

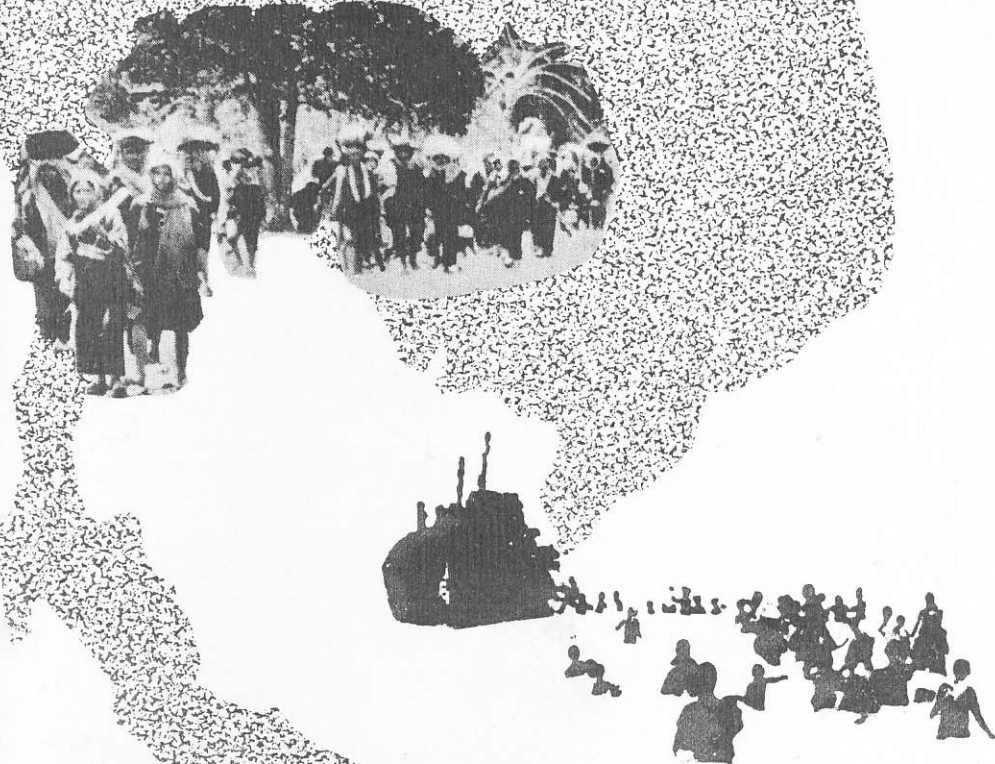
**\$1.75**

**KAMPUCHEA,**

**SELF-DETERMINATION,**

**AND THE "BOAT PEOPLE":**

**The Challenge for Socialism**



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UNITED LABOR PRESS  
P.O. BOX 1744  
Manhattanville Post Office  
New York, NY 10027

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SELF-DETERMINATION,  
AND THE "BOAT PEOPLE":

The Challenge for Socialism

by

The Proletarian Unity League

January, 1980

Distributed by United Labor Press  
New York

About the Proletarian Unity League...

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat is the one thoroughly revolutionary class. In the U.S.A. the proletariat forms both the motor and the leading force of revolution. Yet without its political party, the proletariat can neither lead the revolution nor set it in motion. Only under the leadership of this party can the proletariat fulfill its historical mission: the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and guiding the transition to communism. The CPUSA, which in the past struggled to play such a role, has repudiated all revolutionary principle and become a party of the modern revisionist type. A new Party must be built.

The Proletarian Unity League is a communist organization dedicated to working together with other communist organizations and with all revolutionary-minded workers, freedom fighters from the movements of the oppressed nationalities, and others to bring that Party into being. We do not think that the line or the practice of any single organization in the communist movement (including the several parties) provides the basis at the present time for the construction of a genuine multinational communist party. The construction of a unified, revolutionary proletarian Party, guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, remains the primary objective of all revolutionaries in this period.

## Kampuchea and Afro-America

The current Vietnamese regime has invaded and occupied Kampuchea. These are facts which by now almost no one will deny. True, in the immediate wake of their invasion, the Vietnamese did try to disclaim all responsibility for it. They swore that Vietnamese troops had not set foot on Kampuchean territory.

"It's a matter of a revolutionary internal war," Vo Van Sung, Vietnamese ambassador to France, announced, "and no one from outside can interfere. On the one hand, the Vietnamese armed forces and people defend their frontiers, and we have, on the other hand, sympathy for the struggle of the FUNSK and for the Republic of Kampuchea, but we are not encroaching on a single inch of the territory of Kampuchea."

(Le Monde, January 9, 1979)

"We will never violate a single inch of the territory of another people," Nham Dan the CP of Vietnam Daily, January 4, 1979. The Vietnamese could not have seriously thought that Soviet influence in the world offered the possibility of indefinitely hiding the truth from the world's peoples. The evidence of the Vietnamese invasion was too overwhelming. More likely, their campaign of Big Lies was simply aimed at disorganizing international reaction to their aggression, at buying time until Vietnam could present world opinion with the accomplished fact of Vietnamese domination in Kampuchea.

So in public forums and in its press, the

Vietnamese began to dicker over the truth: first, we deny everything. You don't buy that? You find that hard to believe? Okay, how about this: two wars took place, one a civil war in Kampuchea, and one a defensive border war by Vietnam against Kampuchea...

The "two wars" explanation wore thin very quickly, but by that time the Vietnamese already patrolled the major cities of Kampuchea. Hiding all the truth no longer mattered quite so much, and in any case the contradictions piled up too quickly: there was, for example, a "military treaty" to sign, acknowledging Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea; less than two months earlier, however, the puppet front, FUNSK, had declared that it would "not take part in any military alliance, not permit the establishment of bases or the introduction of military equipment on the territory of Kampuchea." (Le Monde, 1/21-22/79)

Apologizing for aggression is never much fun. The camp followers of the Vietnamese and Cubans in the U.S. (and some people for whom sentiment prevailed over reason and Marxism) dutifully tagged after the Vietnamese pronouncements, but kept getting caught out. They failed to anticipate the consummate cynicism of the present Vietnamese leadership. One of their more embarrassing moments came at the National Lawyers Guild Executive Board meeting of mid-February, 1979. Hank DiSuvero, President of the Guild, and Phyllis Bennis, a Guild Regional Vice President and prominent activist in Vietnamese solidarity work, distributed a policy statement repeating the then standard Vietnamese denials of involvement in Kampuchea. No sooner had they circulated it than a Vietnamese government representative to the U.N. took the rostrum and shocked even Vietnam's supporters with the first public, brazen admission that indeed Vietnam had fulfilled its internation-

alist obligations and invaded Kampuchea. By late October 1979, the Vietnamese routinely acknowledged their presence in Kampuchea, assuring the world only that their 170,000-200,000 occupation troops would not cross over and invade Thailand (UPI, 10/21/79). Like the tens of thousands of Cuban troops who have not left Angola (despite the fond farewell for a job well done bid them over three years ago by supporters of the Cubans like the Guardian newspaper), like the tens of thousands of Soviet troops who have not left the Democratic Republic of Germany, Hungary, or Czechoslovakia, like the tens of thousands of Soviet troops settling into Afghanistan, like the tens of thousands of Cuban troops who have not left Ethiopia or Eritrea, the nearly 200,000 Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea are not leaving. As the Vietnamese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs has so bluntly said, "The situation in Kampuchea is being stabilized and normalized; it is irreversible." (Speech to the U.N., 9/28/79).

With its army and modern weaponry in place, Hanoi has brought a few Kampuchean out of cold storage and knocked together a puppet regime. So unconvincing are the credentials of this government that even Vietnam's staunch supporters are forced to admit in a round-about way its jerry-rigged character.

Now a new Kampuchean government with the support and participation of the Vietnamese is in the process of restoring the empty cities (particularly Phnom Penh) and arranging for the return of former residents.

(U.S./Vietnam Friendship Assoc. of Southern California, Vietnam and Human Rights, p.18, emphasis added)

There is a name for governments which function

"with the participation" of other countries: colonialist or simply puppet regimes. That is how history knows the Vichy government of France, which functioned "with the participation" of the Nazis, and that is how history will record the Heng Samrin regime.

This regime has given Vietnam a puppet signature on an accord that redraws existing borders between the two countries and cedes Kampuchean territory and rights to Vietnam. Reliable information from both Western bourgeois sources and the Kampuchean resistance itself reports that the Vietnamese have begun an outright colonization of Kampuchea, moving in large numbers of ethnic Vietnamese formerly resident in Kampuchea, Khmer Krom or ethnic Kampucheans formerly resident in Vietnam, and Vietnamese settlers largely from southern Vietnam throughout the eastern region of Kampuchea. In western sections of Kampuchea, Vietnamese soldiers have moved in their families.

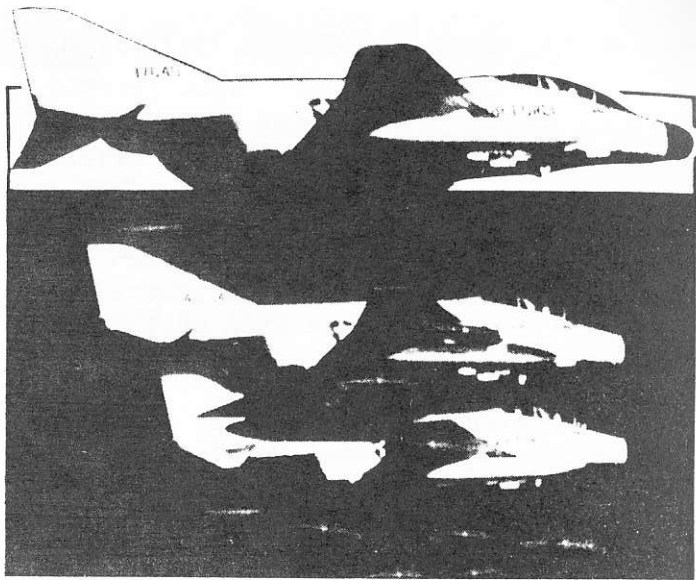
Vietnam has also systematically pillaged Kampuchea. Western journalists invited to Vietnam have documented the looting:

Convincing proof of plunder can be found in the antique shops of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. The theft and export of Cambodian art treasures must be widespread, judging from what can be found in Vietnamese shops. There were common wooden Buddhas, priceless stone carvings, brass objects, dancing figures and what were described as Angkor era busts. (Elizabeth Becker, "Vietnam seeks to rewrite Cambodian history." Washington Post)

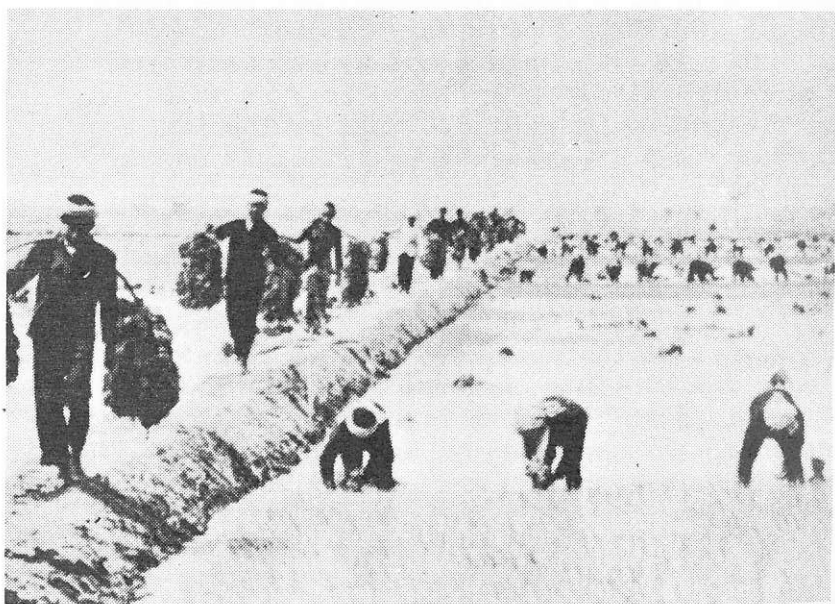
## A PEOPLE ON THE BRINK OF NATIONAL EXTINCTION

But these crimes have nothing that unusual about them. They are the almost routine crimes of a foreign occupation army intent on colonizing another country. What guarantees the Vietnamese occupation a special place in the long, sad history of murdering occupations is the genocidal catastrophe that they have unleashed on the Kampuchean people.

After fleeing Phnom Penh in 1975, the United States Agency for International Development team noted that Kampuchea had "slipped...to the brink of starvation...if ever a country needed to beat its swords into plowshares in a race to save itself from hunger, it is Cambodia...slave labor and starvation rations for half the nation's people...will be a cruel necessity for this year." (quoted by William Shawcross, "Who 'Lost' Cambodia?", NYT, 2/6/79). U.S. bombing had destroyed the agricultural system of Kampuchea. A full assessment of the policies pursued by the Kampuchean Party and government from 1975-1978 may very well have to await the restoration of Kampuchean sovereignty. The first responsibility to make that assessment lies with the Kampuchean Party and the Kampuchean masses, while revolutionaries elsewhere will doubtless come to their own analyses of that period. We know life was not easy and by AID's own admission, could not have been. But relying on its own efforts and determining its own destiny, Kampuchea pulled itself back from the brink of starvation, even managing a modest export of rice during this period. All foreign visitors to Kampuchea during that time confirmed this fact: the Kampuchean people had conquered famine through self-reliance.



U.S. bombing destroyed Kampuchean agriculture...



...but through self-reliance, Kampuchea rebuilt and was even able to export rice prior to Vietnamese invasion.

Today, literally millions of Kampuchean face death from starvation. The Vietnamese invasion-- what the U.S./Vietnam Friendship Association of Southern California delicately terms "the movement of Vietnamese troops into Kampuchea" (Vietnam and Human Rights p.6)-- and the ensuing war and occupation have once more destroyed the agricultural system of most of Kampuchea. As William Shawcross, no champion of the Pol Pot-led government, has observed, "if there is famine in Cambodia today it is principally the Vietnamese that must bear the immediate responsibility." (N.Y. Review of Books, 1/24/80) Vietnam brought on this historic disaster, and with the cool calculation that characterizes the present Vietnamese leadership, it uses it for its own ends. Vietnam and its puppet government in Kampuchea have so far managed to bar most international relief to millions of Kampuchean. They have gone further: even until just recently, as photographs of ghostly Kampuchean refugee men, women and children too weak to survive dominated newspapers and the nightly news, Vietnam was telling anyone that would listen that people were not starving in Kampuchea. A Kampuchean puppet announced in Moscow two months ago that the talk of starvation for two million of his countrymen was an invention of "Western and Peking propaganda" (NYT, 10/25/79). This charming clown, one Pen Sovan, who gets to dress up as the Defense Minister of the puppet government, told Pravda that, "I can assure you that no one starves to death" (New World Review, November-December 1979, p. 6). Vietnamese strategy imposes starvation on all those Kampuchean who escape its control by following a "scorched earth" policy in the areas its occupation army cannot hold and by denying all food aid to those areas. Prince Sihanouk, who has refused cooperation with the Khieu Samphan and Pol Pot-led forces, nonetheless has reached

the same conclusion they have: Hanoi is deliberately starving Kampuchea (N.Y. Review of Books, 1/24/80). This strategy has a name: genocide. The depopulation of Kampuchea would serve to advance Vietnam's colonization of the country.

Today, Kampuchea faces more than massive starvation. A whole people faces national extinction. Peoples can be wiped out. The U.S. exterminated many Native American peoples: the Chesapeake, the Chickahominy, the Potomacs, and others. Australian settlers exterminated the Tasmanians. Once a people is gone, nothing can bring them back. The human race loses forever part of its genius. People of conscience and feeling mourn the passing of whales, of various birds, even of prairie dogs. But here we are talking about a far different matter: an entire people, with the rich secrets of its culture and history, gone into an eternal past. As Pen Sovan said to the few jaded officials who still read Pravda, "we will never forget this solidarity." And the world's peoples will repay those blood debts with a solidarity of their own.

#### A DEBATE FOR THE WORLD'S PEOPLES

Once the broad facts of Vietnam's involvement came to light, a new debate began. It is a debate that concerns every small nation, every people, in the world. It is a debate that grows more pressing each day, as the Soviet offensive for world hegemony unfolds around the globe, as tanks roll through the streets of Prague or Kabul. Can the Vietnamese invasion be justified?

A week after the Vietnamese representative to the Lawyers Guild conference had admitted its "presence" in Kampuchea, Irwin Silber, formerly of the Guardian, now national chairperson of the

National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs, put together a justification for Hanoi's aggression (available in the pamphlet, The War in Indochina). It puts the case for the invasion as well as anything we have seen, and has the added interest of seeking a Marxist justification for it all. Silber's pamphlet contains many speculations and arguments, and to deal with all of them here would divert us completely. We hope someone does undertake a thorough refutation of them, if only because dragging all the lies and utterly groundless slanders of that pamphlet into the light of day would go a long way towards politically isolating Irwin Silber.

But four of his arguments have an important bearing on the relation between the struggles for consistent democracy and for socialism in the U.S.

Silber warns against making too much of the violation of Kampuchea's national sovereignty.

If we make a judgment that Vietnam is wrong simply because it "invaded"\* Kampuchea and that this supposed fact transcends the politics of the situation, then we are elevating the question of territory to one of principle

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\* Silber places quotation marks around each mention of the word invasion. Though his entire pamphlet attempts to justify an invasion, he cannot bring himself to admit the invasion outright. We do not blame him. Back in late February 1979, who knew what the latest Vietnamese-Soviet version of events might be? By explaining the invasion and simultaneously questioning its reality, Silber places himself in an enviably flexible position for the latest communiqué from Hanoi.

and the thesis of national sovereignty to an absolute..."The several demands for democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, but only a small part of the general democratic (now general socialist) world movement. In individual concrete cases, the part may contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected." (Lenin, CW Vol 22, p. 341) (p.3)

To view the "actual political character of the Kampuchean regime" as "secondary to the question of 'invasion'" amounts to "the standpoint of narrow nationalism, 'my country right or wrong'."

#### AN INVASION BY ANY OTHER NAME...

Having opened the door to the "export of revolution," Silber now invites it inside.

Communists are not opposed to 'exporting' revolution as a matter of principle. If exporting revolution could succeed, we should advocate the constant, steady, uninterrupted export of this commodity all over the world. (p.4)

He half-heartedly acknowledges the traditional Marxist rejection of the "export of revolution," as summed up in Stalin's 1936 interview with Roy Howard, "The export of revolution is nonsense. Every country will make its own revolution if it wants to, and if it does not want to there will be no revolution." This acknowledgment only lands Silber in an utter contradiction. "If conditions in a country have not ripened to the point of revolution, then its 'export' cannot

possibly succeed." But if the conditions in a country had ripened to that point, then why would anyone deem it necessary to export a revolution there? The export of revolution arises only where the conditions for revolution in a given country do not exist and where the "revolutionary" change contemplated cannot possibly be the expression of the popular will.\* Unmindful of the contradiction, Silber continues, "in certain particular instances, 'outside' (note the quotation marks) intervention by a socialist country or a revolutionary force may well prove to be the decisive factor in a revolutionary struggle." This social-imperialist proposition gives the lie to the condition Silber himself had set for the export of revolution: that conditions had ripened to the point of revolution.

Next, Silber sternly reminds us that "in any way to suggest that a socialist country should not aid indigenous revolutionary forces is a gross betrayal of Marxism-Leninism." (p.6) The confusion thickens: Marxists have never regarded aid for indigenous revolutionary forces as in any way connected to the "export of revolution." And what qualifies the puppet front Vietnam has placed into power as "indigenous revolutionary forces?" For

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\* Silber's one historical example of the justified export of revolution admits as much, and since he cites it to excuse the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, he implicitly recognizes the unpopular character of the FUNSK puppet front. That example is the Soviet imposition of communist-dominated governments in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and East Germany. The situations in those five places at the time of the Liberation were not identical in any case: in Bulgaria, the Communist Party had according to most authorities emerged as the best organized political force by that time; the East German example is more complex.



Silber, precisely their long association with the Vietnamese!

Many of the best leaders of the Kampuchean people, communists who had experienced the struggles over the decades in close comradeship with the Vietnam Workers Party, were apparently liquidated by the Pol Pot regime; in fact, their historic association with Vietnam seems to have been a decisive factor in the decision to liquidate them.

Others, many tens of thousands, fled to Vietnam and these make up most of the leadership of the new government in Phnom Penh. (p. 5)

These assertions fly in the face of the historical record, as established by many Southeast Asia scholars and other researchers. The so-called

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But in Romania, Poland and Hungary, the Communists only had the backing of a minority of the population. Thus the Soviets set up governments against the popular will. Silber asks rhetorically, "who would argue that any other course should have been followed?"

He later adds two examples of justified invasions by socialist countries: the Soviet invasion of Finland in 1940, and of Hungary in 1956, when, Silber says, "a majority of the Hungarian people" "probably supported" the regime the Soviets overthrew.

The Soviet invasion of Finland is in no way analogous to these other examples. The USSR had sought through negotiation to trade Finland a section of its territory for small sections of Finnish territory which it regarded as necessary for the defense of Leningrad and Kronstadt against an expected invasion of German forces from Finland. When the pro-Nazi Finnish government broke off

"Khmer Vietminh" left Kampuchea for Hanoi in 1954, following the signing of a Geneva convention which gave them no role in their country. Other Kampuchean revolutionaries set about the difficult task of reconstructing the revolutionary movement inside Kampuchea, of surviving the murderous repression unleashed by Norodom Sihanouk, of beginning the armed struggle in the countryside during the 1960's (against the express wishes of the Vietnamese, who courted Sihanouk's neutrality throughout this period), and of beginning to organize the broad united front for national salvation after the CIA-organized coup of 1970. Meanwhile, these "best leaders of the Kampuchean people," these "communists who had experienced the struggles over the decades in close comradeship with the Vietnam Workers Party," were in such close comradeship with the Vietnamese that they spent those decades in Vietnam. They only returned "several years after 1970" (Le Monde, 1/6/79), and

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negotiations, the Soviets invaded. They made no attempt to overthrow the Finnish government, despicable as it was. They made no attempt to occupy all of Finland, or to "station troops" throughout the country. They took a small area of Finnish territory for the purpose of safeguarding themselves against the Blitzkrieg. When Germany did attack the USSR, Nazi troops in fact swarmed across the Finnish border.

Now consider the very different implications of the Hungarian examples. The Hungarian people do not yet want socialism in 1946-47; the Soviet army brings it to them anyway. The Hungarian people do not want Soviet-style socialism in 1956 (perhaps any socialism at all, but we have no way of knowing); the Soviet army makes sure they retain it anyway. Do the Hungarians want Soviet-style "socialism" today? Who can know, since the Soviet troops are not about to leave long enough

as the actions of people like Heng Samrin make perfectly clear, some of them functioned as a true fifth column for Vietnam's hegemonist designs over Kampuchea. At no time did the Khmer Vietminh number 10,000, much less tens of thousands.

Lastly, Silber faults the internal policies of Democratic Kampuchea. He mentions "political conceptions...based on an ultra-'left' view of social development in which social and political relations we would associate with the epoch of communism were being imposed on the country arbitrarily and, therefore, with a considerable measure of repression." (p.7) As we said above, we lack the evidence to make any realistic assessment of the Kampuchean transition to communism; the Vietnamese invasion and the genocidal catastrophe it precipitated have made any analysis of the 1975-78 period extremely difficult. Regardless, Silber's main accusations do not concern

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to find out. But the permanent Soviet domination of Hungary indicates that the Kremlin has few illusions on this score.

Let us then ask: once you have embarked on a course of imposing governments on a people, where do you draw the line? For how many decades will you continue to impose that rule? And when you take stock, decades later, will you have any more "socialism" in such a country than you did when you started? How can "socialism," which according to everything we claim about it, expresses the popular will of the majority, the rule of the masses, be imposed despite their wishes and even against their wishes? Are we then simply liars and hypocrites who talk of the popular will when it suits us, but given the chance will call in foreign troops and foreign secret police to put us in power?

It is true that the international communist movement gave its general sanction to the imposi-

the Kampuchean conception of the transition nor whatever repression took place. The transition to communism in the countries that have embarked on it has proven considerably more complex than any Marxist ever imagined, and has known many missteps, retreats and defeats. Then too, the man who identifies aid to revolutionary movements with invasions, applauds the so-called "export of revolution," and is determined to see the Hungarians get the socialism they deserve whether they ever come to like it or not, could not easily turn squeamish at repression. No, Silber reserves his main fire for the Kampucheans' "narrow nationalism," their "decision...to go it alone in terms of economic reconstruction even if this meant massive and arbitrary reorganization of every aspect of Kampuchean life." (p. 8)

It seems obvious that in the situation prevailing after liberation in 1975, it was in the interests of all three countries of Indochina--Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea--to establish close relations, to cooperate economically, to resolve contradictions between themselves quickly and peacefully, to pool their collective limited resources to the extent they possibly could. (p. 8)

The common history of struggle against French colonialism and U.S. imperialism

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tion of a communist-dominated government in Hungary and to the invasion of Hungary in 1956. To answer Silber's question, and to answer it in solidarity with the Hungarian people and with Hungarian revolutionaries: we believe that the actions of the Soviet Union in countries like Hungary after World War II will have to be re-examined and the balance-sheet redrawn.

by all three countries--as well as common material interests in terms of natural resources, waterways and economic development indicates that close cooperation between all three would objectively be in the interest of their respective peoples. (p. 9)

Thus while Hanoi continues to deny in words its desire to establish an Indochinese Federation, Silber takes note of Vietnam's deeds--its subjugation of Laos (formally placing the Laotian army under Vietnamese leadership, for example) and invasion of Kampuchea--and prepares the ideological groundwork for yet another Vietnamese about-face.

While it would clearly be incorrect for Vietnam, as the largest of the three Indochina countries, forcibly to impose such a federation, there is nothing at all incorrect in proposing it, but we will go further and say that it was just as much the communist responsibility of Kampuchean Marxists-Leninists and Laotian Marxist-Leninists to advocate the establishment of such a federation as it was of the Vietnamese Marxist-Leninists. Clearly such a federation would have to be entered into voluntarily and with complete and full guarantees for the democratic rights of the different peoples--including the right to secede from the federation...While defending the right of self-determination for peoples and nations, Marxist-Leninists in general stand for the voluntary merger of nations on the basis of equality as being the best interest of the laboring masses of the respective countries and

the international working class as a whole. The economic basis for this view is obvious. The construction of socialism requires, as a material foundation, the development of large-scale industry and mass production; it requires centralized economic planning over the widest possible range of enterprises so that the most efficient division of labor can be developed that will move the socialist economy as a whole forward. (p.9)

What would "cooperation" and "voluntary merger of nations" for this "most efficient division of labor" have meant for the Kampuchean? For one thing, it would have meant the Mekong irrigation and hydroelectricity project. Originally conceived by the United States, the Mekong project as now planned by Vietnam, Thailand and Laos, "requires the depopulation of large inhabited areas and the building of large scale irrigation systems. The dams of Pa Mong in Laos and Stung Treng in northeastern Kampuchea alone demand the resettlement of about 700,000 peasants." (Heinz Kotte, "The Conflict between Kampuchea and Vietnam"). The Report of the World Bank notes that "in some cases the chief beneficiary may not be the country in which the projects are located." (ibid) Significantly enough, Kampuchea broke diplomatic relations with Vietnam on the same day that Thailand, Vietnam and Laos formed an interim committee for the Mekong-project. Further, "the most efficient division of labor" from the Vietnamese point of view would have required the rich agricultural regions of Kampuchea to serve as a breadbasket for all of Indochina, while Vietnam abrogated to itself most industrial production and energy development--in other words, another version of the "international division of labor" the Soviet Union has implemented in

Eastern Europe.

### "RESPONSIBLE" SELF-DETERMINATION

Let us sum-up Irwin Silber's remarkable argument for the invasion of Kampuchea, the overthrow of its government and the installation of a puppet regime peopled with the likes of Pen Sovan. Irwin Silber stands for the self-determination of nations and the voluntary merger of peoples. But he does not go overboard in such matters. If the Communist Party or the established government of a country fails to recognize the advantages of close cooperation and the pooling of collective limited resources, they are abusing this right of self-determination. Nay, Irwin Silber goes further: if the Communists in question fail to advocate the establishment of the proper Federation and the "most efficient division of labor," then they give proof not of Marxism-Leninism, but of "narrow nationalism." If they rely on their own resources, if they try to "go it alone" and ignore the "common history" and "common material interests in terms of national resources" that a beneficent larger neighbor shares with them--if they start their damned whining every time somebody wants to flood the land of a few hundred thousand peasants; if they have the unmitigated gall to spread rumors about impending invasions from their neighbors, and deploy their troops in line with such obvious obsessions--friends, that has nothing to do with self-determination. That is narrow nationalism and ultra-leftism, pure and simple. Your genuine self-determination can always be recognized by the willingness of the people in question to pool their collective limited resources, set up federations with a larger beneficent neighbor, share the little territory they have under the time-honored Marxist-Leninist principle that what's mine should really be yours,

and help find interesting patrol routes for bored foreign troops--in other words, your anti-narrow nationalist, genuine self-determination can always be recognized by the willingness of the people in question not to determine their own destiny. If Pol Pot had only lent a hand in flooding north-eastern Kampuchea, none of this would have happened.

When a people start abusing the right of self-determination, making all sorts of decisions on their own, Marxist-Leninists cannot raise the issue of national sovereignty to an absolute. They cannot shirk their responsibility to support the "indigenous revolutionary forces" they have reserved for just such an occasion who are valiantly attempting to exercise their right to "self-determination" in mature, responsible ways. Under such circumstances, Marxist-Leninists cannot fail to send in a few hundred thousand troops to conduct an informed plebiscite on the voluntary merger of nations.

This is no less than a recipe for world-wide aggression, and it comes from the cookbook of Soviet social-imperialism. Silber merely provides the fine print in the Brezhnev doctrine of "limited sovereignty," the proposition that individual socialist countries exercise their sovereignty under the discipline of the "common interest" of the "socialism community" as a whole, as interpreted by the first socialist country, the USSR. The invasion of Kampuchea only provides a particularly naked example of this doctrine in action, but other instances predate it, and now Afghanistan has followed it. If the world's peoples and the international progressive community accept the invasion of Kampuchea, as countries like Nicaragua sadly already have, then no recognized international barriers remain to the Soviet drive for world domination.

If we can now invade countries and overthrow governments such as Czechoslovakia's where some supposed members of it (the very genuine Marxist-Leninists, no doubt) call for the peculiar solidarity that only Russian tanks can bring;

If we can now invade countries and overthrow governments such as Kampuchea's or Afghanistan's because a few carefully cultivated citizens of that country (the very genuine Marxist-Leninists, who else?) pop up in another country and supposedly entreat it to send in the solidarity;

If we can now crush liberation movements such as those in Eritrea or, with all their shortcomings, Angola, because some people (the genuine Marxist-Leninists, or course) call in troops from thousands of miles away to put them down; then what barriers remain?

Surely if we can overthrow socialist governments for supposedly oppressing their people when a few "genuine Marxist-Leninists" can be found to call for it, we cannot object at aggression against capitalist governments when they oppress their people, or feudal-bureaucratic governments when they oppress theirs, for surely a few "genuine Marxist-Leninists" can be found to call for that. And who could object if the Soviets invaded Yugoslavia next in "defense" of this or that "persecuted" group of Yugoslavians in need of some well-armed solidarity? "Right revisionists" in Czechoslovakia; yesterday's "proletarian statesmen" in Afghanistan; "ultra-Lefts" in Kampuchea and in Ethiopia; "narrow nationalists" mired in the intransigent defense of the independence of Eritrea, Kampuchea, or Angola; each has gotten what was coming to them from those tireless guardians of the correct line, those champions of the voluntary merger of nations,

Leonid Brezhnev, Fidel Castro, and Le Duan.\*

#### THE SOCIALISM WE FIGHT FOR

What are they saying around the campfires in the liberated zones of Burma, Thailand, and Malaya tonight? In the fall of 1978, Pham Van Dong toured the countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations and gave them Vietnam's solemn promise not to aid the revolutionary movements in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and the Philippines. He even placed a wreath at the Malaysian government monument to those who died fighting the communist-led guerilla war of the early 1950's (what must Irwin Silber be saying about this failure to aid "indigenous revolutionary forces"?). The invasion of Kampuchea has given revolutionaries in those countries a taste of what the Soviets, the Cubans and the Vietnamese mean when they talk about solidarity or, conversely, a lack of support. Vietnam's "support" of "indigenous revolutionary forces" in Kampuchea gives a new and grisly meaning to Lenin's old metaphor of supporting a leadership the way a rope supports a hanging man.

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\*Silber and other supporters of the Vietnamese leadership view the Chinese invasion of Vietnam as "weightier" than the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea. There is a great deal to say on this issue. For the moment, we would only note that the Big Lie option of the Vietnamese was open to China. Suppose a front formed tomorrow in China for the National Salvation of Vietnam, composed of former Chinese residents of Vietnam, Vietnamese of Chinese descent, and other Vietnamese who have recently fled to China. Suppose a month later hundreds of thousands of troops invaded Vietnam, and China claimed that they were all members of the front. Suppose they seized the major cities,

Forget what they are saying around the campfires in the liberated zones of Southeast Asia, What are we, U.S. communists, supposed fighters for socialism, against white-supremacist national oppression and for the self-determination of nations, what are we saying to the Afro-American people, to the Puerto Rican people, to Chicanos and to Mexico, to Canadians and the Quebec nation, to the Native Americans and to the other peoples who share this hemisphere with the U.S.A.? We claim to be Marxist-Leninists, consistent proletarian internationalists, the firm champions of national self-determination. If we refuse to condemn Vietnam's aggression, if we refuse to campaign against Vietnam's policies, if we cite unsubstantiated Western and revisionist press reports and conclude, "well, the Communist Party of Kampuchea was ultra-Left, it deserved to be annihilated," what are we saying about the socialist U.S.A. we're fighting for?

The peoples of our country want to know about socialism--they want to know how it will work, what it will look like. Aren't we saying to Mexico, to Puerto Rico, Canada or to the Quebec nation that may someday be independent: well, if you too have a socialist country, that will be swell, as long as you do not pursue policies we consider ultra-Left or Right-revisionist, as long as we do

announced the formation of a new government, agreed to cede territory to China, to station Chinese troops permanently in Vietnam, and restore their traditional friendship. Would anyone in their right mind believe such a thing? That what the Chinese call their "counter-attack" did nothing of the sort, that it withdrew from Vietnamese territory and never questioned the existence of the Vietnamese government, demonstrates very different policies from those of the Le Duan leadership in Vietnam.

not have the wrong kind of border disputes, or you agree that we need to dam up the Rio Grande or the Mississippi or the St. Lawrence for our socialist development needs and flood a little of your land. That will be swell as long as you recognize that socialism "requires centralized economic planning over the widest possible range of enterprises so that the most efficient division of labor can be developed." Therefore, Quebec should devote itself single-mindedly to the extraction of its mineral resources; Mexico should get the natural gas and oil out of its ground and oceans; Canada should produce beef and grain; Puerto Rico should dock our supertankers and maintain our refineries; and we, the socialist United States, we will do what our "common history" and "common material interests" best equip us to do, namely, refine your raw materials, eat your grain and beef, and exchange you the machine tools, manufactured goods and other products of our technological monopolies. We will call that "most efficient division of labor" and the unequal trade relationships that result, The North-American Socialist Federation, with its headquarters in some very efficient buildings we found in lower Manhattan. (Of course, heaven help you if you are not socialist, because as we like to argue in justification of the invasion of Kampuchea, the CPK-led government there was not socialist, and as every genuine Marxist-Leninist knows, that gives us carte blanche in the armored solidarity department.)

What kind of proletarian internationalism is this? What kind of socialism is it? What kind of support could it ever win from the peoples in this country? What kind of fight against white-supremacist national oppression could this conception ever inspire?

The only hope of revolution in this country lies in convincing the white masses that consistent democracy and support for the complete

emancipation of the oppressed nationalities are in their interests, and in showing the oppressed nationality masses that all revolutionaries and the white masses mean that. The demand for self-determination has a popular and revolutionary resonance among Afro-Americans from all walks of life in this country. If communists fail to condemn and organize against the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, we are giving the Afro-American people a powerful lesson in what self-determination represents for us. The Afro-American people will spot that kind of "self-determination" for what it is: a socialist cover for white-supremacist national oppression.

If we condone the invasion of Kampuchea on the grounds that the Kampuchians should have advocated the voluntary merger of nations, should have "pooled their collective limited resources", because of their "common history" with the Vietnamese, should have ceded still more territory, should have flooded their land and served as Indochina's bread-basket, the Afro-American people will know what to expect from our "socialism." They will know that if we talk about self-determination, it is simply a gimmick to gain their support. They will know that one day in a socialist U.S., the Irwin Silbers of this country will pull into a Mississippi Delta town, and tell the inhabitants, "if there's one thing your people know, it's cotton. Therefore, we're keeping the big industry elsewhere, to give you room for planting." They will know that one day in a socialist U.S., the Irwin Silbers of this country will announce that we are damming up the mouth of the Mississippi entirely, and that previous agreements about Afro-American regional autonomy in the Black Belt South still apply, except they will now apply in Montana. We will have plenty of "common history" and "collective limited resources" to point to in justifying all of this,

and we can denounce "narrow nationalism" all we want but that won't change a thing. If in our international line and politics, we give this kind of example to the Native American peoples fighting for their lands and tribal rights, to Afro-Americans fighting for their land and national rights, to Chicanos and Mexicans fighting for their land and national rights, and to Puerto Ricans fighting for national independence, we will show ourselves as complete hypocrites, liars, and great nation chauvinists, as traitors to communism and democracy.\*

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\* The connection between these issues is not a fanciful one. Can it be pure coincidence that some supporters of the Vietnamese invasion such as Irwin Silber and some of those who regard the invasion as a "mistake" but do not want to talk much about it, have yet to face up to the genocide Vietnam has unleashed and continue to call for solidarity with Vietnam? Can it be a coincidence that they hold the positions on the situation of Afro-Americans that they do? These individuals and groups make up the bulk of those people in the revolutionary movement who consider themselves anti-revisionist Marxist-Leninists yet have long opposed self-determination for Afro-Americans, however conceived (whether as self-determination for the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt South or as self-determination for the Afro-American national revolutionary movement). Nor have they suggested any provisions for Afro-American regional autonomy in the historic homeland of the Afro-American people within a socialist U.S. Those Black nationalist organizations currently building solidarity with Vietnam might consider this fact.

## To Aid Kampuchea: What Can Be Done

The plight of Kampuchea demands urgent action on a massive scale. Millions of people throughout the world have joined in efforts to relieve the suffering of those in refugee camps and of millions within Kampuchea. These humanitarian activities deserve the whole-hearted support of peoples and governments everywhere. But that support must also take account of the political realities of South-east Asia today. Those realities demand political action as well as international relief.

### Humanitarian Aid

At least two administrations govern in Kampuchea today. One is that of the Vietnamese army and its puppet regime. The other is that of the government and army of Democratic Kampuchea. A third administration may yet emerge, composed of forces resisting the Vietnamese invasion but so far refusing cooperation with the government of Democratic Kampuchea. The existence of two administrations has introduced major political complications into the organization of international relief.

After denying the dimensions of the catastrophe they brought on, Vietnam and its Heng Samrin regime now demand that all humanitarian aid go to the so-called "People's Republic of Kampuchea" and its "Kampuchean Red Cross." They have attempted to confine all food shipments to areas they control. For its part, Democratic Kampuchea has sought aid commitments to the areas it governs. But unlike the Vietnamese authorities, it did not object to the distribution of humanitarian aid to both sides, as long as aid actually went to Kampucheans and not to the Vietnamese occupation army or to Vietnam. The difference in the two governments' positions on aid followed from their respective political objectives. Whatever criticisms of Democratic Kampuchea

may come from whatever quarter, no one can deny that it fights today for the national existence of Kampuchea, which also entails the physical existence of Kampucheans. The actions of Vietnam, on the other hand, threaten not only the national sovereignty of Kampuchea, but also the survival of the Khmer people.

Faced with the obstruction of the Vietnamese occupiers and its pawns in Phnom Penh, a few relief agencies have bowed to the conditions set by the Vietnamese. Organizations like OXFAM have agreed to channel all aid through the puppet government. They reason that cooperation with that government will at least ensure that some aid reaches the largest part of the Kampuchean population, that part patrolled by Vietnamese troops. Besides, they say, the soldiers commanded by Pol Pot get some of the aid going through Thailand.

The short history of aid to the puppet regime has discredited this rationale. The "People's Republic of Kampuchea" forced OXFAM to pay port fees of \$3,000 to unload its first barge in October of last year. The French humanitarian vessel Ile de Lumiere carried one load of supplies to Phnom Penh and then canceled future trips.





Its director argued in Le Monde that the Vietnamese were perpetrating a gigantic fraud: they were using food not to feed but to subjugate the Cambodian people. (Shawcross, New York Review of Books, January 24, 1980, p. 28.)

OXFAM disagreed with these charges, but its officials did acknowledge, "that the first two government reports they received on where aid had gone were 'useless.' In early December the organization announced it would press for more stringent monitoring." (Ibid.) The New York Times of January 2, 1980, related a report from an international aid program cooperating with the Phnom Penh government.

"Impossible to comment on allegations that aid is being missed," the report says tersely, "but we can confirm that nearly all aid brought in under the joint program remains in warehouses."

Those warehouses held 50,000 tons of food aid. Taking note of this situation, the director of international operations for the Red Cross warned the Phnom Penh authorities two weeks earlier that relief shipments "might be suspended unless the supplies were distributed promptly." (Ibid.) On January 2, World Food Program officials took that step, suspending shipments to the "People's Republic of Kampuchea" "until authorities there permitted distribution of supplies already in warehouses in Phnom Penh and Kompong Son." (NYT, January 7, 1980.) In short, most of the relief aid that has arrived in Phnom Penh has not gone to the Kampuchean population. Defenders of Vietnam blame these delays on the absence of trucks and good roads. Yet these same people claim that "deliveries of over 250,000 tons of food, medicine and other badly needed supplies have already been received by ship and air from Vietnam, the USSR, and other countries, as well as from the American Friends Service Committee, OXFAM and other nonpo-

litical relief agencies." (Organizing Committee for a Viet Nam Solidarity Committee leaflet.) Some OXFAM officials have quietly dismissed such figures as a total fiction. An OXFAM doctor

doubted that the communist countries could have sent 200,000 tons, as the Heng Samrin and Hanoi governments claimed. This would have been logistically impossible: a figure of between 20,000 and 40,000 tons seemed more likely. (Shawcross, op. cit., p. 27)

But even suppose this fiction were true. How is it that the same trucks and roads could carry 200,000 tons of supplies from these countries yet not handle 50,000 from international relief agencies? Vietnam puffs up the amount of aid the Soviet bloc has sent in order to deny the dimensions of the catastrophe facing Kampuchea, and to re-establish its own tarnished humanitarian credentials. But its actions around Kampuchean relief speak louder than its fanciful figuring. The delay in aid distribution is deliberate and is of a piece with Vietnam's colonialist designs on Kampuchea. Those humanitarian agencies who had originally accepted Vietnam's conditions for relief work will increasingly have to take a long, hard look at that decision.

In light of this situation, three steps need to be taken. First, all those interested in preserving the Khmer nation must see to it that relief aid is organized for the population in those areas held by the government of Democratic Kampuchea and by other forces resisting the Vietnamese colonization. Such work become especially urgent given the decisions of organizations like OXFAM to aid exclusively the Phnom Penh regime. But even if those agencies reverse themselves, relief aid to Democratic Kampuchea remains critical. The forces resisting Vietnamese aggression represent Kampu-

chean sovereignty and the very existence of the Kampuchean people. To refuse them aid under any pretext gives carte blanche to aggression not only in Southeast Asia but throughout the world.

An international campaign of humanitarian relief to the Kampuchean resistance has been mounted by organizations cooperating with the Red Cross Society of Democratic Kampuchea. Checks marked for this purpose can be made out to the Kampuchea Support Committee, P. O. Box 1285, Peter Stuyvesant Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10009. The Committee has a number of publications available and can be contacted for further information on Kampuchean relief work. It is also possible to write directly to the Red Cross of Democratic Kampuchea in care of Mr. Pech Bun Ret, Representative of Democratic Kampuchea to the U.N. Economic and Social Committee for Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP Building, Bangkok, Thailand.

Second, concerned organizations and individuals should exert pressure on church organizations and other agencies to ensure that food and medical aid reaches both sides in Kampuchea. Pressure should also be organized against the current policy of organizations like OXFAM who channel all aid through the puppet government.

Third, relief agencies must insist on close monitoring of all aid directed through Phnom Penh to ensure that none is diverted to the Vietnamese occupation army or to Vietnam.

Aid to the Vietnamese army can in no way be equated with food and medical relief that reaches the army commanded by Pol Pot. The Vietnamese army has brought the threat of national extinction to Kampuchea. The Vietnamese authorities know that without an army the people have nothing; they therefore seek by military offensives and by starvation to crush the military forces opposing them.

At the present time, Pol Pot commands by far the largest and most effective of those forces. Without a guerrilla army, the Kampuchean nation is lost. It is right that the legitimate government and army defending Kampuchean nationhood against foreign aggression receive food and medical aid.

#### Diplomatic Recognition

Vietnam and the Soviet bloc have campaigned hard to win diplomatic recognition for the Heng Samrin regime. That campaign has largely failed, and Democratic Kampuchea has continued to be recognized by the United Nations and related international bodies as the sole legitimate government of Kampuchea.

In recent months, however, some Western governments have either withdrawn recognition from Democratic Kampuchea, now headed by Khieu Sampan, or announced their intention to do so, without granting recognition to the "People's Republic of Kampuchea." This trend must be opposed. In time, Kampuchea may see the formation of a new national unity government or front, including the Communist Party of Kampuchea, forces loyal to Prince Sihanouk, and others. If that happens, such a government naturally should receive recognition. But until such time, the withdrawal of recognition from Democratic Kampuchea (DK) sanctions Vietnamese aggression. While not legitimizing the puppet regime, the withdrawal of diplomatic recognition would serve that regime's purposes, and make the provision of relief aid to DK-governed areas more difficult.

#### Other Forms of Aid

Following the collapse of the U.S.-backed puppet regime in Saigon in 1975, Vietnam rightly called upon the U.S. to fulfill its war-time promise of reconstruction aid for Vietnam. The U.S. government refused, and many people who had opposed the war did not press the issue very vigorously. Vietnam desperately needed that aid, and the U.S.

government had a legal and moral obligation to provide it, as small recompense for the cruel, genocidal war it waged against the Vietnamese people. Moreover, the failure to grant the promised reconstruction aid could only strengthen Vietnam's dependence on the Soviet Union. The Chinese government, among others, brought up this argument in discussion with the U.S. authorities. Stronger Vietnamese dependence on the Soviet Union would only advance the Soviet strategic deployment in its contention with its superpower rival. Thus, opposition to both superpowers' attempts to dominate the Third World dictated uncompromising support for US reconstruction aid to Vietnam.

Unfortunately, that time is past. For the moment, the Vietnamese authorities have cast their lot with the Soviet offensive for world hegemony. In return for that support, the Soviets have aided Hanoi's efforts to bring Laos under its control and overrun large sections of Kampuchea. These are the realities of Southeast Asia today; progressive opinion must take account of them. We cannot allow justified anguish over Vietnam's suffering at the hands of U.S. imperialism to blind us to the present-day situation. We therefore see no alternative but to oppose any aid to Vietnam as long as it remains in Kampuchea. That is a stand many progressive people and many former anti-war activists find painful and difficult, a course we ourselves would have considered unthinkable only a few years ago. But then, unlike the government of Democratic Kampuchea, we found the idea of a Vietnamese invasion unthinkable a few years ago.

After the conclusion of Vietnam's war for national salvation, the world's peoples had every interest in a strong Vietnam. Today, a stronger Vietnam would only serve to tighten the aggressor's grip on Kampuchea, shore up the domination of Laos, and inflate Vietnam's ambitions over Southeast Asia. The world's peoples, including the people

of this country, have no interest in that kind of strength.

Hanoi says it will leave Kampuchea if only it gets aid for itself and for its puppet regime.

The burden of sick Cambodia and Vietnam is enormous and senior Vietnamese officials say privately that, if only the West (that is, America) would help both countries and persuade China to stop its war dance, the Vietnamese army would go home. (John Pilger, British New Statesman, September 21, 1979; the Organizing Committee for a Vietnam Solidarity Committee distributes this article.)

Progressive humanity must oppose this ransom demand, which in any case we have no reason to believe. "Senior Vietnamese officials" repeat over and over again that the situation in Kampuchea is "irreversible," meaning that they have absolutely no intention of seeing an independent Kampuchea emerge ever again. Hanoi's refusal to have any dealings with the neutralist Prince Sihanouk underscores its commitment on that point. Aggressors invariably claim that they will depart once a few of their conditions are met, but they never do unless they are driven out. Kampuchea, Vietnam, and Laos defeated the U.S. aggressors, and the U.S. had to leave. The USSR has yet to be defeated in Czechoslovakia or Afghanistan, and it has yet to leave. One day, Kampuchea will turn back the Vietnamese, and then and only then will they pack their bags and go.

Finally, to hasten that day, we must pressure the U.S. government to provide military aid to all forces resisting the Vietnamese occupation, including to the army commanded by Pol Pot. The U.S. will doubtless attempt to use such aid as a means of interfering in the internal affairs of the

Kampuchean resistance. But if one trait characterizes the present government of Democratic Kampuchea, it is the intransigent defense of its own independence. The U.S. government has little hope of bending that government to its will, which explains its unwillingness to supply any military aid to date. And the U.S. people have every interest in seeing a strong Kampuchean resistance capable of winning back its country from the Soviet-backed aggressors.

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Humanitarian relief can buy a little time. But no amount of foodstuffs can remove the threat to Kampuchea's national existence. The fundamental condition for ending the current tragedy of the Khmer nation remains the withdrawal of the Vietnamese occupation army. Vietnam's aggression and its colonialist designs are the source of the threat to the survival of the Kampuchean people.

But more than the survival of one small nation is at stake in Southeast Asia today. If the Soviet-backed aggressors succeed in destroying the Kampuchean nation, that precedent will reverberate across the globe. If aroused public opinion does not carry this message from Kampuchea throughout the world, Soviet tanks will. Already the uncertain world reaction to the invasion of Kampuchea has doubtless encouraged the Soviets to invade Afghanistan.

Events in Afghanistan have followed the by now familiar pattern observed in Kampuchea, and elsewhere before that. Soviet bloc troops pour across the borders of a sovereign nation; the Soviet bloc dismisses any talk of an invasion taking place; the government is overthrown; photos appear of the new puppet leader, who formerly made his home inside the Soviet bloc; Babrak Karmal, the Heng Samrin of Central Asia, entertains the big-brother people to

bring on more tanks; the aggressors wave a puppet signature on a freshly interpreted or freshly written treaty as sanction for the presence of their oh so fraternal troops; the occupation army fans out to crush indigenous resistance; the resistance forces make use of sanctuaries in neighboring countries; the occupiers issue solemn threats against the neighboring countries. The world watches.

Today it is the turn of Kampuchea and Afghanistan. Yesterday it was Czechoslovakia, and then in a different form, Angola and Ethiopia. Tomorrow it may be Pakistan. Or Yugoslavia. Or Rumania. Or Iran.

The world's peoples have a choice. They can write off this or that country because it is too small, too far away, or simply too foreign. They can wait until the tanks roll into a country that is big enough, close enough, or familiar enough. In short, they can wait their turn. Or they can awaken to the danger, a danger on the march in Kampuchea and Afghanistan today, a danger that will not go away until it is opposed on every front, in every corner of the globe.

In a small country in Southeast Asia, a brave people has taken up arms against the most dangerous source of a new world war. They fight for their survival as a nation. They fight for every nation that wants to safeguard its sovereignty and independence. They fight for every people who wants to live in peace. They fight to discourage the Soviet deployment in Southeast Asia, and thus to postpone the outbreak of World War III. They need our help. We need to give it.

## The "Boat People"

The spectre of an entire people on the brink of national extinction has pushed the mass exodus from Vietnam off the nightly news. Ghastly images of emaciated Kampuchean women and their children staggering into refugee camps have replaced scenes of sinking boats loaded to the gunnels with half-starved, frightened and sickly "refugees" from socialist Vietnam, invariably passing one now unconscious passenger over their heads for emergency medical attention. Stories of famine in Kampuchea have provided a change of pace from the sordid tales of mass round-ups in Vietnam, of the payment of bribes to Vietnamese officials, of pillage, rape, and drowning on the high seas.

The catastrophe in Kampuchea now serves the bourgeois media about as well as the plight of the so-called "boat people" in heaping discredit on popular aspirations for a new society. The numbers of refugees from Vietnam has also declined dramatically in the past few months. Refugee officials in Southeast Asia place the number of arrivals at only around 6,000 for the month of September of last year (NYT, 10/15/79). Assuming that the generally accepted survival rate for "boat people" (at the worst one out of every two is lost at sea) held for September, this would indicate that at most around thirteen or fourteen thousand people left Vietnam during the month. This figure compares with 55,000 arrivals on Southeast Asian shores in the month of June alone.

Various factors account for the decrease in the exodus from Vietnam. The monsoon and typhoon season has deterred some from venturing forth in the small, unseaworthy craft which the refugees must use. The navies of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have mounted

an increasingly effective blockade against the refugees boats. Systematic piracy directed against the refugees has kept others from undertaking what was already a very hazardous journey.

A change in Vietnamese policy is also evident. Since pledging to curb the outflow of refugees at a Geneva conference in July of last year, the Hanoi regime has taken steps to restrict the exodus. The conscious policy applied by Vietnam recently is reflected in the changed composition of the present boat people. Overseas Chinese or Vietnamese of Chinese-descent no longer arrive elsewhere in Southeast Asia.\*

Those now reaching foreign shores are similar to the original boat people who left before Hanoi's decision in mid-1978 to expel ethnic Chinese in return for payment...Most of the refugees now coming from Vietnam are ethnic Vietnamese. A high proportion of them have family ties abroad or were civil servants in the old Saigon Government with connections to the American civil and military bureaucracies there. Many of the men have served time in what Hanoi authorities call "re-education camps." (NYT, 10/15/79)

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\* Irwin Silber has raised a great to-do about the expression "overseas Chinese".

...the very concept of 'overseas Chinese' is itself an expression of national chauvinism that is completely contrary to Marxism-Leninism. How can there be a special status for citizens of a socialist country simply because they are descended from people who emigrated from another country? The view that there

The halt in the exodus of ethnic Chinese proves one thing: that the Vietnamese can stop the outflow of ethnic Chinese when they want to. For about a year, they did not want to; on the contrary, they expelled Chinese and Vietnamese of Chinese descent in vast numbers. For the moment, they have stopped doing so. The Vietnamese authorities acted in response to the strong pressure exerted by Southeast Asian and Western countries. At a time when Vietnam has hopes of finishing off the Kampuchean resistance struggle, securing its occupation of Kampuchea, and winning diplomatic legitimacy for its puppet regime there, Vietnam saw a need to muffle the outcry against its "export" of human beings. Further, the present Vietnamese leadership may not have fully anticipated the disruption caused its economy by the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of productive citizens.

These considerations explain why Vietnam

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is an overriding patriotic loyalty to China by people of Chinese origin resident in other countries is an ethnocentric expression of great power chauvinism. (p.11)

Silber displays either an extraordinary ignorance about Vietnam here or else a deliberate disregard for the facts. The people of Chinese national origin in Vietnam fall into two categories, as statements from China invariably emphasize. For many years, China had encouraged the Chinese in Vietnam to assume voluntarily Vietnamese citizenship, as it has encouraged Chinese elsewhere to assume voluntarily the citizenship of their countries. Those who did so are Vietnamese of Chinese descent; the Vietnamese call them the "Hoa" people. Those who had not taken Vietnamese citizenship remained Chinese citizens. Precisely

agreed at the Geneva conference to stem the exodus for the time being. But the internal evolution in Vietnam and its deep commitment to the war in Kampuchea suggest that the halt in the expulsion of Vietnam's ethnic Chinese is only a temporary one. We must brace ourselves for a new wave of boat people, for more filmed coverage of sinking ships and tales of human misery on the high seas.

A PROPAGANDA WINDFALL FOR CAPITALISM;

A CHALLENGE FOR SOCIALISM

The mass expulsions of ethnic Chinese beginning in mid-1978 caught progressive people around the world almost completely unprepared. Millions who had opposed U.S. aggression in Vietnam found the plight of hundreds of thousands of "boat people" and other refugees embarrassing and demoralizing. Hanoi apologists like Wilfred Burchett sought to dismiss the whole affair as "the exodus of a few thousand Vietnamese" (Vietnam Newsletter

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because they have not become citizens of a different country they remain "overseas Chinese." Since the Vietnamese began the systematic persecution of both overseas Chinese and Vietnamese of Chinese descent, they have tried to deny the existence of the overseas Chinese, labeling all people of Chinese descent in Vietnam as Hoa, just as Silber attempts to do. But a long historical record, including numerous agreements reached between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and People's China, clearly establishes the presence of many overseas Chinese in Vietnam.

Moreover, we should note that the Vietnamese term "Hoa" does not imply any particular relationship of people of Chinese descent to Vietnam. The Vietnamese government designates as Hoa all people of Chinese descent in Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries. The designation "Hoa" includes

#2, 3/20/79, p. 16). Western bourgeois governments and media seized gleefully upon this propaganda windfall for capitalism. Here were hundreds of thousands of people having to risk their lives in flight from socialism--in flight not at the advent of socialism, but over three years after the war had ended, after they had experienced a taste of life under the new social system. Here was an ethnic group forced to quit its homes and jobs in the type of society which has long promised an end to every form of national or racist discrimination. A wonderful and unforeseen opportunity had arisen for politicians in the West to strike their most statesmen-like poses, for editorial boards in our great metropolitan newspapers to shed crocodile tears over the inhumanity of socialism and the Third World.

Confusion reigned in the U.S. Left. Some protested against the Vietnamese policies, but many fell silent. Still others, whether moved by a sentimental attachment to Vietnam or a deeper ideological affinity with its present course, have attempted to justify or explain away its persecution of the ethnic Chinese. Their rationalizations have left many bewildered.

The misunderstandings and factual inaccuracies surrounding Vietnam's export of "boat people" have to be addressed by anyone concerned about the future of world socialism. In all likelihood, the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam have won only a temporary respite from expulsion; their lot in Vietnam today at this time cannot be a very happy one. When those expulsions begin again, the

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Chinese nationals in all the countries and citizens of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam who have Chinese ancestry. Thus, "Hoa" cannot necessarily imply Vietnamese citizenship. See the Hanoi publication, Those Who Leave, p. 22.

Left must have a clearer policy towards them than it has had until now. Not to have a policy, and not to propagate it widely means ceding U.S. imperialism a propaganda bonanza in its tireless war against national independence and socialism. For like the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, the persecution of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam raises issues which go to the very heart of the future that socialism proposes to the billions of this earth, and especially to small nations and national minorities everywhere, including in the United States. Of two things, one: either we agree in principle with U.S. imperialism that socialism may very well entail from time to time discrimination against, persecution or even expulsion of this or that national minority, and thus, Vietnam's policies in this case should be defended; or, through our words and actions towards those policies, we keep faith with the small nations and national minorities throughout the world and at home, resolved that the socialism we fight for will put an end to racist discrimination and national oppression.

The Vietnamese government and its defenders have offered three main explanations for the existence of so many "boat people" and for the high percentage of Chinese among them. They have attributed the exodus to the consequences of war; to the consequences of socialism; and to Chinese manipulation of the Chinese nationality in Vietnam as a "fifth column" for subversion.

#### THE EXPULSION OF ETHNIC CHINESE:

##### A CONSEQUENCE OF WAR?

The Vietnamese government has frequently cited the devastation caused by Vietnam's thirty-year war against Japanese imperialism, French colonialism, and U.S. aggression as a main cause

for the outflow of so many people from Vietnam. The Japanese, the French and above all U.S. imperialism brought extraordinary destruction and untold suffering to the Vietnamese. The aftermath of the war left a monumental task of national reconstruction before the Vietnamese people. Life in Vietnam is hard, in both halves of the country.

Many progressive people in the U.S. see the hardships of national reconstruction as the basic cause for the mass exodus. As the anti-war activist and actress Jane Fonda has said, "There's no question that many people are leaving Vietnam because there are no jobs, the economy is in a shambles and there is famine." (Newsweek, 8/13/79). They therefore point to the plight of the "boat people" and other "refugees" as an additional reason to increase pressure on the U.S. government for economic aid to Vietnam and for the payment of war reparations.

This explanation is at best incomplete and fundamentally misleading. Some of those fleeing Vietnam--the true refugees--do so because of the consequences of war. Foremost among those consequences is the fact that the side they took--that of U.S. imperialism and the Saigon regime--lost, and with the Americans went the benefits of siding with reaction. But this accounts for only a certain percentage of those who have left Vietnam, and can account for them only up to a certain point. If you choose the losing side, the time to leave is when it loses, or as soon thereafter as possible. Many Vietnamese with close ties to the Americans or to the Saigon government fled shortly after Vietnam's victory, or in a regular trickle after that. The dispatch quoted earlier reports that those reaching foreign shores during the early fall of 1979 (when the exodus had declined dramatically) fell into this category. They were ethnic Vietnamese; they either had family ties abroad or connections with the U.S.

forces in Vietnam. Because of those connections many had spent time in the camps the Vietnamese government set up for re-education.

But the consequences of war do not explain why over a million people--counting those who successfully arrived elsewhere and those many "boat people" who died trying--would leave Vietnam from mid-1978 to mid-1979. How is it that the consequences of a war that by then had been over for three years suddenly became so grave as to force them to flee?

The consequences of war--at least, the war against U.S. aggression--certainly do not explain why the Chinese would make up such a completely disproportionate number of those leaving southern Vietnam since mid-1978. Yes, life in southern Vietnam is hard. But why would the Chinese find it so much harder than anybody else? Why would they so much more frequently find it impossible?

#### THE PERSECUTION OF A NATIONAL MINORITY:

#### A CONSEQUENCE OF SOCIALISM?

To answer these questions, Vietnam, its zealous defenders, and many progressive people cite the consequences of socialism. Allegedly socialism required transformations in the economy of southern Vietnam in 1978 that many people and particularly many Chinese found unbearable. Therefore, they chose to leave Vietnam. Nguyen Co Thach, the acting Foreign Minister of Vietnam, claims that the Chinese who leave "are mostly big businessmen and they don't like the socialist reformation of South Vietnam. They would like to go away." (Seymour Hersh article in NYT, 8/7/79. The Organizing Committee for a Vietnam Solidarity Committee has made Hersh's dispatches more widely available.) Irwin Silber tells us that "when Vietnam



took measures to expropriate the sizeable merchant class operating in the south--a large number of whom were of Chinese descent--the Chinese leadership accused Vietnam of attacking the 'overseas Chinese' on an ethnic, chauvinist basis." (p.11)

This answer, otherwise known as the-Chinese-as-the-usurious-Jew-of-Asia line, is even less convincing than the first. The overseas Chinese in Vietnam and Vietnamese of Chinese descent have been variously estimated at 1.2 million, 1.8 million people, or several millions. (This last figure comes from, among others, Hoang Van Hoan, former Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of Vietnam; Beijing Review No. 49, 1979.) Hundreds of thousands left southern Vietnam from mid-1978 to mid-1979. Are we to understand that capitalist production and trade in southern Vietnam was so highly developed as to support at one time--a time three years past the Americans' escape--several hundred thousand "big businessmen" or members of the "merchant class"? Break it to us gently: are the rest of the 1.2 to 1.8 million Chinese also "big businessmen" and members of the "merchant class"? Just how "sizeable" was this "merchant class" and just how "large" a "number of them were of Chinese descent"?

Some of the Chinese who have left southern Vietnam were of the merchant class. Doubtless, a small percentage were something approaching "big businessmen," at least by Vietnamese standards. But the majority were not: some were workers, some were peasants, some were artisans and other petit-bourgeois working people (Jean Lacouture, NY Review of Books, 8/16/79). The nationalization of most private enterprise in southern Vietnam had not just affected a few "big businessmen"; it also affected artisans, small shop-keepers, and the employees of all nationalized enterprise. At about the same time,

much artisanal production and small, independent trading in northern Vietnam was also nationalized. Once those nationalizations occurred, what happened to the Vietnamese and Chinese affected by this policy?

The Vietnamese government and its defenders reply: why, the people affected did not want to make the transition to a new way of gaining their livelihood, so they decided to leave. But why is it then that so many who fled during the mid-1978 to mid-1979 period happened to be Chinese? Perhaps Chinese made up a disproportionate percentage of the artisans, small shopkeepers, traders, and middlemen. But Vietnam is a country of 50 million people; the Chinese compose some 4, 5 or 6 percent of the population. So, even if they were disproportionately concentrated in these occupations, they certainly did not constitute the majority of those engaged in them. That those who left during this period were so overwhelmingly Chinese should give us pause.

Here an analogy with the situation of the Jews is in order. Not a comparison between Vietnam's present depiction of its fast disappearing Chinese national minority and the standard anti-Semitic line about Jewish "big businessmen." No: a comparison between what a social system masquerading as socialism but pursuing world hegemony has today brought the Jews and what the Vietnamese social system pursuing regional hegemony has brought the Chinese national minority.

There are many technicians, intellectuals, scientists, and artists in the Soviet Union. Say, Jews make up a disproportionate percentage of them. Jews are a small minority in the Soviet Union. They do not compose anything even remotely approaching the majority of technicians, intellectuals, scientists and artists. That a completely disproportionate number of those technicians,

intellectuals, scientists and artists trying to get out of the Soviet Union are Jewish gives strong evidence for the existence of anti-Semitism in the USSR. Similarly, that such a wholly disproportionate number of those former artisans, small shopkeepers, small traders, etc., leaving Vietnam during the mid-1978 to mid-1979 period were Chinese gives strong evidence for the existence of the systematic persecution that the Chinese arriving on foreign shores report.

Despite the Western bourgeois media's insatiable appetite for tales of the horrors of socialism, Vietnam's new export items do not give the traditional interview that, "Oh, socialism came, it was terrible." They report a pattern of systematic discrimination. In sections of northern Vietnam, in at least some heavily Chinese towns, schools run in Chinese were closed as early as 1975 (NYT, 5/11/79). When much artisanal production and small independent trading were nationalized in northern Vietnam in early 1978, the Vietnamese were instructed to continue working as before but now as employees of the state. The Chinese formerly engaged in those occupations were told to quit working. Many trades and crafts are now barred to Chinese. Because they knew no other life, many of the Chinese still did not consider emigrating. To encourage the reluctant to leave, says the Far Eastern Economic Reporter, the Vietnamese government took a series of measures. "No school for the children. No work. The threat of 're-education.' Confiscation of funds sent by relatives abroad." Chinese could find themselves ordered to move to a new area, where police might check ration books every month (NYT, 5/11/79). Finally, their ration books would run out, or else police would come with orders for them to leave the country.

The consequences of war and socialism explanation might be more plausible as an account of why many Chinese left southern Vietnam if the mass exodus from southern Vietnam did not belong to a larger pattern. The Chinese national minority has not left only southern Vietnam. It has also been forced to leave northern Vietnam and Kampuchea since the Vietnamese occupation. Are we to understand that the many overseas Chinese and Vietnamese of Chinese descent in northern Vietnam (including fourth and fifth generation families) were also "big businessmen" and members of a "sizeable merchant class"? How could that be? Ho Chi Minh led his people in declaring independence in 1945. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was on the socialist road from the mid-1950's. How is it that all these "big businessmen" and members of the "merchant class" in northern Vietnam, the wily Shylocks of the East, had escaped detection until now?

They escaped detection because they were not big businessmen or members of a sizeable merchant class. They were peasants, fishing people, production workers, miners, dockers, army cadre, government officials, teachers, researchers, hospital workers. Many of the Vietnamese of Chinese descent no longer even speak Chinese, yet they too were driven from Vietnam.

The new Vietnamese settlers have been organized into three of the farm's 50 production teams in isolated areas. They are further isolated because many of them do not speak Chinese. (NYT, 9/11/79)

The Times reports on two "exports" from Ho Chi

Minh City's Chinese Cholon district who now teach other refugees Chinese. Like the Chinese national minority in southern Vietnam, that in northern Vietnam has not emigrated because there were no jobs. They have had to leave because of systematic persecution, because their jobs have been taken away from them. Some recent reports in the U.S. press offer confirmation.

As always, we have to treat bourgeois press reports with the greatest of care. But there is reason to pay attention to a couple of them. In the summer of 1979, the Vietnamese government invited Seymour Hersh, the former New York Times reporter who first brought widespread attention to the My Lai massacre story, to visit. The Vietnamese government does not invite reporters who have, for example, given favorable coverage to the Kampuchean resistance struggle to Vietnam. It invites those whose reports it believes might prove useful.

Hersh returned with an account of the occupations previously held by the Chinese fleeing Vietnam.

A crew of skilled Soviet longshoremen are now hard at work in Vietnam's busy harbor at Haiphong, unraveling a huge tie-up caused by a lack of skilled workers.

There are precious few factories in underindustrialized Vietnam, but some of them had to be closed down recently because of lack of skilled workers.

The missing workers were ethnic Chinese...

The Chinese population, which once totaled 1.2 million, traditionally has been concentrated in government

offices, hospitals, schools and research institutes, Vietnamese officials said. They noted that 3,000 of the 13,000 Chinese living in Hanoi at the beginning of last year worked in central Government offices...One senior Vietnamese official acknowledged that because of the outflow of Chinese medical doctors, "Now you can find parts of Vietnam where there are none." He added, "We don't like to let the skilled people go away."

The loss has been felt not only in the upper reaches of Government and in medical clinics. More than 15 percent of Vietnam's coal miners were Chinese, and mining operations were said to have been hampered by the exodus of key workers. ("Exodus of Skilled Ethnic Chinese Worsens Hanoi's Plight," Seymour Hersh, NYT, 8/9/79)

The New York Times ran another interesting story about the Chinese who fled northern Vietnam. A Times reporter visited the Red River Valley in China's Yunnan province. He spoke to Chinese from northern Vietnam on two state farms. His story devotes most of its attention to detailing the gripes of some new arrivals who find life on the state farms unpleasant; the story headline, "Some Vietnamese Ethnic Chinese Find Life Hard in China," conveys the emphasis. But in passing, the article reveals a couple of very significant facts.

For the peasant farmers who make up the majority of the 27,000 Vietnamese refugees in Yunnan Province, life as new members of 15 state farms is a blessing, a fresh and peaceful begin-

ning of a new and productive life...  
(our emphasis)

Another reporter invited to Vietnam by the government, Elizabeth Becker of the Washington Post, has similarly reported that the Chinese in northern Vietnam "were key in the coal mining, fishing and manufacturing fields and with their departure there was a marked decline in all three sectors." What "consequences of war" could strike peasants, miners, fishing people, and industrial workers three years after a war that did not strike them during it?

What of the Chinese national minority in Kampuchea? Since the Vietnamese army invaded Kampuchea, overseas Chinese in that country and Kampucheans of Chinese descent have had to flee it as well (see, among other reports, NYT 12/9/79). Are we to understand that the Chinese in Kampuchea were also "big businessmen" or members of a "sizeable merchant class"? If so, this new fact adds to a breathtakingly original class analysis of Southeast Asia: everywhere the "big businessmen" and "sizeable merchant class" are Chinese; and everywhere the Chinese are all "big businessmen" and members of the "merchant class."

But pardon the momentary confusion. We have been reading the stories about Kampuchea told by the Vietnamese government and its supporters in this country. According to those accounts, the government of Democratic Kampuchea under Pol Pot committed all sorts of "ultra-Left" excesses in the name of promoting a utopian egalitarianism. "...the evidence continues to mount that the political conceptions guiding the regime were based on an ultra-'left' view of social development in which social and political relations we would associate with the epoch of communism were being imposed on the country arbitrarily..." (Irwin Silber, The War in Indochina, p.7). Now

we learn from other sources that the Chinese national minority in Kampuchea must flee the country, and everyone knows about those Chinese businessmen and merchants...

#### THE CHINA SYNDROME

To explain away the exodus of Vietnamese of Chinese descent and Chinese nationals from northern Vietnam, the Hanoi government and its defenders take aim at the People's Republic of China. In the embarrassing departure of families who have lived in northern Vietnam for many generations, they spy the long arm of Peking.

They [the Chinese leadership] spread rumors among Vietnamese of Chinese descent in the northern sections of Vietnam that they would be persecuted and killed because a full-scale war with Kampuchea was in the offing, a war in which they would be considered a 'fifth column.' (Silber, p.11)

The charge lacks plausibility on a number of counts.

Along with their Vietnamese brothers and sisters, the Chinese national minority in northern Vietnam was "persecuted and killed" during "a full-scale war" lasting thirty years. Millions of tons of U.S. bombs did not drive them into leaving. Napalm did not break their resolve. Sacrifices of an epic proportion did not cause them to lose courage. Atrocities did not send them into panic. Japanese, French and U.S. troops did not lead them to take to the high seas. One would have thought that during those thirty years, Chinese nationals and Vietnamese of Chinese descent would have forged unshakable bonds of mutual trust and affection with the Vietnamese people. Are we now

to understand that a few words from the Chinese cause them to panic? A few rumors from the Chinese would cause them to forget thirty years of common struggle with the Vietnamese? As the reports show, many Vietnamese of Chinese descent in northern Vietnam did not even speak Chinese. Can any materialist seriously believe that ancient blood ties exert such a strong mystical power as to override the common history of the Chinese national minority and the Vietnamese in northern Vietnam? After all that time in northern Vietnam, why would the Chinese national minority not break out in hearty gales of laughter at the very idea that their Vietnamese compatriots would persecute or kill them?

Some representatives of the Vietnamese government go further than Irwin Silber. They say that "foreign reactionaries" (e.g., the Chinese) organized the exodus of the Chinese nationals and Hoa people from northern and southern Vietnam. But since when have the Chinese had such a mighty free hand in Vietnam as to be able to organize the flight of at least the 250,000 "refugees" who have entered China? The Vietnamese have not had that close an association with China. Even during at least the last years of the Vietnamese war against the U.S. aggression, you could not buy a copy of Mao Zedong's works in Hanoi bookstores. How could China organize the departure of so many people from northern or southern Vietnam?

When tens of thousands of Chinese nationals and Vietnamese of Chinese descent began pouring over the border into China, the Chinese government protested and later closed the border. China has made the repatriation of the Chinese national minority to Vietnam a negotiating issue in its talks with Vietnam. Curiously enough, the Vietnamese side has not made China's return of Vietnamese of Chinese descent or Chinese nationals to Vietnam a negotiating issue in those same talks.

Indeed, after shedding crocodile tears about the disruption caused Vietnam's economy by the departure of the Chinese national minority, the Vietnamese authorities turn around and complain that the return of the Chinese would only bring "disruption"!

...the Chinese Government which drove the Hoa into a massive exodus to China in 1978 is now demanding that the Vietnamese Government agree to the return of that mass of refugees who had left Vietnam of their own free will. Such a massive return of those Hoa will give rise to innumerable economic and political difficulties. (Those Who Leave, Hanoi, 1979, p.35-36)

Are China's actions those of a country intent on whisking away another country's national minority? Is Vietnam's silence on the repatriation of its own people back to Vietnam the action of a country intent on building the strongest possible unity among its constituent peoples? Or is it in fact the action of a country which forced the emigration of the Chinese national minority in the first place?

If China has incited and organized the exodus of the Chinese national minority, why can't the Vietnamese government do more to stop it? At an international meeting in Djakarta in mid-May of 1979, the Vietnamese representative Vu Hoang announced that "refugees" would flow out of Vietnam at the rate of 10,000 a month. How does the Vietnamese government know in advance that the Chinese will successfully manage to organize a certain number of people every month? In August of 1979, Democratic Congressperson, Lester Wolff, told Thai Prime Minister Kriangsak Chomanan that the Vietnamese had resolved to "allow" 10,000

people to leave each month. According to Vietnamese at that time, unless 10,000 were "allowed" to leave, it would "be impossible to stem the flow of refugees. Hanoi reportedly said it did not have the resources to stop all those trying to flee by boat." (Associated Press, 8/13/79) If 10,000 represent those legally free to leave, shouldn't we expect those beguiled by China to increase the total? Would legal emigration change China's ability to "incite and organize" or "spread rumors" among the Chinese national minority? Or by "allowing" emigration, has the Vietnamese government legalized China's alleged organizing activities in Vietnam?

The Vietnamese may sometimes say that they cannot prevent illegal flight from their country. But facts speak louder than words. During the early fall of 1979, ethnic Chinese did not leave Vietnam. If the Vietnamese could prevent the exodus of the Chinese national minority in September of 1979, why couldn't they prevent it in April of 1979?

The reason was obvious: the Vietnamese were not trying to prevent the exodus of the



Chinese national minority in April of 1979. They were organizing it. The only plausible explanation for the exodus of masses of ethnic Chinese from northern and southern Vietnam and from Kampuchea is the systematic discrimination and persecution practiced by the Vietnamese government. That and that alone can explain why the bonds forged by a thirty-year war did not prevent the Chinese national minority from leaving Vietnam. All the various fabrications and apparently reasonable arguments trotted out by the Vietnamese authorities cannot cover up this fact.

Even Hanoi's more zealous defenders have on occasion admitted the real author of the exodus. They have given the lie to the fantastic claim that the ethnic Chinese "had left Vietnam of their own free will." (Those Who Leave, Hanoi, 1979; p. 36). They have given the lie to the "consequences of war" rationale; they have thrown aside the "consequences of socialism" explanation; they have dropped talk of Chinese "big businessmen" or high unemployment rates. Instead they simply note the incontrovertible: the Vietnamese government kicked the ethnic Chinese out of their jobs, and then kicked them out of the country.

Tens of thousands of ethnic Chinese, at all levels of activity, were dismissed from their jobs following the Chinese invasion and given roughly three choices: 1) go to the rear areas--essentially the Central Highlands where 'new economic zones' were being opened up; 2) follow the road route to China; or 3) pay boat passage to Hong Kong or other countries in Southeast Asia willing to receive them. (Wilfred Burchett, cited in Vietnam and Human Rights, p. 20)

What feeble excuse can Hanoi's defenders muster for such a chauvinist policy? Burchett repeats the Vietnamese authorities' incredible allegation that the wily ethnic Chinese "acted as a fifth column, assassinating cadres as the invaders approached their towns and villages, guiding commando units to hidden stores of rice and other supplies..." (p. 21). But even Burchett, a man who has stomached many an indigestible rational for Cuban, Vietnamese and Soviet aggression, cannot quite keep this one down.

To what extent the often horrendous tales of Hoa 'treachery' were true, or exaggerated, the result was that for the first time in 25 years of regular visits to Vietnam, I found a generalized attitude of hostility towards the ethnic Chinese. (*ibid*)

To translate: even Burchett cannot find it in himself to report Hoa treachery without putting quotation marks around the word; but he did find a chauvinist hostility towards the ethnic Chinese.

Some progressives in the U.S. have faced Hanoi's role squarely—and still condone it. People's attorney William Kuntsler, for example, refers to a "traditional" enmity between Vietnam and China as an excuse for Vietnam to expel its own Chinese national minority. According to this view, the removal of the Chinese nationals and Vietnamese of Chinese descent represents a sensible decision eliminating an internal threat to—a fifth column within--Vietnam.

That people of the U.S. Left as familiar with the poisonous, racist logic of white-supremacist domination as William Kuntsler can accept such an idea shows the strength of our sentimental attachments to Vietnam. Since when do we take

it for granted that an historical antagonism rooted in the feudal past of Vietnam and China carries over into the new societies that each country claims to be building? Since when does any fair-minded person--which William Kuntsler is--believe that national origins, stretching back four and five generations in many cases, determine political sympathies?

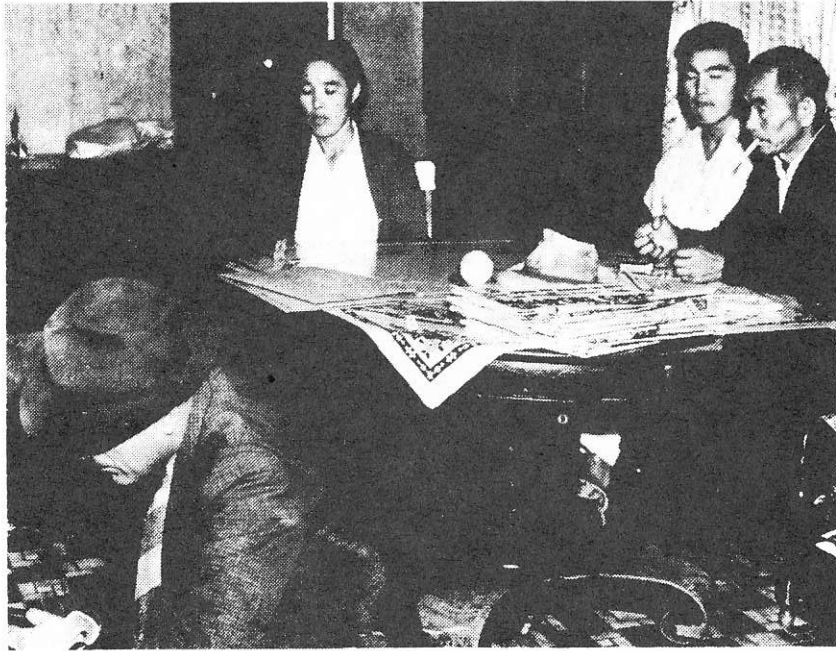
#### A DAMNING PRECEDENT

U.S. history has known and continues to witness innumerable instances of race thinking in action. For an analogy with Vietnam's expulsion of the Chinese national minority, consider the U.S. Government's round-up of Japanese nationals and American citizens of Japanese descent during World War II. The internment of the Nisei in the U.S. has some typically American racist features--no one seriously considered rounding up American citizens of German <sup>descent</sup> or even many German nationals, for example--but the same reasoning is at work. Were the Nisei, as so many shrieked at the time, a "fifth column" within the U.S.? Hardly anyone even among the bourgeoisie still maintains that view today.

Interestingly enough, the Vietnamese acting Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach has invoked the Nisei precedent in explaining the Chinese exodus from Vietnam.

'The second group of refugees,' Mr. Thach said, 'are the Chinese. There are two reasons they left. First, you should know that I have been in New York and I have talked with the Japanese. They told me that after Pearl Harbor the Japanese were all concentrated into camps and all their property confiscated.

'Here the Chinese are free. You



[An F.B.I. agent violates the home of a Japanese family during World War II.]

can see them in the streets. But they have the difficulty of being caught in a crossfire. If they support the Vietnamese against the Chinese, the Chinese are suspicious. If they support the Chinese against the Vietnamese, the same. If they are neutral, they are doubted by both sides. So it's very difficult for them to stay.' (Seymour Hersh article, NYT, 8/7/79; Thach then goes on to the "big businessmen" explanation).

Thach does not tell us why, if this were true, 250,000 Chinese nationals and Vietnamese of Chinese descent (we might note that he forthrightly describes both groups as Chinese, prompting the indignation of people like Irwin Silber, no doubt) "opted" to move to China. Or why, according to this version of events, a thirty-year war had not fostered greater feelings of camaraderie and Vietnamese patriotism among the Chinese national minority in the north. But notice the casual reference to the Nisei, and the extremely limited contrast that Thach draws with the Chinese situation in Vietnam. Even when stating that contrast, he depicts Vietnamese citizens of Chinese descent and Chinese nationals as unassimilable outsiders to Vietnamese life.

The U.S./Vietnam Friendship Association of Southern California has also turned to the Nisei precedent to excuse Vietnam's conduct. Perhaps they have reminded their fellow Californians of those camps in order to make the expulsion of ethnic Chinese more palatable to the non-Japanese public on the West Coast. To bleeding-heart liberals with qualms about the round-up of a national minority, they solemnly cite "twentieth century political and military reality."

...terrible as it is that so many people are moved from their homes, has there ever been a country which, in order to protect the rights of one portion of its citizens, willingly risked its security, in the face of an overtly threatened attack? However admirable such a humanitarian position might seem, it is not a reflection of twentieth century political and military reality anywhere in the world.

We need only look back to our own history, when tens of thousands of



Japanese citizens were herded into concentration camps during World War II. At that time, as distinguished from the current situation in Vietnam, there had not been a single accusation of sabotage or fifth column activity, not a single Japanese-American had gone to Japan, to return to the U.S. leading a Japanese sapper unit up the beach at Los Angeles or San Francisco.

(Vietnam and Human Rights, p. 21-22)

Yes, if only a few "accusations" had turned up, or a few of those "often horrendous tales of [Japanese-American] 'treachery'" (even if, as Wilfred Burchett would say, they were exaggerated or false, then the Nisei camps would have fit right in with "twentieth century political and military reality," just like the expulsions of ethnic Chinese.

Vietnamese citizens of Chinese descent and Chinese nationals fought shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the Vietnamese for thirty years. If the Vietnamese government is conducting a just struggle today, it should be able to continue to count on support from all nationalities in their country, just as it did then. If, on the contrary, the Vietnamese government is pursuing an unjust war of aggression in a neighboring country; permanently stationing troops in another country; and conducting provocative activity against yet another country, complete with chauvinist anti-Chinese propaganda, then the government and its acting Foreign Minister have good reason to doubt the reliability of many of its citizens. Which brings us to the causes behind Vietnam's actions.

To know the underlying causes for the present Vietnamese government's policies towards Kampuchea, towards the Soviet Union and China, and towards the Chinese national minority, we would have to study the extremely complicated history of class struggle in both southern and northern Vietnam since 1945. With the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea and other actions, new research into Vietnamese history is underway. Even a summary review of the internal evolution of the Vietnamese party and state is beyond us at this time. But we can say something about the immediate advantages to Vietnam of expelling the Chinese.

The Vietnamese persecution of the Chinese national minority takes place against a very specific international backdrop. The Soviet Union has stepped up its drive for domination of the world, placing the strategic positions of its superpower rival, U.S. imperialism, in danger. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provides the most recent and striking evidence of the Soviet march for world hegemony. In all probability, Vietnam saw in the increased tempo of the Soviet offensive an opportunity to realize goals of its own. It therefore abandoned all attempts at "neutrality" in the controversies dividing the Soviet Union and China. In return for its support for Soviet world hegemonism, Vietnam received the USSR's full backing in Vietnam's attempt to dominate Indochina, to achieve a regional hegemony. Regional hegemony meant the domination by any means necessary of Laos and Kampuchea. Vietnam would try to use the USSR; and the USSR would try to use Vietnam.

Understandably, the government of Kampuchea did not go along with Vietnamese designs on itself.

China supported self-determination for the Kampuchians, and China also continued its efforts to mobilize world opinion against the Soviet drive for world hegemony. In this situation, an open rupture with China became inevitable, as long as the Vietnamese government clung to its expansionist aims.

The break with China would inevitably necessitate the orchestration of a chauvinist campaign against the People's Republic of China; the Vietnamese decision to impose its will on the Kampuchians left no other choice. The increasing closeness of the Soviet-Vietnamese relationship--given its most tangible expression in the 25-year "Friendship Treaty" signed by the two and in Vietnamese adherence to COMECON--would also involve Vietnam in the Soviets' own efforts to vilify, isolate and encircle the USSR's most implacable opponent. In the circumstances of an external campaign against China, one that risked military confrontation over Vietnamese designs on Kampuchea, the Vietnamese government calculated that it could not count on the political reliability of the Chinese national minority. Therefore, it hastened the rupture with China by undertaking in earnest the persecution and expulsion of that minority. The chauvinist campaign against China by the Vietnamese is shown by the racist logic it employed in ridding itself of Vietnamese of Chinese descent. The expulsions reached sometimes even fourth and fifth generation Vietnamese of Chinese descent and of many Hoa people who spoke no Chinese.

The ejection of the Chinese national minority from Vietnam had two additional benefits. Hundreds of thousands of homeless and frequently penniless Chinese placed heavy economic and political burdens on the rest of Southeast Asia. Governments in the region had no jobs or resources for these people. In the non-socialist countries with al-

ready large Chinese populations such as Malaysia, the presence of additional Chinese risked the aggravation of already deep tensions among nationalities. The arrival of hundreds of thousands of Chinese nationals and Vietnamese of Chinese descent caused great difficulties for China as well, since its underdeveloped economy could not easily absorb them. The burdens placed on other Southeast Asian countries hinder their effective opposition to Vietnam's efforts to achieve regional hegemony.

Finally, after having stripped the Chinese national minority of its livelihoods, the Vietnamese government and various middlemen exact whatever price the "refugees" can bear for the privilege of being kicked out of their country. Spokespeople for the Vietnamese government categorically deny that they charge the Chinese money to get out of Vietnam. Their denials contradict the refugees' many accounts; but since many refugee stories in the Western press lack all credibility, other verification is needed. That verification comes from two sources: knowledge about the Soviet Union's dealings with other countries; and credible reports from the U.N. and other sources.

The Soviet Union currently supplies enormous amounts of military aid to the Vietnamese government. Everyone knows that the Soviet Union does not give away guns--it requires payment, it sells them. For example, even during the Korean War, when China was an apparently close ally of the USSR, the Soviet government made China pay for all the weapons it received. Pham Khue, the vice-director of the Reunification Electric Fan Factory, told Washington Post reporter, Elizabeth Becker, that, "In the war years we had a lot of aid from socialist countries. Now we must pay for everything" ("Vietnam after loss of aid"). Le Vinh, vice-director of the economic institute of the

Commission for Social Science of Vietnam, told Becker that,

Without more help we became short of money and we have had to carry out cooperative projects with the Soviet Union. We also have to make money immediately so we concentrated on export goods, not products for our own people. (ibid)

How does Vietnam earn the hard currency to pay for Soviet arms? Becker reports,

Plastics, medicines, rugs, textiles, and handicrafts are produced in Vietnam for immediate delivery to the Soviet Union. To pay back grants and aid, Vietnam has become a source of cheap labor for the Soviet Union. 'Almost nothing is free from the Russians,' explained one expert familiar with Soviet military and economic aid to Vietnam. (ibid)

Imagine the number of rugs and handicrafts it takes to pay for a modern tank. Now many agree with the Vietnamese government that owing to the "consequences of war," "the economy is in a shambles." Seymour Hersh reported that "the economy is stagnant, with little manufacturing and little foreign-trade revenue." (NYT, 8/9/79). The Vietnamese government does not have the food to make up for the Soviet Union's own perpetually crisis-ridden agricultural production. On the contrary, Vietnam has to import food. How then does Vietnam pay for the arms it receives?

Evidence mounts that the extortion of payment from the "refugees" is not, as the Vietnamese government claims, the work of bribed lower echelon officials and middlemen alone, but a policy

of the central government. Jean-Francis Held estimated in Le Nouvel Observateur (a backer of the Socialist Party in France, this left-liberal magazine had a long history of opposition to the war in Vietnam) that in 1978, the "refugee" trade brought 115 million dollars to the Vietnamese treasury. This figure amounted to two and one-half percent of the country's gross national product. An official at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (the Vietnamese Government today cooperates with this office in its managing of the exodus) reported that at the height of the expulsions of the Chinese, this trade brought 240 million dollars to Vietnam in April, 1979, alone. Other reports indicate that some of this money finds its way to the USSR in payment for arms aid.

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For over one hundred and twenty-five years, socialism has held out to the small nations, numerous minorities and ethnic groups of this earth a vision of a different world. That vision promises a future free of nation enslaving nation, free of pogrom, of apartheid, of Jim Crow, of national discrimination, persecution and prejudice. For that world, tens of millions have given their lives, and tens of millions, even hundreds of millions more, fight today to change this one.

The need and desire for socialism has reached every people of the world. But it has a special resonance and inspires a special sacrifice among the small nations, the colonized, and the oppressed, those peoples held in contempt by the oppressor--the downtrodden, the despised and the forgotten. In the barrios, the ghettos, the shantytowns and the villages, they dream of that new world in

which their people walk as the equals of all humanity.

The spectre of the "boat people," the expulsion of the Chinese national minority from Vietnam, test the resolve of every person pledged to a socialist future. They test that socialism itself. Do Marxists stand fast in their supreme commitment to a social system that will end national oppression? Is the socialism they promise a socialism worthy of the oppressed peoples, the small nations and national minorities? Is it a socialism of which those peoples can dream and for which they will lay down their lives? Or is it a "socialism" of the oppressor, a "socialism" of superpowers, hegemonists, and dominant nations-- a chauvinist, arrogant, racist "socialism" for which small nations, national minorities and the oppressed need not apply?

If we oppose Vietnam's expulsion of the Chinese national minority and its attempted subjugation of Kampuchea, we keep faith with the small nations and national minorities of this world, and through them, we keep faith with socialism itself. We remind ourselves and the world that when Marx said the proletariat had no country, he did not envision homeless citizens of an erstwhile socialist society wandering the high seas because of their nationality. We say that in our socialism still burns the promise of national equality, of national self-determination and the voluntary amalgamation of nations.

Defenders of the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea such as Irwin Silber have invoked the voluntary amalgamation of nations to support Vietnam's action. The Vietnamese expulsion of the Chinese national minority shows how highly the Hanoi authorities regarded the amalgamation that had gone on in Vietnam in the thirty-three years since independence. It shows us the "volun-

tary amalgamation" that awaits the Kampuchean. It shows us the fate that small nations and national minorities can expect in the world the Soviet and Vietnamese governments want to build for us.

Those who in the name of socialism defend, condone, excuse, or ignore the Vietnamese expulsion of the Chinese national minority and the new political realities bobbing on the waves in Southeast Asia are also speaking to the small nations and national minorities of this earth. They say:

Socialism demands the work of all;  
the fighting of all; the cooperation  
of all; the sacrifice of all; the blood  
of all.

They say:

Small nations and peoples of the world:

You may work with us for 33 years.  
You may fight with us for 33 years.  
You may visit in our homes, take  
food with us, belong to our Party  
and our state.  
Your children may play with our  
children.  
You may shed your blood, and your  
children and their children may  
shed theirs.  
We may endure atrocities together,  
share prison and exile.

But one fine sunny day, we may  
decide to take away your livelihood;  
to close our schools in your language;  
to round you up in the middle of the  
night and send you to camps or parts  
unknown; to deny you coupons for food.

And on that day, look out. Marxist-Leninist phrases have not caused us to forget who you are. The "voluntary amalgamation of nations" is not thicker than blood. You are not sister and brother to us. For despite those thirty-three years, we can still pick you out, we will know you by your funny names, by the other language you speak or your parents spoke, by your physique, or by your family history. Perhaps we will know you, as the Nazis knew the Jews and the southern plantation owners knew the Afro-Americans, by your grandparents.



*Nat Turner preaching to his followers in a Virginia swamp*

(CULVER PICTURES, INC.)

Yes, we may have a grandfather clause.

On that day, you will be like the Jews, hunted down on cobbled European streets. Or like the Afro-Americans running through the swamps to the baying of blood-hounds. Or like the Mexicans, waiting in the hills for the Texas Rangers.

Small nations and national minorities, even under socialism, some things never change. The knock at the door. The children staring at strange soldiers. The presentation of identity papers. The hurried gathering of a few belongings.

But wait. After all, these are Chinese in Vietnam we are talking about. A special case. Don't worry about it. Sleep soundly tonight, Afro-Americans. Sleep soundly tonight, Chicanos. Sleep soundly tonight, Puerto Ricans. Sleep soundly tonight, Chinese and other Asians in the U.S. Nothing for you to worry about in a socialist U.S. We have many years of work, of fighting, of visiting each other's homes, of taking food together, of belonging to the same Party and the same state, of our children playing together, of shedding our blood together, and our children and their children shedding theirs, of enduring atrocities and sharing prison and exile.

Sleep soundly tonight. Dream of what socialism holds for you.

--January 1980  
Proletarian Unity League

A HOUSE DIVIDED: LABOR AND WHITE SUPREMACY  
by the Proletarian Unity League

- "Don't whites benefit from racism?"
- "Didn't white people work and struggle for what they have over Black people?"
- "Whites have always been against our rights; why should they ever change?"
- "Why should our demands include something about racism?"
- "Why talk about what divides us when there are things that unite us?"

These are conversations that occur every day, whenever the question of white supremacy and how to fight it comes up, which means whenever working people try to fight back against oppression and exploitation.

The Proletarian Unity League wrote this pamphlet as a first attempt to answer not only these questions, but some large issues central to the work of making socialist revolution in this country: Why hasn't socialism taken permanent root in the U.S. working class? Why hasn't the U.S. working class succeeded in forming a mass labor party? What is the relation of racist discrimination within the workplace and U.S. society to these failures? How has white supremacist thinking acquired such a formidable hold on a broad section of the white workers? How can that hold be broken? In short, what must be done for socialism to gain a mass following in this country?

The drafting of this pamphlet goes back five years now. Its themes have a new urgency in light of the possibilities and dangers that the current situation holds for the U.S. Left.

\*\*Order before April 1, 1980 at prepublication price, \$2.50, single copy. 175 pages.\*\*

Themes from A House Divided: Labor and White Supremacy:

"Like the inventor in the story, U.S. Marxists know a thousand things that don't work. General strikes of armed railroad workers who deny employment to Black labor don't work. Soldiers, Sailors, and Workingmen's Councils in Seattle which ignore white-skin immigration policies don't work. Women's emancipation movements which sever their bond to Black emancipation don't work. Industrial unions which wrap national oppression in 'seniority rights' don't work. Communist Parties which do not make the fight against white-supremacist national oppression 'part and parcel' of every struggle don't work."

"The history of class struggle in the U.S. confronts Marxists with a choice that each succeeding upheaval has only sharpened. To emancipate itself from the power of Capital, the proletariat must end national oppression. To end the oppression of the Afro-American people, the Chicano people, and other oppressed nationalities within the U.S., the proletariat must overthrow Capital. But the ending of national oppression entails more than the overthrow of Capital; it also means the ending of the special status the bourgeoisie has established for white workers, the destruction of that other 'peculiar institution,' white supremacy."

"In other words, the persistent weaknesses of the labor and other mass movements are bound up with the strength of white chauvinist influences within those movements. Those influences are the chief mainstay of capitalist rule in the U.S."

"Where and to the degree that seniority protects workers regardless of nationality or sex, it is a gain; but to the extent to which the 'last hired, first fired' rule applies particularly to most oppressed nationality and women workers, seniority merely affixes the union label to bourgeois policies of white supremacy and male supremacy. Such seniority rights are privileges and constitute a victory of the bourgeoisie over the workers, not a 'gain' of the workers over the employers."

## ON THE "PROGRESSIVE ROLE" OF THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER DOGMAS

This 120 page pamphlet sums up the debate between the PUL and the PWOC and other anti-dogmatists on a wide range of important issues. Replying to a long polemic by the PWOC and the Committee of Five, it shows the continuing weaknesses of the anti-dogmatist analysis of the Marxist-Leninist movement, and the sectarian consequences which this analysis has entailed. About half the pamphlet deals with the differences between the PUL and the PWOC over the character of the Soviet Union today, the role the USSR plays in world affairs, and the far-reaching consequences these differences have for understanding the present international situation.

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### THE ULTRA-LEFT DANGER AND HOW TO FIGHT IT: Three Articles on "Anti-Dogmatism"

This 45 page pamphlet consists of a nine page introduction, three articles dealing with various features of the current debate over ultra-leftism within the U.S. Marxist-Leninist movement, and the reprint from the Guardian newspaper of a two-part review of our book, Two, Three, Many Parties of a New Type? Presents some of our differences with the theory and unifying initiatives being advanced by prominent anti-dogmatist organizations such as El Comite-MINP, the PWOC, and associated groups. Includes reply to the Guardian review of our book. One of three pamphlets in the debate between the Proletarian Unity League and the best-known representatives of the "anti-dogmatist" position, this booklet is an indispensable complement to the newer pamphlets, Party Building and the Main Danger and On the "Progressive Role" of the Soviet Union and Other Dogmas. \$.95, +5¢ postage. 10 or more copies, \$.80 each, postage included.

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## PARTY BUILDING AND THE MAIN DANGER

PARTY BUILDING AND THE MAIN DANGER: An Exchange Between the Proletarian Unity League and the Committee of Five (Detroit Marxist-Leninist Organization, El Comite/MINP, Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee, the Potomac Socialist Organization, the Socialist Union of Baltimore.)

Six contributions to the current debate over the nature of the main problems in the Marxist-Leninist movement and how to rectify them. Topics discussed include: whether dogmatism or "left" opportunism better characterizes weaknesses of Marxist-Leninists today; whether an "anti-dogmatist trend" has emerged in the communist movement; the nature of proletarian internationalism and the place of international line in current ideological struggles; the implications of these differences for the practical work of revolutionaries. Contains three statements by the Committee of Five, two by the Proletarian Unity League, and one by the Communist Unity Organization. 120 pages.

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## 2, 3, MANY PARTIES OF A NEW TYPE?

### AGAINST THE ULTRA-LEFT LINE

Offers a comprehensive analysis of the current situation in the U.S. communist movement. Sets out the implications of "left" opportunism for party-building and political line, and uncovers the social, historical, ideological, and philosophical roots of the subjectivism, sectarianism, adventurism, "left" economism, and factionalist party-formations which flourish in our movement. In conclusion, the book provides a perspective on the way forward in the struggle against "left" opportunism and for a unified Marxist-Leninist Party. 253 pages. \$2.75. On orders of 10 or more, \$2.25 plus 20 cents postage each.

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**"It's Not the Bus": Busing and the Democratic Struggle in Boston, 1974-1975.**

Although busing hasn't dominated the headlines in the way it did at the beginning of the Boston and Louisville plans for partial desegregation of the schools through some busing, this issue remains as critical as ever. The continued forcible segregation of U.S. schools, the multiplication of judicial busing orders, the growth of the Right-wing, particularly through single-issue coalitions of the anti-busing type, and the refusal of Afro-Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Asian-Americans, Pacific-Americans, Native Americans, and other oppressed nationalities and progressive white people to go quietly back into the 19th century, insures that busing will continue to be a focus of class and national movement struggles during the late 1970's and doubtless into the 1980's. Some copies remain of this pamphlet, at \$.75 each, \$.55 on orders of 10 or more.

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**On the October League's Call for a New Communist Party: A Response.**

An analysis of one organization's plan to build a Marxist-Leninist Party. Besides criticizing the OL's proposals, this pamphlet puts forward a perspective on some elements necessary for a successful party-building plan. Very few copies of this pamphlet remain, at \$.15 each, plus \$.15 postage. On orders of 10 or more, \$.10 each including postage.

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We welcome all comments. If you have any questions or criticisms on this or our other publications, please write us.