At that Congress Hua Kuo-feng spelled out in great detail targets for the completion of a 10-year growth program beginning in 1976. In the development plan China pledged to build 120 major industrial complexes, including 30 power stations, 10 iron and steel plants, 10 oil fields, 6 railway lines and 5 harbors—all by 1985. Simultaneously, China would double its annual steel production to 60 million tons and push grain output to 400 million tons a year, from the 1978 level of 295 tons.

During 1978, several conferences were held to promote the necessary organizational changes and to enshrine the bourgeois line that would guide this "new long march," as it was called: science and education in March

and April, trade and finance in June and July. A program for the reorganization of the agricultural machine industry was drafted and two major articles, one by Hu Chiao-mu, head of the Social Sciences Academy on industrial organization, and the other on wage policy appeared later in the year. In October an enlarged Politburo meeting was held in which several important decisions were made with respect to economic affairs. This led to a working conference in mid-November whose decisions were endorsed by a Central Committee meeting held in late December.

The communique issued at the close of that meeting revealed the rehabilitation (even posthumously in some cases) of the remaining high-ranking targets of the Cultural Revolution (with the exception of Liu Shao-chi, though his reactionary wife who was a key figure in fighting for Liu's line was now back in political life) and made some economic policy pronouncements. The peasants' rights to decide their own affairs and do their own accounting at the production team level (the basic unit of perhaps 30-40 families in the commune through which production is organized and from which most income is derived and distributed) was upheld, and with this came a reaffirmation of inviolability of private plots, domestic sideline activity and rural trade fairs. It was further announced that grain prices paid to peasants would rise while prices they paid for machinery, fertilizers and pesticides would be cut over the next two years by 10 to 15%. At the same time, prices for grain and farm products to urban residents were to be kept stable. Finally, the meeting stressed the greater authority to be placed in local enterprise management hands—this, of course, eclipsing and replacing the political authority of the now dissolved revolutionary committees. The communique called to a close the campaign against the "gang of four" and declared that modernization and production were now the central task. An editorial published in connection with the communique explained that a shift away from political movements to production at center-stage of the revolution should have been effected as early as 1949. Only a fool couldn't figure out *who* it was that stood in the way of this shift!

With this shift in force, we find such claptrap and doggerel as this in a recent issue of *Beijing Review* #17:

"People at various fronts must see that every kind of work we are doing now is in the service of the Four Modernizations and hence is of extreme significance politically. Thus it can be said that politics in the petroleum industry is to get out more oil. For coal miners politics is extracting more coal."

And just under their breath you can hear the missing refrain: for the rulers, politics means extracting more surplus value.

This CC meeting is a convenient reference point—it codified themes that had been emphasized in some important theoretical statements in the previous summer and fall and also hinted at underlying problems and certain adjustments that would be made in the months following. It was at the time of this session that grain output was officially estimated at 295 million tons for the year—considerably below the targeted growth rate. Moreover, the communique warned against "rushing things." (What is interesting here is that despite their frequent calls for order and stability, the entire economic program of the revisionists has been a headlong rush into chaos.) 1978, it is true, had seen industrial output rise by about 11%. Steel production was put at 31.7 million tons and coal output was said to have exceeded the 1977 level by 50 million tons. The initial summaries of 1978 steel output cited the performance of the industry as proof positive that the 60 million tons goal for 1985 would be achieved. Yet, a February 24th editorial in the *People's Daily* called into question the whole idea of taking steel as the key link in industry (this was a policy formulated by Mao based on the relationship between steel and machine manufacture) and announced a reduction of the proportion of investment for iron and steel. The 1985 target has now been scaled down 25%. Clearly agriculture was not developing as rapidly as planned. Heavy industry was absorbing investment funds at agriculture's expense, and because China had to contract for major grain imports through 1982, cuts into the industrial imports which had been negotiated at a feverish pace throughout 1978 became inevitable. China must pay for grain imports totaling 11 million tons in 1979 alone.



Teng Hsiao-ping worships at the shrine of imperialist "modernization."

The upshot of these difficulties has been a decision to emphasize the development of those trades and branches of the economy that would most quickly earn profits and foreign exchange and that could compete on world markets, like cotton textiles. The trade deals are being re-thought and renegotiated. But, most important, and in the name of boosting agricultural production, a major adjustment in farm policy has been enacted. Nevertheless, what motivates the very major changes announced is the desperate attempt to continue to divert funds towards the industrial sector, but now by selectively mechanizing agriculture—bolstering some areas while abandoning others. In this way it is hoped that large surpluses and foreign exchange generated through the more intensive exploitation of the countryside can underwrite the modernization program, hence the call for regional specialization and greater reliance on cash and industrial crops. Hua's campaign promise of basic mechanization of agriculture by 1980 has been quietly shelved. So here we have the early returns from the modernization program—temporary spurts in output which, far from giving momentum to any kind of all-round development, have tended to strain resources and distort growth. Timetables, targets, even promises to the foreigners are routinely thrown to the winds.

... there is much similarity to the Cuban experience. . .

What is going on? Basically two things: first, a further adoption of capitalist practices and methods, essentially in the form of building up what is already built up and going in for what yields the greatest immediate returns—in a word, reorganization according to and concentrating on what is most profitable; second, and directly related, the breakdown of the planning mechanism. The time frame within which the "four modernizations" were to be achieved does not reflect the real capabilities and needs of the Chinese economy and such modernization is assuredly not based on the creative energies of the masses. As a result, major dislocations have already occurred. Planning is reduced to patchwork attempts to make good on some of the long-term targets and foreign agreements—but only by further squeezing some sectors while other targets are ditched altogether.

In many ways there is much similarity to the Cuban experience where the 10-million ton sugar target for 1970 was not only unrealistic in its own right but based on the same comprador philosophy of exporting to industrialize. It led to serious disruptions of the economy, particularly for cement and consumer goods production (and, of course, perpetuated the very colonial relationships the leadership claimed to be fighting, though

Continued on page 23

Party's Advances Raise New Questions

Editor's Note: The following article was submitted by a comrade who has had responsibility for leading important work in one area of the country.

Over the last year since the split with the Mensheviks, the Party's revolutionary line and practice have made tremendous advances. We have begun to really come to grips with what it means to do revolutionary work in a non-revolutionary situation, to grasp the crucial role of communist agitation and to seriously and scientifically address the task of preparing the masses for revolution.

Although it has always been the Party's line that armed insurrection is what we are building toward, often our view of this was that it was something in the dim distant future with no relevance for our work today, and we had our sights more clearly fixed downward on the current level of the workers' struggle and our own "routine" work in relation to it. Breaking out of the well-worn reformist rut that we were falling into (with the help of our dear departed Mensheviks) and staying on the high road of revolution has not been accomplished without turmoil, some confusion and a lot of struggle.

Quite a few sacred cows and long-time reference points have been knocked down as we have rekindled the revolutionary fires that were burning dangerously low in our ranks and have pushed forward in charting the previously uncharted course of making revolution in an advanced imperialist country. Things like the "center of gravity" (viewing everything in terms of and making a special stage of the economic struggle), the wearing of different hats for different situations and thinking that open revolutionary communist work was only for "special occasions," as well as other well ingrained ways of looking at and doing things have been blasted away in the revolutionary advances the Party has been making. Grasping more firmly our Party's revolutionary line has meant making a "radical rupture" with a lot of bourgeois ideas and prejudices that were leading us down into the swamp of reformism and revisionism. This swamp and the low-life vermin that dwell there completely negate the revolutionary aspects of today's situation and the sharpening up of the major contradictions in the world today that are pushing things toward both war and revolution. (Could any revolutionary seriously

think that the key question for the working class in today's situation is "Cash on the Line in '79"? Well, check out the 25¢ *Workers Voice*. And these people were in our ranks a little over a year ago!)

So it is no wonder that there has been a lot of struggle going down in the advances we are making. Looking at it dialectically it's clear that construction and destruction form a unity of opposites. There cannot be new and important advances in our line and understanding (construction) without clearing the way first by kicking out the cobwebs that have clouded our thinking (destruction). And as in any time when there is a lot of turmoil and struggle, there is also a tendency to pull back a little bit, to be conservative, exactly because of the uncertainty that goes with breaking new ground.

This is especially true for someone like myself who has been in leadership for a number of years, for whom the task of putting the Party's line into practice mainly takes the form of helping lead others to do this. As we push forward, it gets more and more clear that a lot of the old pat answers, ways of doing things and even methods of leadership just won't cut the cake. And there is no doubt this is a good thing, because past garbage *needs* to be left behind if we are going to make revolution. But the whole process inevitably raises some questions in one's mind, that is, it presents some contradictions that must be resolved if a person is to move forward.

Let me break it down this way. For the last few years I have been responsible for work in an industrial concentration. Now over this time we have gotten very good, in fact we have achieved advanced world levels, at being able to formulate contract demands and put together the tactics for building a big contract struggle. But now that we have finally realized that what Lenin says in *What Is To Be Done?* is actually true, it's clear that what we need to be good at is doing "strictly Marxist" all-round political exposure and building concentrated struggles, particularly revolutionary struggles. So obviously this poses new questions for our work. Others look to you as leadership for the direction forward, and a rap about seniority rights isn't going to make it. And that old image as the "answer man" in leadership goes right down the tubes with it. You know that you have to push forward into new ground, but at the same time uncertainty is tugging at your

collar from behind. The plain facts are that if you fear struggling through these questions and if you approach the tasks of leadership from the point of view of "keeping things under control and my reputation intact" then you will get left behind and the advances that need to be made will be made in spite of you.

Role of Leadership

That's why it's real important for people to get straight on a correct orientation on the role of leadership. Leadership is not some gifted group of "geniuses" or "hot shots"—and its role is not to "have all the answers at hand." Rather, the role of leadership is to apply Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought to the experience of the Party and the class struggle, and on that basis concentrate this experience up through the various levels of leadership and formulate correct lines and policies. In turn, comrades under their leadership must be armed with the Party's line (and the general science of Marxism-Leninism), thereby unleashing them as a conscious dynamic force for changing the world. It's not a question of leadership, as individuals, innately having the answers in their heads. Rather it is a question of correctly concentrating, through *struggle*, the collective knowledge of the whole Party and then returning this higher, more rational knowledge to practice.

What is happening in this period, when comrades are being unleashed by our more revolutionary understanding of things, is that as our practice advances, new questions are arising. Questions that we are just beginning to grapple with and get a handle on.

For instance, recently in my area a comrade got some time off for broadly agitating in his plant around the demonstration against Teng Hsiao-ping's visit to Washington D.C. in January. This followed on the heels of an earlier suspension for "unsubstantiated absence" because he had been arrested and hospitalized in D.C.

This whole situation stirred up a lot of interest and controversy among the workers in the plant as to how to view this type of political attack and how to respond. The more the company attacked, the more the broad masses wanted to know what it was all about and why the company was so rabid about these revolutionary ideas and struggle. At the same time, a number of the advanced workers in the plant raised questions around whether it was worth it to risk getting

disciplined (and possibly fired) around these types of questions. And in the Party itself similar questions arose. Just how important is it to push things like the Teng demonstration and its lessons to the max? Is it a good thing or not when the enemy attacks these revolutionary ideas and struggles? Is this a diversion from the "real" struggles and questions we should be taking up?

In the past we might have ignored the fertile soil that was being turned up by the questions coming off these attacks by the company. Or we might have responded with a leaflet and some kind of struggle about how his rights under the contract were violated by these trumped-up suspensions. Instead we answered these attacks with a Party leaflet (no hats) running down what was really going on—that the company was hell-bent on suppressing revolution and making an example out of this comrade, and it called on people to defend revolution and revolutionary fighters. This leaflet was followed by some bold actions that hit these attacks head on, created even more controversy and struggle, and brought further counter-attacks from the company (and the backward forces they were whipping up).

Two lines arose on how to view the situation. One said that all this struggle and controversy around questions like revolution, communism and the role of our Party was isolating us from the masses. That because we could not today win over a majority of the workers to our views on these questions that we shouldn't take them out in a bold way. Likewise, this view said, it therefore wasn't worth it to expose ourselves to and stand up against these attacks by the company and backward forces under their ideological sway. Basically this view boiled down to saying the only thing to do at this point was to let things "cool down." This line in the Party dovetailed with a view among some of the advanced workers in the plant that said these revolutionary ideas were cool for those who could understand them but were too hot to handle for the broad masses—especially when the company was attacking them (and anyone who stood up for them) so hard and trying to unleash whatever backward clowns they could against them. They felt it just wasn't worth the risks involved for what you could "get" out of it.

The other, correct, line said that the situation was excellent. It pointed out that the reason the company was coming down so hard was exactly that we were speaking to the sweeping questions that are on the minds of not just the advanced but growing numbers of workers. And with the sharpening situation in this country and around the world, they definitely *don't* want anyone out there talking about revolution as the way forward, that there is an alternative to their dying parasitic system. The fact that literally thousands of workers were checking out more closely than ever before what we had to say about these big questions and were

discussing and struggling over them, raising their eyes up off the shop floor—how could this be anything but an excellent situation? And among the advanced, while some were uptight about all the struggle and controversy and did back off some, others came forward to find out more about the Party and where we were coming from. The whole situation provided us with an opportunity to struggle with people over the importance of doing *revolutionary* work and building revolutionary struggle in this non-revolutionary situation.

This is exactly what the Chinese Communist Party (when it was still revolutionary) meant when it said:

While actively leading immediate struggles, Communists in the capitalist countries should link them with the struggle for long-range and general interests, educate the masses in a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary spirit, ceaselessly raise their political consciousness and undertake the historical task of the proletarian revolution. If they fail to do so, if they regard the immediate movement as everything, determine their conduct from case to case, adapt themselves to the events of the day and sacrifice the basic interests of the proletariat, that is out-and-out social democracy. (*A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement*, FLP, Peking, 1963, page 19)


How is it possible to carry out this task without controversy and struggle? How can we possibly hope to break the masses out of the ideological hold of the bourgeoisie (to "divert" them from trade-union consciousness, which they will inevitably remain mired in if they are left to spontaneity) without, among other things, some heated

debate—including attacks from the bourgeoisie? But if we fail to carry out this struggle, as our Chinese comrades also pointed out, "...when the objective conditions are ripe, the proletarian party will simply throw away the opportunity of seizing victory." (*Ibid.*, page 24)

If we freak out over these kinds of struggles today, what are we going to do as the storms on the horizon draw closer and things get a whole lot sharper?

Cast Aside Conservatism

Comrades, this is not the kind of situation to fear or get uptight about; it is an excellent situation. We should welcome and want more of it. Because it is only through struggle, through overcoming difficulty, through breaking new ground that we can advance. We will get old before our time if we try to hold onto old, outmoded ideas. As communists we stand for progress and are opposed to conservatism. We should support and foster enthusiastically the new emerging things and help them defeat and destroy the old. Mao said, "The philosophy of the Communist Party is the philosophy of struggle." For myself, it has only been by trying to base my outlook on and grasp more firmly this truth that I have been able to stay on the right road and struggle with the conservative pulls on me. "The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the fundamental law of nature and society." This means that new things are constantly emerging and through struggle overcoming the old. This is how the world moves forward and society advances. The more struggle, the more advances that can be made. The advent of communism, like the birth of any new thing, will be achieved only through a great deal of pain and struggle. Let us cast away all illusions and get out there in those big storms that are brewing.



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the COMMUNIST

Theoretical Journal of the Central Committee
Of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

- Beat Back the Dogmatic-Revisionist Attack on Mao Tsetung Thought
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- Some Notes on the Study of *What Is To Be Done?* and its Implications for the Struggle Today
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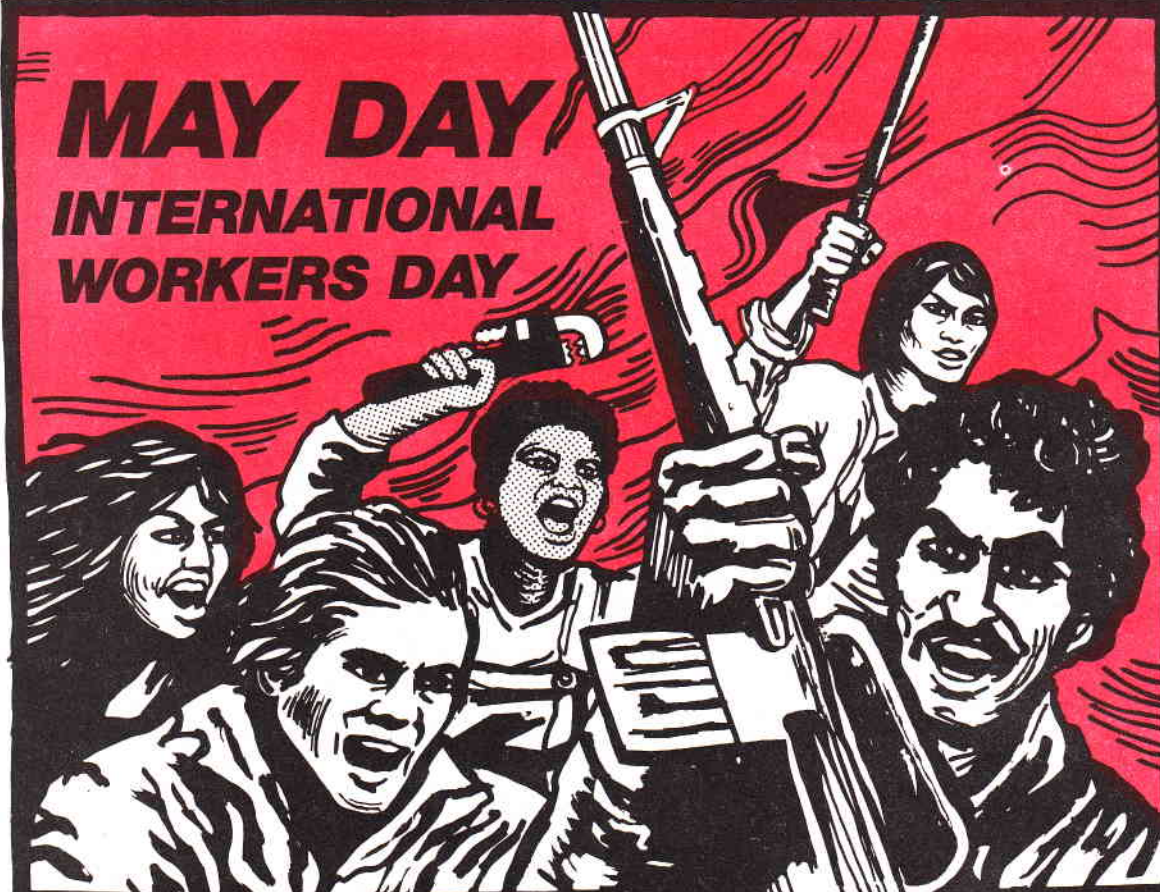
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- ★ Why the bourgeoisie likes to push Plato
- ★ The inadequacy of Charles Bettelheim's critique of Chinese revisionism

(Translations of reply to Hoxha forthcoming:
—In Spanish, in next *Revolution*
—In French, as a separate pamphlet)

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OPEC—FRIEND OR FOE OF U.S. IMPERIALISM?

Once again the dread spectre of the Energy Crisis is now conjured up with renewed urgency by the U.S. bourgeoisie. Once again, as in 1974, there is no real shortage of oil (despite some supply dislocations caused by the Iranian revolution); once again there is no real long or medium-range shortage of energy; and once again the U.S. rulers are using the opportunity to mount a chauvinist agitational campaign against the OPEC countries, trying to convince the American people that their enemies, the cause of all their troubles, are external—"out there," in mysterious sheikdoms and Iranian revolutionary councils, somehow connected with the Soviets—rather than right here at home.

Many similarities. But 1979 is not 1974, and we are not witnessing a repeat performance. The world of imperialist contention is not the same: the moves of the U.S. ruling class in relation to oil supplies must be seen in very close connection with the accelerating movement toward inter-imperialist world war (see "Another 'Oil Crisis': Imperialists Defend Jugular Vein of Empire," *Revolution*, April 1979).

This brings up the question: Has OPEC also changed? In 1973 and 1974 there was a fairly widespread tendency to view OPEC as basically an anti-imperialist alliance—and one which would serve as a model for a new form of action against imperialism. The extent to which this was true at the time, and the extent to which it has changed since then, are questions this article will address.

One pole of thought is represented by the following statement:

At the present stage, a developing country that wants to develop its national economy must first of all keep its natural resources in its own hands and gradually shake off the control of foreign capital. In many developing countries, the production of raw materials accounts for a considerable proportion of the national economy. If they can take in their own hands the production, use, sale, storage and transport of raw materials and sell them at reasonable prices on the basis of equitable trade relations in exchange for a greater amount of goods needed for the growth of their industrial and agricultural production, they will then be able to resolve step by step the difficulties they are facing and pave the way for an early emergence from poverty and backwardness.'

The speaker here is Teng Hsiao-ping, in the course of voicing the infamous "three worlds strategy." OPEC is hailed, in effect, as the model for how countries under the heel of imperialism can "gradually" free themselves from exploitation by foreign capital and "step by step" develop the productive forces of their countries. In other words, OPEC is held up as a model of the correct *strategy* for waging the struggle against imperialism on the part of countries dominated by imperialism.

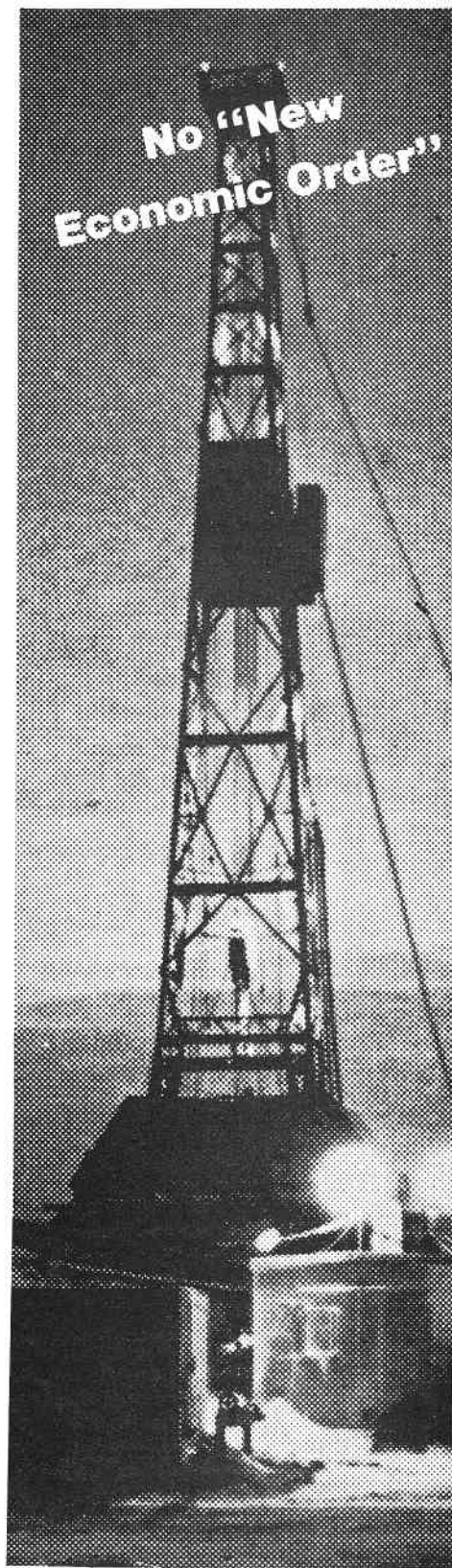
This thesis is and always was fundamentally wrong. It is nothing but reformism in the international sphere, and coming from the mouth of a supposed communist, it is pure revisionism. Freedom from imperialism can only be won by the *revolutionary struggle* of the masses. And as long as imperialist domination continues, it inevitably holds back and perverts the development of a country's productive forces—its economic development. This has been amply proven by the history of the OPEC countries themselves in this decade, as will be seen below.

As will also be seen, OPEC has had an aspect of conflicting (or more accurately, haggling) with the imperialist powers—but this is by no means its only aspect, nor is it the one which is always dominant. Further, although OPEC was able to strike certain blows at imperialism and create a situation with new features, the imperialists were able to adapt themselves to this new situation and continue to assert their domination. To understand what has happened here, it is first necessary to review some history.

The Oil Industry

Oil has been an important resource since the latter part of the 19th century—and one whose production has been an important source of enrichment for the capitalists, as witnessed by Rockefeller's Standard Oil trust. But its importance in both these respects has vastly increased during this century, until by the beginning of this decade it was, for example, the predominant world energy source and probably the most important commodity in international trade, accounting for almost one half the tonnage of all international sea trade.

From the first, the industry was dominated by monopolies. In the U.S. it was Standard Oil; internationally it was Standard and Royal Dutch Shell (an Anglo-Dutch company). World War 1 showed the strategic



value of oil and also destroyed the old Ottoman (Turkish) Empire (within whose boundaries were much of the then-known undeveloped oilfields), thus giving impetus to the drive of the imperialist powers to control world oil resources. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company, strongly supported by the British government, got a 60-year exclusive natural gas and petroleum concession in Iran. Britain got Iraq as a "protectorate" after the war, and had its puppet government there grant it an oil concession.

The U.S. oil companies (consisting mainly of the companies which came out of the former Standard Oil trust and those, like Texaco and Gulf, which came out of the big discoveries of oil in Texas and along the Gulf of Mexico) were able to legally form a cartel during World War I, and they moved quickly to get in on Iraq's oil. Finally in 1927 a group of British, Dutch, French and U.S. oil companies was formed to jointly exploit Iraq's oil—a compromise reflecting the declining strength of British imperialism. This group agreed, in fact, not to compete with each other throughout the area of the former Ottoman Empire, and the biggest British and American companies agreed not to compete in marketing as well.

In the 1930s, the new oil discoveries came in the Arabian peninsula, and the concessions there were almost all "given" to U.S. companies. By the beginning of World War 2, what came to be called "the seven sisters" had consolidated their power in international oil; they were Standard Oil of N.J. (now Exxon), Mobil (Standard of N.Y.), Gulf, Socal (Standard of California, or Chevron), Texaco, Anglo-Persian (which became British Petroleum), and Royal Dutch Shell. The set-up clearly reflected the dominance of U.S. imperialism, a dominance which was strengthened by World War 2, during and after which it was a basic part of U.S. policy to supplant Britain in the Middle East, especially with regard to protecting U.S. access to Mideast oil and pushing forward U.S. investments. When Iran tried, in the early 1950s, to nationalize the British company which controlled oil production there, the British instituted an economic boycott of the country, which the U.S. supported. The U.S. then moved in with its CIA-engineered coup, set up the Shah, and got an agreement which gave rights over Iran's oil to a consortium which included 40% U.S. companies.

In Europe, meanwhile, the U.S. had asserted its dominance over its junior imperialist war-ravaged allies and erstwhile enemies. One means to this end was the Marshall Plan, whose main purpose was to assure that Europe could quickly become a major market for U.S. capital and goods. And the oil companies were certainly not left out of the picture, with every effort being made to increase Europe's dependence on oil, since that industry was now dominated by U.S. companies. As one analyst comments:

Some \$2 billion of total Marshall Plan assistance of \$13 billion was for oil imports, while the Marshall Plan blocked projects for European crude oil production and helped American oil companies to gain control of Europe's refineries.³

The U.S. even refused to fill requests for railroad cars, instead allocating 65,000 unrequested trucks to the European countries, in order to open up the market for oil to a greater extent by building the trucking industry at the expense of the railroads.

But we won't waste too many tears on the

**But 1979 is not 1974
... imperialist contention is
not the same.**

woes of the European (and Japanese) imperialists as they lost out in contention with their U.S. counterparts. The oil which could now be marketed to such an extent in Europe came from the Middle East, where U.S. companies extracted not only the petroleum from the ground, but almost \$15 billion in profits in the postwar years of 1948-1960. But, although the "seven sisters" had various agreements among themselves to try to keep things under control, the mad pursuit of profit by the various capitalists, and the immensity of the profits themselves, had their usual unsettling effects. Other capitalists were not content to let the seven sisters have it all—they wanted a share in the loot too.

The way was opened up for other companies, particularly by the Italian national oil company (known by its initials, ENI), which negotiated an agreement with Iran in the late 1950s to explore for new oil and share the profits in a 25/75% split in favor of the producing country (Iran) rather than the 50/50% division which was the invariable rule with the seven sisters. Other companies, both state and private, rushed in to negotiate agreements along the same lines, with an eagerness which betrayed the great profits to be made even if the company took only half the profits the major companies were taking.

This, of course, revealed the immensity of the superprofits being realized by the seven major monopolies and thus put a certain amount of pressure on them in this respect. But a more immediate effect was a greater production of oil, which exerted a downward pressure on the price of oil. Actually this over-supply relative to demand, although exacerbated by the oil production of the smaller companies which were gaining a foothold in the Middle East, was already inherent in the discovery of immense amounts of oil in this area in the postwar period. The seven sisters, naturally, had set up monopoly production

and price agreements, but there was a constant tendency for prices to go down, and only the occurrence of various events which increased demand (like the Korean War) or decreased production (like Mossadegh's nationalization in Iran or the crisis following Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal, both events which hit at imperialism) enabled the high monopoly prices, which had little relation to the costs of production, to be maintained.

Finally, at the end of the 1950s, the major companies were forced to cut prices. And it was the response of the producing countries to this price-cutting which brought OPEC into existence.

Formation of OPEC

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was formed in 1960 by Venezuela and the four major Mideast producers (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq and Iran) as a direct response to the cuts in the official or "posted" prices at the Persian Gulf made by the oil companies in February 1959 and in August 1960. (Posted prices were the set prices per barrel of oil upon which the companies paid royalties and taxes to the producing-country governments. By this point market prices had fallen substantially below posted prices. Thus a cut in posted prices was to the benefit of the companies and to the detriment of the countries.)

During the 1960s OPEC was a very timid and conciliatory organization. It did not succeed in reversing the cuts in posted prices, nor did it succeed in most of its other stated objectives, such as gaining information from the oil companies on exactly how the final price of oil was arrived at, or increased "participation" in the oil industry. Its only victory was in preventing the further decline of posted prices (although market prices did

**(OPEC's) role... was...
conservative, putting a brake
on the movement of the
masses.**

continue to go down). The practice of OPEC in relation to the oil companies is summed up by one writer as follows:

Negotiations were allowed to drag on interminably, in a way which left the companies with the initiative and the countries only with the option of accepting or rejecting company offers. There was no real negotiating strategy used by OPEC beyond repeated declarations of its "sense of responsibility and good faith" instead

of "being a menace and a threat to the security of the international oil industry." OPEC repeatedly went along with company ultimatums and deadlines, and just as readily waived its own deadlines whenever the companies made some last-minute token gestures of accommodation.⁴

In fact OPEC was during this period an organization which was more useful than dangerous to the oil companies. To see why this is so, it is necessary to remember the wave of anti-imperialist nationalism which was steadily growing throughout the decade of the 1950s, and which erupted in crises for the imperialists several times in the Middle East (which has always been the center of OPEC). 1951 saw the Iranian nationalization of their oil industry. In 1952 the Egyptian "Free Officers" threw out the decadent King Farouq and instituted a regime in which Gamal Abdul Nasser soon rose to the leading position. 1954 saw the beginning of armed struggle in Algeria against French colonialism. In 1955 the U.S. refused to give Nasser arms unless Egypt signed a full military and political agreement with the U.S., at which point Nasser turned to the Soviet Union for arms. In retaliation the U.S. abridged its agreement with Egypt to help build the Aswan dam. Also in 1955 the U.S. set up the Baghdad Pact, which linked Britain, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Iraq in a "defense" treaty.

1956 was a year of sharp struggle against imperialist domination in the area. In April there were strikes by oil workers and others in Bahrein, the British administrative center in the Persian Gulf, directed against the British presence; in June there was a massive protest against Aramco, the imperialist oil company, in Saudi Arabia; and finally in July Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal. This brought on an invasion in November by Britain, France and Israel to seize back the canal. The U.S., though, saw that this would only increase resistance to imperialism and boost the prestige of Nasser, so it refused to support the invasion, and the European powers were forced to retreat. This enabled the U.S. to crush these junior imperialists' pretensions to independent action, and to put itself forward as opposed to colonialism.

This was followed up by the "Eisenhower Doctrine" for the Middle East, which was a program of military and economic "aid" coupled with the promise or threat to intervene militarily to "protect the independence" of nations in the area "against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international Communism." This was immediately put to use in Jordan, where King Hussein invoked the spectre of communism to arrest the Prime Minister, dissolve parliament, etc., and received the assistance of the U.S. Sixth Fleet to do so. In July 1958 the "Free Officers" in Iraq overthrew the reactionary monarchy. Immediately Britain

sent paratroops to Jordan and the U.S. landed 14,000 Marines in Lebanon, ready to invade Iraq. It was probably only the promises of the new military government not to touch the oil companies that saved Iraq from invasion.

Thus the decade was a tumultuous one in the Middle East, and while the movements against imperialism there were for the most part led by vague and ultimately rightist ideologies of pan-Arab nationalism and "Arab socialism," there was no mistaking the strong and militant hatred of imperialist oppression which infused the movement of the masses. This also held true with regard to oil, as it was apparent to all that the oil companies were the chief means of imperialist exploitation in the area. Demands grew that Arab oil wealth be considered the property of the whole "Arab nation" and that the oil concessions be completely reconstituted.

This is in contrast to the timid requests for a few more pennies which OPEC was voicing. The *Middle East Economic Survey* summed up OPEC's role in January 1964 as follows: "Oil has aroused certain emotions in the Middle East which must be satisfied, and this is OPEC's task." This can be seen as a statement that, given the strong anti-imperialist sentiments of the masses, and the fact that the oil concessions were the most obvious embodiments of imperialist exploitation, OPEC had the task of channeling this sentiment into demands acceptable to the oil companies and to the imperialists (especially the U.S.) as a whole, or at least into demands that would not fundamentally alter their position. It was not, of course, that OPEC was a mere tool or a puppet of the companies, but that its role during this period was essentially conservative, putting a brake on the movement of the masses rather than leading it forward.

New Contradictions

However, as the 1970s began, new contradictions were emerging both within the petroleum industry and within the system of Western imperialism, contradictions which also had their effect on OPEC and its role. Within the industry the main fact of life that seemed to be emerging was a large glut of oil. The entrance of new companies into the field of international oil, lured by the immense profits which the oil majors had been able to make in the postwar period, had continued during the 1960s. The consequence was a fall in market prices. This, coupled with what slight concessions OPEC had been able to obtain, and, more importantly, the increasing cost of digging new wells, meant a falling rate of profit per barrel of oil. Companies were able to maintain gross profits only by increasing the level of production—which increased the supply and exerted more downward pressure on the price.

Within the system of Western imperialism, the most prominent fact was the increasing

weakness of U.S. imperialism, signaled particularly by the increasingly obvious prospect of its defeat in Vietnam, but also by the increasing contradictions between the U.S. and its junior partners in Europe and Japan.

Further, one factor in the growing U.S. weakness was the increasing strength of the Soviet Union, which was beginning to contend for the U.S. position as top imperialist dog. Taken together, these things made it impossible for the U.S. to assert its hegemony with the same brazenness as earlier, and gave the ruling classes of the dependent countries some more room to maneuver—if only for the purpose of feathering their own nests.

In the Middle East, meanwhile, the June 1967 Israeli war against its Arab neighbors created a whole new situation. On the one hand, the crushing defeat of Egypt and Syria seemed to reveal the bankruptcy of the radical pan-Arabism and "Arab socialism" of which they had been the main exponents. At the Khartoum Arab summit meeting in August 1967 Nasser, considered the leader of Arab radicalism, was forced to acknowledge the political hegemony of the reactionary Saudi regime in the Arab world in exchange for large subsidies to repair the Egyptian economy. (This subservient relationship of Egypt to Saudi Arabia intensified under Sadat after Nasser's death, and played no small role in Egypt's sell-out treaty with Israel—even though Saudi Arabia had to make a show of opposing the treaty.) The Saudi line of oil as a so-called "positive weapon" (on which more below) was accepted, with the Khartoum conference resolving that

nothing should be done to impair the financial capability of the Arab oil-producing states to back the unified Arab efforts; and that the responsibility for deciding on appropriate measures should be left to the producing countries themselves....⁶

In other words: no joint oil embargos!

On the other hand, the aftermath of the June war also involved the Palestine Liberation Organization taking its independence, at least formally, from the Arab League, and later that year the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman declared its adherence to Marxism, and South Yemen won its independence from the British under the leadership of a group which had begun to give formal adherence to Marxism. Indeed, throughout the Middle East, the victory of Israel in the June war, clearly backed by the U.S., showed revolutionaries the necessity of a deeper understanding of imperialism and how to resist it, and of course the search for this understanding led more and more toward Marxism-Leninism.

It was these sharpened contradictions between imperialism and the popular forces in the Middle East which made it politically impossible for any Arab state not to use (or

at least threaten) the "oil weapon," in the form of an embargo, in any new war with Israel—such as was to come in 1973.

Further, there were political events which affected the oil industry more directly. In the late 1960s Iraq nationalized those areas and oil fields which had been given to the companies in concessions but had not yet been developed. The oil companies retaliated by cutting back production, even drilling wells to the wrong depth and bulldozing over others. In 1969 Iraq entered into an agreement with the Soviet Union to develop the nationalized fields.

Finally, in September 1969 a group of young soldiers and army officers brought down the British-sponsored regime of King Idris in Libya, which had been noted for its extreme corruption, and whose oil laws had been drafted by the petroleum companies themselves. Libya had been seen in the preceding decade as a haven for the companies from the "instability" of the Arab world in the eastern Mediterranean, but now Libya was to become the starting point for some instability for the Western imperialists and the oil companies.

Price Rises of 1971

Libya was in a unique position among the oil-producing countries because of the interaction of several factors. Its oil was more saleable because of its closeness to Europe, which cut down on shipping costs, and because of its low sulphur content. On the other hand, it was the only source of supply for several smaller "independent" companies which had entered the picture in the late 1950s and early '60s. All this gave Libya a better bargaining position, which it began to use in 1970 under the "Islamic socialist" regime of Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. Libya joined Iraq and Algeria in voicing a philosophy of militancy with regard to negotiations with the oil companies, and then put it into effect in bargaining with some of the independents, ordering them to cut back on production if Libya's terms were not met.

In September 1970 Libya and Occidental Petroleum (one of these smaller companies) announced an agreement whereby what was then considered a rather sharp hike was given to its posted prices. This set the stage for the negotiations at Tehran in early 1971 between OPEC and the oil companies.

Before negotiations began, the companies met together in New York to map out a strategy, receiving specific exemption from the U.S. antitrust laws to do so (an exemption not rescinded until mid-1974). Meanwhile, meetings were held in Washington between representatives of the U.S., Britain, France and the Netherlands—in other words the parent countries to the major international oil companies. The companies then went to Tehran and quickly concluded an agreement with OPEC, giving the Persian Gulf countries a deal proportionately similar to what



Pseudo-militant posturing to hide real hand-in-glove relation to imperialism by Yamani, Saudi Arabian Oil Minister.

Libya had obtained. Later Libyan prices were further raised in the Tripoli Agreement of March 1971.

Many have commented on the ease with which the big oil companies agreed to OPEC demands at this time. A former advisor to the Libyan Ministry of Petroleum, for instance, who was involved in these negotiations, says that the companies

... did not show any significant resistance to OPEC claims, and the Teheran negotiations almost seemed to be "club discussions" for drawing up the details of a formal agreement rather than to challenge its basic components. The oil companies were there to sign, not to fight.⁷

Even before this point, the oil companies could probably have headed these demands off by supplying Occidental with the crude oil it needed to fill its contracts with European customers, thus enabling the company to resist the Libyan demands. But the majors specifically refused to do so. Why? And why were they so compliant to OPEC demands this time around? These questions will be looked into below.

But first let us look at the events which marked the real qualitative leap in the evolution of OPEC: the 1973 October war with Israel, the Arab oil embargo, and the subsequent steep oil price rise. Limited oil embargos had been imposed during the 1956 and 1967 wars, but they had been almost totally ineffective due to incomplete participation and the ability of the oil companies to reroute supplies. Following 1967, Saudi Arabia used its hegemony in the Arab world to downplay all talk of an embargo. Instead, it was emphasized that oil should be used as a "positive" rather than a "negative" weapon, a strategy explained by Saudi Arabian Minister of Petroleum Sheikh Yamani as follows in 1972:

I must say that we do not believe in the use of oil as a political weapon in a negative manner. We believe that the best way for the Arabs to employ their oil is as a basis for true cooperation with the West, notably with the United States. In this way very strong economic ties are established which will ultimately reflect on our political relations.⁸

This was the general policy of complete capitulation and trust in the "reasonableness" of U.S. imperialism (which was supposed to get Israel to give up the conquered territories) which Saudi Arabia urged and played a key role in forcing upon the rest of the Arab world in the years following 1967. But the only fruit of this policy was a series of more and more defeatist and conciliatory statements and actions on the part of the Arabs, and complete intransigence on the part of Israel, which proceeded to integrate the occupied territories into its economy.

In the face of the obvious bankruptcy of this strategy, Egypt and Syria began planning the 1973 war to regain their territories. Saudi Arabia (which was giving large amounts of aid to both countries) was told of these plans, alone among outside states, and was not necessarily opposed, since it was obvious that both Saudi Arabia and the Sadat regime in Egypt had to do something to try to show the masses that they were not completely cowed by Zionism and imperialism. Once the war broke out, it was likewise politically impossible for Saudi Arabia not to go along with the use of oil as a "negative weapon." But even so, they managed to drag their feet to the greatest possible degree, waiting until the fighting had been going on for almost a month, when Nixon requested \$2.2 billion emergency aid for Israel, before reluctantly agreeing to oil production cutbacks and an embargo of close allies of Israel, principally the U.S. (In reality, the embargo, at least on the Saudi's part, was never intended to be implemented.) Although the Arab embargo was supposed to last until Israel had with-

Continued on page 29

THE DRAFT & IMPERIALIST WAR

As the laws of imperialism inexorably push the rival imperialist blocs led by the U.S. and the USSR towards war, their war preparations on a number of fronts are necessarily stepping up rapidly. The U.S. bourgeoisie, just like their counterparts in the Soviet Union, pursue dual tactics. They spew out a stream of words about "peace" and disarmament and prepare to sign another SALT treaty in order to camouflage their growing drive towards war. But increasingly the bourgeoisie is directly building public opinion to prepare for war—by issuing appeals through their thousand and one mouthpieces to protect the U.S.'s empire of exploitation, openly touting their "superior" new weapons systems, and making new efforts to reinstate the draft in one form or another.

In recent months the bourgeoisie has launched a big campaign to prepare the masses for the reinstatement of the draft. Though the form this has taken has been a debate among various politicians and generals between only requiring that all 18-year-olds register and that there be immediate institution of the draft, the signs are unmistakable—the bourgeoisie wants the draft back, and soon.

The arguments marshalled by the imperialists in favor of restoring the draft center heavily around their "manpower shortage" in the armed forces. For the first time in recent history, during the last quarter of 1978 all four services fell short of their recruiting quotas. Even with various enticements to join the "exciting, all-volunteer army" (especially the astronomical unemployment rate among youth, particularly Black and other minority youth!), their army is a full division short of its mandated force levels.

This comes at a time when the U.S. Army is steadily beefing up its forces in West Germany, troop withdrawals from South Korea have ground to a standstill, and the Army and Marine Corps have put together a 100,000-man "strike force" for use in the Middle East, the northwestern Pacific and other strategic areas for U.S. imperialism.

Beating the drums of war loudly, Army Chief of Staff Bernard Rogers (slated to be the next NATO commander-in-chief) and others point to the fact that the Individual Ready Reserve, the only source of trained

personnel to replace combat casualties among active units during the early stages of war, is more than half a million below its mobilization strength of 700,000. Thus, Rogers and others are currently calling on Congress to institute a limited draft of 70,000 to 100,000 men a year in order to bring the Individual Ready Reserve up to required levels by 1985.

Make no bones about it, the bourgeoisie and its generals are getting ready for the real thing. Though there are still differences among them over how and when to restore the draft—due mainly to the widespread opposition to the draft among the masses, especially from the struggle against the Vietnam War—they are solidly united on the need to restore registration of all 18-year-olds as a basic first step for bringing back conscription. As General Louis Wilson, commandant of the Marine Corps, recently commented, "I believe the draft will be necessary in the decade of the '80s [but] at the moment I'm in favor of registration first."

However, what the imperialists are even more united on is the necessity to start preparing the masses of people for war, to unite them behind the imperialist state (to "Keep America Number 1") and to sweep away the considerable anti-war sentiments and political opposition to their preparations for war. And this is certainly an important part of what they are trying to accomplish through this current debate on bringing back the draft.

These developments raise important questions about the stand of the Party towards the draft and the struggle against it. What relationship does this have to the overall tasks of communists around an inter-imperialist war on a world scale? The historical experience of the proletariat sheds some light on this question, particularly the revolutionary line developed during the first imperialist world war by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in Russia. In addition, the stands taken by the Socialist Party and the IWW in the U.S. during World War I, and the massive resistance to the draft as part of the movement against the Vietnam War in the late '60s and early '70s, periods when the draft and resistance to it were major social questions, contain valuable lessons for today.

(The situation in World War 2 was more complicated due to the entry of the Soviet Union into the war and is outside the scope of this article.)

Communist Stand on Draft

The RCP's stand on the draft is to oppose it as part of the reactionary war preparations of the bourgeoisie. The Party supports opposition and resistance to the draft, especially mass forms of resistance that target the imperialists and expose their criminal drive towards war. However, this is not the central thrust nor the strategy for the Party's work around the imperialist armed forces and the question of war, especially the inter-imperialist world war between the U.S. and the USSR whose shadow is more and more ominously hanging over the masses of people. The communist attitude to such wars is not to "boycott" them, but rather to build the all-round revolutionary struggle against the war and the bourgeoisie itself both before and in the course of the war.

The Party's strategy around imperialist war is one of *revolutionary defeatism*. It is *defeatist* because the proletariat welcomes the defeats suffered by the U.S. bourgeoisie during imperialist war—not because it is working for the victory of another equally imperialist power (though in the event of an imperialist war of aggression against an oppressed nation such as during the Vietnam War, communists do work for the victory of the "enemy")—but because the defeats suffered by the bourgeoisie and the profound crises that inevitably result from world war provide the proletariat with the opportunity of advancing its struggle towards the overthrow of the imperialist slavemasters by the *revolution* of the working class. This demands building revolutionary struggle among the masses of workers and other oppressed, and in close conjunction with this, doing revolutionary work among the imperialist armed forces in order to disintegrate them and win over as much of the rank and file soldiers to the revolution as possible.

Presently anti-draft sentiments among the masses are widespread, and spontaneous resistance to the draft has already started to develop, particularly arising out of the powerful struggle against the Vietnam War

that forced the bourgeoisie to drop the use of the draft in January 1973. Opposition and resistance to the draft is one significant expression of the masses' deep hatred for imperialist war and is a first step that millions will take in opposition to the bourgeoisie's drive towards war. Widespread resistance to the draft can do much to oppose and expose the imperialists' war preparations and can help create more favorable conditions for all-round revolutionary work among the broad masses and within the military itself.

However, opposition to the draft by itself cannot stop the imperialists from raising and fielding an army. The laws of imperialism dictate that the bourgeoisie maintain a standing army to enforce their class rule at home, to expand their worldwide system of plunder and to defend it from revolutionary forces as well as from competing imperialist powers. To take one example, despite massive draft resistance during the Vietnam War, the bourgeoisie still was able to press-gang their army. But this resistance was a powerful impetus to the struggle against the war among the broad masses as well as among the GI's forced to fight the war.

It is wrong, however, to make building an anti-draft movement the lynchpin of the work of communists in relation to imperialist war. This could only serve to fuel illusions, especially tending towards bourgeois pacifism, that spontaneously arise within anti-draft movements, such as believing it possible to individually opt out of the war, or that imperialist war can be stopped by massive enough draft resistance, i.e., a boycott, of the war.

Bolsheviks and World War I

The revolutionary line around imperialist war was first developed and put into practice by the Bolsheviks during World War I. Years before 1914, the Second International, composed of social democratic parties who espoused Marxism (but most of whom were being eaten away by revisionism within their ranks) predicted that war on a world scale was coming as a result of the rivalry between the major imperialist powers. It summed up that the international working class had no stake in such a war. The social democratic parties agreed to mobilize the masses through broad anti-war agitation, by having social democratic representatives in Parliament vote against military appropriations, mandatory conscription and other moves toward war, and even by preparing to take mass actions against the war when it broke out. As late as 1912, in the famous Basle Declaration, the Second International reaffirmed the stand that "In case a war should nevertheless break out, the Socialists shall take measures to bring about its early termination and strive with all their power to use the economic and political crises created by the war to arouse the masses politically and hasten the overthrow of capitalist class rule." When the war actually broke out in August 1914, however,

the leaders of most of the social democratic parties scrambled terrified beneath the skirts of the monopoly capitalists of their own countries, and they called for "defense of the fatherland," urging the workers of their respective countries to march off to slaughter their fellow workers.

But some revolutionary Social Democrats stood firmly with the working class in denouncing the war as thoroughly reactionary. Foremost among them were the Russian Bolsheviks led by Lenin, who not only analyzed the reactionary class nature of the war but out of this developed the line of revolutionary defeatism, summed up in the slogan of "convert the imperialist war into civil war." They pointed out that the war crisis itself created untold suffering among the masses and increased their revolutionary sentiments. Further, the Bolsheviks recognized that the war, and particularly military defeats, would greatly weaken the capitalist class and its state apparatus and create more favorable conditions for its revolutionary overthrow.

The Bolshevik deputies in the Duma voted against war credits and agitated against the war until their arrest in late 1914. The Bolsheviks formed illegal revolutionary cells in the armed forces, advocated fraternization among the soldiers of the opposing armies at the front, organized revolutionary actions and strikes of the workers and peasants against the war, and worked tirelessly to direct the masses towards an actual insurrection against their own government at a time when it was reeling from military defeats and a deep economic and political crisis. The Tsarist regime unwittingly aided the revolutionary work of the Bolsheviks in the military by drafting thousands of Bolsheviks and militant workers (many of whom were regular

readers of the Bolshevik press) into the army as a punitive measure after the outbreak of the war in 1914.

At that time, the Tsarist army was made up overwhelmingly of peasant conscripts, and due to the autocratic form of rule that characterized Russia, coupled with a giant wave of patriotism that swept the country with the outbreak of the war, there was little or no spontaneous struggle against conscription. While the Bolsheviks opposed the war mobilization, they did not urge the masses of workers and peasants to refuse conscription. The stand taken by Lenin and the Bolsheviks under these conditions was illustrated vividly in the famous question he posed in 1916:

What will the proletarian women do against it [militarism]? Only curse all war and everything military, only demand disarmament? The women of an oppressed class that is really revolutionary will never consent to play such a shameful role. They will say to their sons: "You will soon be a man. You will be given a gun. Take it and learn the military art. The proletarians need this knowledge not to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as they are doing in the present war... but to fight the bourgeoisie of your own country..."

In fact, under the conditions in Russia at that time, for the Bolsheviks to have issued a general call to refuse military service would only have kept the most revolutionary-minded workers out of the Tsarist army, thus retarding the revolutionary work that cried out to be done inside the army, which would bear fruit especially as the war dragged on. And drag on it did, until 1917 when the Russian workers, soldiers and peasants rose up to



During the war in Vietnam massive struggle against the draft and resistance inside the military (such as these GI's refusing to go into combat) contributed greatly to the defeat of U.S. imperialism. As a third world war looms ever closer, communists must prepare the masses of people, including soldiers, to turn the guns on the war-mongering imperialists.

throw off first the hated Tsar, and soon after the "liberal" capitalist government which had continued the Tsarist government's war policy. It was in this way that the world's first socialist state was established.

The electrifying victory of the Russian Revolution, right in the middle of World War I, drove home a crucial lesson: that imperialist war does not require the communists and the class-conscious workers to hop on the war wagon with their own ruling classes, or to stand aside passively, but that it affords great opportunities to advance the masses' revolutionary struggle, and even to rise up and overthrow the bourgeoisie in the course of the war itself. Lenin stated emphatically that "only a bourgeois" believes that a war which *began* as a fight between rival imperialist powers could only *end* with the victory or defeat of one or another capitalist governments. It could end instead, at least in some conditions, with the revolutionary defeat of the reactionary government—the revolutionary *victory* of the *proletariat*. The Bolshevik Revolution demonstrated the total bankruptcy of pacifism (as distinguished from the masses' just desire for peace) and of illusory strategies for ending imperialist war short of proletarian revolution.

Socialist Party and IWW in World War I

The stand taken by the American left, represented chiefly by the Socialist Party and the IWW (International Workers of the World), towards the draft and World War I, also bears some examination. The Socialist Party, which at that time was dominated by petty bourgeois reformers and "sausage socialists" who saw socialism as arriving through gradual reforms and elections (but also had within it a growing Marxist left wing) came out against the war in 1914 with an essentially pacifist stand. They called on the U.S. to remain neutral and generally played up to the isolationist and even pro-German trends existing among large sections of the American people and the SP membership. On the subject of the social democratic parties in Europe that had caved in to their respective capitalist rulers, the SP National Executive Committee apologized for their treachery, saying "they did the best they could under the circumstances." The SP left wing struggled with this rightism and opportunism, and prior to 1917 it led struggle against conscription and the bourgeoisie's war preparations.

When the U.S. bourgeoisie entered the war on the side of the British-French-Russian imperialists in April 1917, the Socialist Party took a much firmer anti-imperialist stand against the war at an Emergency Convention held in St. Louis. Within days, hundreds of thousands demonstrated against the war under SP leadership in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and other cities. In the twin cities of Rock Island and Moline, Illinois, 18,000 men refused to register for the draft. However the SP's petty-bourgeois leader-

ship, centered around Morris Hillquit, retreated rapidly from this stand, especially as the government rammed through the Espionage Act in 1917 and proceeded to round up and jail thousands of SP and IWW members for the "crime" of opposing the war.

In contrast, the SP's left wing, including leaders such as Eugene Debs and a number of people who later went on to found the Communist Party in 1919, maintained their stand against the war and conscription through 1917-18. The salvos of the Russian Revolution had a powerful influence on them, as well as on revolutionaries in the IWW and elsewhere. In January 1918, Debs wrote, "The quickest way to end the war was to encourage the workers of Germany and Austria to overthrow their emperors...the ruling class of all nations engaged in the conflict, including our own profiteering plutocracy, must also be overthrown, and this is the great work that confronts us on the threshold of the new year." Due to his uncompromising stand against the war, Debs was arrested in 1918 and sentenced to ten years in prison (from where he was to run for President in 1920 on an anti-war and socialist platform and receive more than a million votes).

The IWW took a militant stand against the war at its outbreak in 1914 and against conscription (which was first introduced in 1916). In contrast to the stale reformism of much of the SP (reflecting its petty-bourgeois leadership and part of its social base), the Wobbly workers carried on widespread soap-boxing and revolutionary agitation against the war, including through the anti-war songs in the "Little Red Songbook." They mounted active opposition to the bourgeois "Preparedness Day Parades" and other efforts to mobilize public opinion for war. However, with the U.S. entry into the war in 1917, the IWW leadership backed off and urged their membership to register for the draft as "IWW opposed to war." This met opposition from revolutionary-minded Wobblies, including leaders such as Frank Little. One account of the emergency IWW General Executive Board meeting in July 1917 reported the following exchange:

"If we oppose the draft, they'll run us out of business," Richard Brazier had said. "They'll run us out of business anyway," insisted Frank Little. "Better to go out in a blaze of glory than to give in. Either we're for this capitalist slaughterfest or we're against it. I'm ready to face a firing squad rather than compromise."

As a direct outgrowth of its anarcho-syndicalism and opposition to political action, the IWW as a whole pursued an abstentionist policy during the war instead of a policy of active opposition. Though the Wobblies were hardly pacifists, their anti-war stand was based on essentially anti-militarist as well as anti-capitalist grounds. Thus, the IWW attempted to "boycott" the war and

directed its attention to the workers' economic struggles during 1917-18. Just the same, during their organizing campaigns IWW members were savagely attacked by the capitalists and branded with charges of "sedition" and being "German agents."

Though the anti-war stands taken by the left wing of the SP and the IWW placed them in opposition to the social chauvinism and abject betrayal of most of the European social democrats (as well as a large section of the SP which deserted to the banner of the U.S. bourgeoisie, the AFL and other jingoists during the course of the war), serious internal political weaknesses hamstringed them from mounting consistent opposition to the war and taking a thoroughly revolutionary stand. Their anti-conscription work, in particular, strongly tended to develop into a position of "boycotting" the war, which ruled out the possibility of overthrowing the ruling class during the war and consequently negated the critical task of doing anti-war and revolutionary agitation among the imperialist armed forces. Overall, only a small minority in the SP and the IWW grasped the significant opportunities that existed for advancing the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat through the course of World War I.

Since the U.S. did not officially enter the war until three years after its outbreak, and the actual fighting in Europe never seriously threatened to move to American soil, the situation made it more possible for the American left to maintain a somewhat pragmatic anti-war stand that often tailed isolationist and spontaneous anti-militarist trends among the masses. Furthermore, since the deep crises that many of the European belligerent powers underwent during the war were not felt in the U.S. nearly as strongly, the question of capitulation vs. working for the defeat and revolutionary overthrow of the U.S. bourgeoisie through the course of the war was never posed as sharply here as in Europe.

Draft Resistance and the Movement Against the Vietnam War

The powerful movement against the war in Vietnam, and the struggle against the draft that arose in relation to it, are crucial to sum up. The various interpretations of this period held by millions of people have a direct bearing on their current views on the draft and the looming imperialist war.

Beginning with a small handful of draft resisters in the early '60s (many of whom applied for conscientious objector status on the basis of religious and pacifist convictions), thousands and eventually millions came to oppose the draft in one way or another as part of the overall anti-war movement. Draft resistance and other actions such as signing "We Won't Go" pledges in the early stages of the war (like the first mass pledges developed by hundreds of Black youth in

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Modernization . . .

(Continued from page 11)

now the neo-colonial relationship was with the Soviet Union as imperialist overlord).

Such difficulties make necessary frantic planning to utilize and manage resources under conditions in which they cannot be rationally allocated given the unrealistic targets, e.g. large steel mills to be constructed when there are no assured supplies of raw materials and inadequate transportation, as is the case in China. And it also becomes necessary to placate sectors of the population unleashed by the promises and methods of such a program while the majority is enjoined to work hard and perhaps be the lucky ones to get ahead. The illusion of broad and systematic planning to the year 1985, to the year 2000, is shown up for what it is—anarchy. The long-term planning which is supposed to take account of capital construction needs, indicate a general orientation and raise people's sights, proves totally unrealistic. The flexibility associated with short-term planning in realizing such goals now becomes a dike-plugging affair.

To understand the situation developing it is necessary to go back to the program outlined at the 5th National People's Congress. By most estimates it involves expenditure of perhaps \$600 billion over the 10-year period. Of this, \$230 billion is thought to be the cost of imported equipment which is the keystone of the entire project. There is no question that steel output, for instance, could be increased through the import of huge steel plants, such as the one planned for Baoshan by Nippon Steel, which was very much at the center of the steel expansion program. But the financing and absorption of this technology has already posed problems so serious that this contract was frozen since China had to pay (and lacked) cash for it.

China's foreign exchange reserves are estimated to be anywhere between \$1—2.5 billion—essentially a drop in the bucket. How will China pay for such plant and equipment? Tourism is one possible source of earnings, and would-be travelers will be happy to learn that the Bank of China is issuing travelers' checks and accepting credit cards. (For the more homesick tourist, coke and pornography are now being made available.) More significantly, it can finance these projects through export earnings which for some years to come will center around oil, light manufactures and cotton textiles.

But the development of the oil industry, itself, is based on a massive infusion of foreign exploration and extraction equipment, management and finance. In return for this assistance China has been willing to repay with a portion of the output from these and other sectors. These co-production deals, as they are called, are the most widely

employed and preferred at the present time. The development of an export-oriented oil industry, however, cannot be looked at in isolation from the rest of the economy. It requires the upgrading and expansion of port facilities to accommodate large tankers and the construction of pipeline, if inland sources are to be tapped. In other words, it requires major shifts in overall investment policy, not to mention a careful clamp on domestic consumption (which has increased 2-fold in the last 10 years and much of which goes towards fertilizer production) if this oil is to be freed up.

Baoshan is also interesting in this connection. If actually built, it will be the first Chinese steelworks to be constructed on China's coast—far from China's own ore deposits. Much of the increase in China's steel output in the '60s and '70s was due to

the output of small and medium-sized mills scattered throughout the country and able to process local materials. Not only will the new complex have to import Australian ore, but to do this a new berth will have to be built. And who was to have undertaken the necessary dredging of the river? A Dutch consortium! It becomes a kind of vicious cycle of tightening dependency and increasing distortion of the economy. What's more, the world market must be prepared to take up this oil. At present this would appear to be quite the order of the day—but so did it in 1973 just before the worldwide recession of 1974-75. As for the here and now, the world market is glutted with textiles and clothing, which figure in prominently in China's future export plans and which already make up 25% of China's export earnings. Moreover, the very markets the Chinese hope to penetrate

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with these goods (North America, Japan and Western Europe) have seen a major escalation in protectionism in the last few years. Meanwhile, the prices of the high-technology items the Chinese hope to bring home have been rising steeply.

The point is that China can't pay for all of what it intends to purchase (these compradors are like children in a candy shop). . .

Japan has no need for repayment in steel for its Baoshan complex, so other financial arrangements must be made. Various credit schemes have been worked out ranging from suppliers' credits to syndicated bank loans to what amounts to foreign "aid" from Japan's Export-Import Bank and its Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund. But here other problems present themselves—high interest rates, long-term loans denominated in yen which will be more costly to repay if the yen continues to climb in value relative to the dollar (the Chinese have been burned in such a way in contracts signed 4 or 5 years ago for plant and equipment), and the prospect of a rather large debt burden, even assuming that China meets some of these targets. Yet these targets are more and more at cross purposes with each other. There is to be a major expansion of oil and other raw material exports when agricultural mechanization is oil-based. There is to be a major drive to increase agricultural exports when increases in grain and non-staple food consumption in the cities is promised. There is to be price stability when this program has a built-in inclination towards inflation. Reports have been circulating of higher consumer prices in some cities and this undoubtedly will spread given the "all things to all people" hype behind the modernization program—wage increases, bonuses, promises of increased purchase prices of agricultural goods alongside the limited growth of consumer industries and the spread of rural free markets.

The point is that China can't pay for all of what it intends to purchase (these compradors are like children in a candy shop) and can't do what it says it can do as far as the fulfillment of these goals is concerned. The havoc it is already wreaking with the economy—the strains on resources and lopsiding of growth—is only a small glimpse into the future. The growth rate of industry over the past 10 years has been much greater than that of agriculture (though agricultural output picked up during the Cultural Revolution), and any program that has as its starting point the establishment of advanced industrial complexes, the technology of which cannot be widely introduced throughout the country, is only going to increase the

technological gap between industry and agriculture as well as widen differences between peasants and workers, since wage payments are to be more directly linked with output.

The All-Round Destruction of Agriculture

But it might be reasonably argued that the Chinese leadership's decision to re-evaluate some of the targets and to retrench a bit represent a new-found realism that will result in a more balanced growth between industry and agriculture. Actually, the latest calls to step up agricultural development (the editorials on this are excerpted in *Beijing Review* No. 11, 1979) will lead both to the exploitation of the peasantry and to more uneven development within the countryside in terms of the spread and level of technique and living standards. A hint of what was to come was contained in a *People's Daily* editorial published on January 28th—again, in the wake of the 3rd Plenum. Here it is concluded that "compared with the pre-liberation period, the peasants' living standards were much better during the time the agricultural cooperatives were set up . . . but in the following years farm output rose only slowly." The message is unambiguous. It was beginning in 1957-58 when the People's Communes were set up that mistakes were made! The ruling revisionists hanker for the balmy days not of the early '60s, but the 1950s—which is why Peng Teh-huai, a vocal opponent of the Great Leap Forward, has been posthumously restored to honor.

Mao's view was that mechanization was key to transforming agriculture, although he also stressed that collectivization had to proceed mechanization. The manner in which the mechanization of agriculture would be brought about required that industry serve agriculture (50% of all rolled steel had been allocated to farm equipment manufacture), that local industry at the county, commune and brigade level acquire the capability to produce and repair farm machinery as well as generate the funds to assist collective units in purchasing equipment, that technicians be trained from among the peasants, that agricultural science and education serve the needs of the peasants and be based on their experiences in production, and, most essentially, that all this be carried out within the framework of the continuous revolutionizing of the superstructure and production relations.

Hua Kuo-feng in his 1975 Tachai speech called for the mechanization of agriculture by 1980. The content of this mechanization has been continually redefined and finally the goal itself has been abandoned. But the political line guiding all of this has remained thoroughly consistent—that is, revisionist. The RCP's CC Report on China made an analysis of Hua's speech. It was pointed out that it does not deal anywhere with the central question of reducing differences between production teams. These are economic differences based on fertility, location of land

and previous accumulation. When the revolutionaries were in control several different kinds of measures would be taken to reduce these differences. First, political leadership would be given to these poor or more backward teams so that they could unfold mass movements to overcome various obstacles. Second, the commune's machinery would be used to enlarge arable land area and improve the soil. Third, some of the labor from these poorer teams would be employed in commune-run enterprises during slack season to boost incomes. And finally, the bulk of the reserves accumulated by these enterprises would be used to mechanize and further develop agriculture while a substantial portion would go toward expanding social services. Hand in hand with these measures were efforts by the revolutionaries to encourage those brigades or communes with more favorable conditions (better land, access to water, etc.) to make sacrifices to aid those less favorably suited. (The revolutionary opera *Song of the Dragon River* is a powerful portrayal of a struggle to implement this line.)

. . . "self-reliance" . . . has now come to mean sink or swim.

That Hua's much-touted mechanization program was just a pretext for widening such differences has now been completely borne out. In the fall of 1978 Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien announced an increase in the proportion of medium and large tractors to be earmarked for state mechanized farms. But it was a January 27th editorial that sealed the fate of the nationwide mechanization campaign. It explained that the state would "concentrate on building modern production bases in crop farming, forestry, animal husbandry and fisheries." Funds and material would be concentrated there. A subsequent editorial indicated "that these production bases can be built by expanding some state farms or by reclaiming virgin land. In some cases they can be run by the combined efforts of several people's communes." These bases receive the latest and most advanced equipment and the people there will be allowed to improve their living standards and, according to this revisionist wisdom, "become examples to the rest of the country." Other areas are to achieve mechanization, it is declared, by taking into account local conditions and practicing "self-reliance," a policy which has now come to mean sink or swim. The other key component of the new policy is a move away from grain self-sufficiency—different regions are to specialize in different activities with a greater emphasis on cash and industrial crops. Cash crops are not produced according to a compulsory delivery obligation to the

state. They include such items as fruit, vegetables, beets, medicinal herbs and tea. One example that is widely referred to concerns an area which in 1958 (the Great Leap Forward year when the communes were formed) turned grassland over to grain cultivation. Now it has reverted to grassland, to the jubilation of the revisionist planners.

Taken together, this is a frontal assault on Mao's agricultural policies. On this last point it was Mao's line to "take grain as the key link and ensure an all-round development." The logic of this was to reduce dependency on the state for grain supplies and to lessen the burden on the transportation system, making it possible for all regions to feed themselves. And it was a policy which helped safeguard the country's independence—first by minimizing needs for grain imports, and second by building up grain surpluses in order to sustain a war effort. This was not a call to eliminate other crops, but to establish priorities based on political criteria—including the development of the economy overall along *socialist* lines. Wherever possible, for instance, a cotton-growing area was encouraged to increase grain output. Land for grain, cotton or other crops was allocated in a unified way—usually at the prefectural level (consisting of several counties)—and production norms for different crops set. Attempts were made to bring more land into cultivation, to introduce new cropping techniques and make greater use of chemical and organic fertilizers so that grain and industrial crops could be expanded simultaneously; but again, this was undertaken with an eye towards the overall needs of the country and by struggling against the ideology of self-gain, since many of these industrial crops brought higher incomes to peasants.

The new turn with respect to crop specialization and selective mechanization also stipulates that tractor and machine stations be set up by the state to serve surrounding communes and brigades. In the past, communes purchased such equipment with internally generated funds, operating it on their own account, with the state assisting the more backward areas and giving overall guidance to mechanization, which was based on mass initiative. This latter policy is obviously being reversed in the name of efficiency and specialization, which is why Hua Kuo-feng, returning from his infamous tour of Iran last summer, stopped off in the less developed Sinkiang province to announce that state subsidies there would be phased out. In keeping with this orientation, the government announced in April a shift in investments and subsidies to Kwangtung, which lies opposite Hong Kong, where non-staple foods and light industrial goods production will be expanded for exports. What is being dished up here is nothing but an updated version of Liu Shao-chi's program, complete with its "left" cover of big state farms and state monopoly on farm tools.

This "state ownership" masked an exploitative relationship that had grown up between tractor stations and communes, which were charged exorbitant fees for the use of this equipment in the early '60s. Many of these stations refused to plow for communes and brigades in difficulties, since they had to show a profit. Moreover, the new policies, like Liu's, restrict local farm machinery industry which was a basic element of Mao's line on how mechanization would be achieved. Yu Chiu-li in January of 1978 had criticized the independent development of this industry and ordered that it be brought under tighter rein. In the period since then, some plants have been phased out while others are being placed under provincial and regional authority.

This whole policy, then, in its centralized deployment of agricultural technology and its rigorous allocation of funds to where returns will be highest, will lead to regional imbalances and polarization. Mechanization,

. . . on the one hand, the systematic dismantling of the socialist economic base. . . on the other, the unleashing of spontaneous capitalist tendencies. . .

rather than being achieved by relying on the masses, will be a function of state investment policy. Rather than being linked with overall needs of defense policy and guaranteeing food supplies, such mechanization will serve to "drain the pond to catch the fish"—that is, to levy a higher tribute from the peasantry to finance a bankrupt modernization program. And the seeming ambitiousness of Hua's mechanization speeches dissolves, as with most everything else, into neglect and exploitation of the countryside. As the peasants come to register their complaints in the cities, the ever-so-concerned Hua and Teng, with the understanding and benevolence that is uniquely theirs, prepare them for an even more royal screwing.

The results of this are already in evidence. The fragmentation and breakup of the communes outside the key areas of investment is beginning. This was given impetus by a series of directives last year and reiterated this year, emphasizing the peasants' right to grow what they think fit; to distribute their own products, including the further encouragement and stimulation of rural trade fairs where privately grown produce or hand-made goods can be marketed freely; and the right to ignore arbitrary orders from above. These "democratic rights" are just a cover for the setting loose of the countryside from any unified planning and from any kind of political leadership that challenges the ideology of petty proprietorship. In fact, the

peasant families held up as models today are those that reap extra-profits. "What's wrong with becoming rich?" feature stories and editorials ask.

A new system of quotas—with bonuses for those who exceed them—was experimented with last year, and it involved administrative subdivisions of production teams. Apparently, a Central Committee Draft is circulating which calls for tracts of land to be farmed by smaller work groups who will be assigned quotas and responsibility on this basis. The consequences have been reported in provincial radio broadcasts monitored abroad. In some areas of the country there has been a dangerous reduction in rice planting and a return to family-oriented cash farming. Fertilizer supplies have been seized by some groups, and forest areas have been cut. Tools have been divvied up and some transportation equipment used for mainly non-agricultural purposes, as growing numbers of people are drifting out of agriculture into commerce. One account told how the production responsibility groups mentioned earlier have spontaneously taken the form of stronger men banding together, hoping to capitalize on the work-point system, which is now almost exclusively calculated on a piece-work basis.

Some of these trends, particularly as they have adversely affected spring planting, have been condemned at various levels, but this doesn't alter the fact that once the floodgates are opened, once a proletarian line is replaced by a bourgeois one, these things are bound to occur. Where all this is heading is perhaps indicated in an article appearing in a Hong Kong newspaper with close connections to the revisionist leadership: "The organizational form of the communes does not assist the accelerated modernization of agriculture and has already become an obstacle. If this obstacle is not removed how can the rural economy be developed without hindrance." The all-too familiar pattern of agriculture in the underdeveloped countries is beginning to reappear in China—the subordination of food production to mechanical harvesting of industrial and cash crops, a growing proportion of which is linked with export needs, the ruining of some sections of the peasantry and a drift into the cities.

Trustification of Industry and the Expanded Role of the Banks

A major reorganization of industry was heralded in an important series of articles appearing in the fall of 1978. It called for four major reforms: the formation of specialized companies, enforcing the contract system between various economic units, binding economic legislation and increased responsibility for the banks. As with most every other reform, this one is barely distinguishable from the provisions of a trust system experimented with in the early '60s, which was criticized and repudiated during the Cultural Revolution. The policy of pro-



Comprador Teng pretends he's an imperialist cowboy—but he's only a stable boy, whose "modernization" schemes lead China back under the domination of imperialism.

vinces setting up independent and complete industrial systems on their own is now to be scrapped. It was Mao in a widely quoted directive (which encouraged the spread of rural industry suppressed by the revisionists) who said that "various localities should endeavor to build up independent industrial systems. Where conditions permit, coordination zones, and then provinces, should establish relatively independent but varied industrial systems." In the short run the significance of this approach lay in its ability to quicken development and overcome bureaucracy. But from a strategic standpoint it limited China's vulnerability to a major attack, which could knock out vital installations or nerve centers. China would be able to sustain a war effort on the basis of its industry's dispersion and its linkage with agriculture. But beyond this Mao had an entirely different vision of economic development. The attempt was being made to avoid the over-concentration of industry and population in the cities and to avoid the kind of technological and industrial organization that would lead to an oppressive and stifling specialization and division of labor. In an article written by the revolutionaries on this subject it also pointed out, "If we build an industrial or mining enterprise on a foreign model we shall have to build or expand a city; we shall have to build a welfare district and use walls to keep the peasants away. This is bound to lead to separation from the masses and to expansion of the differences between industry and agriculture and between town and countryside."

The new reform also challenges the practice forged through the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution of enterprises being run on an "integrated and self-contained basis,"—that is, making spare

parts and even machinery for use in production, opening workshops that could utilize waste material, and so forth.

In 1958 Mao had made an inspection tour of the Wuhan Steel Works and directed that, besides producing a greater variety of iron and steel products, it should also produce some machines and building materials and in addition engage on a modest scale in agriculture, trading, education and military training. Similarly, the Four promoted as a model a plant in Shanghai where 52% of the workforce was proficient on two or more machine tools.

Taking shape in China is a trust system in which factories producing similar products are incorporated into specialized companies under the command of responsible ministries. This is linked at the enterprise level with a system of material rewards and penalties for management, staff and workers who overfulfill or fail to fulfill production quotas. Contracts will be signed directly between enterprises, with provisions made for fines when such obligations are not met. This system of trusts is a form of vertical integration through which calculations for raw materials, semi-finished goods and auxiliary raw materials will be made for related enterprises nationwide. By means of these trusts maximum profits can be achieved by withholding material from lagging enterprises, which can be compared directly with others on the basis of pure economic criteria. This authority and its bureaucratic overlay was broken up during the Cultural Revolution. In its place revolutionary committees were established at the provincial level and more initiative given to localities to work out plans bringing into play the dynamic relations between different enterprises producing different kinds of products but which, through socialist cooperation, could combine efforts and make creative use of local resources.

"What's wrong with becoming rich?" editorials ask.

Economic accounting of production costs, materials consumption, yields and so on was practiced by individual enterprises, but this was always subordinate to mutual assistance and cooperation with other enterprises and always done with an eye to overall political priorities. These were policies which in the long run would boost and diversify production capabilities. A crucial commitment to deepening and expanding ties with agriculture and rural industry was part and parcel of this. (Shanghai was a pacesetter in dispatching skilled workers to rural areas and training rural workers in its plants.)

The return to the trust system means, as has been explicitly stated by China's leaders, that advanced enterprises—judged by such

yardsticks as labor productivity and return on invested capital—will be given priority in the supply of power, fuel, and raw materials. This dovetails with a fresh emphasis on banking: "All Chinese banks will exercise supervision over commercial and industrial enterprises by means of credits, according to their financial statutes." This is a practice which especially impressed Chinese revisionist leaders during their recent tour of Yugoslavia, where operations with good profit records get easy credit terms from the government banks. Those with poorer records must pay higher rates, if they can get credit at all. Funds for capital construction projects in China will now be funded by bank loans instead of state appropriations.

It's useful to examine the method by which the revisionists rationalize all of this. They assert that under the old system of state appropriations enterprises paid no attention to cost and quality and that now, with a system of loans, waste and complacency will be overcome. Actually, waste and complacency was not the main problem during the Cultural Revolution, and to the extent that it did exist, it was because a revisionist line was still dominant in those enterprises. But by throwing this up as a smokescreen it now becomes defensible to unleash competition between enterprises for loans. In the same way, the charge of excessive administrative interference is made so that revolutionary committees can be dissolved and so that the banks can be placed at center stage to monitor the performance of the economy. In fact politics must "intervene" in the economy in the sense of guiding it. This commanding role of politics was summarized in the slogan "Grasp revolution, promote production."

How the New System "Works"

To draw some of these threads together, one example will suffice. There is a pressing need to generate foreign exchange, as was mentioned earlier, to pay for the massive imports upon which modernization is predicated. Textiles which can be manufactured quickly and which are competitive in world markets are to be made in specially designated export zones—announced by Hua at the 5th NPC. These factories will be grouped into an export corporation. They can market their entire product overseas and even contract independently with foreign concerns, working out the specific terms of quality and quantity. At the same time Hong Kong businessmen will be allowed to construct factories to manufacture clothing—enjoying the right of choosing location and establishing production norms. Land given over to grain cultivation will now be turned over to cotton-raising in the mad rush to develop this sector and maximize export earnings. Workers in these textile plants will find themselves subjected not only to oppressive rules and regulations, but increasingly to the dictates of foreign capital while peasants' security will grow

more uncertain as crops are reallocated and land redivided.

How the New System Doesn't Work

Tragedy or farce? It's hard to say which it is, but the "four modernizations" is a flop. Buck Rogers type pictures of spaceships and electrons adorning the pages of the *Beijing Review*. There's a little of everything for everyone in this cornucopia—peasants promised better terms of trade, workers higher wages, intellectuals their old prerogatives and privileges—and all based on conflicting investment priorities and targets that cannot be met. But there is an internal logic that propels things in a certain direction. As it is not possible to politically mobilize the masses, so suppression and bribery must be resorted to.

As it is not possible to dictate to the imperialists, so it becomes necessary to accept their dictates as foreign capital interpenetrates with the Chinese economy. In some of the trade talks with the Japanese, word leaked out that the Chinese might be willing to grant offshore concessions to some of the drilling companies. The Ministry of Foreign Trade has announced that joint-equity ventures, such as one being negotiated in which GM will be entitled to 49% ownership of truck plants it builds in China, are perfectly acceptable. China is actively considering joining the World Bank with all the interference and monitoring this entails. And what is the import of a recent article in the *Guangming Daily* which said "Some foreign friends after visiting our factories have said

"The organizational form of the communes . . . has already become an obstacle."

that if they managed them, they could double productivity without increasing manpower or equipment." Yes, the foreign capitalists have rich experience in this regard and will be given many opportunities to put it to use and perhaps even refine their methods.

Planning for Dependency and Stagnation

The superiority of the socialist system does not turn on the formal attributes of central planning, but on the conscious initiative and collective force of the millions. On this basis plans can be drawn up and modified while knowledge of the production process and relative proportions and balances required can be deepened through mass movements. When the proletariat was in power planning was an important link in unifying and coordinating different aspects of the economy, even as local initiative was released. Guided by a revolutionary line, such planning held in check the centrifugal tendencies, the forces tending toward fragmentation and disintegration, which would be very strong in a backward peasant country. In fact, it was the view and practice of the revolutionary forces that by putting ideological work at the center of the planning mechanism local enterprises and areas could work out flexible arrangements while their activities could be gradually incorporated into the planning process.

Now, under the rule of the revisionists, what is happening is maybe best expressed in the lines of a poem, "things fall apart, the center cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world." There is intensifying contention within the ruling clique, though not over basic orientation; just how fast to wreck and destroy and who will get the lion's share of the spoils. No doubt there are those who would use Mao's order of priorities of agriculture, light industry and heavy industry to justify a capitalist program *à la* Singapore or Yugoslavia, emphasizing rapid turnover and quick profits that can be earned from certain agriculture and light industrial enterprises. Other elements, it appears, would hew to a Japanese or a Soviet model anchored in heavy industry or advanced technology. The scaling down of investment targets and the renegotiation of some heavy industrial contracts would suggest that the former position is the ascendant one. Flowing from this have been attempts to induce foreign capital to take advantage of cheap land and labor—particularly in the processing industries. There is adjustment and reevaluation—but it's partial, spontaneous and based on the same assumptions—how to maximize export earnings, etc. There are growing conflicts of interest between various sectors and



"Grasp revolution, promote production." Chiangnan Shipyard workers in Shanghai hold a meeting in 1970 to combat Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line in running enterprises.

enterprises which can only be addressed by resort to pricing and profit indicators.

The conflict within the revisionist ruling clique over what model of "development" to follow, and the current push for agriculture and light industry, sheds additional light on the big hoopla made about—and the distortion of—Mao's essay "The 10 Major Relationships" after the coup. In this article Mao makes the argument that agriculture and light industry allow a more rapid accumulation of funds, thereby helping to create the basis for a further development of heavy industry and an overall growth in the economy. By divorcing this argument from the context within which Mao makes it (namely, the development of all around *socialist* economy through self-reliance) a section of the revisionists hope to twist Mao's words for "support" in arguing that the most rapid means of *capitalist* accumulation is in light industry and certain branches of agriculture.

The bottom line and rationalization for the reversals in China is always the Soviet threat. But China already went through this experience with, ironically, the Soviets themselves. In the early '50s when 50% of China's machine tools were imported from the Soviet bloc, management manuals translated and management methods copied. And long-term loans entered into, the effect of all this was to distort China's development

China is actively considering joining the World Bank . . .

and threaten her independence, as Mao summed up. It's no mystery where all this leads and the policies of these revisionists make easy work for the Soviets. The destruction of the rural economy, the spread of private plots and free markets—these things increase China's susceptibility to attack, making it more difficult to mobilize people and resources and maintain unity, particularly in the sensitive border regions. Since everything is read in purely economic and technical terms, and since these revisionists can only carry out "modernization" under the sponsorship of one or another "great power" the need grows to come to terms with the Soviets, who enjoy massive military superiority, conventionally defined, and who pose the most direct and immediate threat.

China's semi-feudal and semi-colonial past weighed very heavily on her even during the socialist stage of the revolution. There were the ideological influences in the form of national inferiority, small-producer thinking, Confucian obeisance and the concrete fact that the democratic revolution was not that distant nor that separate from the socialist revolution. There were elements of the other within each stage of the revolution. That peasants have actually formed into traditional clans and family groups as some of the

production teams have been broken up is an indication of where things will go as the restorationist process continues. But this entire process will also give rise to resistance, something far more difficult for the revisionists to factor into their planning models than the dislocations and breakdowns that have already made a mockery of "modernization."

Resistance Will Grow

The prospect of speed-up and coercion set against the backdrop of a more direct foreign presence in the Chinese economy, the growth of anarchy and dislocation as the socialist economy is destroyed, and the attendant misery all this brings with it all raise the question of what kind of internal support the new regime can count on. Clearly, one of the reasons the Hua-Teng clique could consolidate power was its ability to play upon people's immediate material concerns. Could it be any accident that one of the most widely advertised of the economic reforms was the promulgation of a wage increase in late 1977? These are time-honored tactics. It should be recalled that Liu Shao-chi had attempted to suffocate the mass movement in Shanghai during the early stages of the Cultural Revolution with bonuses and pay hikes; for that matter, the Shah of Iran, in one of his last acts of desperation, tried unsuccessfully to placate the striking oil workers—who had been raising political demands—with an offer of a 100% wage increase. Communists are, of course, concerned with the material welfare of the masses and no system of exploitation can fundamentally satisfy the needs of the masses, but the highest aspirations of the working class are not a "chicken in every pot." Further, as borne out by the examples cited, economic concessions are, as Lenin often emphasized, the cheapest or easiest kind for the bourgeoisie to make.

The Chinese revisionists have consistently made demagogic appeals to the masses of the order "you can't eat politics," "since when does improving your lot mean you're going revisionist," "if we don't soon attain the living standards of the Japanese, then what good is socialism," etc. A not inconsiderable section of the population could be taken in by extravagant promises made by the new rulers. Certainly, a substantial portion of the intelligentsia, middle-ranking party and government officials, and administrative and managerial personnel, who were being groomed as a social base and who would be the most likely beneficiaries of the new policies, did, to a large extent, unite behind these revisionists in the conditions of the last great struggles in 1973-76. This only confirms what Mao had repeatedly said about the existence of classes under socialism. But the existence of classes is also reflected in the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie within the working class.

With the arrest of the Four and the temporary defeat of the initiatives of the advanc-

. . . resistance (is) far more difficult . . . to factor into their planning . . . than dislocations and breakdowns . . .

ed and revolutionary section of the working class, it became difficult to sustain organized resistance to the revisionist take-over. Many of the intermediate sections of the workers and peasants were lured by the promises and crumbs thrown them, or at least disposed to a wait-and-see attitude toward the regime. Needless to say, if the revisionists could "deliver the goods," if they could build China into a modern and prosperous country and allow the workers to share in the prosperity then there would be little basis for any widespread or durable opposition to the regime. But capitalism does not, and cannot, lead to a balanced and steady development of the economy and still less to any real improvement in the lives, material or otherwise, of the masses on any long-term basis. In China, as everywhere, capitalism brings economic dislocation, crises and the attendant misery for the masses.

The current revisionist rulers used the excuse that the "gang of four" (and Mao!) had "wrecked" the economy as an excuse for restoring capitalism, an argument that was shamelessly parroted by apologists for revisionism throughout the world. Now, however, the hollowness of this change stands out clearly as the very measures the revisionists take, far from leading China's economy forward, simply leave it in disarray. The question remains the same as it has been all along—not whether to "pay attention" to the economy, but whether to take the capitalist or socialist road.

Precisely because the new revisionist policies are not in the interests of the broad masses and will lead in a direction opposite to that professed by the new rulers, they will provoke resistance. This resistance is not highly developed yet—some confusion obviously persists, repression is fierce, the effects and implications of the new measures are just beginning to be felt, and many challenges confront the revolutionary forces in their task of reconstituting leadership and organization. Nevertheless, the significance of the cracks and fissures in the revisionists' economic plans (which are widening daily) and the increasing hardships that will be faced by the masses as the economy stumbles and careens into deeper difficulties is that the political hold of the new rulers will be harder to maintain, particularly over the intermediate workers and peasants, and this will create better conditions for the revolutionary left and the line of Mao Tsetung to again triumph and overthrow the revisionist usurpers. ■

OPEC . . .

(Continued from page 18)

drawn from the occupied territories, it was actually lifted after a few months, at the urging of both Saudi Arabia and Sadat, after Egypt had made a U.S.-sponsored separate disengagement with Israel.

Accompanying this was a very steep petroleum price rise. On October 16 in Kuwait, OPEC raised the posted price about 70%; on December 22 in Tehran it was raised 128% from this point. These price hikes were of a magnitude far surpassing those of 1971. Further, they were decided upon unilaterally by OPEC rather than through negotiation with the oil companies, which also marked a new departure. These were clearly events which created a new situation within the system of Western imperialism.

The imperialists themselves, of course, lost no time in conjuring up images of hordes of greedy Arabs destroying western civilization, blaming OPEC for rampant inflation and all the ills of the imperialist system, and floating schemes for the invasion of the Middle East. On the other hand, some anti-imperialist forces hailed it as, for example, "... a tremendous victory which moves in the right direction of decreasing inequality among countries." Some, like Fred Halliday of the British "neo-Marxist" *New Left Review*, even said that it "... represented an enormous shift of wealth, and reflected a parallel shift of power, between the advanced capitalist and oil-producing states."¹⁰ And while not in the same ball park as the above statements, even among many Marxist-Leninists there was a big tendency to overestimate the significance of the OPEC action.

None of these estimates is correct. The imperialists, of course, were slinging straight-out lies, attempting to take the heat off themselves. And as for those who oppose imperialism, it was a basic mistake to think that this represented a fundamental change in the relationship of oppressed to oppressor nations, or to think that the price-rise was a step "in the right direction," which had only to be followed by another step, and then another, until inequality among nations is overcome. Only the actual breaking of the chains of imperialism will bring about this fundamental change, and this will come about not as a result of piling up a series of reforms modifying the unequal relations among nations, but only through a mass struggle climaxing in a revolution which kicks the imperialists out lock, stock and barrel.¹¹

It is true that the 1973 actions of the oil-producing countries had an anti-imperialist aspect. These governments were driven to take these actions by the struggle of the masses within these countries against imperialist domination, and these actions had effects which objectively hit imperialism, the U.S. bloc in particular. The Arab embargo demonstrated the vulnerability of U.S. imperialism to some extent; the rise in oil prices

weakened Western imperialism economically to a certain degree and exacerbated its internal contradictions. But it is important to see that, in the first place, these blows against imperialism were at best very limited and, second, there were several factors which weakened and undercut their anti-imperialist

. . . price hikes have . . . increas[ed] the hold of the imperialists on those underde- veloped countries which must import oil.

aspect.

First, let us look at the effect on the oil companies themselves. It is clear that the increase in posted prices benefited the companies. The producing countries were able to claim a greater amount in taxes and royalties, but the companies were also able to take a greater amount of profit—and because of the embargo and the general crisis atmosphere, it was not only the posted prices which went skyrocketing, but the actual market prices as well. Thus the OPEC actions had the effect of reversing the phenomenon of falling prices which the oil companies were becoming unable to prevent themselves.

In general the companies were able to use the crisis atmosphere created by the embargo and the price hikes, along with (in the U.S.) the Justice Department's handy removal of antitrust restrictions, to (more brazenly) collude and together raise prices quite a bit above what was necessitated by the OPEC raises. Besides these large profits which the capitalists eagerly scooped up, it also provided the opportunity for the companies to provide for their longer-term needs by increasing the price of foreign oil up to (and actually beyond) the level of domestically produced oil, so that when the U.S. began to import more oil in the 1970s (as was clear would happen), there would be no conflict between cheap foreign and expensive domestic oil.

The profiteering of the oil companies was widely recognized at the time, and other sectors of the bourgeoisie who were hurt by the price rise even helped to expose them. But before it is concluded that it is a case of the gains of one sector of the capitalist class balancing off the losses of others, the position of the oil industry in the structure of U.S. imperialism should be borne in mind—for this is not just "another industry," but one which occupies a central strategic position as well as having very great importance in terms of both the overall economy and especially international economic activity. Thus by the end of 1966 the industry accounted for 30% of total direct U.S. investment overseas, and 40% of investment in underdeveloped countries; at the same time it brought in 60% of U.S. investment earnings

from the underdeveloped (imperialized) world, thus making a huge positive contribution to the U.S. balance of payments.¹² Within the U.S. economy the size and dominating position of the industry is remarkable. In 1947 there were three oil companies among the top ten manufacturing companies. By 1973 there were five. Today there are still five in the top ten, and eight in the top fifteen. By the end of 1973, the assets of the top five oil companies were one-eighth of the total assets of *Fortune's* top 500 manufacturing companies, a proportion which still holds good today.

Further, in several ways the increased prices were of benefit not only to the oil industry, large and central part of finance capital that it is, but to the U.S. bourgeoisie as a whole. Most notably, the higher prices for oil helped enable the U.S. to reassert its weakening hegemony over Japan and Western Europe.

In the 1930s, when the depression and the threat of war hit Europe harder than the U.S., capital flowed from the former to the latter, until by 1940 the U.S. held the bulk of the world's gold. The economic strength, and the gold hoard as well, of the U.S. were enormously strengthened by World War 2 in comparison with Europe and Japan. The U.S. used its postwar dominance in the imperialist world to push through an inter-capitalist agreement (the Bretton Woods agreement) to make the dollar the basis of international monetary exchange—to literally make the dollar "as good as gold." But the weakening position of U.S. imperialism in the period since then, especially over the past two decades and in particular since the mid-'60s, had to be reflected in this arena as well—as it was in the dollar devaluations and the falling apart of the Bretton Woods agreement in the early 1970s. The economic power of the lesser Western imperialists (particularly that of West Germany and Japan) began to seriously compete with that of the U.S.

Piling up dollars—or spend- ing them—can never win im- pendence from im- perialism . . .

Suddenly, following 1973, this trend received a serious setback. The fact that Europe and Japan had to depend totally on imported oil became a very serious source of weakness. The fact that the U.S. was not nearly so dependent upon imports, coupled with American predominance in the international oil industry, was a source of strength for U.S. capitalism. The increased cost of importing oil reduced the balance of payment surpluses of Western Europe and Japan, while the increased oil company profits were very helpful to the U.S. balance of payments

deficit at the time (although since then increased U.S. imports have made the higher oil prices a serious problem for the balance of payments).

These factors are probably sufficient to explain the acquiescence of the oil companies in—even, after a certain point at least, their welcoming of—the big price hikes, as well as the fact that the U.S. imperialists as a whole saw a good many silver linings in these clouds. Another good aspect of these events from the point of view of U.S. imperialism was the increased power which accrued to the regimes most closely tied to the U.S. By far the biggest oil producers in the region (and in OPEC) were Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the greater power which the new revenues gave them went to strengthen U.S. dominance in the Middle East. As a recent *Business Week* comments:

The price runup, although it dealt a blow to Western economies, also gave the conservative Gulf states enormous financial clout, which they used to underwrite Egypt's turn to the West, to help wean Sudan away from the Soviets, and to buy moderation on the part of Syria's militant regime.¹³

Further, in the years since 1973, it has become apparent that the price hikes have had the effect of increasing the hold of imperialism on those underdeveloped countries which must import oil. This is so because they are unable to pay the higher oil and petroleum product prices out of their own economies; to import these needed commodities, they must borrow money and reschedule their old debts; but in order to do this, most underdeveloped countries must submit to the dictates of those instruments of U.S. imperialism, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In other words, they are forced to open up their economies even more to imperialist penetration and domination.

Thus the actions of OPEC have had many effects which have led to a temporary strengthening of the domination of U.S. imperialism, and have enabled the U.S. ruling class to more tightly build a war bloc as it moves toward a showdown with its main imperialist rival, the USSR.

Effects on OPEC Countries

But besides this, what has become more and more obvious is that the increased revenues have not enabled the OPEC countries themselves to become independent. Saudi Arabia and Iran offer a glaring illumination of this fact. Saudi Arabia, despite its massive oil wealth, remains a virtual puppet of the U.S., and Iran could only begin to move toward independence from imperialism when the revolutionary struggle of the people against the imperialists shattered the Shah's regime. Independence must be won in the

political (and military) sphere, by the masses of people led by the working class seizing state power from the hands of imperialist lackeys, and then the economic system must be transformed to reflect this, before the wealth of a country can be used for the benefit of its people. Piling up dollars—or spending them—can never win independence from imperialism, and to think that it can is only a particularly degraded form of the “theory of productive forces.”

Of course things are not the same as they were and, generally speaking, it is not particularly to the liking (or to the benefit) of the imperialists to pour large amounts of money into the hands of the OPEC governments. But the imperialists have adapted to the changed situation, and have turned things that they may not have favored at first (such as the flow of money to OPEC) into another link in the chain of imperialist enslavement. What has happened is analogous to (although not by any means the same as) the situation when many colonialized countries won their formal independence in the years following World War 2. Although this was not something which the imperialists wished to have happen, nonetheless they were able to adapt to the changed situation and continue their domination and exploitation in a changed form, and even intensify it. The form changed but the essence of the imperialist relationship remained the same.

Something similar could be said of the OPEC actions. On the one hand there were several aspects of the price rise and its effects which were actually quite acceptable to U.S. imperialism, as outlined above. But nonetheless the U.S. economy, and especially the whole economic system within the U.S. bloc, was hurt by it, and it was not something which the imperialists wanted to have happen. Further, they were genuinely apprehensive about the possibilities of nationalization of the oil company properties, of the countries taking things more into their own hands and generally becoming more powerful. But in fact, they have been able to cope with the realization of these possibilities, as will be examined below, adapting their imperialist interests to the new situation.

The imperialists were rather clear about what their objectives were in the changed situation. In a paper put out by the Treasury Department in 1975, for instance, these objectives are outlined as follows:

The consumer countries [the U.S. and other Western imperialists] have several basic policy objectives in their relations with OPEC countries which would seem to include:

a) Encouraging establishment of an OPEC oil pricing policy which would simultaneously permit a more efficient allocation of world resources and allow OPEC nations to obtain a reasonable return on their major resource. [The imperialists are so reasonable!]

b) Avoiding fruitless confrontation which would create greater instability in the Middle East, increase the friction between consumers and producers in general, and render the economic objectives of both the consumer countries and OPEC difficult to achieve [the imperialists are very peaceable, too]; and

c) Ensuring that current and prospective OPEC oil earnings have minimum disruptive effects on the world economy and its growth prospects. [The imperialists are so concerned about the world's well-being!]¹⁴

In other words, imperialist objectives were to make sure that future price hikes were kept “within reason,” that the countries did not “confront” imperialism, and that the money generated from OPEC sales would be integrated into the imperialist economic system without “disrupting” it. And all in all, the imperialists have been able to achieve these objectives.

The last objective concerns the famous problem of “recycling the petro-dollars”—in other words, getting the dollars back to the imperialist countries as quickly as possible. There are several ways in which this can be accomplished: (a) putting the money in Western banks, or other forms of short-term investment; (b) longer-term direct investments in U.S.-bloc capitalist enterprises; (c) buying commodities from the imperialist countries. This last option was and is the one most favored by the imperialists (although all three are operative to one degree or another), for (a) gives rise to the danger of economic dislocations if money is shifted rapidly and leaves the money under the control of the countries, and (b) raises the spectre of OPEC countries gaining control of companies and industries within the imperialist nations. Basically, (a) and (b) have the potential of giving an OPEC country “too much” power, whereas (c) does not pose this danger to nearly the same extent. A striking measure of the strength of the continuation of the domination of imperialism over these countries is the extent to which the imperialist countries have been able to carry out this preferred “recycling” strategy—and the extent is very great indeed. A recent *Business Week*, speaking of the Middle East, points out that:

U.S. companies have steadily expanded their exports to the area even though oil production in recent years has levelled off. . . . What that signifies, in part, is that the oil producers' expanding economies are able to absorb more goods and services, paid for with oil revenues that were formerly banked as surplus. . . . Saudi Arabia's still-rising outlays actually created a current-account deficit in the first three months of the fiscal year that started last June, because oil production

fell below the 8 million bbl. per day that had been projected for that period.¹⁵

Even Saudi Arabia, which took in by far the greatest amount of oil revenues (\$35.2 billion, against second-highest Iran's \$20.7 billion, in 1978), and which has a very small population (probably about 3.5 million, plus a million foreign workers) is coming close to spending it all!

And what is it being spent on? A British construction engineer working in the Gulf area told a reporter in 1975:

A lot of money is being poured down drains. This whole area is becoming a boondoggle belt. Thank God for that. These countries are developing their own systems for recycling petrodollars—spend, spend and spend some more. The oil money is coming back to people like myself and to companies like ours.¹⁶

A good example of how the imperialist at-

OPEC is not a model for an alternative strategy for breaking free from imperialism. . .

itude toward the "development" of these countries manifests itself. Walter Levy, the well-known industry analyst and consultant, admits that OPEC countries are swindled:

To sum up, since 1974 OPEC government revenues, which coincide with most if not all of its foreign exchange income, have amounted to some \$550 billion. An estimated \$400 billion may have been spent on goods, services, military expenditures, and so on. The value received on an OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, an organization of U.S.-bloc countries] cost basis would appear not to have been more than perhaps some \$200 to \$300 billion.¹⁷

Of course the imperialists will try to cheat and plunder in every way they can—and their ability to succeed in doing so is a dramatic index of the fact that the people of these countries do not control their own destinies. But besides this, there is also the fact that buying consumption goods will not bring either independence or development. This is brought out sharply in the grotesque case of the lightly populated but oil-rich country of Kuwait, which follows a policy of consumption and little work for native Kuwaitis, while foreign residents (who constitute half the population and 70% of the workforce) are ground down into poverty and deprived of all political rights, as Kuwait's rulers attempt to transform the entire native population into a parasitic society of *rentiers*.

Another avenue into which the imperialists like to guide the OPEC countries is military spending, which brings back immense sums of money to the U.S. (mainly) and also buys commodities which are used to serve U.S. ends in the area. Saudi Arabia and Iran under the Shah have been the huge spenders in this area. In Saudi Arabia, as the U.S. sought to build the country into a military force capable of intervening throughout the peninsula, military expenditures rose steadily until by 1970 they comprised more than a fifth of the total budget—and they have continued to take approximately this proportion (or more) of the budget through the 1970s, when Saudi government income and expenditures have risen astronomically. Iran, being more populous, more highly developed economically, and with greater potential for development than Saudi Arabia, had a more key role in U.S. strategy for the area, being assigned the role of policeman of the Persian Gulf after Britain had withdrawn its forces from the area. This necessitated huge military purchases; from 1972-78 Iran bought over \$18 billion in arms from the U.S. (not to mention big arms purchases from Europe), more than went to any other country in the world from the U.S.

But although sales of military and consumption goods have offered the biggest bonanza for the imperialists, their spokesmen with a more long-range view of their interests point out that it is also necessary to export capital goods and technology to these countries. A U.S. government report, for instance, states:

Rapidly increasing imports [by the U.S.] of labor-intensive manufactured goods combine with the U.S. natural resources deficit to require steadily increasing foreign sales of U.S. capital goods and technologically intensive products. Only those less developed countries (LDC's) that become economically self-sustaining will have the purchasing power and the requirement for the products and services for which the U.S. is competitive.¹⁸

The U.S. does have an interest in creating a market for these types of goods; but on the other hand the imperialists do not have an interest in helping their victims to become really "economically self-sustaining;" and this contradiction determines the nature of much of the transfer to these countries of technology and of commodities which are supposed to help them develop economically.

Again, Saudi Arabia and Iran before the overthrow of the Shah, the two biggest oil producers, offer the starkest examples. Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world outside the U.S. where major building projects are managed and run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—and this is merely symptomatic of the complete domination of the Saudi "development" plans and activities by the U.S. imperialists. The current \$142

billion five-year plan itself for this country (running from 1975-1980) was drawn up under contract by the Stanford Research Institute—an imperialist "think tank" whose "experts" carefully assigned themselves a \$6.4 million contract to provide "research and advisory services" to the Saudi Central Planning Organization during the duration of the plan.

In fact the imperialists and their native comprador partners have, quite naturally, treated the "development" plans as another opportunity for plunder and pillage. The result is fertilizer plants and steel mills that turn out to be so badly planned and constructed that they never reach their supposed productive capacity and run at a loss. The lack of actual development of the productive forces has been striking in both Iran and Saudi Arabia, and indeed throughout the area of the Persian Gulf. A recent article in the *New York Times* notes that in all of these countries, "...their once-ambitious plans for developing oil-based industries of their own now seem to be in jeopardy." The article goes on to say,

After the big oil-price jump of 1973, the Middle East producers hoped to take over for themselves much of the refining, shipping and processing of oil into chemicals, plastics and fertilizers.

But soaring Middle East construction costs and slowing world growth are now conspiring to undermine the Gulf area's hopes of rapid oil-based industrialization. Kuwait has founded a loss-making tanker business, while Bahrain has an empty tanker repair yard. Small subsidized steel and aluminum plants exist in Iran and the emirates. But the refining and petrochemical plants planned by Saudi Arabia and others a few years back have been quietly pigeonholed.¹⁹

Domination by imperialism has meant that the oil revenues have created a big comprador bourgeoisie. The greatest and most immediate profits are to be found in acting as the middleman for imports, speculation in trade in general, and investment abroad, so this is where the money goes—particularly in countries like Saudi Arabia and pre-revolutionary Iran, whose rulers were religious in their devotion to the ethic of "free enterprise."

"Nationalization"

A recent *Business Week* said:

But it was not just control over prices that OPEC wrested from the companies. For the producing companies individually moved to nationalize the oil fields. The soon-to-be announced completion of Saudi Arabia's takeover of the Arabian-American Oil Co. marks the end of an era for the oil companies whose concessions

had once vested them with virtual power of ownership.²⁰

It is true that there has been a change, but it has by no means been such a qualitative leap, nor so inimical to the interests of imperialism, as would appear from this quotation.

The first oil nationalization took place in Iran in 1951, which the imperialists responded to with the coup that put the Shah in power. But even after the coup, the oil industry in Iran remained formally nationalized, while control over pricing and production was totally in the hands of the international consortium (in which U.S. companies now had a big share). This is worth remembering because it is a graphic illustration of how formal nationalization may mean absolutely nothing in substance.

After the June 1967 war, popular pressure for nationalization of the oil companies operating in the Middle East grew considerably. At this point Saudi Arabia's Petroleum Minister Yamani put forward the concept of "participation" in an explicit move to combat the idea of nationalization. The concept was kept purposefully vague, but basically it meant that the country would own part of the producing company. The company which actually produced the crude oil was usually a specially set-up entity in which various oil companies participated jointly, like Aramco in Saudi Arabia, and often these producing companies were non-profit, simply selling crude oil at a cost to the parent companies, so that Yamani's proposal that the OPEC countries should buy shares in these producing companies meant essentially nothing as far as ownership and control was concerned. Yamani even carefully spelled out the very conservative nature of his proposal, as in a 1969 speech on "Participation Versus Nationalization":

For our part, we do not want the majors to lose their power and be forced to abandon their roles as a buffer element between the producers and the consumers. We want the present setup to continue as long as possible and at all costs to avoid any disastrous clash of interests which would shake the foundations of the whole oil business. That is why we are calling for participation.²¹

OPEC formally resolved on participation as a goal in 1968 and finally signed an agreement on the subject, negotiated by Yamani, in 1972, an agreement which gave the countries 20% ownership in 1972, increasing gradually to 51% by 1983. The companies were to be compensated very handsomely—four times the net book value—and to retain the management and operation of the production facilities.

This sellout met with significant resistance from other OPEC countries even in 1972, and after the 1973 war and embargo, it went

completely out the window. Already by 1973 some of the more radical nationalist OPEC states, such as Algeria, Libya and Iraq, had taken significant steps toward nationalization. By 1976 all of the Gulf states except for Saudi Arabia had nationalized the producing companies, and by this time even Saudi Arabia has done so.

Of course, whether ownership transfers have been made on paper is not the question, but what the reality of the situation is. An article in the *International Herald Tribune* noted with regard to the producing company in Saudi Arabia, "As Aramco likes to point out, the company has already passed through phases of 25, 40 and then 60 per cent government ownership with no other than an accounting effect on its operations."²²

While Saudi Arabia may represent the extreme case of phony nationalization, this is not the only way in which nationalization can fail to represent any real transfer of power and control. Even where they relinquish the actual management of production, the companies push for guaranteed supplies of crude oil, and hold on to their control of marketing. This is what happened in Iran in 1973, for instance, where the consortium relinquished control of production in exchange for twenty years guaranteed supply. And even in cases which are less clear-cut than those of Saudi Arabia and Iran, the fact of nationalization can by no means be taken to signify that a country has taken the control of its natural resources into its own hands. Even while Algeria, for instance, largely broke free from French economic control in oil and other areas, it did so only by relying heavily on the U.S. and the Soviet Union. (John Connally represented Algerian legal interests in Washington for a time, to be succeeded by Clark Clifford, former Secretary of Defense.) Likewise, in its battles with U.S. oil companies, Iraq relied on French and Soviet assistance. In general, the "radical" OPEC countries, Algeria, Libya and Iraq, have looked for assistance to the Soviet Union and Western European countries. Although they may in the process have been able to strike some blows against U.S. imperialism, they have by no means been able to break free from imperialism. At best, they have only been able to momentarily play off one imperialism against another. And this is a tightrope that becomes increasingly difficult to walk as the world moves toward war and the superpowers tighten up their war blocs.

OPEC is not a model for an alternative strategy for breaking free from imperialism, or for countries to get control of their own resources. It has not created a "new economic order," nor will it. Objectively it did strike certain blows against imperialism—although even here, the anti-imperialist blows came more when its Arab members took action on political grounds (such as the 1973 oil embargo and, more importantly, the threat of stronger measures)

than from the more purely economic actions of 1971 and since. OPEC and its actions have created a new situation to which imperialism has had to adjust, but within these new parameters, it cannot be said that imperialism has a weaker hold, or is less exploitative, with regard to the nations under its domination.

And since 1974, even the OPEC price rises have hardly been the blows against imperialist interests that the bourgeois press would lead one to think. The most recent one, ballyhooed as "unreasonable" and "devastating," actually did not even make up for the decline in the real price of crude oil caused by inflation and the decline in the value of the dollar since 1974. Indeed, the fact that OPEC continues to set its prices and sell its product for dollars is another token of subservience to U.S. imperialism—and one that does not sit well with Europe and Japan, either, as every further weakening of the dollar means a real hike in the price the capitalists of those countries must pay for oil.

But at the same time that the imperialists have been able to integrate OPEC into their system, and to make use of it to both keep control of the vital Mideast oilfields and maintain their hegemony over Europe and Japan, they also attempt to make use of it to take the heat off themselves and whip up a chauvinist storm, which such reactionaries as Paul Harvey on the radio promoting the slogan, "cheaper crude or no more food," *Time* magazine holding that "Snapping and snarling at the [oil] industry benefits nobody—except the OPEC producers, who exploit the divisions within importing nations," and an article in the N.Y. *Times* proclaiming, "It's not the domestic oil companies who are our economic adversaries; it's the OPEC cartel."²³

Today the U.S. ruling class needs to cut back on oil imports—both to increase self-sufficiency in preparation for war and to remedy their serious balance of payments deficit and shore up the dollar, which still serves as the cornerstone of the economy of their bloc. Their method for cutting back is to raise prices, and the Iranian cutoff gave them a timely excuse. As the "necessity" (by their logic) for these higher prices becomes more apparent throughout their ranks, there is much less exposure of oil company profiteering, and much more exhortation to all pull together, stop griping at the oil companies, and accept that "the era of cheap energy is over." On the other hand, there are also some demagogic appeals to the oil companies from Carter or Republican hopeful Howard Baker to reinvest their profits in domestic oil production—which is a real need on the bourgeoisie's part too, for they want to both cut back on oil imports and increase U.S. production.

The U.S. rulers may want to decrease U.S. use of Mideast oil, but they hardly want to pull out of that area. Control of oil in the Middle East is vital for U.S. imperialism. It is

not that the U.S. needs the oil for its own consumption. What is at stake is outlined in the *Business Week* article quoted above:

At risk in the Middle East is a vital U.S. interest that runs even deeper than the supply of oil to the West. The danger, illuminated with stark clarity by the explosion in Iran, is that a vast, global shift in political alignments could occur if control of the Persian Gulf's oil were to fall into hostile hands. "There would be a dramatic shift in the regional balance of power," says Energy Secretary James R. Schlesinger, who is more a geopolitician than an energy expert. "Given their dependency on that part of the world, Japan and Western Europe would have to change their orientation."²⁴

In other words, Mideast oil is an extremely important stake in the superpower contention that is moving the world today toward war. Given this, it is also of great importance to communists to understand the dynamics of U.S. domination in this region—and within this dynamic, OPEC plays a vital role. ■

Footnotes

1. *Speech by Chairman of the Delegation of the People's Republic of China, Teng Hsiao-ping, at the Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly* (FLP, Peking, 1974), p. 16. (Also reprinted in R. Lotta,

ed., *And Mao Makes 5*, Banner Press, Chicago, 1978, see p. 497.)

2. For more on this theory see "Three Worlds' Strategy: Apology for Capitulation," *Revolution*, November 1978.
3. Michael Tanzer, *The Energy Crisis: World Struggle for Wealth and Power* (Monthly Review Press, N.Y., 1974), p. 18.
4. Joe Stork, *Middle East Oil and the Energy Crisis* (Monthly Review Press, N.Y., 1975), p. 97. The quotes within this quotation are from "OPEC and the Principle of Negotiation," a paper presented by the OPEC Secretariat to the Fifth Arab Petroleum Congress, March 1965, pp. 7 and 15.
5. Quoted in Stork, *ibid.*, p. 98.
6. *Middle East Economic Survey*, September 1, 1967, quoted in Stork, *ibid.*, p. 115.
7. Taki Rifai, *The Pricing of Crude Oil*, quoted in Tanzer, *The Energy Crisis*, p. 121.
8. *Middle East Economic Survey*, November 3, 1972.
9. Tanzer, *The Energy Crisis*, p. 149.
10. Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans: A Political Survey of Instability in the Arab World* (Vintage Books, N.Y., 1975), p. 420.
11. Of course there is a qualitative difference between the revisionism of Teng and the over-estimation of the possibilities of OPEC by honest, if naive, anti-imperialist forces.
12. See Michael Tanzer, *The Political Economy of International Oil and the Underdeveloped Countries* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1969), pp. 43-47, and *The Energy Crisis*, p. 60.

13. *Business Week*, March 12, 1979, p. 48.
14. "The Absorptive Capacity of the OPEC Countries" (Department of the Treasury, Office of the Assistant Secretary: Trade, Energy and Financial Resources Policy Coordination, September 5, 1975), p. 40.
15. *Business Week*, March 12, 1979, p. 58.
16. *Wall Street Journal*, October 17, 1975, quoted by Joe Stork, "Oil Revenues and Industrialization," *MERIP Reports*, No. 42 (November 1975), p. 13.
17. Walter J. Levy, "The Years That the Locust Hath Eaten: Oil Policy and OPEC Development Prospects," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Winter 1978/79), p. 299.
18. "Technical Cooperation with Iran: A Case Study of Opportunities and Policy Implications for the United States," Report to the Agency for International Development, April 11, 1972, p. 9.
19. Paul Lewis, "Some Lessons of Iran," *New York Times*, March 11, 1979. Examples in the case of Saudi Arabia can be found in *A House Built on Sand: A Political Economy of Saudi Arabia*, by Helen Lackner (Ithaca Press, London, 1978).
20. *Business Week*, March 12, 1979, p. 62.
21. Quoted by Stork, *Middle East Oil and the Energy Crisis*, p. 184.
22. *International Herald Tribune*, Paris, June 17, 1975, quoted by Lackner, *A House Built on Sand*, pp. 47-48.
23. *Time*, May 7, 1979, p. 79; Arnold E. Safer, "How the U.S. Could Stand Up to OPEC," *New York Times*, May 6, 1979.
24. *Business Week*, March 12, 1979.

Draft . . .

(Continued from page 21)

SNCC's Mississippi Freedom Schools during the summer of 1965, which not only opposed the war but called on Blacks to fight for their freedom right here in the U.S.) played an important role in exposing the criminal nature of the war and spurring the development of the anti-war movement. As a direct part of the anti-war movement, the late '60s and early '70s witnessed repeated attacks on draft boards, militant campaigns on hundreds of campuses to kick out ROTC and military recruiters, mass demonstrations in front of induction centers (Stop the Draft Week in Oakland in the fall of 1967 was one of the first militant street battles involving thousands of anti-Vietnam War activists in combat with police), large-scale refusals to report for induction, and massive efforts among millions of American youth to avoid the draft altogether. In Oakland, California, for example, over a six-month period during 1970 more than 50% of those called for induction failed to report, and 11% of those reporting refused induction!

However, in spite of the massive proportions that resistance to the draft assumed

over the course of the war, it would be wrong to overestimate its importance, in and of itself, in ending the war and dealing powerful blows to U.S. imperialism. The decisive blow was, of course, the national liberation struggle of the Vietnamese, Kampuchean and Laotian peoples themselves, supported, objectively and increasingly subjectively, by the powerful anti-war movement among the American people (which included the resistance to the draft) and the rapid spread of resistance to the war within the U.S. military itself. (According to the government's own figures, *one quarter* of the U.S. Army either deserted or went AWOL in 1971.) By the early '70s, the government was often not prosecuting those who refused induction, in part because their courts were so clogged up with back cases, but more importantly, the bourgeoisie did not want new infusions of anti-war youth into the army, nor did it want to pay the political price of persecuting those who refused to fight a war whose imperialist features were becoming increasingly exposed. At that point they were more concerned with stemming the tide of resistance inside the military and were handing out early discharges to large numbers of anti-war GI's, sailors and airmen.

The most advanced line that developed within the anti-war movement was not one of

building a militant or anti-imperialist "anti-draft movement." It was the line of siding with the Indochinese peoples against the aggression by U.S. imperialism and targeting imperialism as a worldwide system of exploitation and plunder that inevitably gives rise to reactionary wars as in Vietnam. And while continuing to support resistance to the draft, especially mass and militant action at induction centers and draft boards, etc., the developing revolutionary Marxist-Leninist forces took this anti-imperialist stand to the masses of workers, youth and students, soldiers, and other sections of the people—not only to hasten the defeat of the U.S. imperialists and the victory of the Indochinese liberation forces, but through this work to build a revolutionary movement consciously directed at the overthrow of imperialism. In the course of this, revolutionaries had to struggle sharply against backward ideas that developed spontaneously and were in turn promoted by pacifist and reformist forces in the draft resistance movement—such as raising non-violence to a principle (and thus making no distinction between just and unjust wars) and promoting individual acts of conscience as a strategy for opposing the war.

Backward tendencies such as these, as well as the more prevalent form of searching for

individual solutions to avoid the draft and "stay out of the war," had a certain basis in the nature of the Vietnam War itself. This was an imperialist war of aggression on the part of the U.S., fought thousands of miles away from this country. The resistance to the draft was swelled greatly by this fact, since it was possible for millions to refuse to participate in that war in a way that will *not* be true of the world war brewing between the imperialist blocs led by the U.S. and the USSR. Since the idea of the Vietnamese landing on the shores of California couldn't get very far among the American people, the question of "defending the country"—a critical question that must be addressed head-on in relation to the threat of World War 3—did not come to the fore in the same form and with the same force as it would in an inter-imperialist conflict. Thus, many came out of the anti-war movement saying they would never fight in Vietnam or another war like it, though they "would damn well fight if someone attacked our country."

A "Democratic" Draft?

In addition to guarding against the danger of placing one-sided emphasis on building a movement against the draft, especially in relation to inter-imperialist world war, it is also necessary to strongly combat tendencies to support a more "equitable" system of conscription or a more "democratic" military, which objectively aid the bourgeoisie's war preparations.

For example, in the late 1960s the Progressive Labor Party (PL) adopted the position that the masses of students should give up their 2-S deferments as an act of renouncing their petty-bourgeois "privileges," which would supposedly contribute to the building of a "worker-student alliance." At the same time that PL put out this "left"-sounding line, the government and scores of college administrations were attempting to silence the campus anti-war movement by taking away the deferments of student activists and drafting them. In 1901, after the Tsarist government drafted 183 student protesters at Kiev University into the army as a punitive measure, Lenin wrote that "the worker who can look on indifferently while the government sends troops against the student youth is unworthy of the name socialist." This stands as a sharp indictment of PL's neo-Trotskyite line.

PL's particularly reactionary line of calling for the extension of conscription to the masses of students at the height of the Vietnam War stresses the importance of uniting with the masses' just opposition to being dragged off to fight in imperialist wars. It also points to the dangers of attempting to come up with more "equitable" forms of conscription for the imperialists' armed

forces—which the proletariat opposes in any form. This kind of thinking plays directly into the hands of the bourgeoisie's current efforts to reinstitute the draft, such as, for example, in the proposal being advanced by liberal Rep. Pete McCloskey to create a National Service System that will "fairly" and "equitably" require all youth from 18 to 30 to perform military or "civilian" service.

Another erroneous argument that arose after the ending of the draft in 1973 was that conscription should not be opposed because, otherwise, a volunteer army will become a pliable mercenary force in the hands of the imperialists. However, the experience of the Vietnam War itself proves this wrong. While it was certainly true that large numbers of draftees, especially from the radicalized youth and students, became a thorn in the bourgeoisie's side during the war, the strongest resistance inside the military came from volunteers, who were overwhelmingly from the working class and oppressed nationalities. And today the bourgeoisie is openly fretting about the effects of the "economic draft" on the armed forces—which has historically been the military's main source of manpower. Black GI's now make up more than a third of the army and even higher concentrations in combat army units.

Both a drafted and an "all-volunteer" army pose particular problems for the bourgeoisie, which fundamentally reflect the imperialist military's reactionary mission. Either way, the class makeup of and contradictions in the society will inevitably be reflected inside the armed forces. Exactly for these reasons, communists oppose any way the imperialists recruit and organize their armed forces and make full use of the particular contradictions in either a draftee or volunteer army to do revolutionary work among the soldiers. Certainly communists do not get into speculating about what type of imperialist army is preferable.

Conclusion

This summation of the experience of communists and the proletariat in the First World War and during the Vietnam War can and must be applied to the current situation in the U.S., where there is mass opposition and struggle developing against the bourgeoisie's attempts to reinstate the draft, which is a crucial part of its war preparations. This is in large part due to the legacy of the mass movement against the Vietnam War. And this is overall a good and very positive thing.

But the world has gone through some important changes since the end of the Vietnam War, especially the sharply escalating rivalry for world domination between the U.S. and the USSR. And while the U.S. will continue to have the necessity of militarily defending

its far-flung empire from revolutionary struggles, even such wars of aggression will increasingly take place in the context of, and will be heavily affected by, the growing moves towards World War 3. While an inter-imperialist war for world domination grows out of the same basic cause—the imperialists' drive for profit—it would obviously be different from the war in Vietnam. This war will be an armed collision between two blocs of imperialist aggressors. And this provides fertile ground for the bourgeoisie to pick up on the concerns of the people related to the real imperialist nature of the Soviet Union to whip up support for their own war preparations under the guise of "defending the U.S.A."

As the contradictions in the world further heat up, the bankruptcy of a pacifist or abstentionist position becomes more evident. A third world war would not allow the option of "staying home," splitting to Canada or otherwise boycotting the war. And without a clear, revolutionary alternative to this, many who hold such illusions will end up rallying behind the bourgeoisie as the only possible, if undesirable, course of action. The task of communists is to reveal the class forces at work and assist the masses in understanding that there *is* an alternative to lining up behind the capitalist rulers or vainly trying to find a place to hide.

The workers and all the oppressed must come to understand that they must overthrow the rule of the capitalist class—that this and this alone (coupled with revolution in other countries, especially the Soviet Union) can prevent World War 3 from breaking out. If the proletariat is unable to make revolution prior to the outbreak of such a war, then all the work of communists must be based on the strategic slogan of "turn the imperialist war into a civil war."

Communist tactics, while based on this strategic orientation, will depend on condition, time and place. The Party's tactics in relation to imperialist war in general, and the struggle against the draft in particular, will necessarily be shaped by many factors, including: the relative imminence of war, the strength of the revolutionary forces at any given time, the actual role being played by the anti-draft struggle, and so forth.

At this time, mass struggle against the draft will play a positive role in exposing the growing war preparations of the bourgeoisie and creating more favorable conditions for all-round revolutionary work on the question of war. At the same time, communists do not seek to lead an "anti-draft movement" as such and must resolutely combat pacifism and fight illusions of "boycotting the war," which are obstacles to building the revolutionary struggle that is the only way out of the horrors of imperialist war for the international working class and oppressed peoples.