

# Chicago Workers' Voice

## Theoretical Journal Issue #5



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**This issue of the CWV Theoretical Journal features**

\* A continuing debate on the nature of Imperialism today in Haiti and Palestine

\* Another round of debate on Lenin's analysis of imperialism

*A new letter from Jim, S.F., repeating his criticism of Lenin*

*Replies from Joseph, Detroit*

*Statement criticizing Jim's views from NC, Los Angeles*

\* An opening salvo in a new debate on the role of the working class

### Contents

<b>Haiti:</b>	
Editorial Guide to the Fifth Issue of the <i>CWV Theoretical Journal</i> .....	2
The debate on imperialism revisited: Part 4. The Occupation of Haiti by Joseph, Detroit .....	3
"Haiti: rotten motives, wretched deal." <u>Boston Worker</u> leaflet on Haiti .....	7
Letter from CV, Los Angeles .....	9
"Was there any substance to my criticism of an article on Haiti in the Nov. 1991 Workers' Advocate?" by Oleg, Chicago .....	9
Excerpt on Haiti from Michael's article "On WA's international coverage" <i>I.B.</i> #73 .....	11
<b>Palestine:</b>	
Reply from Jason, Seattle, to Mark, Detroit .....	12
Once again on Jason's reformist stand on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Sowing the seeds of struggle or sowing illusions in Israel?, by Mark, Detroit .....	18
Reply to Jason, by Pete, Detroit .....	25
"Jason's new 'Tikkun.'" Letter from NC, Los Angeles .....	27
<b>Further debate on the nature of imperialism</b>	
Some replies on imperialism, letter from Jim, San Francisco, August 17, 1994 .....	28
Letter from Joe (Boston) which contains Jim's letter of July 29, 1992 .....	29
Excerpts from "The debate on imperialism revisited," Parts 1, 2 and 3, by Joseph, Detroit .....	31
Letter from NC, Los Angeles, regarding Joseph's reply to Jim .....	44
<b>Composition of the Working Class</b>	
Flaws in Boston's study of the composition of the working class, by Gary, New Jersey .....	41
<b>Socialism in One Country</b>	
Letter from Joseph to Phil .....	45

# Editorial Guide to the Fifth Issue of the *CWV Theoretical Journal*

Just when we thought it was over...

This issue number 5 of the Chicago Workers' Voice Theoretical Journal features an escalation of the debate between former members of the Marxist-Leninist Party. It had been a while since we had heard much from the other side (the former majority of the MLP), but lately they have replied to articles and opinions published in this journal. For our part, we have replied in detail. While these letters and articles are debating topics within the context of disagreements that arose inside the MLP, they deal with issues that are being hashed out by the left as a whole. The reader will see that the issues such as the analysis of imperialism or the analysis of the composition of the working class are not just issues of theory up in the air. The opposing stands of the "minority" (allied with the CWV) and the "majority" of the former MLP have very different concrete results when applied to organizing on such questions as Haiti and Palestine.

We are printing one article relating to the issue of "Socialism in One Country". We expect to continue with this topic in future issue. We did want to run all the differing views on Haiti and Palestine this time. Also the reader should please note that the descriptions of the contents of articles in this editorial guide are very rough. They are not meant to substitute for a critical reading of the articles themselves.

## A. The nature of imperialism today:

### 1. Haiti

\*From the "majority" side, an article by the Boston Worker on Haiti which is notable for its pessimistic outlook.

\*Three articles from the "minority" (CWV and allies):

"The debate on imperialism revisited: Part 4, The Occupation of Haiti" by Joseph, Detroit, a criticism of the views of Michael and of the Boston Worker article.

A letter from CV, a supporter of the Los

Angeles Workers Voice criticizing the Boston Worker article.

An article by Oleg, Chicago, discussing an earlier criticism he had made about an article on Haiti in the Nov. 1991 Workers' Advocate. For your reference the section of Michael's 1992 reply to Oleg on Haiti is also reprinted.

Not included in CWVTJ #5 but available upon request are leaflets from Detroit and Chicago on Haiti. They reflect a quite different view toward the struggle in Haiti from the Boston leaflet. (Subscribers of CWVTJ will find the Chicago and Detroit leaflets included in the mailing.)

### 2. Palestine.

\*Jason (Seattle) replies to Mark (Detroit). He denies his views are those of Fred, modifies one statement and defends his previous position (printed in CWVTJ #3).

\*Mark (Detroit) published a lengthy criticism of the reformist orientation in Jason's first article on Palestine (see CWVTJ #3) and rebuts Jason's latest statement in this issue.

\*Pete (Detroit) joins Mark in refuting Jason.

\*NC (Los Angeles) sends in a letter titled "Jason's new 'Tikkun.'"

## B. Further replies to the ex-MLP debate on the nature of imperialism.

\*Jim (San Francisco), not heard from in some time, replies to his critics in the MLP minority with a letter sent out August 17, 1994.

\*Joe (Boston) really likes Jim's point of view so he circulated an old letter from Jim dated July 29, 1992. Joe says that this 1992 letter from Jim proves Joseph is

a demagogue.

\*Joseph (Detroit) doesn't think so and he E-mailed a three-part letter titled "The debate on imperialism revisited." CWVTJ excerpted Joseph's replies and we present them here.

\*NC (Los Angeles) submits a letter which supports Joseph's reply to Jim.

## C. The Role and Composition of the Working Class.

\*This is a new front for the CWVTJ. The first contribution comes from Gary (New Jersey) who attacks the views presented by the Boston Communist Study Group. Gary's article, titled "Flaws in Boston's study of the composition of the working class" details some of the lies with statistics carried out by Joe and other ex-MLPers in Boston.

Coincidentally, the views critiqued by Gary are quite fashionable today. The nature of the working class is another theoretical issue that faces the left as a whole. Ongoing research by supporters of CWVTJ will provide more articles in future issues.

## D. Socialism in One Country

\*Joseph has some interesting comments in a letter to Phil. Is it correct to speak of the "accomplishments" of the state capitalist, revisionist regime in the Soviet Union of the 30s and later?

We hope you find this issue stimulating, enlightening, and rewarding. We welcome comments and criticisms from our readers. Please indicate if your remarks are for publication.

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## THE OCCUPATION OF HAITI

By Joseph Green.  
October 2, 1994

We have been discussing whether political domination exists today in the world. As we discuss, American troops occupy Haiti. Americans politicians debate the future of Haiti. American intelligence agencies discuss how to preserve their old friends in the military and how to build up new networks of influence in Haiti.

Can there be any doubt that Haiti is in the American sphere of influence? Is not Haiti a politically dependent country? Is it not clear that not just colonies but independent countries are bullied and dominated? Some had doubts in the past. Michael, of the former Central Committee majority, believed that the military coup that toppled President Aristide was proof of Haiti's freedom from American domination.

Michael had discussed Haiti in Information Bulletin #73 in Sept. 92. On one hand, he called Haiti "the poorest and most dependent of countries". But he only talked about its "dependence" to emphasize that today even dependent countries were politically free from domination. (1)

Michael held that "even in the poorest and most dependent of countries, the internal class struggle is generally the main determinant of political developments....Even in a place like Haiti, not every policy—not even a major policy—has to get prior approval from the U.S., though imperialism props up the system as a whole..." (2)

In fact, he added that "imperialism will come to terms with most local policies", i.e. will accept them. He did not write that Haiti has to come to terms with American policies. Nor did he describe the difference in how U.S. imperialism comes to terms with Haiti's policies versus how Haitians come to terms with U.S. politics. (3)

### Politics today

And now see what is going on. Earlier this month ex-President Jimmy Carter, Senator Sam Nunn and General Powell made a deal with the uniformed thugs in Haiti. Haiti's exiled President Aristide had nothing to do with it.

The next day American troops occupied Haiti.

Day after day there is a discussion of whether Aristide is suitable for American interests.

Whether Haiti will get economic aid is dependent on whether it implements the preferred American economic policy.

All this won't stop the class struggle in Haiti, and is even likely to spur it on—at least temporarily. Nevertheless, what's been going on Haiti is political domination in action.

### What is political domination

And isn't that precisely what we were discussing? Is there domination of countries which are not colonies? What does it look like? In fact, there are many gradations of it. Haiti is simply a particularly blatant example.

But Michael held that Haiti, despite its dependent status, was free to make its own decisions, because:

the military coup didn't have "prior approval" from the US;

U.S. imperialism only props up "the system as a whole" and will allow a number of different policies. "unless they are of course radically in conflict with major U.S. interests"; and there is an internal class struggle.

### Two views of political domination

Michael sees political domination only in terms of whether the government agencies of one country give orders to those of another. He looks at a coup by forces fostered by U.S. imperialism and concludes: "It shows that ... Even in a place like Haiti, **not every policy—not even a major policy—has**

**to get prior approval from the U.S.,...**"

He sees domination only in terms of **prior approval**, or of direct orders.

He does say that "**imperialism props up the system as a whole**", but that doesn't count as domination.

But isn't "the system as a whole" precisely what is at stake? On the contrary, Michael assures us, it's not. It's sufficient for the local people to be able to take decisions on how to maintain that system.

He says that the imperialism "will come to terms with most local policies". He doesn't add that the Haitians have to "come to terms" with any U.S. policies, whether they like it or not, whether they violate major interests of the Haitian toilers or even of the Haitian bourgeoisie or not. No, it's just a fine civilized world where imperialism will adjust to whatever policies the Haitians prefer.

"...unless they are of course **radically in conflict with major U.S. interests**".

So the Haitians can do what they want—within the limits set by major U.S. interests. To me, that's domination. Period. But to Michael, it shows that Haitians determine their own destiny.

### Imperialism in action

So Michael sees "prior approval" of the coup as the key question.

But at the time of the coup in late 1991 the **Workers' Advocate** saw another question. It wrote:

"Many Haitian protesters connected the coup to U.S. imperialism and the CIA. While no evidence has surfaced linking the coup to the U.S., and Washington had apparently come to terms with Aristide, there is more to it than whether U.S. imperialism had its fingers in the plot itself. **It was in any case propping up all the backward forces that provided the soil for the coup.** The anti-U.S. slogans of Haitian demonstrators showed their rightful skepticism towards U.S. imperialism." (4, emph.

added)

This is stated too weakly; nevertheless it brings out that the role of U.S. imperialism can't be restricted to whether it ordered the coup itself. There are questions like who fostered the repressive apparatus? Who backs the Haitian bourgeoisie in its search for quiet exploitation at fantastic rates? If these were not key questions, the anti-U.S. slogans wouldn't be "rightful skepticism" but simply wrong; they would be harmful diversions.

In fact, everyone now says that the CIA and other U.S. agencies had the militarists and thugs on their payroll, worked with them, gathered information from them, looked the other way over their little indiscretions—from drug dealing to murder, etc. To this day, much of Congress hates Aristide and thinks highly of the Haitian assassins. Their connections with the American bourgeoisie are undoubtedly one of the things that encouraged the Haitian militarists to hold out against sanctions, and to have hope now.

Do these types of contacts really mean anything?

Well, let's see what one interested party—the American government—thinks. It has American citizens who take foreign money for various purposes register as "agents of a foreign power". It monitors the gifts an official may take from individuals or foreign governments. Maybe it's a bit paranoid about these things. But then again, maybe it has in mind some of its own methods of influencing other countries. After all, this same government routinely finances Haitian militarists and builds up networks of foreign influentials.

And this is only one fragment of the influence the U.S. has by virtue of its economic and political power.

Michael looks at domination solely from an administrative point of view: are you taking direct orders from another power? Do you seek their prior approval? I think domination has to be looked at from the actual relations of power between the American bourgeoisie and other countries.

### Internal class struggle

12/1/94

But isn't there an internal class struggle in Haiti?

Yes, indeed. And the central role of this class struggle for understanding events verifies the Leninist theory of imperialism, which emphasizes the internal class relations of colonies, semi-colonies, dependent countries, etc.

Why was there a military coup in Haiti? It's not explained simply by Haiti's domination by the U.S. It's explained by Haitian class relations, some possibilities for which are closed off by American domination while other possibilities are put on the agenda. It's explained by the history of how the Haitian rich dominate the poor.

What type of resistance will there be to tyranny in Haiti? It depends on the class relations in Haiti.

But the existence of this internal class struggle doesn't, by itself, even distinguish Haiti from a colony. What happens in a colony isn't explained simply by the orders of the metropolis. For example, whether a colony fights for independence or merges into the metropolis depends on internal relations, and not just on the desire of the metropolis.

Why isn't there a raging national liberation struggle today in, say, the American colony of Puerto Rico? It isn't just because Washington doesn't want one, or that the FBI is vicious. It has to do with class relations and social conditions in Puerto Rico. These relations are influenced and transformed by American tax policy, American trade policy, etc. etc. They have been transformed by economic developments and by the actions of the American bourgeoisie. But these internal relations have to be studied closely if one wants to have the faintest idea of what Puerto Ricans are likely to do in the future, and under what conditions the independence movement would catch fire.

If domination meant that the internal class relations were completely subordinated and all changes took place according to the desire of the oppressor, then domination would last forever. It doesn't. Colonies may become independent. Dependent countries may become oppressors. Spheres of influence

shift. Revolutions break out.

### But the outcome won't necessarily be what the U.S. orders

Someone might object that the outcome of U.S. actions in Haiti isn't necessarily what the U.S. wants.

But this is always true of human action, and even of inhuman action (imperialist wars, bloody repression, genocide, etc.)

The signs of Haiti's extremely subordinate status is that the U.S. can invade almost at will; that it can build up its network of covert agencies in Haiti; that it can threaten Haiti with huge penalties. Whether these acts have quite the result the U.S. wants is another matter.

The present occupation of Haiti stems from the U.S. government coming into conflict with the military thugs it had fostered. Did the U.S. government really want this? No. And then, through the Carter-Powell-Nunn-Cedras deal (Clinton-Cedras deal), the U.S. hoped to moderate this contradiction, but it is still there. And then there was the fight in Cap Haitien, with the trigger-happy marines killing 10 Haitian reactionary and provocative police. The masses were jubilant, and reactionary police fled Cap Haitien and many villages in Haiti. This was not what the White House and Pentagon wanted. They want the masses to be kept in order, as passive workers for the profits of the U.S. and Haitian bourgeoisie.

Several different forces are now contending in Haiti.

\* In the first days of the occupation, the masses have come out in the streets. This is not because the U.S. government wants them there; it doesn't. It is not because Aristide wants militancy—he might want demonstrations of support for himself, but he preaches no vengeance, no militancy. It is because the masses were held down by bloody murder after murder after murder, and now the thugs cannot strike at them in the old way. Atrocity after atrocity is still committed against them, but for the time being the old system is in disarray.

\* The military and paramilitary thugs want to hold on to power. They are uneasy faced with the masses, and they face opposition of varying types, but they still beat up people, shoot at demonstrations, and throw grenades. The U.S. commander exchanges pleasantries with chief thug Cedras. The old leaders are not stripped of power yet, and have a number of possibilities open to them, including bigger and bigger massacres. And it isn't just a question of a few top leaders.

\* The U.S. occupation wants to restore the forces of repression on a "professional" basis, with lots of U.S. contacts. It does not want to see the masses cleanse Haiti of reactionary thugs. And Congress isn't even sure that Haiti shouldn't just be left to the thugs.

\* The reformist President Aristide wants to come to power by the occupation, and preaches "reasonableness" and "no vengeance" and "reconciliation" to the masses. And this is no accident, but the result of his class stand. He is popular among the poor but hopes to get the support of the elite for a moderate Haitian government. But if he wants to carry out his program, if he even wants to survive, he has to try to clip the wings of the thugs. He'll try this in his own reformist way, of course. "No vengeance", but he wants to restrict the amnesty.

These forces will come more and more into complicated conflict as the occupation proceeds. If the poverty-stricken toilers of Haiti can't make use of this period to get rid of the thugs and enforce some demands for the improvement of their conditions on the Haitian wealthy, a new stagnation will be imposed on them. Unless they can act, they will see either the old terror return in full, or a conservative, servile government—in the name of "democracy"—imposed on them. How much of the energy of the masses has been drained by murders, and how much will revive? We shall see. But they are the only heroes of the drama.

#### **The Haitian toilers vs. their oppressors**

The key to the Haitian situation is

the action of the Haitian masses. They have lost thousands and thousands of activists killed or forced to flee. Their organizations have been scattered. How far can they rally at the present time? Can they come into the street and enforce their demands? Can they form organizations of struggle? Can they learn from the fast-moving events about the nature of the different political and class forces that confront them?

The Boston "Communist" Study Group (BCSG) put out a leaflet on Haiti. (6) While condemning the Clinton-Cedras deal, the leaflet regards it as "what happens when you see the U.S. as liberator", as one of its subheads proclaims. It not only criticizes the reformist Aristide for this deal, but also suggests that the probable reason why the masses could not overthrow the military coup was that they believed that "freedom (was) coming from the 'international community,' i.e. U.S. governmental action."

No doubt belief in U.S. imperialism, or even simply ignoring the role of U.S. imperialism in the Caribbean, is an extremely dangerous mistake. But the Clinton-Cedras deal was not carried out by mistaken activists, but by U.S. imperialism. The Boston leaflet itself points out that "no representatives of the Haitian people (were) involved": no representative of any mass organization, and not even Aristide.

Such crimes as the Clinton-Cedras deal will be carried out by imperialism no matter what policy is adopted by the Haitian people. Even if the Haitian toilers had overthrown Cedras, they would still have to deal with brutal and cynical imperialist policies, every bit as bad as the Clinton-Cedras deal. After all, the Nicaraguan toilers heroically overthrew the hated dictator Somoza and thereby transformed the politics of the region, but they still faced a dirty war from U.S. imperialism. So long as U.S. imperialism exists, the Haitian toilers and the poor will have to face its propping up of reactionary classes, its military interventions, etc.

The leaflet however, reduces the issue to the belief of the Haitian masses in Aristide. The masses fought despite unequal odds—and the leaflet sees only

believers in the U.S. and Aristide. This is so one-sided it is a parody of the struggle against Aristide's reformism.

The leaflet writes: "The U.S.-supervised deal comes because the Haitian people proved to be too weak to oust the military regime themselves...." (emph. added) And then it goes on to attribute this weakness mainly to illusions in the U.S. fostered by Aristide and other unnamed leaders.

But first and foremost the weakness of the Haitian movement was due to the murderous repression by the Haitian military, police, and paramilitary thugs. For the time being, the dictatorship was able to overcome the popular movement. To fail to give weight to the conditions facing the Haitian masses, while pointing only to their illusions, is to blame the masses rather than to help them in their struggle. To help their struggle, one should show the different class forces in the movement, and their varying reaction to difficult conditions, but the leaflet just talks of "the people," their "leaders" in general, and the "opposition" in general.

The BCSG seem to have a cardboard idea of revolution; and when Haitian events don't fit their stereotype, they become pessimistic and discomfited. How for instance, does revolutionary struggle take place? Do "the people" all have correct ideas and then go into struggle? Does the popular struggle face immediate victory—if only its ideas are correct?

But its par for the course for the masses to begin struggle while still under the influence of reformism. The existence of a party with revolutionary theory would be a great boon in such a struggle. (However the leaflet doesn't call for one.) But even in such a case, the revolutionary party usually does not have the majority behind it at the start, but only wins this majority as the masses gain experience in the clash of differing class forces.

For a few years the Haitian masses couldn't withstand the murderous blows of reaction. They were placed in a passive position.

Now with the occupation beginning, the masses are again coming onto

the street—despite beatings and shootings and grenades. They are showing daring and courage in confronting the paramilitary thugs despite advice from Aristide and despite illusions in the U.S. They will be faced soon enough with the occupation troops using harsher and harsher means to contain them, and with more advice from Aristide. Already some Haitian toilers have been astonished at U.S. actions, and more and more will be in the future. Will their movement be strong enough to survive disappointment as well as sharp blows? This is the question that faces them.

But the Boston leaflet sees the masses “not as actors but as victims. The day after the U.S. military arrived in Haiti, the Haitian military... savagely beat pro-Aristide demonstrators, at least one of them to death.” The authors of this leaflet saw what they looked for. Was it the beginning of a new struggle? Well, the BCSG saw only believers in Aristide and U.S. benevolence. The world saw poverty-stricken Haitians pouring out into the streets despite savage repression; the BCSG saw only victims.

### Revolution and class struggle

The hopes of revolution in Haiti depend on the toilers, not on U.S. bayonets.

But how does the revolutionary struggle take place?

It is based on the struggle of the poor to raise their head. But the Boston leaflet states that “What a revolution could do on the social and economic fronts is problematic, given the present-day international realities and the crisis in revolutionary thinking.” They don’t think there is much hope for the Haitian toilers to accomplish anything on these fronts. (7)

If this is so, then the Haitians toilers and poor are doomed, because only the prospect of social and economic change can motivate the masses to the self-sacrificing struggle needed to transform Haiti. Only such a prospect can motivate the oppressed of Haiti to “re-build their networks and organizations of popular struggle.” as the leaflet asks

for. The poor may not necessarily talk of revolution, and they may have illusions about a lot of things, but they want social and economic change.

Indeed the Boston leaflet itself seems to say at one point that social change is necessary for any progress in Haiti. But it adds, a few paragraphs later, that such social change is “problematic”, i.e. doubtful.

And so the Boston leaflet ends talking of a democratic change without change “on the social and economic fronts”. The best it can offer the Haitian toilers and poor is “new democratic institutions and culture”. I guess the idea is that the poor can live on poems to the wonders of the new parliamentary democracy. And this is the leaflet’s maximum program for the Haitian toilers. The minimum program is even less inspiring. It suggests “To win freedom to gain even the kind of semi-democratic regime that poor third world countries are likely to get’ Haiti needs revolutionary change.”

What a prospect! Revolution to get the usual tyranny.

### Aristide

The leaflet is strident against Aristide. But on what basis? If one put before the masses a different path from reformism—the path of revolutionary struggle, and the path of class organization against the rich—then there would be a clear class difference with Aristide. But if one is skeptical of revolutionary struggle, pessimistic about the possibilities of social and economic change, sees the masses only as victims, and is afraid of even using the words “imperialism” and “class”, then how deep can one’s criticism of Aristide be?

The leaflet holds Aristide responsible for the Clinton-Cedras deal even though Aristide didn’t want this deal. It points out that the deal is “the inevitable culmination” of Aristide’s policy. And indeed Aristide had to adjust to this deal and say “thank you”, despite his well-publicized reluctance.

Very well. But what then of the BCSG’s policy of skepticism towards revolutionary struggle? Doesn’t it “in-

evitably culminate” in reformism? Doesn’t the BCSG end up having to adjust to reformism, whether they personally like the particular acts of Aristide, as Aristide had to adjust to the Clinton-Cedras deal, even though he personally held his nose at it? Does not the BCSG views lead them step by step to renounce social revolution and instead advocate “new democratic institutions and culture” — without economic and social change — as the program for this stage of struggle?

Indeed, if Aristide was led to tone down his economic demands by the need to adjust to what—to speak in the language of the leaflet—are “present-day international realities”, how different is this from the leaflet advocating that change on the “economic and social fronts” is “problematic”, due to these same “present-day international realities?” Talking about “a new democratic system” without economic change is the same sort of realism that Aristide shows in adjusting his program to the international bankers.

### In the U.S.

Meanwhile what prospect does the leaflet put forward in the U.S.? If it is skeptical of what the Haitian activists can accomplish, what does it think about the prospects for American activism?

It discusses this in a paragraph in the middle of the leaflet. (9)

This paragraph starts by saying that “The Clinton-Cedras deal” shows “the narrow parameters” of bourgeois politics.

You would think the deal is an example of imperialist arrogance, and that it shows that the White House considers the Caribbean an American lake. You would think it has something to do with the world order that U.S. imperialism wants to build. Here is the U.S. “world cop” in action. But “imperialism” isn’t even mentioned in the leaflet; nor is the concept discussed with the use of other words.

Instead the leaflet whines that “without an independent movement, in the absence of a mass-based left... we are likely to only see such sorry deals

## **Boston Worker: Haiti: Rotten Motives, Wretched Deal**

With the threat of the 82nd Airborne a few hours away, a diplomatic team from Washington arrives at a last-minute deal to avert a U.S. invasion of Haiti. The players in this deal? On the American side, Jimmy Carter, retired General Colin Powell, and Senator Sam Nunn. On the Haitian side, the dictator Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras and his close cronies.

What's wrong with this picture?

There were no representatives of the Haitian people involved. None. And when Clinton and his aides announced the deal, there were no Haitian faces around. Even Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the president who is supposed to be returned to power through this latest deal, was nowhere to be seen. He was not a signatory, and he came out to support it after several days had passed. Presumably by then he had been cajoled to abandon his misgivings about it.

That goes to the heart of the problem. It is one more deal that does not

include the Haitian people.

When ordinary Haitians came into the picture for the first time in the aftermath of this deal, they did so not as actors but as victims. The day after the U.S. military arrived in Haiti, the Haitian military, under the eyes of a key Cedras aide, savagely beat pro-Aristide demonstrators, at least one of them to death.

The absence of the Haitian people from the deal and their continued role as victims, this is what should give anyone pause before they find themselves ready to believe in the fine words about restoring democracy and human rights that have emanated from the Clinton White House.

### **This is Not about Democracy or Human Rights**

The deal with the generals promises little change. Yes, Cedras and his two closest military cronies will be retired from the military, once the

requisite promises are legalized to keep them from being tried for human rights violations. Jean-Bertrand Aristide could be returned to the presidency in a month, but he has had to promise not to run for re-election next year. In the meantime, nothing is said about what power he will or will not have in the remaining months of his presidency. And the military apparatus, despite its involvement in organized terror for years on end, will remain in place as the U.S. military "cooperates" with it.

In the final analysis, it is a deal to put Aristide into a figurehead presidency while the power of the torturers of Haiti is largely preserved. At best, one may hope that the Haitian people will get a bit of relief from overwhelming political repression. If Washington is willing to put in money, it might help alleviate some of the misery of recent years; but there is little evidence that such a thing will take place. In

*continued, next page*

### *Joseph on Haiti, continued*

[the Clinton-Cedras deal].” This is the leaflet’s total call to the American workers and activists.

The leaflet doesn’t talk about the need to base the movement on the working class. It doesn’t describe any anti-imperialist task or revolutionary task. It just sighs after “a mass-based left”. And this from people who pride themselves on their years of revolutionary work and years of theoretical study. All it can do is say that neither the Democrats and Republicans are any good, but things would be wonderful with “a mass-based left”.

Well, for that matter, there is a “mass-based left” in the U.S., and it does indeed “make its criticisms and demands known and felt across the country”. This is the left-wing of the Democratic Party; a grouping to the left of the liberals, but the tail of every smooth-talking reformist or labor bureaucrat who is a bit more militant than the rest. And what is essential for activ-

ists is to know why this left is so pitiful; why it is part of the “narrow parameters” of bourgeois politics; and how to really build up an independent movement.

This the leaflet doesn’t do.

Nor does it point out which wrong ideas have hampered the activists. No, sobold in criticizing the Haitian masses, the leaflet is weak-kneed in explaining what is the “crisis in revolutionary thinking”. (10) In fact, it doesn’t give any content at all to this phrase. It’s just another source of pessimism.

Not only does the leaflet think revolutionary work is pretty hopeless in Haiti—it’s vanished from the U.S. as well. (to be continued)

### **NOTES for part 4:**

[ed. note, these notes were excerpted from the original for reasons of space by the CWV TJ staff.]

(1) See “On WA’s international coverage, a reply to criticisms made by comrade Rene, Anita, Colleen, and

Oleg”, IB #73. Pp. 6-7 quote Oleg’s remarks, and pp. 8-9 give Michael’s comments on Haiti.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 8, col. 2.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) **The Workers’ Advocate**, November 1, 1991, p. 11, “Angry protests condemn Haiti coup”. See col. 2.

(6) **The Boston Worker** leaflet was put on E-mail on Sept. 24, 1994.

(7) See the second to last paragraph of the leaflet.

(9) The middle of the leaflet, in the last paragraph under the subhead “Clinton’s Motives Are No Good”.

(10) The leaflet mentions the “crisis in revolutionary thinking” in its next to last paragraph, where it gives it as one of the reasons why a revolution probably couldn’t do much on the “social and economic fronts”. It doesn’t say anything about the content of this crisis. However, the leaflet itself might be taken to be an example of it. <>

short, the best you may have is some breathing room for a bit of time, how long is hard to say.

### **What Happens When You See the U.S. as Liberator**

Some of Aristide's aides have complained that they were not consulted and they have rightly pointed to the problems with this deal. But their disappointment is hard to fathom. This deal, unfortunate though it may be, is however the inevitable culmination of a policy that saw the U.S. government as the agency for Haiti's liberation.

The U.S.-supervised deal comes because the Haitian people proved to be too weak to oust the military regime themselves. A few years ago, perhaps they might have been able to rise up and do the job. But their leaders, most notably Aristide himself, encouraged them to believe that there could be a shortcut to freedom. He led them to believe in freedom coming from the "international community," i.e. U.S. governmental action. But the Haitian opposition was constantly to be disappointed by the actual contours of U.S. policy.

George Bush hardly took any steps. His embargo was a joke, and he put more effort into keeping Haitian refugees from reaching U.S. shores. Bill Clinton the candidate criticized Bush, but Clinton the president only stepped up Bush's policy of blocking Haitian refugees.

For months and months, in order to justify this policy Bill Clinton denied that there were massive human rights violations in Haiti. Now he says he's gone to Haiti to stop torture, murder and brutality. Yeah, right.

As the years went by, more Haitians were slaughtered and tortured. More tried to flee. Meanwhile, their networks of resistance were damaged and undermined week to week.

### **Clinton's Motives Are No Good**

Clinton didn't take serious steps against the Haitian generals because the U.S. establishment actually prefers the generals in Haiti to Aristide and his

supporters. They have long-standing connections with the Haitian political-military-business elite. The Haitian military brass were trained in the U.S. military academies. The wealthy have long cultivated ties with the U.S. Embassy and State Department. The mainstream of CIA, State Department and Pentagon officials can hardly hide their disdain for Aristide; to them Aristide is simply a radical rabblouser.

Clinton made several attempts to convince Cedras to bring back Aristide as a figurehead. But the Haitian generals refused to live up to any such arrangements. In other circumstances, the U.S. wouldn't have given Haiti much more thought. But the boat people continued to flee towards the U.S. as the generals escalated their terror.

The Washington elites may prefer Cedras to Aristide but they are not inclined to like a flood of refugees one bit. Especially poor and black refugees. It is ultimately the pressure of continued emigration from Haiti that pushed Clinton into taking a stronger posture against Cedras. This May under pressure from the liberal wing of the Democratic party, whose votes he wanted to curry for his legislative agenda, Clinton raised the ante against Cedras.

He embarked on a policy of bluff. He started preparing an invasion hoping that the Haitian generals would take the hint and leave. The problem with bluff is that your opponent may refuse to flinch. And once that happens, the requirement of "U.S. credibility" would require Clinton to actually launch an invasion. He would have to do so simply to prove that he is not a "wuss." And this is the corner he was finally pushed into this month.

Still, Washington's heart was never in an invasion. Hence the last minute delegation to Port-au-Prince. Hence the rotten deal that was the outcome.

The Clinton-Cedras deal shows up the narrow parameters of bourgeois politics in American society. Washington can freely come to such a rotten deal because politics is located

merely in that small space between the Republicans who obviously prefer the Haitian military and the Democrats who are at most willing to tolerate Aristide as a temporary figurehead. Without an independent movement, in the absence of a mass-based left making its criticisms and demands known and felt across the country, we are likely to only see such sorry deals.

### **Democracy?**

What would this require in Haiti? At the minimum it would require dismantling the old apparatus of repression, the military and police. And building it along new lines. It would require bringing the criminals of the old system to justice. And to allow the promise of a democratic regime to have any serious chance of enduring, it would require removing from positions of power the wealthy Haitians who supported the old regime. The problem in Haiti was never one of one or a handful of rogue generals; it is an entrenched system of terror supported by a social base among the wealthy and privileged.

Is the U.S. military force prepared to do this? Far from it.

The U.S. speaks the language of "reconciliation." It has targeted for removal from office only three militarists at the very top. Washington wants to bring about a new order based on preserving the large part of the old regime and forcing them to accept a few forces from the opposition.

The realities of Haitian class structure, the balance of power and terror, the lessons of history suggest that even if there is a brief respite now, the old miseries of Haiti will rebound again. As long as the social layer that has long ruled Haiti stays in power, Haiti will remain in the grip of terror, at best interrupted by short lulls.

This bitter reality continues to bear down on the Haitian people. The people are not actors in this current deal because they were too weak to get the powers-that-be to take them into account. To win freedom, to gain even the kind of semi-democratic regime that poor third world countries are



## Criticism of the Boston Worker leaflet,

letter from CV of Los Angeles Workers' Voice, October 6, 1994

Boston, I think, plays down the class antagonisms with its emphasis on the 'Haitian people'. What about the workers and farmers? What about the class analysis?

In the section on democracy and human rights, BW thinks the US usually does not give Haiti "much more thought." What about the 19 year occupation by the US marines (1915-34)? What about the close association to Duvalier & co. by the US? BW comment on alleged US lack of 'heart' for invading is, to put it mildly, quite naive considering the over-all history.

I think BW might soon change name

to "Boston Observer" because of its arm-chair quarterbacking speculations about the possible influence of a 'mass based left' on the US political state. Absent is any comment on the need to remove the ruling class of Haiti by the might of the toilers action.

BW contradicts itself claiming on one hand Haitian masses were "too weak to get the powers-that-be to take them into account" then doing some posturing about the need for (in BW's politics—nebulous) "revolutionary change." BW sees social revolution as 'problematic'. This is a trademark of the BW-Jim&Ben tripartite political axis.

It is warmed over bourgeois ideology of political pragmatism & revisionism as far as the exploited and their struggles go. It comes from a trend of what in sports parlance are known as—chokers! I think that the BW underrates the potential of Haitian toilers. Haitian mass movement in action could have a profound effect on struggles in the Caribbean region and Latin America too. Take the example of the Indian peasants revolt in Chiapas, Mexico which has attacked the gaping weaknesses of bourgeois rule and imperialist plunder in the region.[]

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### Was there any substance to my criticism of an article on Haiti in the Nov., 1991, Workers' Advocate or was it just "silliness?"

by Oleg. Chicago

In Dec. 1991, I sent the letter which is reprinted below to the staff of the Workers' Advocate and to all the members of the Marxist-Leninist Party through the Information Bulletin. Since we are now debating analysis of Haiti and its relationship to U.S. imperialism, I wanted to re-examine what I said in light of the events which followed.

First, for the benefit of the readers of the Theoretical Journal who are unaware of this history, I want to explain the context of this letter. I wrote the letter specifically in response to the more major of two articles on Haiti which appeared in the Nov., 1991, Workers'

Advocate dealing with the coup in Haiti which overthrew Aristide. At that time the MLP was several months into a sharp internal debate and this letter of mine was not considered by anyone, including myself, to be the most central issue of this debate. It was the second letter I had written raising criticisms of how The Workers' Advocate dealt with issues of imperialism.

The major focus of the debate concerned how The Workers' Advocate handled the agitation against the Persian Gulf War. However, my criticisms of the Haiti article did come up in a discussion held in the fall of 1992, before the Fourth Congress of the MLP, between several of us from the Chicago

branch of the MLP and several members of the Detroit branch. In this discussion, Michael, who was one of the members of the WA staff, characterized my objections to the Haiti article as "silly". He accused me of trying to make the coup in Haiti be organized by the U.S. even though it wasn't. In Michael's view, since the U.S. obviously didn't organize the coup, there was no need to emphasize U.S. imperialism's relation to Haiti.

Michael went on to make some remarks about how the struggles in South Africa should be analyzed in WA. These remarks were sharper and more startling to those of us in the meeting than his asides on Haiti. We never got back

*continued, next page*

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Boston Worker, continued  
likely to get. Haiti needs revolutionary change.

What a revolution could do on the social and economic fronts is problematic, given the present-day international realities and the crisis in revolutionary thinking. But at minimum, it could strike a serious blow at the old systems of power. As to whether it would be successful in setting up a new democratic system that could endure

instead of collapsing into another tyranny, that depends many factors, including the extent to which a Haitian revolution would face international isolation; the degree to which the people can gather active support overseas, especially here in the United States; the extent to which the old structures of tyranny are rooted out; and the ability of the people to build new democratic institutions and culture.

While motion towards a revolu-

tionary change is a difficult and uncertain prospect, the Clinton deal is not the end of the present chapter either. The Haitian people may have been put in the role of spectators to this deal, but this doesn't mean that they cannot influence anything about the outcome. If they are able to make their voices heard and presence felt, they stand a chance of widening the space for rebuilding their networks and organizations of popular struggle.[]

to discussing Haiti at that meeting.

Michael did write an article for the *Information Bulletin* #73, dated Sept. 15, 1992, in which he gave his answer to my criticism of the Haiti article as well as to various other criticisms which some of us from Chicago had raised. The portion of his reply dealing with this issue is reprinted in this issue of the TJ. Joseph criticizes this statement of Michael in an article in this issue of the TJ. Joseph doesn't comment on whether or not my criticisms were valid, but he does say that the characterization of the role of U.S. imperialism in Haiti made in the other WA article on Haiti in that issue was "weak".

At this point, Oct. 1994, I think the evidence is clear that by the time of the article in 1991 there was a change taking place in the analysis of imperialism by one member of the WA staff, Michael, and by other members of the Central Committee of the MLP. Only slight hints of this peeked out in certain WA articles. The disagreement on this article on Haiti could easily be dismissed as a minor disagreement on how to write an article. Michael's response dismisses my criticism as "silliness" and then accuses me of being uncomfortable with the fact that U.S. policy opposed the coup in Haiti.

There is some substance to this dispute, however. Michael and I do not agree on the analysis of the political relationship between U.S. imperialism and the Haitian bourgeoisie. Michael asserts that the Haitian bourgeoisie can and does carry out its own policy within very broad limits set by U.S. imperialism. Michael says that U.S. imperialism has to go along with what the Haitian bourgeoisie wants. Michael may agree (I don't know for sure) that the Haitian bourgeoisie and the Haitian state apparatus were nurtured and trained and developed by U.S. imperialism. However, Michael is saying (as far as I understand him) that the Haitian bourgeoisie is no longer dependent on the U.S.

I believe that events show dramatically that Michael's views are wrong. The Haitian bourgeoisie is still dominated by U.S. imperialism. As far as the Cedras' coup is concerned, I don't

think the evidence is definitive as to whether or not U.S. imperialism directly organized it or gave it advance approval. Regardless, I feel that U.S. imperialism should be exposed and denounced for creating conditions in Haiti which led to the coup. U.S. imperialism bears the main responsibility for creating the fascist military monster which has been devouring the Haitian people for decades. If this monster got somewhat out of control, we can still blame U.S. imperialism as the agency that nurtured it all those years. The CWV leaflet on Haiti included with this TJ reflects my current thinking on Haiti.

This disagreement is not just an abstract theoretical difference for those of us whose goal is proletarian revolution. Activists who present themselves as proletarian revolutionaries in the U.S. and who don't denounce the actual role of U.S. imperialism in Haiti, for example, are likely to be dismissed as phony revolutionaries and chauvinists by revolutionary minded workers and especially immigrant workers. We have to try to get this analysis right.

I want to emphasize that the article I was originally criticizing in the WA is not a bad article. It does not absolve U.S. imperialism of responsibility for the coup. It does raise some points on the dominant relation that U.S. imperialism has had to Haiti. It gives some good analysis on the role of Aristide. It calls for revolution in Haiti. My point was just that when I compared this article to WA articles on Haiti from 1986, '87, and '88, I felt that this article did not develop the discussion of the history of U.S. imperialist domination of Haiti as well as those earlier articles. I admit that this point is hard to prove.

In fact, none of us from Chicago pushed the issue of Haiti during the inner-party debate leading up to the Fourth Congress. I don't think we would have achieved anything if we had pushed it, since we were never able to convince any MLP members outside of Chicago of the validity of any of our criticisms of any WA articles.

There is one statement in my letter which I would like to correct (and which I did mention in a later letter to the IB).

In the letter I give the impression that proletarian internationalist support for the Haitian peoples struggle by the American working class depends on proving that U.S. imperialism directly oppresses the Haitian people. The fact that U.S. imperialism dominates Haiti makes it particularly important for American workers to support the Haitian masses in their struggles. But it is the duty of the American working class to support the revolutionary struggles of all the oppressed regardless of how directly U.S. imperialism is involved in the particular situation.

In sum, I maintain that I raised valid points in this letter. However, these points are not easy to prove just from the one article I cited. However, subsequent events have shown that a change was taking place in the analysis of U.S. imperialism by one of the staff members of the WA and by more than one member of the Central Committee of the MLP.

Below is my letter of 1991:

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Letter from Oleg concerning Nov. 1991 article on Haiti

Dear comrades,

This letter concerns the front page article on Haiti in the Nov. WA. What bothers me is the overall context in which you discuss the coup and related events. I think you are pretty close to the mark in your specific analysis of Aristide and the movement in Haiti. What I think is lacking is a forceful and thorough analysis of and denunciation of U.S. imperialism's domination and exploitation of Haiti.

In the second column on the first page you have a section going through a little history. This is where I really feel you missed the boat in not putting forward the analysis of Haiti as a U.S. neocolony. I mean, if any country in the world is a client state of U.S. imperialism, Haiti certainly is. Somewhere around 60% of the Haitian government budget comes from foreign (mainly U.S.) aid. The U.S. occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934, and has trained and controlled the Haitian military ever

since. etc..etc.

The March 1986 WA has a very good article on this question entitled "U.S. imperialism: Baby Doc's godfather". The August 1987 WA article concludes with a whole section exposing U.S. imperialism's role in Haiti and calling on the U.S. workers to support revolution in Haiti. The Nov. 1987 WA has an article denouncing Reagan for his support for the Namphy regime. The front page article of the Dec. 1987 WA "In Haiti— revolution or tyranny" carries a very strong denunciation of U.S. imperialism. In the July 1988 WA the article on Namphy's coup sharply denounces U.S. imperialism as the power behind reaction in Haiti.

I am not claiming that you completely ignore the role of U.S. imperialism in Haiti in the current article. But I think that you do not deal with this central point nearly as strongly or as thoroughly as you did in the earlier articles I have looked at. I think that, for a newspaper aimed first and foremost at the U.S. working class, the point of departure must be to analyze the role of our own imperialists in the situation and, particularly on this basis, to call for solidarity with the struggles

of the oppressed in other countries. It seems very clear to me that the Haitian bourgeoisie and the Haitian military are extremely dependent on U.S. imperialism and that we are obligated to make this point clear when we discuss Haiti with the American working class.

As I mentioned above I don't have any big disagreement with your specific analysis of Aristide. Anyway I don't consider myself an expert on Haiti. I have, however, been interested in Haitian politics since reading a book by an American liberal on Haitian politics since Baby Doc's ouster (The Rainy Season, by Amy Wilentz, published 1990). Personally I think the U.S. imperialists allowed Aristide to become President only after they became convinced that there was absolutely no other way to avert revolution in Haiti. The small Haitian bourgeoisie is frightened out of its wits and can only think of "kill, kill, kill". The masses are desperate. But Aristide insists that the masses refrain from organizing a violent revolution. (He is not always against violent mass revenge against the fascists, but he has always been against the masses actually organizing for revolutionary violence.) Over the past five

years there have been several attempts on Aristide's life, many of his supporters have been massacred by the official or unofficial fascists, and he still won't recognize the obvious fact that the only hope for the Haitian masses is to organize their own armed force and make revolution. Apparently his views have had a big effect in shaping the character of the movement in Haiti.

In sum, I agree with the main thrust of your criticism on Aristide. It just seems to me that this current article de-emphasizes the role of U.S. imperialism in Haiti compared to our previous analysis.

So, I have two requests. For one thing I would like to know what the WA staff think about this matter. Also I would like this letter circulated in the same manner as my earlier letter. I would like all comrades to consider whether or not there is a weakness in this article and whether or not they think it is related to problems in WA that we have complained about previously.

By the way I really like your lead article on the economic crisis.

With comradely regards,

Oleg

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**Excerpt on Haiti, by Michael (Detroit), from "On WA's International Coverage" published in the *Information Bulletin of the MLP*, #73, Sept. 15, 1992.**

Haiti

Oleg is unhappy that we didn't go into the history of U.S. domination of Haiti in sufficient detail, and that we didn't characterize Haiti as a U.S. neo-colony.

The article did have a paragraph on the U.S. history with respect to Haiti, and a whole section of the article was devoted to explaining the actual role of the U.S. government with respect to Aristide and the coup. So what's the problem?

In my opinion, how much detail we discuss the history of U.S. oppression of Haiti or any other country is largely a matter of preference. Sometimes we have done this, many times we haven't. I don't see that it is obligatory that we have to have this or that much detail on the history. The important issue was clarifying what the coup

was all about and U.S. imperialism's role in this crisis, and the WA coverage succeeded in that.

On the question of Haiti as a U.S. neo-colony. The fact of the matter is that the recent coup was born out of the internal class struggle, not out of the relationship between Aristide and Washington. All evidence points to the fact that the U.S. didn't organize it, and was even initially unhappy with it. What does this mean? It shows that even in the poorest and most dependent of countries, the internal class struggle is generally the main determinant of political developments. Even in a place like Haiti, the ruling class can carry out acts without reference to what Uncle Sam thinks. Every policy — even major policies — does not have to get prior approval from the U.S., though imperialism props up the system as a whole

and will come to terms with most local policies, unless they are of course radically in conflict with major U.S. interests.

The WA article tried to concretely deal with the U.S. stance. In this situation, what does it do to have the statement that Haiti is a U.S. neo-colony? Would it be to suggest that it was the U.S. that was really behind the coup?

In his latest letter, Oleg writes that maybe he should

"take the WA articles on the Haitian refugees as a reply that [he] had a valid point on that one (that we should expose the longstanding domination of Haiti)." (*IB* #70, p.18)

I can understand his disappointment that until now, we have not directly replied to his criticisms, but I am amazed that he sees the recent articles on the Haitian refugees as a

# Palestine: Jason's Reply to Mark

Letter from Jason— Seattle area,  
June 8, 1994.

Although this is meant to be a reply to Mark's "trashing", as Jake boasts, it will also address other more basic issues of world-view as well. But since I have apparently now been branded as part of Fred's "heresy", I find it necessary to say a few words by way of introduction.

1. It is seemingly an article of faith among the "fundamentalist" group of former MLPer's that there exists some kind of Fred/Ben alliance in Seattle, as well as some Fred/Ben/ former-CC-majority alliance nationwide. The fact that Fred and Ben disagree on any number of fundamental issues and that a glaring chasm separates certain views of Fred from people such as Joe and Michael seems to have escaped them. This is probably not surprising, when one's outlook is reduced to attempting to hunt down and flay any "non-believers" or "backsliders" among the formerly faithful. It would probably require a superhuman effort to attempt to explain to them what the real debates

are about, and I assuredly don't intend to try. However, for the record: I AM NOT PART OF ANYONE'S ALLIANCE! I don't even live in Seattle; I live in Olympia, and actually have been unable to attend that many study sessions lately, as I am a full-time student and part-time worker. Nor are my views on this issue developed under the influence of or in concert with anyone. I have followed the Palestinian issue closely for eight years, studied innumerable documents, and analyzed a host of political trends in the Middle East. More than that, I am a strong supporter of the Palestinian struggle; in fact, I am the author of numerous poems saluting this struggle including "Falcons of Gaza" and "Arafat Needs Spectacles", published in *Struggle* over the years.

This is not to suggest that I am somehow ashamed of my current relationship with either Ben or Fred or anyone else currently designated as a target by our "fundamentalists". I enjoy attending the meetings when I am able, and have had lots of worthy discussions with any number of Seattle comrades.

Indeed, I am cheerfully willing to take at least partial credit for some of the views that Fred or Ben associate themselves with, since my own thinking has perhaps been somewhat of a catalyst for theirs. BUT MY VIEWS ARE MY OWN!

2. A note on the nature of any debate with Mark himself: I should point out at the outset that I refuse to be drawn into a point-for-point refutation of Mark's charges. There are two reasons for this. The first one is quite simple. My motto is: If you argue with a fool long enough, people won't be able to tell the difference. Beyond that though, there is another reason which is perhaps even more important: Mark and I are speaking an entirely different language. What do I mean by this?

I mean that Mark examines political views on the basis of whether they show loyalty to a particular ideology. This ideology is a particularly reductionist and literal interpretation of the words of Marx and Lenin. It is not for nothing that I call people like Mark fundamentalists. On this basis, he and his brethren read others views, and

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*Michael, cont. from previous page*

vindication of his earlier criticism.

I assume he is referring to the June 1 article "Bush sends Haitians back to military terror."

This article has just half a paragraph on "the long standing U.S. domination of Haiti." It says that

"...the Haitian military is their longstanding friend, which they supported and built up over many decades. They preserve order in an island where many U.S. multinational corporations make superprofits off cheap Haitian labor. And order — to preserve exploitation — is after all the real content of Bush's New World Order." (*WA*, June 1, 1992, p. 12)

Meanwhile, the article in the November 1991 *WA* had these statements on the historical U.S. relationship to Haiti. The article "Army back in the saddle: Haiti needs revolution" said,

"Let's not forget that U.S. imperi-

alism was a firm backer of the long night of the Duvalier tyranny. In 1986, it was the U.S. which allowed safe passage out for Baby Doc Duvalier, who also cleaned out the country's treasury. It was Washington's intervention which put General Namphy into power then. The U.S. government is no friend of democracy in Haiti. What it wants in Haiti is order — for the sake of maintaining the tyrannical, capitalist system. That system allows Haiti to be a low-wage haven for many U.S. corporations."

I took the trouble to quote these paragraphs because they highlight the silliness of the criticism that is being made. Note that Oleg likes the example in the June *WA* but found the paragraph from the Nov. *WA* to be a manifestation of our weakness in exposing U.S. imperialist domination of Haiti. But the content and amount of detail given to the history in these passages is

nearly identical!

Judged from the surface, Oleg's criticism is obviously absurd. So the question comes up: why was he upset with the first article while he's satisfied with the second? I believe that the issue is what was taking place in the real world. In the first article, we were dealing with U.S. policy which opposed the coup and supported the restoration of Aristide. However by the time of the second article, the U.S. had already revealed its desire to come to terms with the new regime and was willing to let Aristide twist in the wind. Oleg was apparently uncomfortable in November with the fact that the U.S. was not being described as being on the side of the military, and he thought throwing in more on the history would somehow add up to a stronger condemnation of the U.S. role.

In Part II, I will go more into the issue of "neo-colonies" <>

decide whether they accurately reflect the "truth" of his brand of Marxism-Leninism. If they do, they are valuable and correct; if they do not, then the person is under "alien" influences, and "false" ideologies.

I, on the other hand, am operating from entirely different premises. My goal is to describe phenomena, their interrelations, and their development, in a way which accurately reflects the real world. There are certain basics associated with that: A. I am continually aware that what I am studying is affected by those who report the initial data to me. B. I am continually aware that I carry into any research a pre-given world view. I strive to be objective, and set aside this world view when it blocks my ability to accurately analyze real phenomena; at the same time, I am aware that total objectivity is impossible. This makes me always wary of my conclusions, and quick to change them if I receive better or different data. C. I am a follower of Marxism in the sense that I have found that branch of political theory to be valuable in perceiving phenomena "below the surface." Class distinctions, the connections between different sectors of capital, the hidden agendas of the elites are all general examples of such, and there are many more. I find in Marxist dialectics a useful method for laying bare contradictions. I find materialism to be useful tool in cutting through a lot of ideological rubbish. D. At the same time, I allow no particular world view to entirely rule my mental roost. I think there are phenomena in the world that Marxism is a dismal failure at interpreting. (All followers of St. Karl and St. Lenin may now hurl the appropriate thunderbolts.) On questions relating to an individual's spiritual needs, it is silent. Although it is of some use in analyzing the way in which society shapes the individual's psychology and perception, it is less than adequate in describing how an individual should respond to that in his personal life. And it is only one of many useful tools when looking at non-class (race and gender) questions. None of this is a particular problem; Marxism was designed as a social science, not one rooted in the

individual.

This type of reasoning may be anathema to Mark and his ilk. But more importantly, it is almost impossible to carry out serious debate, because he and I want to debate different things. He and his friends want to debate whether I am a loyal follower of St. Karl. I want to find out in what ways my analysis reflects the real world, and in what ways it does not. I am not worried about defending my "faith", for I have none, and am merely interested in getting it a little better next time out of the gate. What this means is that Mark and I cannot in fact directly argue without talking right past each other.

Nonetheless, I do want to lay out the assumptions behind the presentation I gave so that people who actually want to look at the issues and not engage in witchhunts have a chance to see my underlying reasoning.

3. Alright, now on to the issue at hand: Palestine.

A. WHAT THIS WAS, AND WHAT THIS WAS NOT: I was very specific about what ground this was supposed to cover. I said right at the outset that the first part was merely an "overview of the present situation" and that the second part concerned "some of the issues behind the possible building of a Palestinian National entity". It was NOT, I REPEAT, NOT a complete analysis of the Intifada, the PLO, class relations in the nascent state, or the likely future of the Zionist state. If it had been, I would have said so. Frankly, given my schedule when I wrote this article, I didn't have time for all that. Of course, I might not have to explain this if it were not for one of Mark's methods, which I call: "Simon Says". According to this tactic, if I refuse to utter the usual phraseology which the WA used to offer, that makes me an opportunist. I am "ignoring the tasks of the revolutionary movement", going "down the path of reformist tinkering", etc. Well, excuse the fuck out of me, but I'm interested in analyzing concrete developments. The purpose of this document was to throw a few things out to get some discussion going on those developments. By the way, while we're

talking about discussion, I might mention that I don't believe that on an issue of this nature every reply on E-Mail need be in the form of some worked-out ironclad analysis either. Questions, questioning, musings and brief objections can be raised - WE HAVE TO GET USED TO TALKING TO EACH OTHER! In addition, I have an account on America Online, and can be reached at Jasonred @ AOL. com. I invite any and all to send me their views via that channel if they are unwilling to expose themselves to the scrutiny of the fundamentalists, and will reply to all.

B. "SHOVING ASIDE THE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE": Comrades will probably notice that this presentation issued no strident calls for the Palestinians, toilers or otherwise, to do anything. (or not do anything). This, of course, upset the holy Hell out of Mark. Although that is reason enough to have done it, there was in fact some thinking behind my decision. First and foremost is the issue of what I regard my responsibility is as a politically conscious individual living in this country. And that is to analyze the ACTUAL motion and development in the world, not just the parts of it I deem to be r-r-r-evolutionary. The truth is that there is a situation in Palestine which is really new, presenting all sorts of distinct issues to analyze. Further, that these issues, ranging from economic independence to developing political legitimacy, to the establishment of state institutions, will come up again in other parts of the world for some time to come. What I attempted to do is no more than sketch out a rough start on these complicated issues. But I decided better a rough start than sitting around pontificating like our Stalinist know-it-alls as to which group of people should be doing what. You see, contrary to fundamentalist belief, Palestinians are probably not gathered around their E-Mail nodes waiting with bated breath to hear strategy from the remnants of the MLP, even this remnant. Thank God for that.

C. THE END OF ROMANTIC ILLUSIONS: I have some news for Mark, and anyone else who may have

missed it: ISRAEL IS NOT GOING AWAY. It is not going to collapse, it will not be overrun, the Intifada is not about to storm the Knesset with Palestinian flags waving. This may disappoint some of us, but facts are stubborn things, so let's wake up and smell the coffee. This does not mean that the state of Israel will be as firmly wedded to Zionism as it is now, or even that Zionism is some eternal ideology. But for the foreseeable future, there are going to be, at best, two states in that region, one Israeli, and one Palestinian. And anyone predicating their analysis on some other basis than that is simply closing their eyes to the real world. There are three reasons for this. One is that as strong as the Intifada is, it has not succeeded at this time in "bringing the war home" in a manner sufficient to challenge Zionism on its own turf, Israel proper. Another is that Western Imperialism is not going to allow Israel to be destroyed. They will, for now at least, provide whatever aid is necessary to insure that. If the four full-scale wars in that region since 1948 were proof of nothing else, they were proof of that. I realize that one of the reasons for the support was as part of the geopolitical rivalry with the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the U.S., in my estimation, remains firmly wedded to a close relationship with Zionism. And the third reason is obvious: the Israeli working class is not about to join up with the Palestinians anytime soon to overthrow its own Bourgeoisie.

D. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE INTIFADA? Given that the Zionist state is an on-going reality, what then, will the Intifada gain by continuing to fight? The answer is: to prepare the conditions for the creation of the nation of Palestine. By this I mean that the chief gains of the uprising so far has been to bring Israel to a position where it must prepare for a future Palestinian state. Everybody's statements to the contrary; every politician in the Labor Party, and to its left, knows that. The only other choice is to try and hold on to the territories in a permanent state of unrest. Although Israel can do that, it is not currently in its interests. That's not because Zionism has suddenly switched

its stripes, or because Rabin is suffering from a bad case of creeping humanitarianism. It's because for Israel to modernize its political structure and build an economy that can compete on the world market, the relationship with the territories must undergo a fundamental change. Despite the tax revenue pulled from the West Bank, the occupied territories are more and more resembling a millstone around Israel's neck in their present form.

Israel is desperately trying to cut a deal which will allow the highest degree of control over the new Palestinian entity. But the Intifada limits how much leverage they actually have. Consider the issue of armed settlers. This issue, as well as any other connected to settlements overall, was not even supposed to be on the table for two years. Then the Hebron massacre took place, and the Intifada exploded in a fresh wave of struggle. The only response the Israelis could have was to bargain on this issue immediately. Although this issue has not been resolved, for the first time settlers have been arrested, banned from certain areas and were even put under curfew for a short period of time. Am I saying this is enough? No, obviously not. I am saying it's an example of how the Intifada, the actual motion on the ground, shapes the debate that takes place between the PLO and Israel.

Many analysts, our fundamentalists included, are viewing the Peace Accord as the end of the Intifada, and therefore of struggle. I think not. The PLO leadership did not start the Intifada, and it can't stop it. As long as the IDF is playing an occupying role in the territories, the struggle will go on. That motion is independent of Arafat. But the point of this motion is not the end of Zionism - that is primarily the role of Israelis. The point of the motion is the establishment of a Palestinian state! There is of course one scenario where these two goals combine in at least a limited sense. And that is if an alliance were formed between Palestinians inside the territories and Israeli Arabs. I alluded to this on pg.1 of my original presentation. A full-scale alliance could possibly force an early establishment of statehood and increased civil and eco-

nomical rights for Israeli Arabs; possibly even an end to Zionism in its present form. But at present, that does not appear to be in the cards, and no amount of strident calls will make it materialize. Once again, I am dealing with the situation as it is actually is, and probably will be. That's not pragmatism, its materialism. Comrades who see other possibilities should feel free to comment - I would love to be wrong.

E. THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS: Mark spends a lot of time ridiculing my concerns for the material well-being of the Palestinians. My standpoint is likened to a "bourgeois social planner", whatever the fuck that is supposed to be. I am supposedly tailoring my demands to what Zionism will find acceptable, engaging in wishful thinking, and committing other grave political crimes. So here's a couple of news flashes:

NEWS FLASH #1: THE PALESTINIANS DON'T HAVE A FUNCTIONING ECONOMY! Mark of course couldn't care less how many toilers go through what kind of hardships, as long as they're r-r-r-evolutionary toilers. It reminds one of the conservative bishops in Latin America, who didn't care how many peasants died, as long as their souls were saved. And his advice is about as practical. We get vague exhortations about mythical organizations of toilers who will engage in various heroic struggles with various bourgeoisie.

Back in the real world, those "lists" I composed just happen to be what the real Palestinians need in the real world. And I didn't come up with them by sitting in a dark room and pontificating about what I thought they would need. It happens to be what they think they need, as reported in a host of articles and interviews with real live Palestinians based in the real live territories. So excuse me for reporting the facts.

NEWS FLASH #2: THE ECONOMY IS NOT A ZERO-SUM GAME! It is not correct to assume that the economy is a pie, and that the issues boil down to however many pieces the Israelis get will be pieces the Palestinians don't get. The issue is not distribution of economic wealth, it is production. Last time I checked, when real

Marxists in the real world analyze economic issues, they start with production, not distribution. If you don't believe me, try checking out *Capital*, Vol.1. You'll be amazed how much time Karl devoted to this.

That being the case, in a situation where an economy has been nearly destroyed by a host of factors ranging from Israeli political regulations and economic strangulation to certain Palestinian tactics of the Intifada, it seems reasonable to ask ourselves: what will make this economy grow larger?

This is not for the purposes of making some neo-conservative argument about "a rising tide lifts all boats". I am obviously aware that a love fest is not about to ensue between either Israeli capital or Palestinian capital and the Palestinian toilers. Nonetheless, an economy which is in a state of what one writer calls "de-development" will probably benefit from increased investment and a lifting of prior restrictions on economic activity. It is my further belief that this will provide a certain amount of material benefits to a majority of the Palestinians. If anyone can prove to me that this will do more harm than good, I await your arguments.

F. A SELF-CRITICISM: Upon re-reading my original notes, I did stumble on one fairly serious error. It started out as a semantic confusion, but I think unfortunately has other implications. It's not in the facts that I reported, nor even really in the conclusions I have drawn, but in a certain verb usage.

One word that leaped out at me when I was reading the second section (issues around the Accord) is "should". Israel "should" do this or that policy or the settlements "shouldn't" be dismantled, *are two examples* of how it's used. There are some definite problems associated with the use of this word. This issue actually came up briefly during the discussion in Seattle, but I failed to recognize the nature of the confusion I had caused at the time.

There are two possible meanings to the word should. One involves a sense of obligation, as in "Mark and the rest of the fundamentalists should stop looking for backsliders to attack and

concentrate on understanding present-day development." The other meaning involves what is a likely outcome. "If Mark sticks a shotgun up my nose and pulls the trigger, my ability to write further articles should be greatly diminished." It is in this second sense that I used the word, in keeping with my desire to analyze current developments. However, the way in which I used the word makes it almost impossible to decide which meaning I am intending. It sounds in places that, having given up dispensing r-r-r-evolutionary advice to the Palestinians, that I am now dispensing advice on economic reforms to the Israelis.

I think the basis for my confusion is that I am still in the midst of attempting to stop writing r-r-r-evolutionary polemics, a la MLP, USA, and start writing actual analysis. This is more than an issue of verbiage; it is an issue of changing certain ways of thinking and looking at the world. What I am actually attempting to do here are two things. On the one hand, my major project is to point out the general outlines of what I think is the most likely outcome of the relationship between the Palestinians and Israel, given the state of Israel's economic crisis, and the situation on the ground in the territories. On the other hand, I am trying to sketch out likely points of contention between the two sides, and what the key demands of the Palestinians are likely to be, if their economy is to be allowed to develop. Even those modest goals are not easy, and comrades will simply have to bear with me.

#### G. THE REAL STATE OF THE ISRAELI ECONOMY.

I said earlier that Israel was attempting to reform and re-organize their economy and political structures. Now why would they want to do that so badly as to give up the territories? The answer to that lies in understanding the true nature of the Israeli economy. That is not necessarily easy, as Zionist propaganda is devoted to such fairy tales as agricultural Edens reclaimed from the swamps and swimming pools in every Kibbutz. There is a constant drumbeat, thoroughly racist in nature, of how Israel is a modern first world country

surrounded by Arab cultural and political backwardness. This is usually attributed to some basic character defect of the Arabs, totally disconnected to the levels of aid Israel receives. So here's the real deal:

Since it's inception, the state of Israel has been trying to be two mutually exclusive types of state. On the one hand, it has tried to have a huge military regime, capable of fending off it's much larger neighbors. On the other hand, it has been trying to be a modern state in the first-world sense, with a high level of material comfort, and a consumer-oriented society. No country could have succeeded in this, regardless of how vital it's economic resources base or system of capital accumulation. Given Israel's size and natural resources, it was an obviously impossible task. So how has Israel's economy survived? The answer is through two sources: foreign aid and territorial conquest.

The original war in '48 brought a huge windfall of land and housing to the flood of immigration Israel was encouraging. A huge component of the war, despite Israel's denials to the contrary, was the expulsion through terrorism, psychological intimidation, and outright military assaults of a large percentage of the Arab population of Palestine. It has been estimated that of 370 new Jewish settlements between '48-'54, 350 of them were on former Arab holdings that were expropriated by the new state. In '49, olives and olive oil from former Arab-owned olive groves were the third largest Israeli export. This theft of Palestinian resources is reflected in the GNP of 1951, the first year Israel measured this statistic. It shows an astonishing 29.7% growth in just one year

Nonetheless, in just two years, GNP had dropped to - 1.9%, as resources were absorbed without producing much in the way of output. The Israeli economy entered a severe crisis. Fortunately for them, two things happened in 1952- 3. The first was a reparations agreement reached with West Germany, to the tune of \$1.2 billion spread over twelve years. The second was a huge jump in aid from the U.S., some \$230

million over three years. There was also an influx of money from Jews in the U.S., though I have no figures on this at present. All of these combined to bring the '53 GNP rise from -2% to an astonishing +19.9%. This pattern continued, with the West Germans also starting to buy Israeli government bonds in '59, and granting a \$500 million loan in '60 on very concessionary terms.

The economy once again slumps in '65, as direct payments to the Israeli government from Germany ended, and American aid was cut by two thirds. GNP growth falls again to +0.8 % by '66, as not only revenue falls, but the military build-up that culminates in the '67 war continues. Then, the famous "Six-Day Miracle" happens, and triumphant Israel snatches up the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights, not to mention the other half of Jerusalem. Again the '48-51 pattern repeats itself. GNP growth jumps to 15.5% and stays mostly in the 'teens for the next six years. More importantly, a colonial relationship is set up between Israel and the territories, complete with cheap wage labor and a captive market for exports.

Then along comes the '73 war. This was not the success of the first two wars, or even the '56 skirmish. Had it not been for the hesitation of Jordan to involve itself in the Arab cause, it is likely that Israel might even have lost. As it was, a draw was the best to be expected, and the myth of Israeli military invincibility was shattered. Indeed, it is not hyperbole to state that though militarily victorious, Israel in fact was psychologically defeated. Several negative complications ensued for the Israeli economy.

First, although U.S. aid to Israel rises in '74 to \$2.65 billion, it drops by two-thirds the next year to \$803 million. Secondly, Israel is forced to return the Sinai oil fields to Egypt, forcing the cost of importing oil up by 50%. Third, the myth of invincibility that was shattered in the war forced Israel to accelerate an already untenable military build-up. Defense expenditures, already 21% of GNP since the '67 war, now rise to nearly 32%. Fourthly, and most importantly, the psychological blow to the

dream of Zionism causes many Israelis to question whether they are living in a tenable, stable state, and the prospect of mass emigration is feared by Zionist authorities. It is precisely that fear which goads the Israeli government to begin aid to the settlement movement. I will go into the composition of this movement more a little later on, but it is important to understand one thing. It is a common misunderstanding that the settlers movement arose because a discredited Labor government gave way to the Likud and the likes of Menachem Begin. The truth is that the Labor government, in power for over a quarter of a century, found itself unable to present a version of Zionism either ideologically or materially tenable to its people. The task of revitalizing this tired, racist ideology fell to Likud, with its extreme nationalism. The resurgence of Begin and his little band of fascists, largely considered a marginal trend throughout most of Israel's history, was brought about through a new alliance between those nationalists and a new outgrowth of Messianic Zionism, a Zionism harkening back to the early pioneer spirit of the 1930's and '40's. Had the psychological blow to Israel not occurred in '73, there never would have been such a need for the settler's movement. But there was, the Israeli Bourgeoisie knew it, and so the settler's movement was either not opposed by the Labor Party, or openly championed by Likud.

In addition, for the rest of the Israelis there were moves to increase government subsidies, the availability of imports, and aid to their new buddies in the religious parties. All that cost money, though, and lots of it. Partly, the cost of this was by getting increased foreign aid. U.S. aid went back up, till by 1980 it was averaging \$2.66 billion a year. And of course, let us not forget the urgent appeals to world Jewry, using the tactics of pleading and guilt. Yet even this increased revenue only brought the GNP rise from +1.8% in '76 to +2.9% in '80. Worse yet, the increased dependence on foreign aid increased not only its debt, but caused massive inflation as well.

The '82-3 war in Lebanon was

another fiasco. Israel consumed more than \$2.5 billion in extra military expenditures and lost GNP. Again, the U.S. stepped in with aid, again it did little good. By the mid-eighties, the Israeli economy was a basket case. GNP growth was down to +0.5%. GNP per capita was in actual decline. Inflation was 500% in '84. In '85 the government budget was so high, it reached 110% of GNP. No, that's not a typo - 110%! A quarter of the budget was required just for debt servicing, despite the usual grants and easy terms afforded by the U.S. Another 22% was going for the military. The government was giving massive subsidies to anyone who even looked like a settler. One government figure described it thusly: "I believe we are living in the middle of a terrible fiction...there is no real budget...the process is out of control."

In 1985, the writing was on the wall, and a new Labor-Likud coalition began to tighten the screws with an austerity program designed to at least break the back of inflation. Wages and prices were frozen, and a privatization program was begun. This had mixed results. Inflation was indeed brought down, but the price for that in any capitalist country, as we learned here in the early eighties, is recession. The government budget stopped growing, but so did GNP for the most part. Israel attempted to compensate by increasing aid. In '84, Israel received \$2.63 billion, of which \$1.76 was a grant. In '85, it received \$3.37 billion, all of which was a grant. In '86, another \$3.75 billion, all in grants. Plus a free-trade agreement, plus an invitation to join in the Strategic Defense Initiative.

None of it was enough, though. Partly this is due to the inefficiency of Israel's huge state sector. Politicians aren't just beholden to so-called "special interests", they are special interests. Imagine a Hebrew-speaking PRI-dominated Mexico, and you get a rough picture. So inflation is down, but government regulation makes private investment tortuous and inefficient. Wages were reduced, but investment doesn't increase, and productivity doesn't really improve.

And of course, subsidies to settlers



continue. And the military budget continues. The Israeli military is estimated to cost \$1.5 billion a year in lost GNP from keeping so many people mobilized as soldiers. And previous debt servicing continues. Israel's foreign debt is \$29 billion by the mid-eighties, more than five times Mexico's when measured per capita. And let's not forget the Arab boycott, which hurts international investment. And the cost of the flood of immigration from Russia and surrounding regions. And then, last but not least, the Intifada. The \$100 million-dollar-a-year Intifada, which is what it costs Israel in lost tax revenue and political/military coercion. So is it any wonder the economy is hurting?

Any intelligent Israeli government official or private large-scale capitalist could only see two solutions, taken together. Reduce the state sector, (especially through privatization; break out of the economic blockade. Another Israeli official, in the late eighties: "One of our first economic goals must be to break out of our encirclement. This is a necessary condition for economic independence, and it can only come about through the peace process and the eventual achievement of peace."

It is this, and nothing else, which forced Israel to the bargaining table. They need to get the millstone of the territories from around their necks. They need to cut the massive subsidies to the settlements, settlements which in many cases are completely unproductive. And they need peace, in order to break out onto the world market, like every other country is trying to do!

I have no idea what prospects they face in achieving these goals. In the last three years, their economy has grown 6% a year, and unemployment has fallen. That is unlikely to continue. And even if their economy maintains a steady 4% growth a year, and the budget only increased 2% a year, it would be 40 years before their government moved back into the black. All of this looks pretty unsure. But there is one sure thing. Israel is doing what it's doing because it has no choice - and knows it.

H. MORE ON THE SETTLEMENTS. My understanding through the grapevine is that the previous infor-

mation on settlements is new to many. So I will add some more here, for further enlightenment.

Israeli is currently using 20% of West Bank and Gaza land for settlements. However, it has officially closed off another 40% from Arab settlement and development. Besides military seizures, Israel has made skillful use of a patchwork of laws; Ottoman, British Mandate, Jordanian, as well as Israeli. A lot of creative use of the word "vacancy" has taken place, especially in regard to dwellings.

There were basically two phases to settlement. The first phase was from '67-'74, when seizures were limited to mostly to the Jordan Valley and the slopes overlooking it, as well as strategic places in Gaza. In the Golan Heights, mass expulsions of some 180,000 Syrians were carried out immediately after the '67 war. It was settled almost immediately by kibbutzim, quite heavily in comparison to early West Bank and Gaza settlers. In some cases, in fact, kibbutzim were set up forward of IDF lines.

Most seizures of land, regardless of area, were justified under various "security" justifications, as ordered by the Ministry of Defense. After a while though, this wore pretty thin, as in the case where a Palestinian families land was seized in Northern Sinai, but then the family was allowed to re-enter and work the land as laborers. Some liberal Israeli lawyers had some field days with the Justice and Defense departments on some of these cases, even though they lost most of them. But it did give Israel pause for thought, and exposed the need for new methods.

The second phase, (which I have previously referred to) starts in '74. It is at this point that the Gush Emunim is founded. For the next couple of years, Shimon Peres as Minister of Defense provides the means for settlers to set up "illegal" settlements by sheltering them in army camps, or approving them under the guise of "archeological excavation camps". In '77, the Likud comes to power, and then the process really takes off. Ms. Pli'a Albek, who is an important official at the Ministry of Justice, can be credited with the previously men-

tioned method of using bits and pieces of various law. The timing of her crusade is interesting, because it is at precisely this point that Begin is preparing to give up land to the Egyptians as part of the '78 Peace accords. Another major tactic used by Albek was to take advantage of the fact that most land in the Territories was held by custom, rather than a formal deed. Using some of the intricacies of Ottoman law, Albek was able to have a tremendous amount of land outside of the immediate towns and villages declared "dead land", and seized by the military governor. Also, a tremendous lot of land was seized under the pretext of them being "vacant". This was a great tactic to use in light of a state which was based on expulsion of the Arab population, and which has managed to imprison at one time or another half a million Palestinians before the Intifada broke out.

I wish I could give a more exact breakdown of which settlements are particularly military, or religious, or economic, but it doesn't necessarily cleanly break down statistically any further than I've previously stated. In its place I offer a profile of a religious settlement, a so-called "kibbutz" in Gaza known as Netzarim. It is actually an outpost of Gush Emunim extremists, and not many at that. They do virtually no work, and spend most of their day studying the Talmud. The few "farmers" among them are really overseers who manage the labor of workers from ... Thailand! These were brought over because these racists refuse to have anything to do with the local Gaza population who no doubt accord them the same. All of their overhead is paid for by the government. It is these clowns who the Israelis are going to have to dispense with. According to one statistic, settlers make up only 2.4% of the population, yet drain 12% of municipal budget money. Another interesting fact: 25% of all Israelis are employed by the private sector, which is high enough, but of those who live in the occupied territories the proportion is 45%, and of religious settlers, that rises to 75%. An illustrative story from Israel Shakak, a liberal Israeli writer:

"Last summer the religious settlers demonstrated for an entire week on the

# Once Again on Jason's Reformist Stand on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Sowing the Seeds of Struggle or Sowing Illusions in Israel?

by Mark (Detroit)  
September 27, 1994

In my article of May 22, 1994 entitled "Economic Schemes Replace Revolutionary Organizing" I criticized a presentation by Jason on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The criticism centered on how Jason's presentation failed to come to grips with the tasks of revolutionary organizing necessary to advance the cause of the Palestinian toilers under the new conditions of the PLO-Israel

peace accords. Instead, Jason set about the task of developing economic blueprints which he considered "realistic" because they were confined to what he thought Israeli capitalism and international imperialism would be most likely to do in the Palestinian "mini-state". On the one hand, these economic schemes led Jason to present a glorified picture of economic development for the "mini-state" under Israeli domination. On the other hand, all the needs of the Palestinian masses not in accord with his "real-

istic" economic schemes were shunted aside, presumably as non-realistic.

In his September 14 reply to my criticism, Jason rants and raves about how maligned he was by my reply. He recites a litany of standard anti-communist charges where essentially I am accused of the "crime" of judging his views by Marxist standards. But after he cools off, Jason himself admits that in his previous presentation "it sounds in places that, having given up dispensing r-r-revolutionary advice to the Pales-

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*Jason, cont. from previous page*

'Hill of the Roses' opposite the Knesset. I went to meet them there. I passed by a religious settler talking to one of the handful of secular settlers from the Golan Heights. The former asked the latter: 'Why are hardly any from the Heights here?' The settler from the Heights responded. 'Because we are busy harvesting cotton.' Replied the religious settler. 'Harvesting money in government ministries is more profitable than harvesting cotton.'

Speaking of the Golan settlers, it is significant to note that these settlers are in fact largely secular, though still vociferously opposed to giving back any of the Heights, on security rather than religious reasons. Their chief political representative is Rafael Eitan's Tsomet party, a hard-line party on the right. Eitan himself is former a Army Chief of Staff.

Current settlement plans have been scaled back in all areas, though mostly in response to a drop in emigration from Russia than any response to the PLO. The current official government policy is "no provision for government support of new housing construction anywhere", which of course leaves out the question of competing existing housing. It also appears to be contradicted by the government policy in annexed Jerusalem, where the goal is to create a Jewish majority in an extended Arab East Jerusalem. 13,000 housing units are currently under construction. An area southwest

of Bethlehem called the Etzion Bloc may also be continuing to receive funding for housing and a new highway intending to bypass Arab settlements.

As for the settlers political clout, it appears seriously on the wane. When Arafat arrived in Gaza, they tried to organize mass demonstrations, and were assisted by the new Likud Mayor of Jerusalem. They got 150-300, a poor showing. They have had one national demonstration of several thousand, but their hard-line positions, as well as their religious zealotry, are not making many friends these days. When Israel does cut their apron strings, as I think it must, I expect vigorous protests, but not large ones.

I. A FINAL COMMENT: Originally, there was lots more I wanted to talk about, including opposition to Arafat's heavy hand, the coming ideological crisis of Zionism, likely tactics of the Intifada, further issues of Palestinian national development, class breakdown, etc. But this is already close to twelve pages of text, and I think that is enough for a start. Having sneered at the tactics of the Fundamentalists' all-encompassing analysis, I would hate to imitate them.

In particular, I am leaving out of this reply a more detailed discussion of what the dynamics are likely to be between the Palestinian majority and Arafat's National Authority. There is also the question of the struggle between the Palestinian working class and peas-

antry, and the Palestinian bourgeoisie. These are serious topics, which need a thorough discussion. I do not believe they can be dealt with by sloganeering. Mark's mythology notwithstanding. Simply advocating a "class organization of the working people independent of the PLO and Hamas" as some kind of magic talisman does not take one step towards answering these difficult issues. I am going to make an attempt in the next piece, (oh yes, you haven't heard the last of me!) to present my views. Needless to say, this doesn't prevent anyone else from putting forward theirs, hopefully sans mythology.

Comrades, so far a lot of the E-Mail has been taken up by what is referred to in Cyberspace as "Spam" and the opposition to it. The latter of course was, and to some extent still is, a necessary by-product of the former. But there is much more to discuss. The future of socialism. The question of interventions. Global Capitalism. The composition and consciousness of the working class and other strata. And so on, and so on.

The E-Mail channel is not for experts. It knows no hierarchy. It passes no judgments except what its participants provide. It is inherently democratic. Let us use it. Let us use it well. Write. Reply. Debate. Argue. Take no one's word. Trust no one's instinct. It is a time for complicated questions, not simple answers. I leave you with:

Revolutionary Greetings,  
Jason

tinians, that I am now dispensing advice on economic reforms to the Israelis." Leaving aside Jason's inability to say the word "revolutionary" without stuttering, this all but admits my charge. But don't think this admission means Jason is about to change his previous views. A few sentences later he proclaims "the issue is not distribution of economic wealth, it is production." In other words, if the impoverished Palestinians just don't make too many demands, economic development via Israel and imperialism will solve their problems. Yet Jason has the nerve to say that Mark was "ridiculing my concerns for the material well-being of the Palestinians." I don't ridicule anyone's concern for the well-being of the Palestinian masses. What I ridicule is Jason's political views which confuse what is "realistic" for the exploiters with the well-being of the masses.

#### **Jason avoids the immediate revolutionary tasks**

In his reply, Jason announces his great discovery — the revolutionary overthrow of Israel is not going to happen soon. This would be of little concern except that Jason actually considers this an argument against what I wrote in my criticism of his presentation. But I argued that "the days of sweeping victories in organizing and winning the big demands are not just around the corner." I did not argue that revolutionary organizing means "storming the Knesset" in the present situation.

What Jason is worked up about is that I raised that even though sweeping victories were not at hand, "anyone interested in advancing the Palestinian movement must face the task of building up the revolutionary class organization of the toilers." Instead of answering whether I am right or wrong about this, he dodges it with his above-mentioned parody and sneers that when I talk about class organization, it is just a "magic talisman" that won't solve anything.

But far from being some empty phrase, it is an immediate practical issue. Let's take an example which

Jason considers an argument against my views. He bellows that "the point of this (Palestinian - Mark) motion is not the end of zionism" but the "establishment of a Palestinian state". But Jason knows that there are different class forces inside the "Palestinian state", that is, the tiny bantustan that Israel is letting the PLO administer. And these different class forces have different interests. The Palestinian bourgeoisie, represented in the main by the PLO, are grateful to be junior partners to Israel. They are willing to call off the struggle for democratic rights while severe national oppression remains so long as they can maintain their privileged position and carve out their own niche for economic exploitation. Hamas represents the Islamic fundamentalist section of the bourgeoisie and would like, for now at least, a share of the power and privileges the PLO has. Of course these, and similar organizations speak in the name of the Palestinian people and attract a section of the masses behind them. But this does not change their class aims.

Well, what about the Palestinian workers and peasants. Don't they need organizations to defend their interests? Or should they rely on the PLO or Hamas? Does the establishment of a Palestinian state mean the masses should rely on the PLO or Hamas to continue the struggle against the direct rule of Israel in the areas outside the PLO mini-state? Does the establishment of the Palestinian state mean the toilers should not wage a fight for their immediate rights and economic interests against the Israeli capitalists and the Palestinian authority within the mini-state? What about the Palestinian Arabs inside Israel? Can we rely on Arafat or Hamas to wage the struggle against the second-class citizenship of these people inside Israel?

But independent class organization is not merely needed to wage a series of immediate battles. It is necessary if the movement will be able to adopt to the changing political conditions. If Israel continues to evacuate, the clashes with the IDF occupier forces will increasingly be supplemented by other forms of struggle. With the ascen-

dancy of the PLO rule in the mini-state, the class issues that have always existed in the movement will acquire greater urgency than ever. This does not mean that it will be a period when the importance of the distinct class interests will be obvious to the Palestinian masses. A number of conditions will most likely place limits on how quickly and deeply the class perspective takes hold among the Palestinian masses. But this only emphasizes the need for organizations that will help spread class consciousness.

It is true that the present phase of the struggle, the "intifada," will not directly lead to the toppling of Israeli rule. But a revolutionary struggle is not just the final act of insurrection. It consists of a whole series of battles that help build up the militancy, consciousness and organization which prepares the oppressed to overthrow the old order. Every step forward in organization today is a step towards gaining the strength needed for bigger battles, including the "end of zionism." Anyone who mocks the need for revolutionary organizing today betrays both the short and long-term interests of the toilers.

#### **Jason adopts the framework of the Palestinian bourgeoisie**

In his initial presentation, Jason congratulated the intifada for forcing Israel to make some concessions in the PLO-Israeli accord. However, he avoided any criticism of the accords even though the PLO agreed in them to call off the struggle against Israeli oppression in return for a "state" that is closer to a bantustan than an independent country, the former demand of the PLO itself. Then Jason went on to argue that Israel should pump in some aid to the bantustan because "this will also buy the nascent Palestinian authorities some time to avoid an explosion."

In his reply Jason forgets to mention his lecture against uprisings in the Palestinian entity. He talks about the intifada continuing. But his general conception of the struggle remains the same. He confines the struggle to the intifada defining the "limits" over the

“degree of control” Israel has over “the new Palestinian entity.” And he adds that the intifada will go on in Palestinian areas still under direct Israel Defense Forces terror. Yes, the struggle is fine so long as it confines itself to creating the mini-state. But where and when the Palestinian administration exists, uprisings must be avoided.

This is a formula which subordinates the struggle of the masses to the creation of the mini-state. Not only is the perspective of broader struggles ignored. But it obscures that the success of the immediate aims of the masses means having to come into conflict with the Palestinian authorities. Take, for example, Jason’s talk about more freedom from Israeli political domination. If Jason is talking about more than just some minor tinkering with the present miserable situation, than the masses will have to militantly rise up. But the PLO, with Jason’s approval, has pledged to Israel to quash such actions. Jason wants to have it both ways. He tries to create the impression that he is for a serious continuation of the struggle, that he is more for the struggle than his opponents. But if he is serious about building up the PLO mini-state authority, then he must agree to clamping down on “explosions” of the workers and peasants.

Now what class force in the Palestinian movement conceives of the struggle as Jason does? It is the Palestinian bourgeoisie. For them, the entire issue has been their own state. Now they have settled for the most wretched, servile form of state imaginable. The PLO has worked for many years to limit the struggle, and now, equipped with their very own state apparatus, they are even more zealous about this task. They are presently playing the role of rent-

cops for Israel. The masses have also fought for their homeland. But they have not fought just to have the “honor” of being suppressed by a new state. They need rights and improved conditions that will enable them to further their struggle for political and economic emancipation. The PLO once promised such a democratic, secular Palestine. They have abdicated. This means that even improvements in conditions for the masses in the present situation means clashes with the PLO “state”. And it means the long-term goal of a democratic homeland encompassing both Israel and the occupied territories can only be achieved in spite of the Palestinian bourgeoisie and their mini-state.

There is another reason to organize the masses to be able to stand up to the mini-state authority. What if the state becomes an Islamic fundamentalist state? In his “Outline”, Jason offers no criticism of Hamas although he mentions them in a positive light a couple of times. Indeed, near the end of his “Outline,” Jason includes in a list of questions he is thinking about, the following: “How much should Hamas be worked with? Is an Islamic state a possible future, and what attitude towards that? Very complicated questions here, and very few answers.” Now I doubt that Jason is enthused about an Islamic state. But in that case, why is it that he can’t even express a clear attitude against such a state? I would suggest this flows from his view that everything must be subordinated to strengthening the mini-state authority. It is because he frets about uprisings against this authority that he must be willing to reconcile to even a religious, fundamentalist state.

As part of Jason’s attempt to prove

his loyalty to the struggle, he even invents the fantastic lie that his opponents are the ones who have written off the struggle after the peace accords. Gee, I thought my sin was talking too much about revolutionary organizing! But it is Jason who conceives of struggle as either strengthening a PLO or Islamic state authority, or empty phrasemongering.

#### **Jason touts neo-conservative economic development**

Since Jason sees little purpose to the struggle beyond strengthening the state apparatus of the Palestinian elite, it is not surprising that he considers the question of the material well-being of the Palestinians solved by drawing up a wish list of good things he expects Israeli domination of the mini-state economy to bring. He contends that this is the “realistic” approach whereas my view that the masses will have to get organized to fight for their well-being he considers phrasemongering. As I pointed out at the beginning of this article, Jason himself admitted in his reply that he erred because someone reading it might get the idea that he is “now dispensing advice on economic reforms to the Israelis” rather than “r-r-revolutionary advice to the Palestinians”.

Well, making an error is no sin if one corrects it. But Jason does not do this. In the section where he does his “self-criticism” he claims his apparent desire to become an unofficial economic advisor to Israel is just an illusion caused by some unfortunate wording. He talks about various meanings of the word “should.” He writes that when he said Israel “should” do such and such for the Palestinians, he did not

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mean Israel had “a sense of obligation” to do the right thing, only that this was the “most likely outcome.” But whether one claims Israel will do right by the Palestinians because of its good moral character or because it is “most likely” for some other reason, it is still creating illusions about Israel.

The truth is the critique of Jason does not rest on this or that usage of the word “should.” As I pointed out in my initial criticism of his “Outline,” Jason presents a long argument allegedly disproving the idea “that Palestinian incorporation into the Israeli economy is necessarily a bad thing.” In other words, Jason took the position that Israeli economic domination is beneficial. Unfortunately for Jason, I also showed that Jason’s arguments made no sense. After Jason made a list of all the great things Israel “most likely” would do, Jason wound up insisting that any demands be very modest. Instead of championing the actual pressing needs of the Palestinian masses, he ended up defining what the Israeli oppressors would supposedly voluntarily do as “reasonable.”

In fact, elsewhere in Jason’s reply, he takes his infatuation with development via Israeli capitalism and imperialism to dizzying heights. Echoing the standard line of the most blatant apologists of capitalism, he states: “It is not correct to assume that the economy is a pie, and that the issues boil down to however many pieces the Israelis get will be pieces the Palestinians don’t get. This issue is not distribution of economic wealth, it is production.” Jason thinks he makes things better by quickly adding “this is not for the purpose of making some neo-conservative argument about ‘a rising tide lifts all boats’.” I am obviously aware that a love fest is not about to ensue between either Israeli capital or Palestinian capital and the Palestinian toilers.”

Jason knows that the workers and capitalists will not be in a love fest. In his “Outline” he even mouthed a few words about Palestinian trade unions. But his neo-conservative arguments provide the rationale that the bourgeois uses to clamp down on the workers’ demands.

By such capitalist logic, the de-

mands of the workers must be limited so as not to hinder the growth of the pie. The toilers should concentrate on creating more total wealth. Of course, under capitalism, the ever-growing wealth goes to the capitalist, not the working masses. But that can’t worry the proponents of “production, not distribution of wealth.” For if the workers start demanding more of the wealth they created, there will be less profits for the capitalists and the capitalists will cry about how development is impossible in such circumstances. Moreover, if the rate of profit is not high enough, you won’t attract foreign investment. Thus, if the workers really want growth, they should work like dogs and ask only for a bone. The capitalists pretend that all boats will rise some day. But that day never seems to arrive because capitalist competition demands ever greater exploitation, and investment shifts to lands where labor is yet easier to exploit. Ah, the wonders of capitalist-imperialist growth!

Applied to the Palestinian working people, Jason’s logic would mean such things as the impoverished Palestinian workers agreeing to work in sweat-shop conditions for their Israeli masters for fear of impeding growth — of profits, that is. And what about social programs? The masses may need them, but they should not be “excessive,” lest they scare off the international bankers. Meanwhile, the Palestinian bourgeois authority will likely argue that the demands of the masses are always more than the pitifully small mini-economy can bear. This will be a constant excuse to deny almost any social programs. Once again, the refrain that production rather than distribution is the issue will be used as a club against the masses. But whatever resources and aid exist, the stronger the mass struggle, the more likely some of it will go to benefit the masses.

Jason cries that his neo-conservative arguments are justified until someone can show him that increased investment in the Palestinian areas “will do more harm than good.” Is that how things should be judged though? If Israeli domination results in a few more crumbs for the Palestinians than it should be supported and the struggle against it

called off? But what if the economy gets a little worse over the next few years? Should we then campaign for a pure Palestinian national bourgeois development as the path forward? Neither. The proletariat has another approach. There is going to be capitalist development and foreign investment in the Palestinian territories until socialism comes. Until then, things may get a little better, they may not. In any case, the more the working masses organize in their own interest, the more they can resist exploitation and Israeli national oppression. The “most likely” course, given present conditions, is that if the mini-state economy is to attract capital, it will have to compete as a low-wage sweatshop against numerous other poor countries. Therefore, Jason, please pardon the masses if they do not bask in the glorious sunshine of Israeli domination and the Palestinian bourgeoisie but get organized against their oppressors.

#### **Fantasies about a peace-loving Israel**

After trying to prove Israeli domination is good, Jason then sets about trying to prove that Israel is no longer interested in domination. He spends several pages tracing the development of Israeli economic crises and their connection to war, settlements and annexations. Jason shows how time and again, Israel tried to get out of its economic problems through aggression and conquest. So what does Jason conclude from this? That the Israeli strivings for domination are intimately bound up with its social-economic order? No. He concludes that militarism is incompatible with modern capitalism! “The state of Israel has been trying to be two mutually exclusive types of state(s),” he explains. “On the one hand, it has tried to have a huge military regime, capable of fending off it’s much larger neighbors. On the other hand, it has been trying to be a modern state in the first-world sense, with a high level of material comfort, and a consumer-oriented society.” In other words, being a military power precludes being an economic power. Now Jason has educated me to the fact that he lives in Olympia, Washington, not Seattle. But could he really

be unaware that Seattle has been a big center of shipbuilding and aircraft, industries that on a national scale have been fostered by Pentagon contracts? Has he ever noticed that he lives in a country with the biggest economy AND the most expensive war machine?

Jason reaches his conclusions about modern states and peace based on his analysis of the present situation in Israel. In his opinion, the particular situation Israel finds itself in means it will "give up the territories". Israel has made a certain retreat from part of the occupied territories and may retreat further. Obviously, there were a combination of circumstances that led Israel to already partially give up direct rule. But this does not prove that Israel will no longer strive for domination or give up militarism. Are we to ignore what the entire history of Israel teaches because Israel has made a particular retreat? Should we treat U.S. history in similar fashion? Did the fact that the U.S. was forced to retreat from Viet Nam, the fact that one could cite a whole number of concrete reasons why the U.S. left, mean that the U.S. was destined to become peaceful?

In fact, using Jason's own information, it is clear that even today, Israel is re-proving its aggressive character. Jason's reply makes note of such things as Israel's current building of 13,000 housing units in "annexed Jerusalem, where the goal is to create a Jewish majority in an extended Arab East Jerusalem." And settlements are not the only evidence of Israel's striving for domination. For example, Jason states in his reply that "Israel is desperately trying to cut a deal which will allow the highest degree of control over the new Palestinian entity." In other words, Israel has retreated from one form of domination, but is still trying to enslave the Palestinian people in a more indirect way.

As well, it would be easier to swallow Jason's claims that the days of Israeli aggression are behind it if Jason was actually opposed to the settlements himself. But he is not. In his "Outline", Jason argued for keeping the Israeli settlements. He said the overwhelming majority of the settlements were basically economic, as opposed to a handful

of religious extremist/military settlements, and therefore, the settlements "may present some benefit for the Palestinians if integrated with the Arab sectors." He even argued that some of the ultra-fanatical settlements should stay. Jason admitted he didn't know if the settlements would really play such a beneficial role, but nevertheless considered his daydreaming "realistic" because the settlements "are not just going to go away" and "Israel is unlikely to agree to abandon them."

Jason's own evidence, his own arguments, now come back to haunt him. Israel will give up its territories, we are assured, but being "realistic" means accepting Israel will not give up its territorial conquest. This is remarkable analysis — and remarkable hypocrisy.

The way Jason presents things, every particular action of Israel is evidence of some new underlying economic law. If one day Israel gives back part of its conquered territories then we supposedly have the law that militarism and modern capitalism are incompatible. By this logic though, one would have to argue that the Israeli push into East Jerusalem negates this previous law and that Israel is following the law that militarism is necessary for modern capitalism. If Jason were to consistently implement his logic, he would have to say Israel is necessarily peaceful and not peaceful. But to just say Israel is peaceful and not peaceful shows how far Jason is from discovering a new economic law.

However, the problem isn't simply that Jason shows confusion about economic laws. Since the recent Israeli policy shift is based on an alleged new law of peaceful capitalist development, Jason feels the reasonable thing to do is to conform to the Israeli policy. Why waste time thinking about how to organize the masses for struggle? The inevitable happy days are ahead! All we need now is some orderly economic plans so that all goes smoothly. It seems the new so-called "law" of peaceful development was the rationalization Jason needed to promote his utopian economic schemes as "realistic."

**Typical reformist arguments against**

## **revolutionary organizing**

Jason presents himself as a free thinker unconnected to any trend. But in fact his outlook is quite in line with reformism. Take his argument against revolutionary organizing on the grounds that Israel is not going to be overthrown soon. For Jason, the harsh realities of today, a sober evaluation of the balance of forces, is not merely something that must be taken into account by revolutionary-minded activists. It is something that should drive the very thought of revolution out of your mind. For Jason, the "foreseeable future" is simply all-powerful Israel and "Western imperialism (which) is not going to allow Israel to be destroyed, period." But doesn't the "foreseeable future" also include possibilities for struggle? And if there are possibilities for struggle, doesn't this provide an opportunity for developing a revolutionary consciousness among the masses? Doesn't the last few years show that the Palestinian masses, armed with only stones, betrayed by their own leaders and facing the mighty Israeli military machine were able to sustain quite a serious struggle? Doesn't Jason's own economic analysis show that Israeli society is not a fortress of rock-like stability, but is faced with serious problems? But never mind all that, Jason reasons. Israel will not fall tomorrow, so let's accept the status quo. And if we must have struggle, let it be confined to minor tinkering with the status quo.

Of course, it is true that the United States is not about to be overthrown quickly either. If the U.S. won't let Israel fall, imagine how ferociously the American capitalists will fight to maintain their own rule! If we follow Jason's logic, the best interests of the workers in the U.S. would be served by following the "realistic" trade union bureaucrats. After all, they are quite sure that revolution is impossible. And, just as Jason's "Outline" advised the Palestinian workers their demands must be tempered by "understanding the need for capitalist development of the economy," so the U.S. labor bureaucrats continually sacrifice the workers' demands so as not to jeopardize the healthy profits or the

international competitiveness of the company.

Similarly Jason's logic would be compatible with the likes of Detroit's own former mayor, Coleman Young. Like Jason, Young is willing to agree that socialism would be a wonderful thing, but it just is not going to happen now. Therefore, the only "realistic" thing to do is concern ourselves with building up the capitalist development of the city. Whatever one imagines about such bourgeois economic planning (yes, Jason, this is what a bourgeois economic planner is), in the real world it simply means sacrificing the needs of the workers and poor in order to make the city more attractive to capital.

### Reformist slanders of communism

Jason has picked up another common feature of reformism — it's gross distortions and slanders of communism. For example, Jason vents his spleen against revolutionary theory. He is upset with me because "Mark examines views on the basis of whether they show loyalty to a particular ideology." Why "he and his brethren read others views, and decide whether they accurately reflect the 'truth' of his brand of Marxism-Leninism." And then these nasty communists have the audacity to pronounce certain views "false" or "correct". Stripped of all the horror-inducing flourishes, all Jason is saying is that he is upset at people loyal to Marxism because they have opinions consistent with their general view of the world. But Jason, in stock anti-communist style, feels this is reason enough to incite people.

Jason claims that he, on the other hand, is "operating from entirely different premises. My goal is to describe phenomena, their interrelations, and their development, in a way which accurately reflects the real world." So in Jason's view, either you believe in Marxist theory or you "reflect the real world." In this way, Jason tries to declare his opponents wrong independent of a discussion of their actual views. But this counterposition of ideology to the real world is absurd. Un-

derstanding the world requires not a mere jumble of facts. It requires theory to make sense out of the facts. The real issue is does a theory accurately reflect the real world. To simply rail against theory is to campaign for blindness. This is also a standard part of the arsenal used to keep workers away from the enlightenment of revolutionary theory.

In point of fact, Jason has theories, but his theories are often wrong or at odds with one another in eclectic fashion. Indeed, Jason considers it a badge of honor to be an eclectic rather than a consistent Marxist. He states: "I allow no particular world view to entirely rule my mental roost." In particular, he thinks Marxism is "only one of many useful tools when looking at non-class (race and gender) questions." He also feels Marxism is a "dismal failure" "on questions dealing with an individual's spiritual needs." I would only add that if Jason thinks race and gender questions should be dealt with on a non-class basis, this is ample evidence that the conception of the class struggle by our sometimes Marxist, has nothing in common with Marxism.

As for an individual's personal spiritual problems, Marxism cannot make everyone's spiritual problems disappear any more than it can make everyone's financial difficulties go away. Indeed, it is likely to compound the spiritual and economic problems of exploiters and those aspiring to "the good life" in bourgeois terms. As for the oppressed, Marxism will be spiritually liberating, although it cannot guarantee that various problems endemic in our society will not overwhelm any particular individual. Marxism can "only" provide the best means of evaluating various theories that deal with personal problems to see what is really scientific in them. It can "only" show that since spiritual problems are rooted in the social-economic system we live in, that the spiritual problems, as a whole, will continue to exist unless the social conditions are changed. Therefore, I think Jason is wrong when he says Marxism can't deal with these matters on the grounds that it is not a theory "rooted in the individual." A

theory "rooted in the individual" may have some helpful affects, but overall it will prevent any deep understanding of one's personal condition. And I don't believe that any theory that mystifies one's situation is really solving someone's problems. Unfortunately, it is inevitable that in a society based on exploitation and oppression, all sorts of spiritual opiates based on the individual will arise. And the more there is despair of any collective struggle against the present mess, the more influence these opiates will have.

Speaking of spiritual matters, it is notable that Jason cannot tell the difference between reactionary religious teachings and communists advocating a revolutionary struggle against oppression. He terms my calls for the building of revolutionary class organizations "vague exhortations about mythical organizations of toilers who will engage in various heroic struggles." And he says such ideas "remind one of the conservative bishops in Latin America, who didn't care how many peasants died, as long as their souls were saved." So in Jason's mind, there is no difference between calling for a fight against oppression and the priest who tries to reconcile the downtrodden to oppression! Both just don't care if the masses suffer. This is an especially remarkable slander from someone who boasts of having "exhorted" the toilers to engage in the intifada. Evidently this shows Jason too just didn't care about kids with stones getting shot by the IDF.

### Stalinism

Jason also raises the charge of "Stalinism." Now there is a Marxist-Leninist critique of Stalinism that I think is valid. But Jason takes up the J. Edgar Hoover criticism of Stalinism. For Jason, it is a matter of fuming against so-called outside agitators. For instance, he equates my calls for struggle and organization with "sitting around pontificating like our Stalinist know-it-alls as to which group of people should be doing what." Jason wants to create the impression that advocating views on the Palestinian struggle is some kind

of sinister activity of "know-it-all" ordering people about. But what's good for the goose is good for the gander. If I am wrong to advocate views on the Palestinian struggle, then so is he. Amazingly enough, he actually presents an argument mocking anyone, even himself, for giving views on the Palestinian struggle. He states that "Palestinians are probably not gathered around their E-mail nodes waiting with bated breath to hear strategy from the remnants of the MLP, even this remnant. Thank god for that." Excellent advice, Jason! And why stop there. Maybe the activists of each nationality should stick with their own kind and not bud into the affairs of other nationalities by having opinions about their struggles. As for me, I reserve my right to give views on the Palestinian struggle and welcome views on the struggle here no matter from what nationality.

If Jason really wants to guard against Stalinism creeping into the Palestinian movement, I suggest he stop portraying Stalin as someone with too much revolutionary zeal. In fact Stalin worked to limit the revolutionary struggles around the world. He urged their acceptance of deals with the imperialist powers based not on the needs of the movement, but on the needs of his big-power maneuvering with the Western imperialists. And Stalinism brought with it an undermining of Lenin's emphasis on the different class interests inside the dependent countries in favor of lining up the masses behind the local bourgeois reformist trends. This was often done in the name of realism, of taking into account the current realities, and of providing immediate benefits. A serious critique of Stalinism actually reveals important similarities with Jason's views on the Palestinian struggle.

#### Jason vs. dialectical materialism

As an eclectic, Jason is able to not only take up the reactionary slanders against communism, but, at other times, to denounce me for not being a real Marxist. For instance, Jason swears he is for philosophical "materialism" and "dialectics" a la Marx. And he boasts that his analysis of the Palestinian-Israeli

conflict is "dealing with the situation as it actually is, and probably would be. That's not pragmatism, it's materialism."

But is Jason's analysis really an example of dialectical materialist thinking? Hardly. His analysis is basically that the powers-that-be are strong and the masses are relatively weak. Therefore, he concludes, we must base ourselves on "reality" and give up talking about revolution. Well, this is a sort of materialism, but it is not dialectical materialism but mechanical materialism. Mechanical materialists base their views only on those elements of reality that are dominant at the moment. Thus they tend to reconcile with the status quo. The dialectical materialist realizes that the present reality is based on contradictions that will lead to a new reality. It considers that the present reality contains not only the dominant features of the moment, but the elements that represent the future. Marxist materialists base themselves upon those elements of reality that represent the future.

Dialectical materialism also recognizes that the conditions for qualitative leaps are prepared by periods of slow evolution. In contrast, Jason ignores the connection between the present limited struggles and the big victories of the future. Thus, he scoffs at using every opportunity today to build up the class organizations of the toilers by thundering that the days of the complete toppling of Zionist Israel are not at hand. Now Jason may object that this sounds like blind optimism or religion or whatever. But if he does so, his argument is really with Marxism.

#### Market-Marxism

In closing, one last example of how Jason distorts Marxism beyond recognition. Earlier on, I noted that Jason is

now spouting the neo-conservative economic view that "the issue is not distribution of economic wealth, it is production." What I did not mention was the following justification Jason gave for this view. Jason states: "Last time I checked, when real Marxists in the real world analyze economic issues, they start with production, not distribution. If you don't believe me, try checking out Capital, Vol. I. You'll be amazed how much time Karl devoted to this."

I am indeed amazed by how much time Karl devoted to analyzing capitalist production. And I'm even more amazed how, despite all the time Karl spent on this, Jason completely missed the point. It is the capitalists who want the workers to concern themselves with production, not distribution. In *Capital, Vol. I*, Marx shows why this is so. He describes how the longer and more intensely a worker toils, the more profit he creates for the employer. He shows how this process leads to a growing gap between rich and poor and to mass unemployment.

As for the relation of distribution and production, Marxism holds that how things are distributed reflects how they are produced. For example, in a system based on capitalist private property, the wealth created by the producers goes to the owners of the means of production, hence there is huge inequality in distribution of wealth. That is why no matter how crisis-ridden the Israeli economy is, it is incapable of turning into some sort of benevolent force. This is why no matter what plans Jason draws up for capitalist development of the Palestinian territories under Israeli domination, the masses will still have to wage a struggle just to keep their heads above water. Concern for production in Jason's sense essentially means concern for capitalists profits. Concern for production in the Marxist sense means, first and foremost, that in the struggles for their

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## Reply to Jason

by Pete, Detroit,  
September 20, 1994 (Detroit 55)

### Are there xmlp trends?

Jason insists, "... MY VIEWS ARE MY OWN!" He says his views on Palestine were not developed "under the influence of or in concert with anyone." Fine. It's fine to take responsibility for your views, and it's fine to take initiative in studying an issue. I've enjoyed reading Jason's poems in *Struggle*, and he has provided some helpful information in the two e-mail contributions he's made.

But Palestine, and Jason's views, are not the only issues at stake in the ongoing e-mail discussion. There are also the issues of what happened to the MLP, and what was the level of ideological disagreement, and were there trends that came out of the MLP? Mark, for one, has been trying to clarify certain trends coming out of the MLP for the past year. It's natural then that he attempted to clarify where Jason stood in this geography.

Jason is so insistent on the independence of his views, one would almost conclude he thinks this precludes his being part of a trend. As if being a strong individual, with your own thought-out views, is incompatible with being part of a group. But politics isn't like that.

Whether or not Jason is interested, there are a number of us out here in cyberspace still interested in the question of xmlp trends. And it's an "article of faith" for those of us interested, that these trends would be **objective**, which means they wouldn't be simply a matter of individual opinions, or whether cer-

tain individuals agree or disagree on any number of things.

For example: Jason insists there cannot be any Fred/Ben alliance, because they "disagree on any number of fundamental issues." I don't doubt that Fred and Ben have some wild arguments. But when it comes to fundamental issues: Mark proposed early on that a fundamental dividing line be Marxism. And on this issue Fred and Ben have shown themselves to be allies — they're both against it. They've tried a lot of evasive tactics to try and get around the issue, but all their evasions, insults and agnosticism basically come down to this, that they don't want anything to do with Marxism.

### Methods of debate as a dividing line

But there are also other issues at stake that can help sort out trends. One of these is the issue of methods of debate. This first came up when Mark raised the question of trends and Jim gave his paternalistic reply opposing any attempt to sort these out. Since then there has been a steady barrage of declarations that nothing should be debated or discussed.

I didn't see this as a distinct issue at first. My attitude was, "If you want to discuss something just go ahead; no one can stop you." But after awhile, when I see the full flowering of this attitude in the anti-epistemology of Ben and Fred, it becomes clear to me that there's a real, fundamental issue here.

This opposition to discussion and debate has taken many forms, from Michael's "Open Letter" to Ben's savage, abusive language. Ben, of course,

insists he's the champion of debate; and he certainly produces a lot of words. But that in itself doesn't make you a champion of democracy. Despite his verbiage, Ben refuses to deal with any criticism of his views. His attempts to analyze things rationally have actually declined significantly as his abusive language has intensified to the hysterical level.

Thus it's disappointing to see Jason taking up the same type of attitude in response to Mark's criticism. Right away he starts with the insults, making sure everyone knows he considers Mark a "fundamentalist" and a "fool." How can he deny, then, that he's part of the Fred/Ben alliance? Aren't they the ones Jason is trying to impress with such language?(1)

The fact is, Mark wrote a strong, well-reasoned criticism of Jason's article. His criticism hit the main weakness of Jason's article ("economic schemes replace revolutionary organizing"), and this weakness wasn't just a side point; it was the main drift, or theme, of the article. If Jason were really just his own man, as he insists, he would have to deal with this criticism somehow. But no; he insists he won't stoop to answer Mark's criticisms. Thus **objectively** (despite Jason's protestations) he locates himself within the Fred/Ben/former-CC majority alliance nationwide, which insists that there is nothing worth debating.

### Tentative vs. definite

Jason does backtrack a little in section 3A ("What This Was, And What This Was Not") of his reply to Mark. There he says he wasn't trying to give

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*Mark, cont. from previous page*

immediate needs, the workers and other toilers must be oriented against the present system of production so as to prepare to overthrow it in the future. It means establishing social ownership of the means of production and a new distribution where the wealth created by the toilers goes to increase their material and cultural well-being.

Believe it or not, Marx actually describes how the capitalist system necessarily gives rise to a struggle against it, and to the complete destruction of this system for a higher system based on social ownership of the means of production. And it's all in *Capital, Vol. I*, Jason! Jason lectures Mark not to be a "reductionist" Marxist. But it is Jason and his friends who have reduced the

teachings of Marx to the idea that production is good. They have reduced Marx to being a proponent of free-market economics. By these standards, Rush Limbaugh could be declared a Marxist! This is the crowning achievement to date of Jason and his "market-Marxists." <>

complete analysis, but only “to throw a few things out to get some discussion going.”

OK, fine. Jason threw out a few things and got a discussion going with Mark. Then why does he recoil so defensively, if these are only tentative and not definite views? And why, if he desires tolerant understanding, does he not extend the same sort of attitude toward Mark? Jason throws out some ideas; Mark replies that these ideas aren't so great, since they throw out revolution; Jason replies that Mark is a fool with nothing to say. But why aren't ideas on building a revolutionary movement of as much value — even if tentative — as ideas on reformist tinkering?

This indicates that what's behind Jason's abuse of Mark is really a bad attitude towards revolution. In other words, he's bought into the framework of his ally Fred.

#### Reality vs. illusion

To make Mark's views sound ridiculous, Jason distorts them. He tries to make it appear Mark is living in a world of illusions. He insists: “ISRAEL IS NOT GOING AWAY. ...wake up and smell the coffee.”

But I never got the impression from Mark's critique that he thinks Israel doesn't exist, or that it's about to disappear. I got the impression, instead, that Mark thinks Israel is an oppressive state, and that for Palestinians to achieve their

rights they're going to have to organize r-r-revolutionary struggle against that state.

It is Jason himself, meanwhile, who's promoting that Israel — the old, oppressive Israel, the Israel we've all grown to hate — is about to disappear and be replaced by a non-zionist Israel. As he says, “This does not mean that the state of Israel will be as firmly wedded to Zionism as it is now, or even that Zionism is some eternal ideology.” Jason thinks signing the Peace Accord with the PLO marked Israel's transformation into a friendly and helpful neighbor of the Palestinians. Coffee, anyone?

#### Caring concern vs. coldhearted revolutionaries

Jason then gives a lecture about how cold and heartless Mark is because he supposedly doesn't care about the economic well-being of Palestinians. “NEWS FLASH: THE PALESTINIANS DON'T HAVE A FUNCTIONING ECONOMY.” Yes, we know, Jason; that's been a problem these past 40 years. The issue has been — what to do about it? Should the Palestinians sit in the refugee camps, reliant on UN aid and aid from bourgeois Arab regimes, waiting passively for things to change? Or should they try to change the situation? Which side is Jason on, with his assurances about gold from the imperialists and zionists about to shower on the Palestinians?

Jason defends his list of economic reforms as things desired by “real live Palestinians.” I don't doubt it, and I don't doubt that “a lifting of prior restrictions on economic activity” would benefit these live Palestinians. Much of the Palestinian struggle has been based on demands for freedom to trade, to farm, to run a business, to work, to join unions, etc. What's odd is that Jason interprets Mark's position as being **against** such things. Israel maintains restrictions against Palestinian economic activities; Mark says there's need to continue the struggle against Israel and its restrictions; and Jason complains that Mark opposes economic progress!

How could Jason so distort Mark's views? It can only be because he shares a certain framework with his allies, a framework which (a) promotes accommodation with the so-called economic wonders of imperialism, a framework originally criticized by Mark; and (b) brooks no criticism, will not allow any debate of this “reality” and denounces anyone who dares to do so as a “fundamentalist fool.”

#### Word-chopping in place of self-criticism

On page 7 of his reply to Mark Jason finally gets around to what he calls “a self-criticism.” He finally admits that some things he said in his original article might possibly have given rise to some “confusion.” But even then, he insists, there is nothing wrong “in the facts that I reported, nor ... in the conclusions I have drawn, but in a certain verb usage.” This is in usage of the verb “should.” Jason gives two meanings of “should” and argues that he meant one, while readers may mistakenly think he meant the other.

But in the first place, Jason's reformist tinkering doesn't rely on just one verb, “should.” There are myriad reformist catch-phrases in his original article. See especially his list of “steps that should and can be taken” on pages 27-28 of the CWVTJ reprint. (See “Notes/Outline on Palestinian Presentation,” in Chicago Workers' Voice Theoretical Journal, #3.) Here I've re-typed a few with some catch-phrases in

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## Jason's New "Tikhun"

By NC, Los Angeles  
Sept. 28, 1994

In Det. #57 (printed elsewhere in this issue of the *Theoretical Journal*), cde. Mark deals point by point with most every aspect of our differences with the 'majority' very clearly. The nature of capitalism and imperialism in our age, peaceful vs. violent nature? Exploitative or philanthropic job creator. On questions of tactics/strategy are exposed which trend supports the worker/farmer struggles and who backs

capitalist despotism and control of our lives not just economically—but also showing this has a political aspect.

The powerful thought-provoking document Det. 57 gets to the heart of the matter on the SPECIFIC issues of the UN-US-Israel-PLO agreements. I ascribed to Jason, the politics of the 'Tikhun' magazine group of liberal-labor zionists, because his analysis sounds very similar to what this outfit has been parroting here in the USA for many years. Actually the issues debated here have a history in the debates in the

US 'left' on the middle east. Mark is still standing firmly with exploited and oppressed majority workers and farmers while Jason is moving towards the plans of the liberal wings of the exploiter groups with class privileges.

I thought it revealed volumes when Jason looked at Israel's military regime as "needed to fend off much larger neighbors". Yes Jason, like when Israel and Syria carried out their de-facto military partition of that terrible world marauder—Lebanon.

On political economy, Jason has

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*Pete, cont. from previous page*

bold:

"a. Israel **should** take back ... Palestinians ...."

"b. ... this process [subcontracting] **should** accelerate..... **Let** Israeli capital and marketing combine with Palestinian labor .... Eventually they [Palestinians in territories] **will be able** to strike out on their own."

This is especially laughable, coming after Jason's lecturing Mark that he should read Marx's *Capital, Vol. 1*. I don't remember Marx, in *Capital* recommending combining your labor with someone else's capital as a means by which you could eventually "strike out on your own."

"... joint ventures **could** serve both development ... and a demilitarization of the Israeli economy "

Of course! We can tell from the U.S. example that developing a modern, hi-tech economy always leads to demilitarization — just look at the miniscule U.S. defense budget!

"c. Direct subsidies by Israel to Palestinian social service ... **are in order. Let them pay ....**"

I agree! Let them pay! But does the Israeli government agree? Or would that be too "fundamentalist" a question? Would that be just promoting some "mythical organization of the toilers"?

"d. **Reform** the water use policies ...."

Good idea! I'll bet it would never occur to those crazy fundamentalists

that Palestinians might need water in order to revive their agriculture. It's so much more realistic to tell the Israelis, "Turn on the tap!" But are the Israelis listening?

"e. **Return** those settlements .... **Reconstruct** a network of highways ...." **Encourage** ... joint projects ...." Of course! Isn't this the basis of the Israeli state, building friendly ties with the resident Palestinians?

Anyway, Jason's reformist scheming is not just dependent on a misunderstanding of the single word, "should."

But even his semantic analysis doesn't accomplish anything either. Jason says there are two meanings to "should." He says "one involves a sense of obligation." He admits that if he asserted, "Israel is obligated to take back Palestinians," that it would sound reformist.

But Jason insists he didn't mean that. He meant the second sense of "should," which "involves what is a likely outcome." Hence we can see he really meant to assert: "Israel will likely take back Palestinians." But how is this assertion any less reformist than the other? Isn't that precisely one of the reasons Israel is agreeing to give up the territories, so that they won't have to ever take back any Palestinians? Isn't it reformist tinkering of the worst sort to promote such illusions about what Israel is likely to do?

### Concluding remarks

Jason concludes his reply to Mark with pages of economic history of Israel leading to the conclusion that Israel is going to "have to" close the settlements. I think a good deal of this is quite interesting, and I'm glad Jason has taken the time to research it. But this research too is marred by the problems I've discussed above: locating these facts in a framework set out by Jason's accommodationist allies; and an attitude of sneering at anyone who tries to discuss this framework.

-----  
(1) Denouncing someone as a "fundamentalist" is insulting, diversionary talk. Of course Mark probably wouldn't mind being called a fundamentalist Marxist, since he's the one who raised the issue of adherence to Marxism a year ago. But Jason's remarks in this regard are not designed to call Mark a **Marxist**, but to ridicule him as religious, unthinking, etc. Strangely enough, despite these insults it is Jason himself who yearns for an ideology "relating to an individual's spiritual needs," indicating religion really might not be such a bad idea after all; and it is his ally Fred who speculates that religion is "just outmoded science," as if there were no essential difference, in method and content, between "fundamentalism" and science. (See Fred's article, "Bloodbath, Part 3" in *CWVTJ*, #4, p. 22.)[]

## --Some Replies-- On Imperialism

By Jim-SFBA  
August 17, 1994

During the debates with comrades in Chicago about the agitation on imperialism, it occurred to me that the thesis of the "territorial" or "colonial division of the world" had become an outworn dogma crimping a concrete analysis of how imperialism works today. In October of 1992, I submitted a letter to the old Information Bulletin about imperialism and the less developed countries. This letter discussed Lenin's formulations about the "territorial" or "colonial division of the world," and the relevance of such formulations to the contemporary world scene. This letter has drawn criticism from some writers in Chicago, Detroit, LA, and possibly elsewhere. They accuse me of prettification of imperialism and a renunciation of Leninism. Almost two years after my submission, these letter writers now re-

fer to "Jim's theory" of a progressive, non-exploiting, or non-monopolistic imperialism. Such characterizations made by Joseph, Mark, Neal, etc., have no correlation with my views about imperialism. I believe that the best refutation of these characterizations is my original letter of October 1992 (IB #77).

But there is another reason to look back at the original letter as well, which is: to understand the lack of response to the theoretical problem that it poses: What does the thesis of the "territorial" or "colonial division of the world" mean today? Twenty months later, the critics of my letter have yet to touch on this question. Joseph has led the efforts to find arguments why this problem should not be addressed, or, more precisely, why posing this problem is an example of the prettification of imperialism and the renunciation of Leninism. His principal arguments run along the following lines:

1) Joseph has written extensively to demonstrate that I overstated the nature of territorial division. Joseph bases his argument on quibbles and word chopping, because the important theoretical generalization was made not by Jim but by Lenin. It was Lenin who wrote an entire chapter on "The Division of the World Among the Great Powers" in his famous pamphlet on imperialism, and who considered the colonial or territorial partition of the world as a fundamental or "basic" feature of modern imperialism. Yet, according to Joseph, here too I am guilty of overstating the case, because in Lenin's "famous listing of five such features in Ch. VII of Imperialism, the territorial division of the world, or rather, the completion of this division, is only the last feature." (see Documents on dissolution, page 154, emphasis added.) In other words, yes, Lenin may have held that it was a "basic feature," but it was only number five on

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*"Tikhun", cont. from previous page*

been getting lessons from following Timothy Leary! Do the capitalists take "risk" in investing their stolen booty (Jason is more forgetful than dialectical on accumulation too!) to create great modern shopping malls and state of the art factories to create jobs and security for workers? That must be our problem—simple to correct—just get into bed with Donald Trump, the Waltons, the DuPonts and the Rockefellers, etc and schmooze them, give a good ole' social democratic Jason special rub-down [and] promise them that the masses resistance will be held in check as long as they shower a bit of their wealth around.

Jason has not much problem with the zionist settler armed brigades who seemingly are also ecstatic to bring happiness and freedom to Palestinian Arabs. Finally, on the question of building trade unions we should remind Jason, the expert on labor affairs, that there are also different trends in unions. There are craft and industrial ones, ones based on class struggle and also class collaborationist ones—ones controlled by work-

ers or their nominal representatives and those controlled by the church, the company or outright by a political regime of the wealthy. I think Dr. Ley headed quite a large labor syndicate during the 30s in Germany—one based on industry too. Should progressive people people have been taken in by such a fraud? In Israel, the main labor unions tolerated are Histadrut style class collaborationist unions. The Histadrut leaders like their ties to The AFL-CIO—and money and

training from the CIA (see Myers/ CIA and American Labor and P. Agee/ Inside the Company-CIA Diary). We should encourage the growth of a militant workers led movement because out of this can emerge independent trade unions based on class struggle—against both zionist and palestinian arab labor skimmers.

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his "basic feature" list, so of what importance can it have for Jim to raise this? Such is the inanity to which the discussion of these issues has sunk.

2) According to Joseph, the questions about colonial and territorial division are being posed to divert attention from other political forms of imperialism, such as the UN, the IMF, etc. Therefore, according to this logic, this is an attempt to cover for imperialism, even deny its existence, etc. This is sheer invention. In fact, most of the particular points Joseph has raised about the political role of such international bodies I have little disagreement with. I would only add that his presentation would be more complete if it dealt with the relationship between these international bodies and the unilateral politics of the big powers (especially the role of the U.S. as world policeman). In any case, Joseph's lectures about the UN, the IMF and other international political forms only add emphasis to the fact that the thesis about territorial or colonial division has been eclipsed.

3) Joseph argues that "colonialism" is a powerful word, and it will be no more possible to remove it completely from political talk than it is to remove the word "slavery." And he goes on to make a comparison with the word "wage slavery." (Documents, page 148) Precisely. No one can object to the use of colonialism as a descriptive word for various forms of exploitation and oppression. But when the thesis of a colonial or territorial division of the world remains fundamental to one's theoretical analysis - as in the case of the Chinese, Albanians, Cubans, etc. - that is something else again. A more apt parallel would be those "white blind-spot" theorists in the U.S. left in the 1960's who attempted to demonstrate that the black population in the U.S. still suffers under chattel slavery. And, amazingly, this discussion has taken on the moralist tone of that epoch: Jim says the thesis about territorial division is out of date, Jim must be an apologist for imperialism, etc., ad nauseam.

4) Joseph argues that by posing the problem in this way, Jim is denying the value of Lenin's theory. This is the most

fundamental issue. For my critics, the sharpest point of disagreement is not over any particular point of analysis of world politics and economics; such disagreements are generally at the level of quibbles and word games. No, my fundamental error is in supposedly discarding Leninism. In the eyes of these critics, by questioning the relevance of one of Lenin's theses, I have supposedly repudiated Lenin altogether. The best exposition of this line of reasoning is in Joseph's discussion of "What's the essence of imperialism?" (See Documents, page 154) According to Joseph, by focusing on this one feature of territorial division, Jim is challenging the "essence" of Lenin's theory. After explaining that territorial division is "only the last feature" of Lenin's "basic features," Joseph concludes:

"Undoubtedly, the economy and methods of capitalist organization have changed radically since the time of Lenin. But it has changed even more since the time of Marx, and still we think that Marx's analysis of exploitation has value. The question is whether the analysis of imperialism still explains certain features of the world...."

"There seems good reason to keep the analysis of imperialism, unless and until a better picture of such a world can be developed."

At first glance, Joseph seems to arrive at similar conclusions to those drawn by myself. As my original letter concludes:

"In short, imperialism remains imperialism. The specific feature of the colonial or territorial global division has faded since Lenin's time. But the heart of his critique of the nature of monopoly capitalism is valid. What we need is a deeper analysis of how capitalism presents itself today, so to better unleash the struggle against it." (IB, # 77, page 27)

But that is the glitch. Jim may swear on a stack of Collected Works that he considers Lenin's analysis valid. But for my critics that doesn't matter. Jim has gone beyond the pale by posing the question that a "basic" part of Lenin's analysis (albeit "only the fifth on the list") has faded in its relevance. Here

lies my apostasy. If one can criticize or put up to scrutiny the present relevance of this or that opinion or thesis of Lenin, that calls into question the entire ideological system. Thus, let us build defenses and prevent any chinks in the armor. Thus, let us not discuss whether such things as "territorial division" make sense in the contemporary world, and keep the old formulas, in their entirety, "unless and until a better picture of such a world can be developed."

Indeed, the so-called "Leninism" created by Stalin and the other soviet leaders in the mid-1920s is precisely such a hermetically sealed doctrine. Any probing, questioning, or exploring of this or that aspect of Lenin's theory (or his theory according to Stalin, et al) was considered an assault on the "foundations" or "essence" of "Leninism." Hopefully, I will get a chance to write on this further, because I believe that this is precisely the Stalinist methodology that Joseph pursues so unswervingly. And I believe that this alone explains the intensity of the debate about imperialism.

Meanwhile, the questions about territorial and colonial division of the world remain unanswered. To what extent is this concept still applicable? What ramifications does this have? Without a serious attempt to deal with these points, criticisms of what is alleged to be Jim's theory sound like the shrill cries of helpless doctrinaires.

— to be continued. <>

## Email Letter from Joe, Boston, (Defense of Jim)

Sept. 18, 1994.

Joseph has again launched his tirade that Jim and Michael denied that political domination still exists or that imperialism still exists. But Joseph is consciously lying. He knows Jim's views and that Jim when he wrote two years ago in the IB was in the process of trying to figure out how to theoretically characterize the forms of political domination now that the system of colonialism has collapsed. Below is a letter from Jim to Manny dated July 29, 1992, a couple weeks before the plenum where Joseph claims that Jim was arguing that there is no political domination. This letter shows that Jim was trying to grapple with the nature of political domination in a world where colonialism (the system where great powers parcel out the weakest nations among themselves for each to dominate a certain number) has been superseded. It is clear that by the time Jim wrote his letter to IB he still had not worked this question out theoretically and so did not speak to it, rather simply left things at the level that the rich nations mercilessly plunder the poor and that US played the role of world policeman. This letter was sent to all CC members including myself. That's why I have a copy. Thus Joseph knows Jim's "hidden views" as he would say it, but has deliberately and repeatedly distorted them as being something different from and opposed to his public views.

Of course this debate has been sterile at best and interest has dwindled. But when I came across this letter in the course of cleaning up my hard drive, I thought it might be of some interest to people to see just how conscious Joseph has been in his demagoguery.

Joe.  
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**To New York  
from San Francisco**

July 29, 1992

Dear Manny,

I had originally intended to make this response to your request re the LDC's [Least Developed Countries—ed.] a more thought out and balanced presentation. Instead, you are going to get my latest outburst re the arguments coming from Chicago. That is all I can do for now.

In Rene's first polemic he repeatedly refers to US imperialism and its colonies (and, apparently, this zone of colonial possession extends across all of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe, with Europe being a toss in that he might not be committed to).

When this was pointed out to the Chicago comrades, they offered the correction that what is meant is neo-colonialism, not old-style colonialism.

When the idea was put forward that, with few exceptions, the LCD's can no longer be called neo-colonies either, that, despite varying degrees of financial and other dependence, they have their political independence and their own bourgeois regimes, the Chicago comrades became excited that this meant revising and/or rejecting Lenin's thesis in "Imperialism, Highest Stage" re the division of the world among the great powers, etc. (This is the reference in Oleg's recent letter).

While it irritates me to no end to be accused of "revising Lenin" when giving concrete assessments of what is taking place, despite all that, I believe the Chicago comrades are picking up on what might be a weak link on our explanation of things.

One of the tenets of Lenin's "Imperialism" is that the colonial/territorial division of the world is a basic feature of monopoly capitalism. (And the semi-colonies—that is Persia, Turkey, China—Lenin described as transitional cases in the process of becoming completely colonies.) The Chicago comrades, reinforced by much traditional thinking in the revolutionary movement including some of our own previous thinking, want to preserve this tenet with the concept "neo-colonialism". That's the way the Chinese and Albanians wrote in the 1960's and 1970's, and it made a certain sense

at the time. But, it looks to me that the neo-colonialism described in those years has turned out to be something of a transition to other forms of financial and other dependency, forms which can hardly be described in terms of "complete territorial division", etc.

Our 2nd Congress resolution makes a good stab at some of these issues. One of the most tortured parts, however, is the discussion of neo-colonialism. My memory is fuzzy on this, but it seems that an attempt was made to distinguish between neo-colonial forms of exploitation, etc, and characterizing any given country or group of countries as neo-colonies, in favor of giving the more concrete analysis of "a broad range" of regimes. I believe this was an important step in our thinking, but one that needs an update. I don't think it makes much sense to speak of an "era of neo-colonialism" when the concept neo-colonial, or new-style colonialism, is hardly applicable to the great majority of the former colonial and semi-colonial world.

The 2nd Congress refers to "new methods, and refining old methods.... of economic and political domination to replace the former method of direct colonial rule", and then goes on to discuss the world debt crisis. This paragraph contains the seed of what maybe needs to be worked on. No doubt the gulf between the rich and poor countries continues to deepen (despite and along with the NIC phenomenon [Newly Industrialized Countries—ed]). No doubt imperialist plunder is taking place on a vast scale. But how this translates into political domination is problematic. The parallel with Lenin's comment about Argentina's financial and diplomatic dependence on Britain is useful. But especially in regard to the larger countries and/or economically more complex countries (China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Iran, etc.), this parallel only goes far. Among other things, in such countries there are few examples of this type of financial hegemony, even where imperialist investment is steep. For example, even in the historic U.S. imperialist colony of the Philippines, foreign capital is di-

# The Debate on Imperialism Revisited, Parts 1-3 (Excerpts)

The following article consists of excerpts from THE DEBATE ON IMPERIALISM REVISITED parts 1-3 by Joseph. The excerpting was done by the CWV staff to enable it to fit in this issue of the Journal. We hope Joseph doesn't mind too much.

## THE DEBATE ON IMPERIALISM REVISITED -part one-

Sept. 6, 1994

Jim (SFBA) has begun a series of articles entitled "Some Replies". The thought that struck me when I saw his first article, "On Imperialism", was how fast Michael's **Open Letter** has been repudiated by life itself. It was barely two months ago when Michael proudly

*Jim to Manny, cont.*

vided between Taiwan, Japan and the U.S., along with a number of lessers. In any case, especially taking into account the larger and more complex countries, it seems that more thought is needed re how indebtedness, capital investment, etc., corresponds to economic and political domination. Something has to be done to replace the neo-colonialism formula. But, more generally, I think we have to spell out the significance of the emergence of independent capitalist states in the former colonial and semi-colonial world, with varying degrees of economic strength and dependency, in relation to Lenin's formula about territorial/colonial world division.

Returning to the question of neo-colonialism as a transitional form. In the 2nd Congress resolution, there is a distinction made between outright puppet regimes and different kinds of bourgeois nationalist governments. It seems to me that the former is typical of the 50's and 60's, a period when, among other things, U.S. imperialism was making a stab at seizing the territories of the former colonial powers, and consolidating its monopoly in Latin America, etc. This was the heyday of what might be called the neo-colonial era. But a harbinger that this was only a temporary, or transitional form was the victory of the Chinese revolution. The CPP smashed the KMT through mass revolution. Since, there have been a multitude of means and shades of transition throughout the LDC's. The general outcome, however, is that we are now entering a time when the puppet regime of United Fruit and West Point is something of the exception. (Of course, the pro-Soviet client state, tied to Comecon and Soviet loans, trained and propped up by the Soviet military and East European secret po-

lice, is also a thing of the past, confirming the point.) We are trying to describe a highly complex social phenomenon. In the past, there was undoubtedly one-sidedness and exaggeration in the revolutionary literature (including, in some cases, ours) of the puppet or neo-colonial nature of various regimes. And it would be a mistake today to exaggerate the degree to which many puppet or neo-colonial features have been shed, or to reject the possibility of reversal to the old ways.

What is responsible for the shift? Modern bourgeois development through revolution, reform and painful evolution. It is one thing for imperialism to seize an alliance with a relative handful of wealthy landlord/capitalist oligarchs and the military men that keep them in power. It is something else when dealing with a regime rooted in the modern classes of the society.

Another factor is the end of the Cold War and the bi-polar global power. For the emerging bourgeoisie in a number of countries, the U.S.-Soviet rivalry created room to maneuver and play the one global power off the other. But for others it meant a tight grip in the military and other alliances. Now that grip has been loosened. Moreover, the rise of Japan, Germany and other economic powers has undermined the economic monopoly that has corresponded to neo-colonial political domination.

Of course, most of the above has already been said in one way or another. But maybe it has been said too tentatively (or only in regard to this or that country) to make the general point.

Back to the Chicago comrades. I am not sure about the others, but both [Anita] and [Rene] argue about these things in a way that one might not expect. It seems to go something like this: we accept that

there is political independence; we accept that the revolution in such and such country is not a national liberation struggle but a socialist revolution against the capitalist ruling class; but we hold that the revolution must be directed against U.S. imperialist domination, whether that domination is called colonial, neo-colonial or something else. To tell the truth, I am something at a loss in dealing with this. If they aren't colonies or neo-colonies, then why call them that in your documents? And why accuse me of revising Lenin for pointing that out? I think that there is more than a tad of imperialist economism in the logic that it doesn't matter what the domination is called, etc.

It also has to be kept in mind that their reference point is often Mexico. For example, in a discussion of the world changes re colonialism and neo-colonialism, [Anita] will ask what all this has to do with Mexico, which has been politically independent for a long time. Good point. In my view, all that shows is that there are concepts in the movement that may have once been relevant to a country such as the [Dominican Republic] or other more classical neo-colonies, but which never made much sense in regard to Mexico. (Of course, the particular arguments about Mexico will go nowhere until the facts are nailed down, as Oleg's recent letter reminds us.)

Well, that's as much as I have for now. Hope this is some help. To keep the CC updated, I am going to send this note to the rest of the CC. Meanwhile, I hope to write something more coherent for the IB.

greetings.  
jim

presented the long list of signers of this letter, which whines about the public discussion of political differences. Yet now, barely two months later, the debate has flared up again. Ben, who wasn't a signer, resumed the polemic. Jim himself, who signed the **Open Letter** and has been one of the most fervent whiners, has cleared his voice, although whether he will ever get around to saying something is still in doubt.

### Jim vegetates

Jim begins by taking up the question of imperialism. But he says that the "best answer" he has on this question "is my original letter of October 1992 (IB #77)".

But it's been nearly two years since that letter. This has been a period of ferment, with ideas being put forward and shot down. Among the new issues are:

\*\* An analysis of the world political system of imperialism has been begun:

\*\* There has been a new criticism of the former CC majority's exaggerated multi-polarism:

\*\* There was a debate over ultra-imperialism, with much of the majority asking "How do you explain 50 years of peaceful relations among the Western imperialists?" (1):

\*\* Manny's theory of progressive imperialism has been debated (2):

\*\* Fred (Seattle) has put forward his theory that imperialism has "transcended the old social contradictions and struggles of the past" (3):

\*\* Jason has suggested that the new, realistic path for the Palestinians is to develop with the help of imperialist aid and Israeli capital. (4)

\*\* Michael put forward that domination and monopoly has become just an imperfection on the world market. And in response Mark has written on the issue of monopolies in the present-day world economy. (5)

Etc.

But Jim doesn't take notice of these developments. For him, nothing much has happened since his October 1992 letter. Surely nothing requiring much thought.

### Does imperialism exist?

What it comes down to, is that Jim doesn't want me to raise key political issues in the open so that everyone can decide for themselves; he would like a situation in which his views, and those of his allies, can't be questioned. So he writes that I claim there is "an attempt to cover for imperialism, even deny its existence, etc. This is sheer invention." And by signing the **Open Letter**, he makes it clear that he is not just referring to his views, but also saying that it is "sheer invention" that anyone in party circles is doing such a thing as "cover for imperialism". He and the other signers complain that the theorizing of various comrades "has been distorted into one in which supposedly the very existence of imperialism was being denied." Why, no one is doing this. It is a "sheer invention" by devils who must hate humanity.

Excuse me, Jim. After Fred's and Jason's articles, only the blind can deny the prettification of imperialism. Or were their writings a "sheer invention" on my part too?

Do I hear you sputter that you are not responsible for Fred and Jason's views?

But I repeat, didn't you sign the **Open Letter**? And didn't it claim that everyone, Fred and Jason as well as yourself, were simply "study(ing) how imperialism works in the present day world"? And Fred and Jason's articles appeared on March 23 and May 10, while the circulation of the **Open Letter** wasn't over until the end of June. So you were quite familiar with these articles while pondering the **Open Letter**.

But let's also look at Jim's own views.

In the Fourth Congress debate on imperialism, Jim eagerly pointed out to Jake that:

"Is imperialism the highest stage of capitalism? Well, to me, the important thing is that we live under capitalism. And it's gone through a series of waves of development...I personally don't put a great weight on well, in 1916 it hit a certain stage and we're still in that stage. I'm not quite sure what that would

mean." (9)

So there it is. Jim is willing to shout "imperialism, imperialism, imperialism", so long as it means nothing more than talking about capitalism. It's just a synonym for capitalism, and Jim isn't quite sure what any other meaning would be. Imperialism is just another slur word to use against capitalism, just as Stalinism has become just another slur word to use against his critics.

Now let's also look at the text of all texts, Jim's letter in IB #77. There we read that the resolution of the Second Congress of the MLP on imperialism supposedly could only explain the economic part of domination by the great powers today, not "the political part". Jim adds "what does neo-colonialism mean minus political domination?" (10) And anyone else might add, what does imperialism mean minus political domination?

If the changes in the world situation mean that we now have to examine whether political domination exists, then in essence we are discussing whether imperialism exists. We are then discussing whether imperialism is a useful concept for analyzing the world today, whether imperialism is a deep reality of the present-day world. This question isn't answered by someone making a ringing declaration about how willing he is to use the word "imperialism."

Yet Jim says that it doesn't matter that he has raised the issue of what does the world look like "minus political domination". So what does matter? Jim proudly quotes his declaration that "imperialism remains imperialism". In his view, imperialist politics have all but vanished, domination and subordination of countries have all but vanished, but the word "imperialism" remains.

Do such declarations—when they contradict the spirit of the author's viewpoint on world developments—answer any serious question about the world?

But how little such declarations mean when discussing theory can be seen in how Jim treated his own declaration. Take the issue of monopolies. Jim apparently quotes his declaration that "imperialism remains imperialism" to show not only that he upholds the existence of imperialism but that he has



no truck with the theories that monopoly has faded. After all, he stated that “the heart of his [Lenin’s] critique of the nature of monopoly capitalism is valid.”

But what happened when this point was discussed during the Fourth Congress debate on imperialism? Recall that Michael questioned whether the monopolies still had a dominant role. He said that he wanted to make “a point on cartels, spheres of influence and so forth. I don’t think you can say that cartels Lenin described in that book is the same phenomena you see today.” And he stated that “*Right now they [the capitalists] still want to preserve this relatively open free market...with all the conditions of unevenness, domination, monopoly and other kinds of imperfections that the market actually has. It’s not a pure picture.*” (8, emph. added)

Well, how did Jim respond? Recall that this debate at the Fourth Congress took place just a month after Jim’s ringing declaration that “the heart” of Lenin’s critique of “the nature of monopoly capitalism” remains valid. In this debate Jim was fervently defending the main theses of his article in IB #77. So did he respond to Michael that monopoly capitalism remained monopoly capitalism?

No! Instead he referred back to Michael’s point approvingly, stating:

“...I think it would be a mistake to take Lenin’s writing of 1916 and say: oh, all the basic things that Lenin said, oh, how do they apply, how are they going on today. Like I agree with the point that was raised about cartels. I think the type of cartels that were being listed was quite a specific phenomenon that he [Lenin] was dealing with. And...you can’t just say, well, now, there’s also international monopolies. I don’t think you can talk about it in that way.” (9)

So Jim has his doubts about the critique of “the nature of monopoly capitalism” as well. Here we have a type of reasoning that we shall see Jim engaging in repeatedly. Is monopoly a key feature of the world economy today or just one of the imperfections in the market, as Michael said? Jim says, well, the monopolies aren’t the same as Lenin wrote about in 1916. That’s the heart of the argument, followed by sheer asser-

tion that today’s monopolies just aren’t that relevant to the issue. Jim may preserve the phrase “monopoly capitalism”, but how much is left of the content of the term?

Jim speaks indignantly about how he has been slandered. But put it all together, and Jim’s statements don’t really contradict his assertion at the Fourth Congress that, basically, “imperialism” is just another insult that can be thrown against capitalism. Jim would maintain the “word” imperialism, but what is the content of this term? Who cares a fig about a word if it no longer has any content? Who cares how many volumes of Lenin Jim has stacked up? But perhaps this is another example of how the former CC majority replaces thought with arithmetic. Don’t ask the content of Jim’s view of imperialism: just count the number of volumes of Lenin’s writings he swears on (or at, as the case may be).

from part two

### IS THERE A WORLD IMPERIALIST POLITICAL SYSTEM?

Sept. 11, 1994

Jim talks a lot about “territorial division.” But in his reply he stays away from most of the particular issues that are at stake in the discussion of “territorial division”. One of the central issues is whether there’s a world political system today, complete with domination and subordination between countries.

Jim no longer sees any value to this question about world politics, and he is silent about its connection to “territorial division”. According to him, it is a separate issue, which I raised only in order to push aside the issue of “territorial division”. He writes “According to Joseph, the questions about colonial and territorial division are being posed to divert attention from other political forms of imperialism, such as the UN, the IMF, etc.” This implies that that these are separate issues, and that I supposedly want to raise one while he wants to raise the other.

#### Jim’s challenge

Thus whether one can talk of domination between countries and of the “political part” of the world order today was debated fervently in the CC and at the Fourth Congress. I and others were challenged to show the political side of present world relations. Jim essentially reiterated this challenge in his article of October 1992 in IB #77, which he still calls his “best answer” to the debate on imperialism. In this challenge he refers to the resolution of the Second Congress of the MLP. He says it could only explain “the economic part, loans, etc.” of what it called “economic and political oppression” by the imperialist powers, but “it couldn’t explain the political part”. (10) He presented this as only a question about “neo-colonialism,” a formulation used by the Second Congress resolution, but it is in fact an issue that is central to whether one can talk of imperialism in any meaningful way.

Well, I wrote about the world imperialist political order. This answered Jim’s challenge. And it helps get a picture of what the world situation looks like today.

#### Jim concedes—and claims victory

And what is Jim’s response? Does he re-evaluate his views, given that a good part of what he wrote in his letter in IB #77 depended on the answer to this question?

No. Instead Jim brushes it aside as irrelevant. He makes what he regards as a devastating retort:

“In fact, most of the particular points Joseph has raised about the political role of such international bodies I have little disagreement with.”

So let me see if I understand this right: because Jim can’t refute “most of” the points I made, he says they have no significance?

Now there’s a powerful argument. Someone answers his challenge, and Mr. Never-Wrong frowns that the issue isn’t important anyway, because “I knew that, I did, I did”.

Actually, Jim’s embarrassment at this point goes back to the Fourth Congress debate on imperialism. At that time, he immediately had to backpeddle on the lack of a “political part” to the

present imperialist order. After my speech dealing with the subject, he stated that:

"...My formulation may not be that [it] was political back then and now we have economic. But my formation would be the politics that existed then no longer exists today. It's a different politics." (11)

So he was forced to concede that there is, or at least may be, a "political part". And this directly contradicts his challenge in IB #77 that the "political part" couldn't be explained.

But Jim didn't ponder what this means for the picture he had drawn in IB #77. Instead he blithely remarked that it didn't matter anyway, because it's not the same politics as "in 1916". Excuse me? Why does domination and subordination have to take exactly the same forms as "in 1916"? Just imagine if he had said, in IB #77, that: "The problem with the Second Congress resolution is that it doesn't explain why the political part is exactly the same as in 1916." Such a statement would have seemed senseless, especially as the resolution sought analyze how the world situation had changed.

### **Colonialism, only colonialism, and nothing but colonialism**

Let's continue with Jim's statement at the Fourth Congress: "It's a different politics. In terms of political and territorial division of the world. There is no such thing. I do believe that...some 90% or 95% of the world did exist under such a condition in 1916."

Really? 90% or 95% of the world lived under colonialism, which is the only thing Jim will accept as "territorial division"? (Spheres of influence, imperialist "backyards", countries dependent in varying degrees on other countries, none of it counts if it isn't colonial, in Jim's view.) This 90 or 95% is an absurdity.

But this absurdity is not simply a minor exaggeration in a heated discussion. It is forced on Jim by the logic of what he was arguing. He was responding to my speaking in some detail of how the world was more complex, even back "in 1916", than a simple division into

colony and master. I pointed out that "...if one is going to raise [what the world looked like in] 1916, one should study the various complex relations that existed and it might give one some idea of what to look for or not look for, what's of significance for the later world. I think looking for countries that are completely under the domination of one country in the sense of complete trade, import and export and so forth, with one country, is not a particularly important characteristic. I don't think even the characteristic of being dominated by one country was a big feature of the territorial division of the world outside the colonies." (12)

To contradict this, Jim had to say that just about the only thing that existed in the world "in 1916" was colonialism. If he had said that almost one third of the world was colonial, almost one third was the imperialist metropolis (with certain issues of national oppression inside this metropolis itself), and the remaining third was dependent to varying degrees, but not colonies, then one gets a different picture. It would be clear that a large part of world was taken up with complex relations besides colonialism. Such a presentation might show that, if one were to seriously study communist analysis and tactics "in 1916", the examination of these complexities might be of interest, especially in the light of later developments. No, to avoid this, Jim had to say that there was "complete" colonialism, almost 100% colonialism.

### **Just another way of saying colonialism**

So all the talk about the "political part" means nothing to Jim. It was just another way for him to paraphrase that colonialism had collapsed. He holds that, as he put it at the Fourth Congress, "Lenin's entire theory on the colonial question was that it represented the complete territorial colonial division of the world. That was Lenin's theory in 1916." (13)

And this is the actual reasoning which Jim has kept to this day behind all his fancy footwork. He is into definitions, and he is the keeper of the only

true definitions (to his mind): territorial division = colonialism = the only politics that counts = Lenin's theory of imperialism.

In fact, Lenin's theory on imperialism was far more than just colonies exist. Even with respect to colonies itself, its distinguishing features from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois theories on colonialism was its emphasis on the internal class divisions in the colonies; its connection between the toilers in the colonies and the workers in the imperialist metropolis; its putting colonialism into a broader picture of dependency relations that enmesh the entire world; its emphasis on economic monopoly as the fundamental feature of imperialism; etc. (14)

### **The international agencies and the international political order**

But back to the "political part" of action by the great powers.

Downplaying the issue of a world political system, Jim reduces it to simply "the political role of such international bodies". But the international bodies are only one part of the world political order.

In Detroit #10, which Jim quotes in his article, I expressed the matter as follows:

"Well, we should start with a picture of world relations, and then decide later whether it should be called imperialism, neo-colonialism, the world market, or whatever. So the question here is not neo-colonialism, but [is] there an international political system dominated by the stronger powers?"

"In fact, the development of such a system is one of the prominent features of the world today, as striking in its own way as the collapse of colonialism. There has been the development of a world political system of imperialism, complete with *international agencies* dealing with political and economic matters. Here I will deal just with the formal side of this system."

I went on to point to the international agencies and treaties as the "formal side" of this system. I pointed out the "the imperialist powers have vastly disproportionate influence. And the top

powers have their own separate meetings as well, such as the G-7 conferences." And so forth.

In fact, the world political system includes military pressure up to and including invasion to enforce imperialist desires. It includes the use of financial, economic and military pressure for arm-twisting—sometimes openly through setting conditions for loans, but also informally and behind-the-scenes. It includes the building up of ties with influential strata and exploiters in the dependent countries. It includes the pressure exerted by giant multinational corporations to get their way with economically weak countries: politics refers to the interests of a class—in this case, the imperialist bourgeoisie of the great powers—and not just the actions of politicians.

The present role of the international agencies and treaties reflects the relative unity among the imperialist powers on how to build the present world order. As I have repeatedly pointed out, this unity does not preclude massive militarism and bloodshed around the world, but it is as close to unity as the imperialists ever will get. It has meant the lack of war between the major imperialist powers, although until recently this was supplemented by the threat of world annihilation due to conflict between the two big imperialist blocs.

The existence of world agencies and treaties is not the cause of the attempt to build a single world order. On the contrary, it is the situation among the imperialist bourgeoisie of the major powers that is reflected in the what the world agencies and treaties can or cannot do. The formal side of the political world order is a reflection of actual power relations existing the big powers.

Jim doesn't look at this whole system. Ho hum, it's all just UN meetings etc., he implies, doesn't everyone know about that? Why is Joseph so excited? And since everyone knows it, it's supposed to be wrong. Really Jim, it took you almost two years to come up with this?

### Unilateral actions

Nor does Jim go on to discuss what

the political system means for the world situation. He only tries to one-up me, saying that he would add to my description that "the relationship between these international bodies and the unilateral politics of the big powers (especially the role of the U.S. as world policeman)."

Well, I can only welcome Jim's recognition of "unilateral politics" as a major factor in today's world. It wasn't so long ago, at the Fourth National Conference of the MLP, that Jim laid stress on the press in other countries discussing what the other big powers would let the American government do. (15)

But his view that I overlook such "unilateral politics" shows his confusion about the relationship between the somewhat bourgeois-democratic forums of the world and imperialist oppression. The dictatorship of the rich and powerful remains under bourgeois-democracy, either within a country or on a world scale. In his charge that I overlook "unilateral politics", he not only repeats the charge against me made earlier by the Boston Communist Study Group, but he repeats their confusion on the meaning of democracy.

It can be recalled that the Boston Communist Study wrote earlier this year that my picture of a world political system had to be supplemented, saying

"...it is also necessary to get a better understanding of the operation of the IMF, World Bank, G7 etc. to see how they work and if they serve quite the bourgeois democratic institutional role Joseph says they do or are things still settled by direct back room deals of the various governments and central bankers." (16)

The BCSG thought that the "bourgeois democratic institutional role" contradicts back room deals, and Jim thinks it contradicts "unilateral politics" of the big powers.

It seems that the MLP may never have run candidates for political office, but it doesn't mean that we were free of parliamentary cretinism. If there's a somewhat representative institution somewhere, then back room deals and unilateral politics must be a thing of the past! What a superstitious belief in the wonders of bourgeois democracy!

Meanwhile Jim is just repeating the BCSG when he suggests I have left out the role of U.S. as "world cop". It was the BCSG who added, after their statement quoted above, the "He [Joseph] leaves out the role of US as world policeman although probably by oversight)."

Now, what is the role of U.S. as world cop? Is this perchance a reference to, for instance, military adventures? It would have been better if the BCSG and Jim hadn't restricted themselves to just talking about world cops, but explicitly talked about the invasions and militarism. I for my part, never had any belief that bourgeois-democratic forms meant a civilized, consensus world. I have laid stress, in Detroit #10 and elsewhere, on the "rivers of blood" being shed, the "continued military adventures", the galloping militarism that is typical of the post-world war II period. Yet the BCSG and Jim suggest I overlook the role of world cop.

Really? Who exactly brushes aside the significance of militarism today? Isn't it precisely those who characterize the world as "50 years of peaceful relations among the Western imperialists", leaving out the threat of world annihilation on one hand and the incessant local wars on the others? Such talk is found in the BCSG circles in Boston and Jim's majority circle in the San Francisco Bay Area, and not in my articles. But downplaying this militarism means overlooking the the content of the role of U.S. as world cop. What is a "world cop" if there really isn't a world baton anymore?

But why didn't I simply throw up the role of world cop as the answer to the question the existence of a world political system? Well, as I pointed out in replying to the BCSG, the Second Congress resolution

"...went with gusto into the U.S. role as world policeman. Yet Jim says that this resolution couldn't explain the political side of domination in today's world. If the BCSG believe the U.S. role as world cop is sufficient to establish that political domination exists, they might, say, discuss why they believe it is so, and why Jim doesn't." (17)

### The eclipse of imperialist politics

But Jim just doesn't try to one-up me about the world policeman. Why no, he holds that my points on the world political order actually reinforce his views.

So he says: "In any case, Joseph's lectures about the UN, the IMF and other international political forms only add emphasis to the fact that the thesis about territorial or colonial division has been eclipsed."

Why is that so? Jim gives no reason at all.

In any case, Jim thinks it is sufficient. The point is just self-evident to him. I think this means that Jim really does have a problem with the relationship of "unilateral politics" to international agencies, and simply assumes that bourgeois democratic world forms exclude imperialism and eclipse domination.

What must the logic be? Can someone really think: "They talk in the UN. They vote in the UN. Therefore this is a big barrier to the big countries dominating the little countries who also have their vote?"

Or take those "unilateral politics". Is it possible that someone thinks that military actions, once approved by a general "world" body, no longer have some relationship to the spheres of influence of the various powers? Is that why it is supposed to be self-evident that "territorial division" is eclipsed by these agencies?

In the past, the existence of international agencies or cooperation among the big powers didn't even preclude colonialism. Recall the joint imperialist suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900. Or the existence of colonialism side by side for decades with the League of Nations, and then with the United Nations.

Nor does the existence of world bodies preclude bloody conflicts over who will exercise power in a region. Recall the Persian Gulf war between members of the UN.

Political domination and subordination between countries is no more eclipsed by world agencies, than bourgeois dictatorship is eclipsed by parlia-

ment. Or would anyone care to advocate that the political domination of the American working class be eclipsed by Congress and the State legislatures?

from

### The debate on imperialism revisited—part 3

#### ON JIM'S LETTER OF JULY 29, 1992

Sept. 21, 1994

Joe of the Boston Communist Study Group has sent out Jim's letter of July 23, 1992 in order to prove that Jim and Michael never denied the role of political domination in the world today or removed the content from the concept of imperialism. (Joe's letter is printed in this issue of the *CWV Theoretical Journal*.) All this is "conscious lying" on my part—according to Joe's introduction of Sept. 17, 1994 to Jim's letter.

\*\* But we read in Jim's letter that, while some third world countries were politically dominated in the 1950s and 60s or even 70s, it's generally a different matter today. He says that "No doubt imperialist plunder is taking place on a vast scale. **But how this translates into political domination is problematic.**" (Emph. added.)

What does problematic mean? According to the dictionary by my writing table, it means "of the nature of a problem; doubtful; uncertain; questionable". (18) So Jim's letter calls political domination into question, and Joe triumphantly cites this very letter to prove that it's a "conscious lie" on my part that Jim has ever belittled the existence of the political domination of today's subordinate countries.

\*\* Joe also says it's a lie that Jim ever denied "that imperialism still existed." But I never said that Jim doesn't use the word "imperialism". Joe doesn't cite a single statement from my writings—he just makes up his "facts" as he goes. On the contrary, I have always quoted Jim's ringing declarations about imperialism, imperialist plunder, whatever. What I have said, however, is that Jim's views remove the content from the concept of imperialism.

Indeed, in the very letter Joe reproduces, Jim casts doubt on the term neo-colonialism on the basis, among other things, of the lack of political domination in today's world. He repeated this argument more explicitly in his subsequent letter of Oct. 1992 printed in IB #77. All I have done is to ask Jim, in front of everyone: what is left of the concept of imperialism without the concept of political domination?

\*\* Joe also implies that it is a lie on my part that the CC argued over the existence of political domination. He waves in front of our eyes Jim's letter of July 29, 1992, which he tells us triumphantly was circulated

"a couple weeks before the plenum where Joseph claims that Jim was arguing that there is no political domination."

But, as we have seen, this letter claims that political domination in today's world is a "problematic" concept. This verifies my account that political domination was debated inside the CC.

Moreover, I cite another witness to the discussions in the CC, a witness who can't be accused of partiality to my point of view: Joe himself.

In the letter to comrades which Joe circulated at the 5th Congress, he described the CC plenum which he is now revisiting. (19) He tells of a "blow up" over Jim's views and over the discussion of the planned report on dependent countries by Manny and a discussion over "the issue of political domination of third world countries". Isn't that what I said?

Or would Joe have us believe that there was a "blow up" not over the existence of political domination, but over secondary questions of slight changes in that domination? Does that make any sense? In any case, Joe's account disproves that hypothesis too. Joe implies that Manny's subsequent report to the Fourth Congress on the dependent countries goes further than Jim on the question of "the political aspect". But Manny's report elaborated on the theme that colonialism = looting by political means, while modern dependency = market relations. One can see that Manny didn't think there was that much of a

“political aspect” to modern world relations. This again verifies that the issue of the existence of political domination was under discussion.

Moreover, Joe thinks Manny’s report was more emphatic about the “political aspect” than Jim’s! This verifies that Jim thought little of any “political aspect” to the domination of countries that had developed complex economies and that had their own ruling classes; he thought such a political aspect was — how shall I put it, yes, that’s it, you’ve found the word — “problematic”.

Of course, when Joe said almost a year ago that the issue of political domination was debated in the CC, that was part of the wisdom of the CC majority, while if I say it now, it becomes a “conscious lie”.

### Reinventing Jim

In order to prove that I am “consciously lying” about Jim’s views, Joe has to remodel and rewrite Jim.

Jim says that his letter of Oct. 1992 in IB #77 is still the “best refutation” of his critics. He has little to add to it. He is proud of his letter, and regards that it answered a number of important issues about the world.

But what does Joe say? Why, on the issues at stake, he says that Jim was simply “in the process of trying to figure out how to theoretically characterize the forms of political domination now that the system of colonialism has collapsed.”

Excuse me? This is the Jim whose self-confident assertions that, “with few exceptions”, political domination doesn’t exist anymore fill his letter of July 29 and his article in IB #77 and his speeches at the Fourth Congress?

But who cares what Jim actually said and wrote? Not Joe. **According to Joe, Jim didn’t even speak to the issue of political domination.** Believe it or not, this is what Joe says. You wonder about Joe’s grip on reality, but he states that by the time of IB #77 Jim “still had not worked this question out theoretically and so did not speak to it.” (emph. added)

You would think, if this were so, and Jim and others were still in the process of vigorously grappling with the

issue, that we would have a series of sparkling ideas from Jim and Michael and Manny about this question. The ideas might be right or wrong, but they would certainly be interesting. In fact, they have vegetated on this issue in the nearly two years since the Fourth Congress. And why? For Jim, he clearly believes that IB #77 is the already-found answer. After IB #77, he lost much interest in further investigation of the issue. Indeed, Joe, searching for anything from Jim to put forward as an example of Jim’s developing thought on the issue, can only find a letter written **PRIOR** to IB #77.

### Jim’s analysis of July 1992

Now let’s look a bit closer at Jim’s letter of July 29, 1992.

It holds that political domination, with a few exceptions, doesn’t exist any more. Jim does describe a process—a process of what he sees as the elimination of political domination from the world scene.

Jim’s main idea is that political domination must take colonial forms. He thus holds that the elimination of colonialism or achievement of self-determination basically eliminates domination.

But how can Jim reconcile his idea that only colonies are politically dominated with the fact that many independent countries have obviously been dominated over the years, parts of spheres of influence, invaded at will, or had servile governments? Dependency comes in many forms and shades, but its existence is admitted by almost everyone in blatant cases. It would seem that once you grant that various independent countries have been politically dominated for years on end, that would destroy the thesis that domination must always come in colonial forms—or that it always means that national liberation or a struggle for national self-determination is on the agenda, rather than social revolution.

Jim saves his thesis by arguing on the word “neo-colony”. This word means different things to different people. Some people use neo-colonialism to indicate a situation where the great powers domi-

nate and exploit subordinate but independent countries. Others use it to deny the class relations inside a country. I myself think that one should start from examining the world and the facts about political domination today and then decide on labels, but Jim wants to start with definitions. For him, if you can call a country a “neo-colony”, the word “colony” means it can still be dominated.

So Jim holds that a country can for awhile still be somewhat dominated. He will grant this for various countries at times in the 50s-70s. But he pictures this domination incorrectly, seeking a direct parallel with a colony and even misrepresenting what some colonies are really like.

Thus Jim holds that a country is politically dominated if and only if it is a neo-colony in his sense of the term. And he gives it an extreme and unrealistic sense. He contrasts the government of a neo-colony to “a regime rooted in the modern classes of the society”. He talks of its “puppet” features apparently in the literal sense of taking orders from the agencies of a single mother country. Or he looks for countries whose trade is completely in the hands of another country. And unless a country has these features, he thinks it can’t be dominated.

So his view is that colonies are dominated, but countries with their own local bourgeois ruling class are not. In between these two situations, he twists and turns on the nature of the independent regimes that he has to admit were dominated. But that’s basically a historical situation for him, since he holds that most countries are now free from political domination.

### Exaggerated model of dependency

For example, Jim grants political domination for colonies or for dependent countries early in this century. But he describes dependence in terms so drastic and exaggerated that even many colonies back then didn’t fit it. The result is that his recognition of past dependency is for the purpose of denying present dependency, and has little to do with a realistic analysis of past conditions.

For example, he puts great stock in the example of Argentina early in this century, and says "The parallel with Lenin's comment about Argentina's financial and diplomatic dependence on Britain is useful." But he describes Argentina in absurdly exaggerated terms. He interprets Lenin, as he would later do in IB #77, as saying that Argentina was exclusively and completely dominated by Britain and only Britain. (20) Instead of looking at what Argentina really was and why it was regarded as dependent, Jim converts Argentina into a fantasy land. The real Argentina didn't even enter World War I on the side of its supposed sole lord and master and dictator of its diplomacy Britain, but stayed neutral. (21)

What's the point of Jim's nonsense about Argentina? It's not to study Argentina. It is to compare the present-day world to the Argentinian never-never land, and thus conclude that, with respect to "the larger countries and/or economically more complex countries", "there are few examples of this type of financial hegemony, even where imperialist investment is steep. For example, even in the historic U.S. imperialist colony of the Philippines, foreign capital is divided between Taiwan, Japan and the U.S., along with a number of lessers."

By pointing out that few countries fit the supposed Argentinian model, Jim hopes to cast doubt on the concept of dependency.

Jim does however describe a period of neo-colonialism following independence. But here he actually goes backward from former MLP analysis to resuscitate three worldism. Euphemistically referring to opportunism as "traditional thinking" in the movement, he writes that what "the Chinese and Albanians wrote in the 1960's and 1970's" about the situation of the dependent countries "made a certain sense at the time."

What were these Chinese conceptions, which he identifies with the term neo-colonialism? Weren't they three-worldism? Yet he holds that they made some sense for those decades—during which time governments were presumably not rooted in the modern classes of

society (another form of the old three-worldist idea of a comprador bourgeoisie separate from the really local bourgeoisie). (22) In this period the countries were supposedly completely commercially, financially and diplomatically dominated by a single lord and master.

So just as Jim paints a never-never land of Argentina in the early 1900s, he presents the 1950s-70s as the period when "three worldism" was somewhat correct. He can denounce the political domination at that time in militant tones, but he pictures this domination incorrectly. And this three-worldist idea of domination pulls him backwards from the analysis of the Second Congress of the MLP. The Second Congress stressed the role of the national bourgeoisie and other local exploiters in the dependent countries; the Second Congress did not recognize the existence of a decades-long buffer period between independence and the rule of the local exploiters. The Second Congress did not hold that there was a period in which three worldism was more-or-less correct; it did not agree that there was period in which three worldism was merely an exaggeration but not fundamentally wrong.

But back to Jim's letter. Jim goes on to say that neo-colonialism "turned out to be something of a transition to other forms of financial and other dependency". But not political dependency. The point here is that Jim separates political and economic dependency. Some forms of dependency may exist, but he stress that "how this translates into political domination is problematic".

Someone may say, well, dependency is dependency. You can't really separate it so neatly into different parts. So if someone recognizes dependency, then that's the main thing. But in his theorizing, Jim does separate political and economic dependency. He does so in the letter of July 29, 1992; and he does so in IB #77.

In IB #77, Jim qualified most of his statements much more. But, when all is said and done, he gives roughly the same picture as his letter of July 29, 1992. By putting Jim's letter into circu-

lation, Joe has allowed one to verify that the main features of IB #77 were no accident.

### Three-worldism revisited

It's notable that, to deny political domination today, Jim has to find that the three-worldist conception of political domination was in good part correct in the past.

The three-worldists saw struggle mostly in the light of a national liberation struggle. This was at a time when many liberation struggles were raging. But the three-worldists painted the situation in the subordinate but independent countries in national liberation colors and downplayed the internal class conflicts and class relations in these countries. (Indeed, they had trouble with the class issues in the national liberation struggles themselves.) Yet Jim held that their description was—substantially although not completely—true for many countries of the 1950s-70s.

It is not my intention to leave analysis at the level of the Second Congress of 1984. But its resolution on dependent countries did stress the internal class relations in the dependent countries, and call for evaluating the stage of revolution through a close study of internal conditions. Indeed, the MLP's fight against "three worldism" had always stressed the internal class and social and economic relations. Now Jim goes more than a decade backward, and reverses much of this criticism.

In IB #77 Jim qualified things much more than in the July letter. Nevertheless he still held that the three worldist literature only somewhat exaggerated the nature of the dependent regimes, but nevertheless did have a finger on the issue.

Thus Jim wrote in IB #77 that "One problem with the Chinese and other literature was the tendency to exaggerate the puppet or agent nature of such regimes, skipping over something as fundamental as the internal class struggle." (23) But Jim adds, don't throw out this way of looking at things—although he has just said it negates the class struggle! He states that, while

there "was undoubtedly exaggeration in the revolutionary literature...of the puppet nature of various regimes", "it would be a mistake today to exaggerate the degree to which these features have been shed, or to exclude the possibility of reversals towards the old ways." On the other hand, Jim adds, "the last 30 years of development have proved the one-sidedness" of this analysis "as a political concept", although we are not supposed to throw it out for the decades of the 1950s-70s. (24)

So when all the qualifications, and qualifications of the qualifications which modify other qualifications, are taken together, one ends up with the same picture as the letter of July 29. There was supposedly a period of governments of trained agents not really rooted in the local situation, but now the national bourgeoisie rules and so the world is supposedly basically free of the political domination of the great powers. Did any three worlder have greater faith in the powers of the national bourgeoisie and its distinction from the hated comprador bourgeoisie, supposedly the sole support of politically dependent regimes?

### **The revival of "traditional thinking" in Boston**

Jim's talk of a period when three-worldism was roughly correct had a bad effect on comrades who took it seriously, as Joe does. Thus the next year after IB #77, in the notes for the May Day speech given in Boston, we read:

"Meanwhile the national liberation movement against colonial and neo-colonial regimes has more or less ended. The colonies have been liberated, the more or less puppet regimes are gone. You are not going to see more Nicaraguas or Iranian revolutions where a section of the bourgeoisie joins the people in a struggle for national independence or against a regime that stands only because of the support of Western imperialism." (25, emph. added)

Here we have the Nicaraguan and Iran revolutions given as struggles for national independence, or struggles against regimes that stand only due to the support of Western imperialism.

Neither characterization in this speech is right. Both are strides backward towards three-worldism. Both deny the facts about the class relations and class struggles inside Nicaragua and Iran. Instead the struggle is paralleled to a national liberation movement, and moreover the role of the local bourgeoisie is prettified.

These characterizations may have been written hastily, as part of a May Day speech covering a lot of ground. And I doubt that Jim would endorse this passage. But you have to close your eyes and stick your fingers in your ears to ignore the relation of this Boston speech to Jim's ideas about political dependency and the national movement. Such denigration of the class basis of these struggles wouldn't have been written at all, even in haste, if it weren't for the circle of ideas that is also reflected in Jim's letter of July 29, 1992 or IB #77. This speech shows what Joe and some Boston comrades picked up from the spirit of these documents.

The passage from the Boston May Day notes continues: "Today in most of the world the regimes are the regimes of the national bourgeoisie. Thus the class struggle of the rich against the poor comes more to the fore. This does not mean that the masses of the third world are no longer exploited by the rich imperialist countries. But this exploitation recognizes the local bourgeoisie as rulers of the country and includes them in it." (emph. added)

This speech puts forward that it is only now, with the fall of the old Iranian and Nicaraguan governments and similar events, that the subordinate countries have regimes of the local exploiters.

This is an absurd picture, as the local bourgeoisie and exploiters were involved from the start. Yet it says that only now are the local oppressors included in the exploitation of the country. This reflects Jim's idea that the 1950s through perhaps the 1970s were a period where there were various regimes which were not "rooted in the modern classes of the society."

This speech shows that the discussion on political domination in the CC was not simply about the views of some

comrades in "the process" of grappling with some ideas. It was not some tentative discussion. There was a trend of ideas being put forward, fervently held by some comrades, and reflected in the party agitation in some areas.

### **Footnotes (also edited by CWVTJ staff):**

(1) See the **Statement of Boston Communist Study Group**, Feb. 5, Boston #5. It wonders aloud "have we really entered an era of ultra imperialism"? And it asks, "How do you explain 50 years of peaceful relations among the Western imperialists." And this question is now posed by a number of comrades of the majority, from New York to the San Francisco Bay Area. None of them seem to think it makes sense to ask "How do you explain 50 years of bloodshed and rampant militarism and the threat of world annihilation"?

(2) Manny's report to the Fourth Congress "On the revolutionary struggle in the dependent countries", which began the debate over progressive imperialism, is reproduced in the **CWV Theoretical Supplement #1**, January 25, 1994. It also contains my article "On the debate over imperialism". My article "A note on 'progressive imperialism'" (Detroit #40) is contained in the **CWV Theoretical Journal**, #2.

(3) See Fred (Seattle) "What can be learned from the bloodbath regarding approaches to investigation," Part 3, Seattle #47, March 23. Fred writes:

"Joseph's clanking blocks of history are well illustrated by his description of the contemporary era: '...the dazzling technological development embellished and accentuated the basic capitalist framework which came into existence some time ago.' This view is quite wrong. Quite accurate is his description of my views: we are in a basically new situation, zillions of times more developed than the past, which has transcended the old social contradictions and struggles of the past." (emphasis added)

(4) See Jason's (Seattle) "Notes/Outline on Palestinian Presentation", May 10, 1994, in the **CWV Theoretical Journal** #3. And in the same issue

there is Mark's (Detroit) article "On Jason's *stand on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: Economic Schemes Replace Revolutionary Organizing*".

(5) Michael's theory was stated during the debate on imperialism at the Fourth Congress. See the **CWV Theoretical Supplement #1**, Jan. 25, 1994, pp. 20-1, with the particular statement on "domination, monopoly and other kinds of imperfections" being on page 21, col. 3. For Mark's article on cartels, see "Cartels and the Striving for Domination by Monopolies", March 28, **CWV Theoretical Journal #2**.

(6) **CWV Theoretical Supplement #1**, January 25, 1994, page 22, col. 1.

(7) See the section of Jim's article entitled "Neo-Colonialism and the Second Congress Resolution of the MLP". The particular words cited can be found on p. 37, col. 3 of the **CWV Theoretical Supplement #1**, Jan. 25, 1994. The particular resolution he was referring to is Chapter IV section J. "On the Revolutionary Struggle in the Oppressed and Dependent Countries: The National Liberation Movement, the Democratic Revolution and the Socialist Revolution". See the "Documents of the Second Congress of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA", Jan. 1, 1984.

(8) **CWV Theoretical Supplement #1**, p. 21, col. 2 and 3.

(9) **CWV Theoretical Supplement #1**, p. 22, col. 1.

(10) **CWV Theoretical Supplement**, Jan. 25, 1994, p. 37, col. 3. The resolution on the oppressed and dependent countries he was referring to is Ch. IV section J of the "Documents of the Second Congress of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA", Jan. 1, 1984.

(11) **CWV Theoretical Supplement**, Jan. 25, 1994, p. 18, col. 2.

(12) **CWV Theoretical Supplement**, p. 16, col. 2.

I also showed, in my speech as well as in **Some notes on theoretical issues—part two**, Detroit #10, that Jim's picture of colonialism wasn't even satisfactory for the colonial world itself.

(13) **CWV Theoretical Supplement**, p. 18, col. 1.

(14) See for example **Some notes on theoretical issues—part two**, Nov.

15, 1993, Detroit #10. The subsection "What's the essence of imperialism" opposes the view that Lenin's theory was characterized by the division of all the world into colonies of different powers.

(15) In discussing the world situation and the issue of multi-polarism at the Fourth National Conference, Jim stressed the difference between how the foreign press presented the role of U.S. as world cop and how the foreign press did. He stated:

"...Just briefly one of the unfortunate things about living in the United States is you have to live on American media, mass media and it is very useful to look at mass media from other parts of the world and you get a very different flavor of what's going on in the Persian Gulf or any other question. Even [in] the British paper which is very pro-American in general there is a different perspective. Read the German press or the Japanese press and they don't give the impression at all that everyone is just following behind America. They give quite a different impression. And the general impression is that Germany and Japan are much stronger than they have ever been, and not just Germany and Japan but other capitalist powers are much stronger than they have ever been. The United States is scrambling like crazy to try and maintain itself as a world power when its position as a world power is slipping in every front. That's the actual picture, and one of the things that's discussed most in both the German and Japanese materials is what role will they allow the American military power. Because in fact, you said that Japan is not a great military power, but that's relative, and it's creating a fantastic military power and there's a major questions and it's debated all the time, who will defend the oil flow from the Middle East to Japan? Will Japanese troops or American troops? Well for the time being they're saying, "Ok, we'll allow American troops to do the job," but I think that that's a question being under discussion. In the world press that's being discussed. In the American press it's just America is defending whatever, but that's not how the rest of the world looks at it and it's

important to keep that in mind, that we are getting a very narrow focus." (emphasis added)

This is taken from Anita's transcript of one of the tapes from the 4th National Conference of fall 1990. (See Chicago #5, Nov. 14, 1993) I have added some capitalization and additional punctuation. I also added the underlining.

(16) See the Feb. 5 Statement of the Boston Communist Study Group, Boston #5, which can be found in the **Chicago Workers Voice Theoretical Journal**, #2. The passage cited can be found on p. 5, col. 3.

(17) See my article "Against sectarianism, part one", Feb. 10, 1994, Detroit #22, which also appears in the **CWV Theoretical Journal #2**. The passage cited is on p. 7, col. 2.

(18) The Random House Webster's College Dictionary, 1991 edition.

(19) See Joe's letter to comrades of Nov. 18, 1993. It was circulated on E-mail as Boston #2, although in fact it was Boston #3. Joe's account is often one-sided, impressionistic or even fanciful, but he does verify my statement that the question of political domination between countries in today's world was fought over.

(20) As I have showed in "Some Notes on Theoretical Issues—Part Two" (Detroit #10, Nov. 15, 1993), Lenin discusses Argentine financial dependence on Germany as well commercial dependence on Britain. Jim neither disagrees with Lenin on this nor discusses the significance of it. Whatever further research about Argentina shows, the theoretical issue remains that Lenin saw nothing even worthy of comment in a country being dependent on TWO countries.

(21) Since everyone still seems to accept that Latin America was dominated early in this century, it is interesting to examine its behavior in World War I.

Unlike Canada, Latin America was noticeably reticent about this world slaughter. Argentina, Paraguay, El Salvador, Venezuela, and Mexico were neutral. Peru, Uruguay, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, and Ecuador broke relations with Germany, but



## Flaws in Boston's Study of the Composition of the Working Class

by Gary, New Jersey

10/1/94

The abandonment of Marxism goes hand in hand with the abandonment of the working class. Boston's work on the composition of the working class, along with declarations from the "majority" about the downfall of the US proletariat, shows such abandonment. It is being done with statistical slights-of-hand and contortions of basic Marxist methods. And they are not even original; the ideologues of monopoly capitalism have been trumpeting the end of the working class, both politically and economically, at a heightened pace for the past five years. One in particular, Peter Drucker in Post Capitalist Society, makes the same claims about the "people who engaged in work to make or to move things" were a majority in the 1950s, but fell to 20% of the "workforce" in 1990, and it will be 10% by 2010. (pg. 40 of paper edition) This is the same slight of hand which Joe uses, jumping from one category to

a different one (majority of population to % of workforce), and more importantly equating the working class with manufacturing only. Drucker also outright lies, thinking no one will check the facts.

The Boston #5 e-mail has already been replied to by Pete (Detroit#30) appropriately for its shift away from proletarian organizing into compromising with other stratas. (ed. note: Both documents were printed in the CWVTJ #2.) Boston has changed the Leninist slogan of going "lower and deeper into the masses", to going higher and narrower into the petty bourgeoisie and upper sections of skilled workers.

However an initial examination of the statistics also brings into question the assertions that the "professional/managerial strata make up more than 25% of the workforce" which "is more people than all the production workers in manufacturing, all the transport workers and all the unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers in the service industries such as restaurants, hospitals etc., put together." (Boston #5). It

leaves the impression that the working class in the US is now a minority. But that is only wishful thinking on their part. They have adopted the capitalist propaganda with open arms. But the rumors of the death of the US proletariat are greatly exaggerated.

First of all, why is the bourgeois term "workforce" used? It is a term used to supplant "class". In this way they have picked up Fred's world outlook and left Marxism. Also "professional/managerial" is a bourgeois term in contradistinction to class analysis, and throwing in "technical" strata and mixing it up with "professional/managerial" further muddies the waters. This professional/managerial strata encompasses all the traditional supervisors and managers of capital, the whip crackers and the paid lackeys. In its initial report in March, 1993, Boston adopts these categories from the statistics without question. If we are going to bring in CEO's as part of the workforce, than why not complete the picture with the rapidly growing "dispossessed" strata of semi-proletarian, state-dependent or

*Joseph, cont. from previous page*

didn't enter the war. Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama declared war against Germany, but only Brazil and Cuba contributed any personnel.

At that time, British capital far and away exceeded American capital in Latin America in general, yet no Latin American country declared war on Germany before the United States entered the war in 1917—Britain had already entered in 1914.

Even this luke-warm participation shows the influence of dependency, but it doesn't show the simplistic relation that Jim paints as the sole criterion of dependency. A more careful study of Latin America early in the century might give some idea of what political dependence really is, and provide a more realistic yardstick for judging the present world.

(22) The three worldists separated the bourgeoisie into a national and a

comprador (sell-out) bourgeoisie. While the bourgeoisie has sections with varying economic interests and different political tendencies (and ties to different powers), the three worldists absolutized these differences, presented them in a dogmatic form, and regarded them in a moralizing light. For or against independent development being the viewpoint of the three worlders, it was supposedly the split among the bourgeoisie. This generally made it impossible to get a real picture of what the bourgeoisie was doing, what its actual splits were, and how it develops over time. For example, the shifts between more or less protectionism are generally incomprehensible if regarded as a simple reflection of a national bourgeoisie/compradore split. And different stages in the development of the bourgeoisie were analyzed as instead supposedly different sections, good or bad, of the bourgeoisie.

Jim's contrast of the the regime

based on modern classes to the regime of the full bourgeois class uses different words, but in essence absolutizes the same distinction. One section is the puppets and trained agents, and the other is the independent, local bourgeoisie. In fact, in the independent but subordinate countries, the regimes of strongmen and the oligarchies are connected to the local exploiters, and reflect a stage of their development. For that matter, in countries with any room for development, the local bourgeoisie evolves even under colonialism.

(23) **Chicago Workers Voice Theoretical Supplement**, Jan. 25, 1994, p. 34, col. 2.

(24) *Ibid.*, p. 34, col. 3.

(25) **The Workers' Advocate Supplement**, May 20, 1993, p. 8. Note, by the way, that many of the qualifications and qualifications on top of qualifications from IB #77 have vanished.

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out-of-the-legal-economy workers and lumpen elements - the impoverished 30 million? This group certainly has more validity to present a true picture of how Americans make a living than the elite. While it is important to know if the administrative level is increasing as a burden on the working class, increasing parasitism, this hardly calls for the abandonment of the lower classes and the working class in particular.

Second, a warning about the statistics - we are forced to use the government's labor statistics for the data. (All data is from the Statistical Abstract of the US, 113th ed, 1993.) The categories used there are not oriented towards a class analysis, but instead occupations are grouped by bourgeois sociological criteria. The government divides all employed people into 6 categories:

1. Professional/managerial
2. Technical, sales, and administrative support
3. Service
4. Precision production, craft, and repair
5. Operators, fabricators, and laborers
6. Farming, forestry and fishing

Third, there has been an artificial line drawn down the middle of the working class. The term "proletarian" has had various meanings, even within the left. "Proletarian" has been equated with industrial proletariat. Some in the "majority" have suggested to me that the working class is dramatically being reduced in numbers because "service" jobs are where the growth is, implying these are not proletarians. The same thing is done by Peter Drucker. This too is not a Marxist distinction. For example, Marx wrote:

"As the cooperative character of the labor process becomes more and more marked, so, as a necessary consequence, does our notion of productive labor, and of its agent the productive laborer, become extended. In order to labor productively, it is no longer necessary for you to do manual work yourself: enough, if you are an organ of the collective laborer, and perform one of

its subordinate functions."

And,

"Capitalist production is not merely the production of commodities, it is essentially the production of surplus value. The laborer produces, not for himself, but for capital. It no longer suffices, therefore, that he should simply produce. He must produce surplus value. That laborer alone is productive, who produces surplus value for the capitalist, and thus works for the self-expansion of capital. If we may take an example from outside the sphere of production of material objects, a schoolmaster is a productive laborer, when, in addition to belaboring the heads of his scholars, he works like a horse to enrich the school proprietor. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of in a sausage factory, does not alter the relation. Hence the notion of a productive laborer implies not merely a relation between work and useful effect, between laborer and product of labor, but also a specific, social relation of production, a relation that has sprung up historically and stamps the laborer as the direct means of creating surplus value." (Capital, Part V, chapter XVI)

To be a productive worker, one only needs to be employed by capital to enrich capital with surplus value. I suggest a MacDonald's hamburger flipper is as much a proletarian as an auto worker. Industrial workers are an important group because of their social relation to production and each other, making them a more viable political agent for the class. However, Marx does not separate workers by type of activity, only by their relation to capital. In one place, Marx separates out the growing servant class of workers in the homes of capitalists as unproductive workers created by the extraordinary productiveness of modern industry to give an example of unproductive labor because they weren't hired to create surplus value for capital. (Capital, chapter XV, section 6). In fact the only wage-laborer who is part of the productive process which Marx distinguishes

from the rest are the managers, who he calls "a special kind of wage laborer" who "command in the name of the capitalist". (Capital, Part 4, chapter XIII)

Let's look at each bourgeois category, and see what the government statistics actually say:

1. The professional/managerial. This is divided further into "Executive, administrative and managerial", which is primarily the traditional supervisory and executive positions, and the "Professional specialty", which is the professional strata per se. That 25% figure is this entire group (31 million out of a 'workforce' of 117.6 million).

This is not to deny that this group is growing - but to take the government's class-biased figures without more analysis is misleading.

Let's look more closely at this group: In the "Executive" half almost all of them are the group of capital's managers - the CEOs to shift supervisors, with the exception of the accountants and auditors (1.365 million) which belong in the professional strata. The "professional" half include the petty bourgeois professions - scientists, physicians, engineers, lawyers, judges, clergy, entertainers, which Marx calls the ideological classes. But 40% of this group are teachers, librarians, social workers, actors, musicians, nurses (7 million out of 17.7 million), which are in many locations part of the working class, working for and generating capital, or in objective parity with the working class, and which have been historically a base of organizing against management and the capitalist local government. Nurses are certainly working class where they work for private hospital corporations, and those nurses working for government institutions are in the same class position as teachers and postal workers - working for the accumulated social capital.

So a class analysis of this group would show the managerial appendage to the capitalists - 1a (13.4 million), whose class interests are closely allied with the capitalists; a petty bourgeois professional strata- 1b (10.7 million), usually in sympathy to the upper classes

and often self employed; and “professionals” in the working class, connected more to the masses (7 million), whose vacillating nature is not necessarily anti-working class, but who are susceptible to bourgeois influence more than the rest of the working class.

2. Technical, sales, and administrative support. This is a larger group than the professional/managerial - 36.8 million people. When we take out the supervisors, we are left with 32.1 million. (That 4.7 million should be added to the 1a group.) Also from this group are semi-professional jobs, like sales reps, which should be in 1b (2.2 million). The rest are primarily working class, both skilled (technicians and pilots - 4.3 million) and semi or unskilled (clerks of all kinds, equipment operators, dispatchers, tellers, aides - 25.6 million). Some of these workers are part of production industries, in transport, distribution, expediting, scheduling, clerical.

3. Service occupations. This is broken into 6 groups: private household, protective (police, fire), food, health, cleaning, and personal service. All of these except the police and supervisors are working class - 14.4 million, with 1.7 million police and supervisors (1b).

4. Precision production, craft and repair. Mechanics, construction, extractive. Skilled and semiskilled, except construction laborers(4.1 million) - total 13.1 million.

5. Operators, fabricators and laborers. Skilled, semi and unskilled lumped together - 17 million.

6. Farming, forestry, and fishing. This includes 1.2 million owners and managers(1b) out of total 3.5 million, the rest working class.

This presents a rough class outline as follows:

A. capitalist class - capitalists per se, rentiers, financiers

B. the capitalists' managers - CEOs to shift supervisors 18.1 million people not including dependents

C. professional strata tied closely to capitalists - 14.6 mill.

including police it becomes 16.3 million not including dependents

D. working class - 83.7 million workers (equating to how many in the population - children, dependents?)

E. unemployed, dispossessed, state dependent(welfare and social security). - to be determined, although the government statistics show 30 million in poverty (from Dispossessed, by J. Jones, p. 269.)

So how Boston could write that the professional/managerial group outnumbered “all the production workers in manufacturing, all the transport workers and all the unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers in the service industries...put together” is playing games with the numbers. In their original report they break the working class into into five groups (which is fine) totalling 61% of the workforce. Then they pick two of the groups and say the managerial/professionals outnumber them. And then they say in Boston #5 this is “one of the most troubling issues being raised”. Why? Why separate these two groups out and leave the clerical, retail and skilled workers out? Even keeping their 25% figure, which we have seen is not meaningful, the working class still dwarfs that figure with 61%. They are deliberately leaving the impression that the working class is fading while the managers are becoming the force to deal with. And this is the main point that Boston pulls from an overall good report dealing with the declining living standards of the workers, their displacement and impoverishment. Now they want to mask the working class and promote other sections. What happened to going lower and deeper?

There is no denying that a “professional” or even technical, skilled strata is growing faster than the blue collar workers, and so are service jobs. However these questions must be approached from a class analysis, not sociological groups which blur class lines. By blurring class lines the true meaning is lost. If a larger segment of the working class is becoming more skilled, this has organizing consequences. However when the majority of the working class, which is the majority of the population, is still overworked, underpaid, insecure and

exploited and impoverished, why is Joe focusing on a small stratum of managers and skilled workers? Because it suits his politics?

So when Boston writes about this “new middle strata” contradicting Marx (on a society dividing up into two hostile classes and the classes in between disintegrating), they exaggerate at best. They lump the engineers, professionals and managers together. These are not new classes. The wage laborers in this group are skilled workers creating surplus value for capital; the managers are a special kind of wage labor - they are commanding for capital. If Boston is saying there is a higher proportion of skilled to unskilled these days, that remains to be seen. But even if there is, what does this mean? There are not two great hostile classes facing each other as the driving force of change in society? And if there are more managers today, doesn't this reflect the concentration of the capitalist hold on society (the top 1% holds more aggregate net worth than the bottom 90% - from American Class Structure, by Gilbert & Kahl, pg 322)? More “professionals” and skilled workers has not meant the end of the growing impoverishment of the people as a whole. If these strata grow large during a phase of retooling the economy, they will be eaten up just as fast. A lot of these engineers and professionals are acting management, and should be treated as such. Future research into this should take a class analysis - their relation to capital, first and foremost.

And Boston's assertion that “Pete in giving our traditional views did not see that the professional managerial strata has been growing faster than the lower strata and that this is a major problem of our social revolution” is another gross distortion. The old middle strata of shopkeepers and farmers is being replaced by managers is a major problem? Why? And what is this “lower strata”? If it is the working class and the dispossessed taken together, whose numbers by the way dwarf this professional/managerial strata, remember their “managerial/professional” strata contains teachers (one of the big in-

*continued on p. 45*

# Letter from NC, Los Angeles, Against Jim's Statement

Sept. 12, 1994.

Dear Comrade Joseph,

RE: Det. #53 (9/6/94), reply to Jim/SFBA—part 1

**(Jim's statement and Joseph's replies are in this issue of the *Theoretical Journal*)**

Excellent job of exposing the shady methods contained in Jim's "analysis" of August! This leading theoretician of the "majority" gives new meaning to the word chutzpah! Imagine with all the outstanding issues related to the development and laws of motion of imperialism in our age being debated and fleshed out and the feverish and many times profound polemical blows exchanged since the dissolution. Jim has the gall to refer to a document (IB #77), written 2 years ago by His Royal Majesty, absurdly implying that his thoughts are almost the final word on

the key issues we are trying to seriously research and study. By resorting to this clumsy subterfuge Jim attempts not only to disparage the theoretical work of the minority, but his own majority forces as well! Nice trick but it won't work!

Today's events in Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Bosnia, Haiti, Cuba and yesterday's in the Gulf War, Panama, East Timor, etc. et. al. cry out for mass struggle against the tyranny not only of native capitalists and their henchmen but for struggle against the "civilized" G-10 imperialist bullies as well. They say they only want "freedom and democracy," but Marxists expose this. Oh yea! But freedom for whom? For which class or classes? Oh, they are all for freedom! Freedom for the transnationals and banks to rob and exploit the working people. They want democracy? No! Theirs is a plutocratic hypocrisy with their hired political puppets and trained janisaries lording it

over the workers and farmers with a mailed fist! The French Legionnaires, U.S. Marines, U.S.-trained Indonesian army men etc. can stick their bayonets into civilians in Rwanda, Panama, and East Timor but Jim sees no political domination here! Excellent Jim! Keep it up! There are openings at the Rand Corporation and the Heritage Foundation. Great Pay and Benefits! Ex-Marxists given preference!

We will be preparing another *L.A. Workers' Voice* for work in building and intervening in the mass action Oct. 16th to fight the racist scapegoating of the rich [against the immigrants] in Prop. #187. The people's struggles continue in the USA as well. The rich and their state are going for the masses' jugular now and we need unity in struggle to give them a firm rebuff!

Fraternally,  
N <>

*Joseph, Socialism ... , from p. 46*

what you meant when you say that "veracity is not the main point here, because bourgeois historians (Carr included) have made a small industry of veracity for years without advancing us very far from the simplistic vision of Communism Vs. Capitalism on the world stage that has dominated so much of the 20th century."

True, it's not that one simply has to accumulate isolated facts interpreted according to mechanical theories as bourgeois historians do. Getting a good picture of Soviet society also involves a vastly better theoretical framework and

more serious theoretical thought than the bourgeois historians. But it seems that whether society has become state capitalist or not, whether it is simply oppressive or whether there still is revolutionary energy (Nicaragua in the 80s), are important issues of historical veracity.

(With Carr too, I think there are issues of how accurate his factual material is as well as just his theoretical interpretations. He marked an advance in academic Sovietology, but not the last word in historical work. True, in discussing Carr, there is the issue of his having a seriously flawed theoretical

framework. But I don't see his theoretical framework as totally separated from the issue of veracity. I don't object to his elaborating his theoretical views and discussing theoretical matters. On the contrary, I think one of the reasons Carr accomplished anything is precisely because he did have theoretical interest. His open discussion of theoretical issues at certain places is far better than pretending to be a historian who is above theory, as if that were possible. But the fallacies of his theoretical framework definitely crippled his assessments. And I suspect they affected his factual work as well.)

I may well not have understood what you meant by certain points. But I put forward the above in the hope that it stimulate a further clarification of ideas. One of the important parts of the discussion on socialism is to bring forward what the various ideas and concepts we have are, which is part of establishing a basis from which we can advance.

Regards,  
Joseph

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## Socialism in One Country, a Letter to Phil

From: Joseph, Detroit  
August 14, 1994

Dear Phil,

Sorry it's taken me awhile to reply to your note of Aug. 7 about your remarks in the socialism discussion. As you undoubtedly know by now, Mark and I have seen your answer to Dave, and we believe it helps move the discussion along. It's important that you have written on this subject. Those who have the audacity to stick their neck out and take part in a this discussion will accomplish a good deal.

As to comments on your work, Mark has written an article expressing his views on some issues concerning what you have written. (This article was printed in *CWV Theoretical Journal* #4.) I wasn't intending to write specifically on your notes.

... (discussion of other issues excerpted by CWV)

While I hadn't intended to write specifically about your comments, let me raise one or two issues. There were some points in your answer where I couldn't quite grasp what analysis you were giving. In order to raise issues that may be of general concern in the dis-

ussion of Soviet history, I will discuss some things in your notes from the point of view of various things that certain formulations might mean. I am aware that I may stray quite far from your meanings, but your notes have served as a platform to raise some important issues. As well, it should be noted that the views I express here are my own opinions, and not necessarily those of others in the minority.

You talk of the eventual state capitalist society as having "a new legacy whose place in Russian history is still not a settled question." Of course, research on this society will continue so long as the history of the 20th century is still studied. But in general, isn't the overall nature of this society clear? The bureaucratic revisionist society represented a state capitalist society and a tyranny, which in its own way savagely repressed the revolutionary energy of the people. I know you agree with that, but I don't understand how you fit the issue of legacy in with that. I think the legacy is first and foremost the class nature and social nature of this regime, which is clear, and the condemnation of this legacy has been a key pillar of anti-revisionism.

You write: "This was a society of

state-capitalist bureaucrats disguised as communists..." indicating your condemnation of this society and characterization of it as state capitalism. And you also refer repeatedly and vigorously, in these notes and elsewhere, such as your letter on imperialism in the CWVTJ #2, to its imperialism. But you go on and say that the state capitalists posing as communists "...at first carried out a pell-mell industrialization and collectivization of the USSR in the face of world-wide economic collapse and surprised the world by helping to break the back of the Nazi war machine, then led an empire assembled from parts of the economically underdeveloped world to challenge the hegemony of the US before stagnating and disintegrating due to monstrous mismanagement and imperialist overextension."

Perhaps I am mistaken, but what seems to come through here is not just description of events, but a listing of accomplishments which the assessment of its legacy has to come to terms with.

Well, when we thought the Soviet Union was socialist until the mid-1950s, it was natural to get excited about the economic development, the anti-fascist war, and the building of an alternative

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*Gary, cont. from p. 43*

creases) and nurses and others. What are they trying to compare then? And if 14% of the "workforce" has grown 20% compared to the rest of the "workforce" of 86% who only grew 14%. where are we going here? The old shopkeepers and farmers were not in the "workforce" data as "professional/managerial", naturally there is more of a statistical jump here. What it shows is the continuing domination everywhere down the line of the ruling monopoly capitalists, absorbing the petty producers and replacing them in the economy with managers and low paying jobs and unemployment.

Again, what they are preaching is both a bourgeois academic approach and social democratic politics. Define a "middle class" as anyone wearing a

white collar and then crow that this "class" is growing faster than the working class; define a "new class" of professionals and managers and have them determine working class politics. It's old hat, it's boring, and it's bankrupt.

This article should serve as an introduction to our study of this question, which the "majority" has put front and center as a fundamental reason for their changing, social-democratic politics. They have lied about the data, but a real analysis still needs to be done.

There are many specific questions needing investigation in this area:

1. Changes in the government data - every ten years from 1920.
2. If there are growing numbers in the manager and highly skilled worker strata, what are the reasons? - shift of manufacturing out of country and pro-

letarianization of Asia, Africa, Latin America and less developed areas in Europe; does retooling the economy generate a surge in technical professionals and corresponding management? is the technical level of workers increasing in general as society incorporates technical advances into production? Has the continued increase in domination of monopoly capital necessitated a larger managerial strata?

3. Numbers for each class; does this show a meaningful change over time?

4. Analysis of the dispossessed strata - the appendage of the working class, intermingling with it, and its growth over time. There are more people in poverty than there are in the stratum of managers. Go lower and deeper![]

"world" as an example of the revolutionary energy unleashed by socialism. But now, although there is disagreement among comrades as to how to characterize the 20s, it is clear that at least from sometime in the 30s it became a consolidated state capitalist regime. And we have looked back at its various accomplishments carefully and in detail, and they turn out to be different than what we once thought. We now know what type of industrialization took place, the way the Soviet Union fought World War II, and its role as a post-world war II superpower (as you describe in your earlier letter to CWV).

So I don't think it is possible to separate off industrialization, the defeat of the Hitlerites, and the post-world war II building of a world sphere of influence and attribute it to in some way to a new legacy. I know some activists and trends try to claim the "good" things as proof of socialism while condemning "bad" things as due to the overall nature of society as state capitalist and imperialist or to bad leaders. You don't do this, but I wonder if the idea of a still unsettled legacy is, to some extent, a concession to this type of thinking. I think the idea of separating the Soviet "accomplishments" and the Soviet "failures" into two separate spheres is inconsistent and mistaken. If the idea is instead to meld these different features into the assessment of a new legacy, then it seems to me that this would also slur over the class features that decisively characterize revisionist society.

On another issue, you say that the Bolsheviks shouldn't just have given up, as Fred says. I think, from what I remember of the notes from Fred and the Seattle majority, that Fred glorified the wonders of above-class democracy, and this naturally was repulsive to you and others. (Indeed, by now, as he put aside the analysis of class as generally irrelevant, democracy could only become an above-class concept.) Moreover, in your notes you are apparently talking about the situation of what to do at a particular time, or a particular year.

So perhaps the general remarks I am going to make are besides the point. But I did want to raise that, in my view,

a revolutionary government can only last as long as it has the right to believe that it speaks for the revolutionary masses. True, it is impossible to make a mechanical rule as to how judge this, a rule which could be applied in all historical situations and all revolutions in all decades and countries. (It's even impossible to specify a mechanical rule for how to carry out elections in bourgeois democracies at all times and places, to say nothing of judging the revolutionary situations when mass action determines support.) Nevertheless, the criterion can't be abandoned. On the contrary, it becomes even more important in moments of revolution.

The Bolsheviks gave an example of how to protect power from the reac-

tion through revolutionary means. But they did not give an example of what to do when the mass support is lost—not temporarily, but sufficiently so that the government can't really be said to be on the basis of this support. This I believe is a real issue. And when the revisionists presented a tyranny without support as the dictatorship of the proletariat, when they represented ordinary repression as revolutionary violence, when they put a damper on all of society in the name of a working class democracy, it was one of the things that did and will tarnish socialist theory in the eyes of the workers, and justly so, unless anti-revisionism exposes it.

On another subject, I wasn't clear  
*continued on p. 44*

### ANNOUNCEMENT: *El Machete* available

by Oleg, Chicago

The Chicago Workers' Voice/ Voz Obrera has begun receiving a revolutionary newspaper from Mexico called *El Machete*. You can get an idea of the paper's stand from its masthead which gives the slogan, "Proletarios de todos los países, uníos!" (workers of all countries, unite!), and says it is a, "periódico obrero y campesino" (newspaper of the workers and peasants. The masthead has a hammer and sickle inside a star on one side and a clenched fist on the other.

Since the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas in Jan. of 1994, the attention of revolutionary minded activists in the U.S. and in other countries has been drawn much more to Mexico. *El Machete* reprints many of the important statements of the EZLN.

At the call of the Zapatistas, a convention of all the leftist forces in Mexico was held in Chiapas and the CND (Convención Nacional Democrática) was formed. Inside the CND a fight is going on between the reformist, opportunist section which is allied with the PRD (Cuatemoc Cardenas' party) and the left forces which are more revolutionary minded. *El Machete* is in the left-wing camp, the so-called (by the right) "ultras". It carries commentaries opposing and exposing the maneuverings of the opportunist, pro-PRD section inside the CND.

*El Machete* also carries news of mass struggles and organizations of workers and peasants in other parts of Mexico.

We will send *El Machete*, for the cost of mailing, to any of our readers who are interested. Please send \$1 (U.S.) for each issue you want to CWV, P.O. Box 11542, Chicago, IL 60611.

You can write directly to *El Machete* to subscribe "*El Machete*", Apartado Postal 1687, Puebla, Puebla, MEXICO. They are asking N\$60 (New Pesos) for 20 issues.

The CWV is distributing *El Machete* because it gives a more left-wing revolutionary perspective than any other paper we have seen from Mexico.