

MIM or MLM? Confronting the Divergent Politics of the Petty Bourgeois “Left” On the Labor Aristocracy and Other Burning Issues in Today’s Revolutionary Struggle

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“It is inevitable that the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will give expression to their own ideologies. It is inevitable that they will stubbornly assert themselves on political and ideological questions by every possible means. You cannot expect them to do otherwise. We should not use the method of suppression and prevent them from expressing themselves, but should allow them to do so and at the same time argue with them and direct appropriate criticism at them. Undoubtedly we must criticize wrong ideas of every description. It certainly would not be right to refrain from criticism, look on while wrong ideas spread unchecked and allow them to dominate the field. Mistakes must be criticized and pernicious weeds fought wherever they crop up.”

- Mao Tse Tung,

“On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People”

Introduction

There is a ‘Third Worldist’ line circulating within ‘First World’ Leftist circles. It claims that workers in the U.S. and other developed capitalist countries are not part of the international proletariat. It says the ‘real’ proletariat exists only in the Third World, and that First World workers are a

labor aristocracy (LA) and enemies of the ‘real’ proletariat. Among those who promote this line (which we in the New Afrikan Black Panther Party - Prison Chapter call the vulgar labor aristocracy [VLA] line), are some who *call* themselves Maoists.

We stepped forward during latter 2013 to refute this line in our article, “Answering a Revisionist Line on the Labor Aristocracy”. There we demonstrated that the VLA line represents not a Marxist or proletarian position, but is rather revisionist and originated with the petty bourgeoisie (PB).¹ In response, the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons (MIMP), which shares the VLA line, published a polemical reply.² We now respond.

Since we were founded in 2005, the NABPP-PC has put forth considerable effort to work in unity with MIMP and its now defunct parent organization, the Maoist internationalist movement (MIM). Our cadre have worked within MIMP/MIM’s prisoner study groups and “mass” organizations, we’ve helped keep them abreast of conditions within the Empire’s prisons in support of their work to publicize such conditions, we’ve published some of their writings in our newsletters and have written for theirs, we’ve worked to help them fight censorship of their media, etc. But unity without struggle results only in degeneration, is non-dialectical, and in political work amounts to PB liberalism.

It is therefore incumbent upon us to openly struggle against what we see to be erroneous in MIMP’s theory and practice, and the PB framework within which these positions have developed. This is especially necessary

¹ Kevin “Rashid” Johnson, “Answering A Revisionist Line on the Labor Aristocracy,” August 25, 2013, can be read at rashidmod.com/?p=879

² Wiawimawo of MIM (Prisons), “Rashid’s Empty Rhetoric on the Labor Aristocracy,” *Under Lock and Key*, No. 34 (Sept./Oct. 2013), pp. 8-9.

because MIMP represents itself as a Maoist revolutionary leadership to many prisoners in Amerika.

While our criticisms here may be particularly sharp on some points, our aim is to build a firmer basis for greater unity with MIMP, by struggling with them to identify and correct positions we see as ideologically and politically divergent from a genuine Maoist line. The same applies to other Leftists who share some or all of MIMP's positions, especially on the LA question. Most of whom are also PB.

In this response we will not only answer MIMP's polemic, but will critique their claim to represent the Maoist line. We will also address their PB origin and resultant revisionist politics, and tackle related questions of fundamental importance to genuine proletarian revolutionaries, such as who are our real friends and enemies and how we correctly identify them, the determinative role of class and class analysis in correctly resolving these questions and so on.

There is Only One Revolutionary Class

Karl Marx was the first to scientifically apply political-economy to make a thorough analysis and study of human society and its stages of development. Subsequently, V.I. Lenin and Mao Tse Tung respectively advanced Marx's political-economy, philosophy (Dialectical Materialism) and principles of scientific socialism, which we now call Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) or simply Maoism.

Through his political-economic analysis Marx in collaboration with Frederick Engels, identified the fundamental component of capitalist production (namely the commodity) and the principal human relationship

and class struggle that forms the basis of commodity relations in capitalist society, namely the struggle between the class of productive wage laborers (the proletariat) and the employing capitalist class (the bourgeoisie). As Mao observed, “[b]eginning with the commodity, the simplest element of capitalism, [Marx] made a thorough study of the economic structure of capitalist society. Millions of people saw and handled commodities every day but were so used to them they took no notice. Marx alone studied commodities scientifically.”³ And from this study Marx, “went on to reveal the relations among people hidden behind commodities.”⁴

Marx set out these studies in his classic works *Capital* and *Wages, Price and Profit*. There we find his identification of the proletariat who must sell their labor power at less than its actual value to the bourgeoisie in order to survive, and the bourgeoisie who in turn sells the commodities produced by the proletariat on the market at their actual value and pockets the surplus as profits to become immensely wealthy.

This inherently exploitative relationship leaves the proletariat producing everything that sustains society while owning little to nothing, whereas the bourgeois produces nothing yet owns the entire productive system and means of production, including productive land, factories, transportation infrastructure, machinery, communication systems, etc.

Marx therefore recognized that the proletariat is the *only* class whose interests are in diametrical opposition to the bourgeoisie’s, and is therefore

³ Mao Tse-tung, “Rectify the Party’s Style of Work,” Feb.1, 1942.

⁴ Mao Tse-tung, “Reading Notes on the Soviet Text Political Economy,” *Critique of Soviet Economics*, trans. Moss Roberts (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), p. 110.

the only class with nothing to lose and everything to gain by overthrowing the capitalist class and system. In the *Communist Manifesto* he and Engels therefore metaphorically characterized the proletariat as the only class with “nothing to lose but its chains,” and consequently the only genuinely revolutionary class existing under capitalism.

He established that a higher and more perfect productive system would come after capitalism, namely communism, which would eliminate class divisions and exploitative human relations. He demonstrated that this was bound to come to pass because all previous phases of human social-historical and technological development prepared the basis for it.

Communism would come about through political-economic revolutions where the proletariat overthrew the bourgeoisie, destroying its old state system and creating in its place proletarian states through which the workers in alliance with other previously oppressed sectors would exercise its own class dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in all spheres – ideological, economic, political, military and cultural. This process would advance societies through “the abolition of class distinctions generally, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations.”⁵

With the exception of the short lived Paris Commune of 1871, it wasn't until after Marx and Engels' lifetimes that the proletariat began seizing state power and transforming society as they'd predicted. This was during the stage

⁵ Karl Marx, “The Class Struggle in France 1848 to 1850,” *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers 1973), Vol. 1, p. 282.

where capitalism developed in several advanced capitalist countries into its *final and highest* stage, namely imperialism. In his pamphlet, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," Lenin thoroughly studied and described this development. He went on to prove in his polemical struggles against various Marxist revisionists that imperialism did not change the basic class contradictions of capitalism nor Marx's basic theory of political economy, but only raised them to a higher level. He also showed that the rise of imperialism marked the dawn of the proletarian revolutions that Marx had foretold. It was with these understandings that Lenin was himself able to lead the Russian proletariat in making the first successful proletarian revolution just as Marx had predicted.

Although imperialism has not changed capitalism's fundamental contradictions, we have seen a steady change in its tactics and the consequent conditions of crisis, chaos and human suffering it has unleashed across the world in its constant ruthless drive for profits and in its continuous life and death struggle to maintain world hegemony over the proletariat and other oppressed sectors.

Having established in Marxist terms that the proletariat is the only revolutionary class under capitalism, we now turn to the PB or literally the 'little bourgeoisie'. As our quote from Mao at the top of this paper makes plain, the PB is *not* a revolutionary class, *does not* present a revolutionary ideological or political line, and we *must not* allow their pretensions to go unchallenged.

The PB is an intermediary class that lies between the capitalist ruling class (the 'big' bourgeoisie) and the proletariat. As such it tends to muddle and

vacillate between the opposing class interests and values of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. As Marx described it, “the petite bourgeois ... is a *transition class*, in which the interests of two classes are simultaneously mutually blunting.”⁶ Hence they are literally the ‘middle class’.

As noted above, our earlier article refuting the VLA line pointed out its PB origins. In their polemical reply MIMP stated they felt our article was directed at them among others. A clear admission of their PB identity, on top of the fact that they *never* denied being a PB group. And why? Because they can't. In fact by their own class analysis of Amerika, they admit themselves and by extension, their views and ideology to be firmly PB. This is why while they endlessly disparage First World workers as an overall counter-revolutionary class, they *never* apply a critical class analysis to themselves. And they've always placed the highest premium on hiding their identities from even their own followers, a point we'll return to.

But as we've made clear and is the very basis of our critique of the VLA line, we in the NABPP-PC completely reject MIMP's class analysis as anti-Marxist. Yet even when a genuinely Marxist analysis is applied to MIMP they still prove to be PB. So, however one looks at it MIMP lacks the class identity and consciousness to proclaim itself and its positions to be revolutionary. And *this*, as we will thoroughly demonstrate, is why they produce all manner of revisionist and anti-Maoist positions, including the VLA line.

And so, our readers can be the judge, we will refute MIMP's positions and claims to Maoist practice using none other than the founders of MLM, namely Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao, as well as Joseph Stalin, whom they also

⁶ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, emphasis in original), pp. 43-44.

claim to uphold and cite as an authority for positions they take. This will allow their imprisoned students who haven't had the means to broadly study and contrast the voluminous works of these Marxists with the MIM line, to determine who indeed are the "revisionists" of MLM.

What Class is MIMP Reppin'?

MIMP opened their polemic against us with the observation – correct in this instance – that it is a first priority that Communists (which *in Marxist terms* means advanced class-conscious proletarians) correctly distinguish between real friends and enemies. Failure to do this and relate to people accordingly can only result in our pushing allies into the enemy's arms and ourselves embracing poisonous vipers.

Mao taught us that the Communist method of distinguishing between real friends and enemies is by analyzing their class origin, stand and practice.⁷ This because, as he observed, "[i]n class society *everyone* lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with a brand of class."⁸ Meaning that everyone, based upon their social-economic conditioning, sees things differently and live, think and act according to their own class values, interests, influences and aspirations. This reality is based firmly in what Marx described as the "guiding principles" of his studies.

⁷ Mao asked "Who are our friends? Who are our enemies? ... To distinguish real friends from real enemies, we must make a general analysis of the economic status of the various classes in ... society and of their respective attitudes toward the revolution." "Analysis of the classes in Chinese society," March 1926.

⁸ Mao Tse-tung, "On Practice: On the Relationship Between Knowledge and Practice, Between Knowing and Doing," July 1937.

“In the social production of their existence [people] enter into definite, necessary relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production corresponding to a determinate stage of development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which there correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life-process in general. It is not the consciousness of [people] that determines their being, but on the contrary it is the social being that determines their consciousness.”⁹

So when we hear anyone – including MIMP – claiming to give revolutionary leadership, we must look closely at their class origin and orientation. Otherwise, as Lenin warned, we set ourselves up to be misled. “People”, he said, “always were and always will be the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics until they learn to discover the *interests* of some class behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises....”¹⁰

Like Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, Mao maintained that the role of revolutionary leadership lies exclusively with the proletariat. Mao noted, “anything that is truly of the masses must necessarily be led by the proletariat,” and “we must necessarily take the class stand of the proletariat

⁹ Karl Marx, “Preface and Introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*,” (Peking: Foreign Language Press), p. 3.

¹⁰ V.I. Lenin, “The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism,” March 1913.

and not that of the petty bourgeoisie.”¹¹ Lenin similarly cautioned, “even the most revolutionary petty bourgeoisie cannot want what the class conscious proletariat does want...”¹² He added, it is “that petty bourgeois diffusiveness and instability, that incapacity for sustained effort, unity, and organized action, which if encouraged, must inevitably destroy any proletarian revolutionary movement.” Because “through their ordinary everyday, imperceptible, elusive and demoralizing activities, they produce the very results which the bourgeoisie need....”¹³

Lenin’s words have proven almost prophetic in the constant subversion and derailment of the proletarian movements in First World countries by PB ‘left’ groups and individuals and their revisionist politics, which includes those embracing the MIM line.

So it is abundantly clear that the genuinely MLM line holds that the PB is per se *not* a revolutionary class nor suited to give revolutionary leadership. Rather this role lies only with the revolutionary proletariat, who must avoid becoming tainted by the PB atmosphere which “permeates and corrupts the proletariat and constantly causes among the proletariat relapses into petty bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternating moods of exaltation and dejection.”¹⁴

Which brings us again to MIMP’s class character, which, if it is indeed PB, means its claims to give authentic revolutionary leadership are, in Lenin’s words, pure *deception*.

¹¹ Mao Tse-tung, “Talk at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art,” May 1942.

¹² V.I. Lenin, “‘Left-wing’ childishness and the Petty Bourgeois Mentality,” May 5, 1918.

¹³ V.I. Lenin, “‘Left-wing’ Communism - An Infantile Disorder,” April/May 1920.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

As we've already pointed out, by their own class analysis of Amerika MIMP classifies itself as PB. Indeed their essential argument against us is that *there is no proletariat in Amerika* (which is where MIMP is based), but only a homogeneous LA which they say "form a new petty bourgeoisie."¹⁵ The only other class and sub-class they recognize as existent in the First World countries are the bourgeoisie and what they call the "First World lumpen".

MIMP maintains the position that there is no First World proletariat as one of their "cardinal points" and declares anyone who even "consciously disagrees" with it their enemy.¹⁶ Which is problematic and anti-Maoist on several points. First it demonstrates that MIMP determines friends and enemies not by class but rather by one's willingness to blindly and uncritically accept whatever they say. And not only must one not speak out in disagreement, they must not even disagree in conscious thought. Even the liberal bourgeois doesn't take thought policing this far! The U.S. constitution is even interpreted by its bourgeois courts to protect one from punishment for their beliefs. We need only go as far as the quote at the beginning of this article to see that Maoists don't repress contrary views, not even those of actual enemies and reactionaries. But MIMP opened their polemic contending that they "cannot forgive" us for daring to disagree with their class analysis of Amerika and VLA line. But let's look at the PB.

¹⁵ MIMP maintains the position as one of its six "Cardinal Principles," that the LA is a new PB, stating in the front of each issue of its *Under Lock and Key* newsletter: the "so-called workers" of the First World countries are "bought off by imperialism [and] form a new petty bourgeoisie called the labor aristocracy."

¹⁶ *Ibid.* In each issue of *Under Lock and Key* MIMP states as to its six Cardinal "Principles," "We consider other organizations actively upholding these points to be fraternal". And as to its prisoner-based groups, "members don't have to agree with MIM (Prisons)'s cardinal points ... but they can't consciously disagree with any of them either."

The PB or middle class consists of educators, doctors, intellectuals, lawyers, small business owners, middle and lower management and so on. Essentially those professionals who live by mental labor and individual achievement rather than working as collective manual laborers and in the service trades and industries. What distinguishes them from the proletariat is their mental as opposed to manual labor, and their lack of ownership of the means of production distinguishes them from the big bourgeoisie. But what they have in common with the proletariat is their being compelled to sell their labor power for a wage to survive, and they have reliance on individual achievement and specializing in mental labor in common with the big bourgeoisie. Hence, based on their social-economic practice their thinking and practice fluctuates between and muddles the mutually contradictory interests of the proletariat on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other.

This conditioning generates in the PB an outlook that is inconsistent, individualistic, idealistic, opportunistic, disparaging of manual labor, and a tendency to elevate intellectual work (and the role of ideas) above manual work (and the role of practice). This is why even among the 'radical' PB we see a tendency toward intellectualizing and endlessly theorizing political struggle as opposed to bringing it down to the level of solving problems through practical application and joining the ranks of the manual laborers.

MIMP's members fall firmly in the class of PB intellectuals and blatantly exhibit PB prejudices. They also prove absolutely unwilling to and incapable of solving real world problems in their approach to political 'work'. They excel at talking shit but fail miserably at practice. And their approach to political organizing is distinctly PB and anti-Maoist. Rather than practice the Maoist Mass Line they operate within a small closed circle intellectual-oriented clique

that is divorced from playing an active role in any proletarian struggle, and indeed remains alienated, aloof and self-isolated from the broad masses. Whereas, conversely *every* revolutionary Marxist – with examples set by Marx, Lenin and Mao – lived amongst and based their political work and organizations firmly within the broad masses of proletarian and poor non-proletarian workers. And all at *great* personal sacrifice and danger.

Once we recognize MIMP's PB character, their embracing the VLA line becomes an obvious expression of their class tendency to generate division within the ranks of the proletariat, and to avoid practicing the Mass Line and integrating with the proletariat by claiming there is no proletariat in Amerika where they live to do mass work amongst. Furthermore, they demonstrate that "spinelessness" that Lenin observed is typical of the PB in their admitted terror of government repression if they ever tried to do mass work, citing the experiences of the Black Panther Party (BPP).

Contrary to these PB *excuses*, we have demonstrated in our prior article and will further show herein that a sizable proletariat does exist in Amerika, and while the BPP did in fact suffer extensive government repression they persevered; and Lenin, Mao and their comrades led *successful* revolutions in the teeth of repression *vastly* worse than the BPP experience.

Apart from their mass style, what set Lenin's and Mao's Parties apart from MIMP and similar 'Leftist' groups was first their proletarian class stand and loyalty, and secondly their tactical ingenuity, fearless audacity and flexibility. Although the BPP was audacious and had a mass style, which is largely what sustained it despite constant official attack, it left much to be desired in these other areas.

And unlike MIMP, Lenin and Mao recognized the indispensable role and need of the vanguard revolutionary Party to politically awaken, unite and organize the proletariat and other oppressed sectors. They didn't pretend as MIMP does that the masses could accomplish this on their own, and upon their failure to do so and falling under sway of bourgeois influence, denounce them as an unredeemable and bourgeoisified LA. Nor did they look for excuses nor cite fear of repression to justify sitting on their hands in trepidation.

They knew the masses couldn't make revolution alone, and if left to their own spontaneous activism would pursue nothing more than economic and such like trade union benefits, and be misled and corrupted by bourgeois and PB misdirection. Just as U.S. workers have done in their decades-long absence of a mass-based revolutionary Communist Party. This was the entire purpose behind Lenin's struggle to develop the revolutionary Party to lead the proletarian revolution. As he observed, "[without] a party of iron that has been tempered in the struggle, a party enjoying the confidence of all honest people in the class in question, a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, such a struggle cannot be waged successfully."¹⁷

Likewise, Mao stated:

"If there is to be a revolution, there must be a revolutionary party, without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary

¹⁷ *Op. cit.* note 13.

style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses in defeating imperialism and its running dogs.”¹⁸

Yet MIMP turns things on their head, blaming instead US workers for lack of revolutionary consciousness and struggle, while proclaiming itself to be a revolutionary leadership, that is a revolutionary vanguard which explains the lack of any revolutionary movement in Amerika. As Mao often pointed out, “when revolution fails it is the fault of the vanguard,” *not* the masses.

Furthermore, Lenin said those who flee the real revolutionary movement for fear of repression are to be pitied and counseled, but as for those who try to blame the workers and portray their flight as politically principled, he denounced them as “apostates” and “disgusting renegades,” stating “[t]hese runaways then becomes the worst advisors for the working class movement and therefore its dangerous enemies.”¹⁹

And while MIMP is fond of calling anyone who disagrees with them ‘revisionists’, every serious student of Lenin knows it was against PB “revisionists” who distorted Marxism that he and Marx before him, waged most of their polemical struggles. This was because once they had soundly discredited the openly bourgeois theories and their proponents (bourgeois and PB alike), these elements had to resort to the sneakier tactic of trying to *revise* Marxism from within to conform to their own class interests. This is why they were called “revisionists”. Even in Lenin's day the struggle against revisionism was of long duration. As he pointed out, “the second half-century of the existence of Marxism began (in the [1890s]) with the struggle of a trend

¹⁸ Mao Tse-tung, “Revolutionary Forces of the World Unite, Fight Against Imperialist Aggression!” November 1948.

¹⁹ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 19 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1960-1970), p. 398.

hostile to Marxism within Marxism itself.”²⁰ He also observed that a first and key Marxist principle the revisionists try to revise is scientific political economy, which as we showed in our previous article and will further demonstrate below, is *exactly* what MIMP has tried to do.

Mao likewise struggled ceaselessly against PB revisionists, characterizing them as those who “wave the red flag in order to attack the red flag”, and declared theirs as a most dangerous tendency which Marxists must unceasingly combat.

Consider now MIMP’s revision of Marxist political economy with their totally invented class definitions using abstract metaphors like people who wear “rags” (which is how they define what they call “First World Lumpen”), and “those who have nothing to lose but their chains” (which is how they define the proletariat).²¹ They actually *had* to resort to such metaphors because the instant Amerikan classes are analyzed using Marxist political economy, *everything* MIMP professes politically collapses like a house of cards in a windstorm.

Indeed, *that* they defined objective conditions or things with abstract metaphors is per se contrary to Marxism. Mao explained:

“*We are Marxists* and Marxism teaches that in our approach to a problem we should start from objective facts, not from abstract

²⁰ V.I. Lenin, “Marxism and Revisionism,” April 1908. Lenin also recognized revisionism to be the continuation of pre-Marxist socialism or utopian socialism.

²¹ See *op. cit.* note 2.

definitions, and that we should derive our guiding principles, policies and measures from an analysis of these facts.”²²

This is why Marx made a thorough and scientific study of core objective productive relations in order to identify and define classes, and didn't base that determination on abstract and arbitrary metaphors like “chains” and “rags”.

Lenin identified as one of the main “tendencies of petty-bourgeois revolutionism” against which his Bolsheviks waged “ruthless struggle” was the anti-Marxist tendency that, like MIMP, “refused (or, it might be more correct to say: was unable) to understand the need for a strictly objective appraisal of the class forces and their alignment, before taking any political action.”²³

But what's most problematic with the MIM/MIMP's use of abstract metaphors to define class, is this is something they opportunistically invented as a result of their inability to prevail in past debates with us where we took on their VLA line. Here is what happened.

In 2006 MIM opened a dialogue with NABPP-PC following their reading an issue of our *Right On!* Newsletter where we made reference to the U.S. proletariat. Of course they argued that the U.S. has no proletariat. In a letter dated February 26, 2006, MIM wrote to us: “A proletarian is a wage earner who is getting paid less than the value of their labor.” Our readers should note that *this* was a genuinely Marxist economic-based definition of the proletariat, not the metaphor they later adopted. MIM went on to say, “I challenge you to

²² Mao Tse-tung, “Talks to an Enlarged Central Work Conference,” January 30, 1962.

²³ *Op. cit.* note 13.

show” that workers in Amerika (New Afrikan workers in particular) “are paid less than the value of their labor or in other words that they produce surplus value.” This is exactly what we showed in our prior article.²⁴ So as a result MIMP abandoned the Marxist definition of the proletariat and said they now “prefer” to use an abstract metaphor of those in “chains” to describe the proletariat.

Furthermore, MIM also recognized a U.S. lumpen proletariat, conceding as much in several letters to us, including on April 28, 2006, where they wrote, “Huey [P. Newton] spoke of the growing lumpen proletariat in the U\$ that will be the force for revolution in this country. We are friendly to this line.” In turn we pointed out that lumpen simply means “broken” proletariat. To be broken means this strata had to first belong to an actual “whole”-proletariat. A point we also made in our prior article. It was with this that MIMP opportunistically abandoned recognizing a “lumpen proletariat” and invented the abstract term “First World Lumpen”. In fact, they admit this in their polemic, stating, “ We completely agree with Rashid’s logic here. And that’s why MIM (Prisons) started using the term ‘First World Lumpen’ to distinguish from ‘lumpenproletariat’.”

So we see that when their line is shown to run afoul of genuine Marxism, MIMP will abandon the Marxist line and invent abstract concepts to justify holding on to erroneous positions. This is pure PB opportunism.

So MIMP's social-economic status, objective practice (or lack thereof), and class analysis all run counter to the revolutionary proletarian line of Maoism, and reflect the PB “revisionism” that Marx, Lenin and Mao fought

²⁴ *Op. cit.* note 1.

against. And that MIMP *calls* itself MLM despite their stark deviations from this line in no way contradicts their revisionism. It actually comports with it. As Lenin recognized, “[t]he victory of Marxism in the realm of theory forces its enemy to pose as Marxist. This is historical dialectics.”

Remolding the PB

Before MIMP, MIM and its cadre also refused to base their cadre and to do political work among the masses. Instead of practicing the mass line they hid out on college campuses (amidst the nascent intellectuals), and now, upon MIM's demise, MIMP is a small cell that focuses on prisoners.

MIMP admits choosing prisoners because they prove most receptive to its ‘leadership’ which in essence means MIMP has latched onto a particularly vulnerable and desperate social group, an isolated group whose severely miserable predicament leaves them desperate for any sympathetic ear and tending to be less critical of those who present themselves as sympathetic. Also prisoners generally lack political awareness and training and access to the voluminous Marxist and relevant works. So they are least suited to critically challenge MIMP’s Maoist representations.

Furthermore that MIMP is based in society while prisoners are confined (and MIMP refuses to allow prisoners to join its group), provides MIMP the perfect excuse for not physically basing itself amongst its targeted base. They can therefore always avoid the direct challenges and dangers of actually participating in the day to day struggles of that base as the Maoist Mass Line demands of revolutionary leadership. This is why we in the NABPP-PC live and struggle right alongside those we aspire to lead, and lead not by preaching but rather by example.

MIMP obviously recognizes that prisoners are one of the only sectors that they can easily convince that their teachings are genuinely Maoist. In fact *no* other Maoist group or movement (especially in the Third World where MIMP says the proletariat is located) takes the MIM line seriously. This is why MIM/MIMP has always disparaged every modern Maoist leader and group as revisionist – that is every one of them except MIM and MIMP and their offshoots.

Also Mao specifically denounced MIMP's PB form of political organization as "closed doorism" and "sectarian". He said as to Communist groups, "we are not a small opinionated sect and must learn to open our doors and cooperate democratically with non-Party people, and how to consult with others."²⁵ In this talk he rejected Communists organizing in "small sects or cliques" typical of PB groups like MIMP.

But there is hope for MIMP. However that hope lies in doing exactly what they have not done, refuse to do, and admittedly fear. That being to remold their class consciousness from that of the PB to the proletariat by integrating themselves with the masses and taking up their struggles and lifestyle as its own. Mao explained this difficult process of committing "class suicide," which he underwent himself:

"If you want the masses to understand you, if you want to be one with the masses, you must make up your mind to undergo a long and even painful process of tempering. Here I might mention the experience of how my own feelings changed. I began life as a student and at school acquired the ways of a student. I then used to feel it

²⁵ Mao Tse-tung, "Speech at the Assembly of Representatives of the Shenshi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region," 1942.

undignified to do even a little manual labor.... At that time I felt that intellectuals were the only clean people in the world, while in comparison workers and peasants were dirty. I did not mind wearing the clothes of other intellectuals, believing them clean, but I would not put on clothes belonging to a worker or peasant, believing them dirty. But after I became a revolutionary and lived with workers and peasants and soldiers of the revolutionary army, I gradually came to know them well, and they gradually came to know me well too. It was then, and only then, that I fundamentally changed the bourgeois and petty bourgeois feelings implanted in me in the bourgeois schools. I came to feel that compared with the workers and peasants the unremoulded intellectuals were not clean and that, in the last analysis, the workers and peasants were the cleanest people and, even though their hands were soiled and their feet smeared with cow-dung, they were really cleaner than the bourgeois and petty bourgeois intellectuals. That is what is meant by a change in feelings, a change from one class to another.”²⁶

Lenin likewise recognized that the PB “can (and must) be transformed and re-educated only by means of very prolonged, slow and cautious organizational work.”²⁷

MIMP clearly has not undergone any such remolding process. First, because it refuses to base itself amongst US workers whom it declares to be entirely non-proletarian. Second, because they don't live in the Third World

²⁶ *Op. cit.* note 11.

²⁷ *Op. cit.* note 13.

where they claim the only real proletariat exists, and in their polemic they make clear that they have no intention of moving there either.

So overall it is no mystery why MIMP admittedly lacks the resources to do any really revolutionary work, and functions as nothing more than a tiny sectarian “prison focused cell”.²⁸ And this despite that its members have had decades of prior experience and failure of the same sort under MIM. Again, it is due to their PB line and practice which shuns the masses and the genuinely Maoist proletarian Mass Line. With Maoists, proof is in the product. As Mao explained *and demonstrated*: “[t]he correctness or incorrectness of the political and ideological line determine everything. With the correct line the party will gain everything; even if one has not a single soldier at first, there will be soldiers; if one has no guns, there will be guns; and even if there is no political power, political power will be gained. With an incorrect line everything will be lost.” Hello MIM?

In “Mastering Bolshevism” (March 3, 1937) Stalin made a similar observation, especially concerning the strength of a revolutionary Party lying in its remaining based in the working masses and its willingness to listen to their criticisms. He sounds to speak as if directly to the MIM line.

“In order to guide correctly, the experience of the leaders must be supplemented by the experience of the party masses, by the experience of the working class, by the experience of the toilers, by the experience of the so-called ‘small people’.

“And when is this possible?

²⁸ *Under Lock and Key*, Vol. 39, p. 8.

“It is possible only if the leaders are closely connected with the masses, if they are bound up with the Party masses, with the working class, with the peasantry, with the working intellectuals.

“Contacts with the masses, the strengthening of these contacts, readiness to listen to the voices of the masses – in this lie the strength and impregnability of Bolshevik leadership.

“It may be taken as a rule that so long as Bolsheviks keep contacts with the broad masses of the people, they will be invincible. And, contrariwise it is sufficient for Bolsheviks to break away from the masses and lose contact with them, to become covered with bureaucratic rust, for them to lose all their strength and become converted into nonentities.

“In the system of mythology of the ancient Greeks there was one famous hero, Antaeus, who, as mythology declares, was the son of Poseidon, the god of the sea, and Gaea, the goddess of the Earth. He was particularly attached to his mother, who bore him, fed him and brought him up so that there was no hero whom this Antaeus did not vanquish. He was considered to be an invincible hero. Wherein lay his strength? It lay in the fact that every time he was hard-pushed in a struggle with an opponent, he touched the earth, his mother, who had borne him and fed him, and thus regained new strength.

“But nevertheless, he had a weak spot – the danger of being separated in some way from the earth. His enemies took account of this weakness of his and waited for him. And an enemy was found

who took advantage of this weakness and vanquished him. This was Hercules. But how did Hercules defeat him? He tore him from the earth, raised him in the air, deprived him of the possibility of touching the earth, and thus throttled him in the air.

“I think that Bolsheviks remind us of Antaeus, the hero of Greek mythology. Like Antaeus, they are strong in keeping contact with their mother, with the masses, who bore them, fed them, and educated them. And as long as they keep contact with their mother, with the people, they have every chance of remaining invincible.

“This is the key to the invincibility of Bolshevik leadership.”

Contrary to Stalin's admonition, MIMP neither has its feet planted within the masses, nor is it willing to “listen to the voices” of its followers, or anyone else for that matter. A point we should look at closer, from a Maoist standpoint.

Maoists Embrace Criticism, MIMP Doesn't

As already noted, to even “consciously disagree” with MIMP means being declared an enemy by them. Such intolerance of being criticized is one of MIMP's most telling PB characteristics, and a tendency that Mao rebuked so often and in so many ways, we could compile a book of his writings on this subject alone.

And to show the consistency of MIMPs aversion to being disputed, let's take a few more documented examples, because they're certain to argue that they actually invite criticism.

In addition to their statement that they “cannot forgive” us for disputing their VLA line, in reply to a subsequent letter from us MIMP contended that they wouldn't have criticized us in their polemic if we hadn't written our critical article first.²⁹

That such a position is blatantly anti-Maoist and smacks of PB liberalism is made clear by Mao's article “Combat Liberalism”. There he pointed out that Communists have a *duty* to speak up whenever they hear erroneous positions advanced by proclaimed revolutionaries, and our failure to do so for whatever reason including to stay in good favor with others, is to practice PB liberalism. Yet MIMP says one must not disagree with them if one expects to stay in their good graces. Their stated position with us (a dressed up version of “you hit me first ...”) also reveals their use of criticism not to identify and correct errors in a principled manner, but rather as reprisal against those whom they feel have criticized and disputed them. But while they seek to discourage and avoid criticism, anyone who's read their publications cannot but note that MIMP spares no opportunity to critique and dispute everyone else.

Mao described such people as liberals who “look upon the principles of Marxism as abstract dogma. They approve of Marxism, but are not prepared to practice it or to practice it in full; they are not prepared to replace their liberalism by Marxism. These people have their Marxism, but they have their liberalism as well – they talk Marxism but practice liberalism; they apply Marxism to others but liberalism to themselves. They keep both kinds of

²⁹ This was stated by MIMP in a letter to us of December 2013.

goods in stock and find a use for each. This is how the minds of certain people work.”³⁰ And those ‘certain people’ he identified are the PB in particular.

But MIMP doesn't practice criticism as Mao proposed, to identify and correct errors and solve problems that affect the struggle, but rather they use criticism to belittle and disparage. They are both persecutory and hyper-critical. Indeed, we know of not just a few comrades who have in their own words, grown weary and quit MIMP groups because of its endless vitriolic criticisms of everyone and everything else, despite its own abject failure to produce any practical solutions to any problems.

Furthermore, MIMP kicks prisoners out of its study groups who dare to disagree with them. One example appeared in the April 2013 issue of *Turning the Tide* newspaper, which published a letter from MIMP expelling an anti-imperialist prisoner from one of their study groups because he voiced disagreements with them.

He was rebuked for speaking out. MIMP wrote, “It's a waste of our time to study with people who consistently disagree with us,” and told him “if you would like to study with us again, please send us a self-criticism and we will consider the prospect.” Mao specifically and sharply condemned such efforts to silence people and coerce them to accept one's views as contrary to Communist principles. Here are just a few examples:

“[T]here are some comrades who are afraid of the masses initiating discussion and putting forward ideas which differ from those of the leaders and leading organizations. As soon as problems are

³⁰ Mao Tse-tung, “Combat Liberalism,” September 7, 1937.

discussed they suppress the activism of the masses and do not allow others to speak out. This attitude is extremely evil.”³¹

“The only way to settle questions of an ideological nature or controversial issues among the people, is by the democratic method, the method of discussion, criticism, persuasion and education, and not by the method of coercion or repression.”³²

“Our comrades must understand that ideological remolding involves long-term, patient and painstaking work, and they must not attempt to change people's ideology which has been shaped over decades of their life, by giving a few lectures or by holding a few meetings. Persuasion, not compulsion is the only way to convince them. Compulsion will never result in convincing them.”³³

“There are some comrades who cannot bear to listen to ideas contrary to their own and cannot bear to be criticized. This is very wrong.”³⁴

He rejected the practice of those who create an atmosphere where people fear to speak openly in opposition to their views as MIMP practices, stating, “when this kind of atmosphere is engendered and people don't dare to speak in your presence then it is up to you to keep away.”³⁵ So according to Mao, it wasn't the critical thinking prisoner who should have been eliminated from the study group, but rather MIMP. But there's more.

³¹ *Op. cit.* note 22.

³² Mao Tse-tung, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,” February 27, 1957.

³³ *Op. cit.* note 8.

³⁴ *Op. cit.* note 22.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

“Communists are duty bound to co-operate with people outside the Party who are against [the imperialists], and have no right to shut them out. This principle means that we should listen attentively to the views of the masses, keep in close touch with them and not be alienated from them ... Communists should cooperate devotedly with non-Party people and must not act arbitrarily or keep everything in their own hands ... Communists must listen attentively to the views of people outside the Party and let them have their say. If what they say is right, we ought to welcome it, and learn from their strong points; if they are wrong, we should let them finish what they are saying and then patiently explain things to them. A Communist must never be opinionated and domineering, or think he is good in everything while others are good in nothing; he must never shut himself up in his little room or brag and boast and lord it over others. Apart from die-hard reactionaries who are in league with the [imperialists] and with the traitors and are sabotaging resistance and unity, and who of course have no right to speak, everyone is entitled to freedom of speech, and it doesn't matter even if what he says is wrong ... Hence Communists have the duty to co-operate devotedly with non-Party people and have no right to exclude them and monopolize everything.”³⁶

³⁶ *Op. cit.* note 25.

Stalin held likewise: "It is generally recognized that no science can develop and flourish without a battle of opinions, without freedom of criticism."³⁷

Not only is MIMP intolerant of being criticized and disputed, we have seen few if any instances where they – and MIM before them - didn't name-call or hurl insults at those who dispute them or don't conform to their views. It is there M.O. even, to denounce their critics or non-conformists as First World chauvinists, Trotskyist, crypto-Trotskyists, anarchist, fascist, pigs and/or pig agents. Matter of fact in their polemic, they slyly classified us as amongst the "anarchists and crypto-Trotskyists" with whom they've "drawn a line of distinction." Yet *another* tendency Mao disapproved of – namely, putting labels on, name-calling and insulting people.

"We must never ... permit the bad old habit of 'sticking labels' on people to continue."³⁸

"Lu Hsun once said in criticism of such people, 'Hurling insults and threats is not fighting.' What is scientific never fears criticism, for science is truth and fears no refutation. But those who write subjectivist and sectarian articles and speeches in the form of Party stereotypes fear refutation, are very cowardly and therefore rely on pretention to overcome others, believing that they can thereby silence people and 'win the day.' Such pretentiousness cannot reflect

³⁷ Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the Problem of Linguistics* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1972) p. 29.

³⁸ Mao Tse-tung, "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," October 1938.

truth but it is an obstacle to truth. Truth does not strike a pose to overcome people but talks and acts honestly and simply.”³⁹

And here's Mao speaking to the absolute futility of those who like MIMP try and compel people to keep silent as though everyone can be intimidated.

“Those of you who ... do not allow people to speak, who think you are tigers, and that no one will dare touch your arse, whoever has this attitude, ten out of ten of you will fail. People will talk anyway. You think that no one will really dare to touch the arse of tigers like you? They damn well will!”⁴⁰

On many occasions Mao explained that Communists must give full play to democracy among the people, which means allowing them to openly and freely express any and all criticisms and disagreements they have. That refusing to do this is to practice commandism and dictatorship, which is unacceptable against the people. Those who don't permit full democracy he criticized as those who want all unity and no struggle. Which is non-dialectical and completely contradicts basic Marxist philosophy. As we've noted he rejected tendencies to try and shut people up (even our enemies) or force ideas on the people that they don't yet grasp, because this alienates them, violates their right to voluntarily and intelligently accept Communist leadership, and reflects PB impetuosity.

And he didn't encourage the people to criticize us as a mere formality. He meant that we take and ponder those criticisms seriously. Here's Mao once more.

³⁹ Mao Tse-tung, “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing,” February 8, 1942.

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.* note 22.

“If we are to promote democracy, we must encourage others to criticize us and listen to their criticisms. To be able to withstand criticism we must first take measures to carry out self-criticism. We must examine whatever needs examining for an hour or at most two hours. If everything is to be brought out in the open, it will take as long as that. If others consider we have not done enough, then let them say so. If what they say is right, we will accept their opinion. When we allow others to speak, should we be active or passive in our attitude? Of course it is better to be active. What can we do if we are forced onto the defensive? In the past we were undemocratic and so we find ourselves on the defensive. No matter. Let everybody criticize us. As for me, I will not go out during the day; I will not go to the theater at night. Please come and criticize me day and night (*laughter from audience*). Then I will sit down and think about it carefully, not sleep for two or three nights, think about it until I understand it, and then write a sincere self-explanation. Isn't that the way to deal with it? In short, let other people speak out. The heavens will not fall and you will not be thrown out. If you do not let others speak, then the day will surely come when you are thrown out.”⁴¹

And here is yet another example of MIMP’s efforts to evade having their positions openly disputed, and presenting such efforts as politically principled. And again they are directly contradicted by the Marxist line.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

In December 2013 we proposed that MIMP publish both sides of our ongoing debates in their prisoner-based newsletter *Under Lock and Key*. They refused stating, “we don't have space to spare ... for articles that are so off the mark,” speaking of our side of the polemics. But conversely they said they were looking to enlarge their newsletter to fit in more articles that reflect their own views. Lenin's position totally refutes them. “We shall”, he said, “gladly afford space in our paper for articles on theoretical questions and we invite all comrades openly to discuss controversial points.”⁴²

He furthermore contended that Communist papers become bland and lose their combative edge and mass interest when they don't publish such polemics. He rebuked the editors of his Bolshevik Party's paper thusly when they did exactly what MIMP promotes.

“You complain about monotony....By avoiding ‘painful questions’, *Pravda* and *Zvezda* make themselves dry, monotonous, uninteresting, uncombative organs. A socialist organ *must* conduct polemics”.⁴³

When we recognize that MIMP, consistent with its PB class tendency, fears being contradicted by the common people, whereas, as Mao pointed out, the masses will still speak out, it becomes apparent why MIMP refuses to integrate itself and its work within a mass base whose voices they cannot readily censor and control as they can with prisoners. And dogmatic lines like the VLA line serve only to falsely justify refusing to base itself and its ‘work’ within the broad masses in society.

⁴² *Op. cit.* note 13.

⁴³ Quoted in Ralph Carter Elwood, “Lenin and *Pravda*, 1912-1914,” *Slavic Review*, Volume 31, No.2, June 1972.

Again on the Labor Aristocracy

Returning now to the LA question and who the proletariat are and who are its friends and enemies, we must begin again with the fundamentals of class.

In our earlier article we elaborated in Marxist political economic terms, that the proletariat is that class which must sell its manual labor power to the bourgeoisie for a wage at less than its actual value in order to survive. That the bourgeois expropriates and pockets the surplus value as profit, which is value realized in the production of commodities for which the worker is not paid. We pointed out that labor power is also itself a commodity. Citing Marx's *Wages, Price and Profit* we explained that workers in Amerika are subject to stolen surplus value just as are Third World workers and are no less proletarians even though they earn higher wages than their Third World counterpart. We went on to explain that the difference in wage scales is the result of different standards and costs of living in different countries based upon the uneven levels of development under capitalist imperialism. And that of course the cost, standard and quality of goods and services in the developed First World imperialist countries like Amerika are simply much higher than in the less developed Third World countries. While we do recognize other factors are also at play in the existence of greater wealth in the First World countries versus the Third World, which are fundamental to the imperialist system, they do not change the fact that workers in the imperialist countries produce surplus value and are thus proletarians.

MIMP disputed us, denying that US workers are proletarians simply because they receive higher wages. MIMP did concede however that we were in fact correctly applying basic scientific principles of Marxist political

economy. But to avoid these principles, MIMP denied that proletarians are those who must sell their labor power for a wage, stating instead that they “prefer Marx’s definition that the proletarian are those who have nothing to lose but their chains.”

As we’ve already pointed out, Marx did *not* use the “chains” metaphor to *define* the proletariat, but rather *figuratively* to make the point that under capitalism the proletariat is the only class that has nothing to lose and everything to gain by overthrowing capitalism.

MIMP’s revisionism has gone to totally redefining the most fundamental question to every Marxist, namely how classes are constituted and how identified. If one cannot correctly identify who is the proletariat, everything else they advance in the way of struggling against capitalism must necessarily be wrong. As we made clear, for the Marxist, the proletariat forms the social base of any such struggle. It is this very class which we necessarily aim to organize to seize and exercise political power and establish its own class dictatorship over the bourgeoisie. Any line that deviates from this is necessarily one that advances the bourgeois.

Classes, as Marx scientifically demonstrated, are determined by objective relations people enter into within the productive system. One cannot objectively show how the abstract concepts of wearing “rags” or existing in “chains” reflect actual relations to commodity production and the capitalist system. In this context such concepts are abstract at best and absurd. This is revisionism in its most literal sense.

But we realize that MIMP *had* to dodge Marx’s actual economic based definition of the proletariat, because under that definition US workers fall

firmly into the proletarian class as our prior article demonstrated. And to acknowledge that First World workers are indeed proletarians would deny MIMP its false justification for refusing to base themselves among them, committing class suicide, and doing real revolutionary work. As Lenin stated, “*Marx’s economic theory alone* has explained the true position of the proletariat in the general system of capitalism.”⁴⁴ And as he observed, the advent of imperialism did not change the class basis of capitalism, although the PB has always tried to revise Marxist political economy and proclaim its principles obsolete. Lenin stated the case clearly:

“Hitherto the doctrines of Marx and Engels were considered to be the firm foundation of revolutionary theory, but voices are now being raised everywhere to proclaim these doctrines inadequate and obsolete ... We take our stand entirely on the Marxist theoretical position”⁴⁵

MIMP, however, claims Marxist political economy is outmoded, rendered obsolete by imperialism and its transfer of immense wealth to the First World (a condition that has always been a fundamental component of imperialism and even the primitive accumulation of capital during Marx’s time), and dismissed its fundamental principles that we cited to demonstrate that US workers are proletarians as “numbers” made “just for show” and “empty numbers” which they presumed to counter by promoting a PB ‘economist’ solution (we’ll address MIMP’s PB Economism below). But as we quoted earlier, Mao held firmly that “we are Marxists.”

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.* note 10.

⁴⁵ V.I. Lenin, “Our Programme.” First published 1925.

And like Lenin, Mao upheld, “[t]he three basic constituents of Marxism [which] are scientific socialism, philosophy [dialectical materialism], and *political economy*. The foundation is social science, class struggle.” And that struggle being “between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.”⁴⁶ So Mao also upheld Marxist political economic analysis of classes (specifically of the proletariat) and this is why he, like us, and like Lenin and Stalin, recognized that there is indeed a First World proletariat (including a white proletariat – which MIMP vigorously denies). And all of them recognized the need for unity of struggle between this First World proletariat and the super-exploited Third World as essential to toppling the imperialist system. In fact Lenin, Stalin and Mao recognized the existence of a proletarian versus bourgeois class struggle within the First World countries as one of the three fundamental components of the imperialist system. Yet MIMP claims there has never been a proletariat in Amerika and especially no “white” proletariat, and used revising what constitutes the proletariat as a class invoking abstract metaphors and citing different wage levels to speciously validate this position.

Now let's look at how Lenin, Stalin and Mao compare to MIMP on the question of the existence of a First World proletariat. Mao didn't lump everyone in Amerika into a homogenous oppressor Labor Aristocracy (LA). He specifically made a distinction between the US ruling class as the oppressor class and the masses as both the oppressed and as allies of the internally oppressed nationalities. He stated, “It is the reactionary ruling circles among the whites who oppress the Negro people. They can in no way represent the workers, farmers, revolutionary intellectuals and other enlightened persons who compose the overwhelming majority of the white people.” Nor did he

⁴⁶ Mao Tse-tung, “Talks on Questions of Philosophy,” August 18, 1964.

characterize US whites as overall exploiters of the Third World. "At present, it is the handful of imperialists headed by the United States, and their supporters, the reactionaries in different countries, who are inflicting oppression, aggression and intimidation on the overwhelming majority of the nations and peoples of the world."⁴⁷

As for Lenin and Stalin, in his definitive work, "The Foundations of Leninism", Stalin in part elaborated Lenin's analysis of imperialism and its practical purposes in the struggle to defeat it.⁴⁸ There he wrote:

"Leninism grew up and took shape under the conditions of imperialism, when the contradictions of capitalism had reached an extreme point, when the proletarian revolution had become an immediate practical question, when the old period of preparation of the working class for revolution had arrived at and passed into a new period, that of direct assault on capitalism.

"Lenin called imperialism 'moribund capitalism'. Why? Because imperialism carries the contradictions of capitalism to their last bounds, to the extreme limit, beyond which revolution begins of these contradictions, there are three which must be regarded as the most important."

He identified the first and most important of these contradictions as "the contradiction between labor and capital," that is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie *within* the imperialist countries. The second contradiction

⁴⁷ Mao Tse-tung, "Statement Calling on the People of the World to Unite to Oppose Racial Discrimination in the US and Support the American Negroes in Their Struggle Against Racial Discrimination," August 8, 1963.

⁴⁸ Joseph Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," April 1924.

was that between the imperialist forces that is “the contradiction among the various financial groups and imperialist powers in their struggles for sources of raw materials, for foreign territory.” The third contradiction was that “between the handful of ruling, ‘civilized’ nations and the hundreds of millions of the colonial and dependent peoples of the world,” that is between the First World imperialist powers and the Third World. *These* being the three fundamental contradictions that *make up the phenomenon of capitalist imperialism* and exist till today. Lenin, Stalin and Mao always maintained this understanding of what constitutes imperialism. Yet MIMP proclaims the first and principal contradiction of imperialism, namely the existence of proletarian versus bourgeoisie class struggle *within* the imperialist countries, does not exist and has never existed. But that rather there is a reconciliation between the bourgeoisie and what they call a LA. So MIMP has revised the MLM understanding of what constitutes imperialism. They have transformed imperialism into a new and different sort of capitalism. Either we accept this absurd notion and that Lenin, Stalin and Mao (and even Marx) were dead wrong in their political economic analyses or that MIMP is revisionist. In either case it's not possible to call MIMP Marxist, Leninist or Maoist since they clearly do not follow the fundamental teachings, studies or practice of any of them.

What's more, in *blatant* contradiction of MIMP, Lenin, Stalin and Mao saw the unity of the First World proletariat with the Third World as *essential* to the success of the struggle against imperialism. Here's Lenin:

“the socialists of the oppressed nations must in particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including

organizational unity of the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressor nation. Without this it is impossible to defend the independent policy of the proletariat of other countries in the face of all manner of intrigues, treachery and trickery on the part of the bourgeoisie.”⁴⁹

And here again is Stalin.

“The victory of the working class in the developed countries and the liberation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism are impossible without the formation and the consolidation of a common revolutionary front;

“The formation of a common revolutionary front is impossible unless the proletariat of the oppressor nations renders direct and determined support to the liberation movements of the oppressed peoples against the imperialism of its ‘own country’, for ‘no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations’ (Engels)”⁵⁰

Moreover, Stalin held the First World proletariat to be the Soviet Union’s *key ally*! He stated:

“The first ally, our principal ally, is the proletariat in the developed countries. The advanced proletariat, the proletariat in the West is an immense force, and it is a most faithful and most important ally of our regime. But unfortunately, the situation, the state of the revolutionary movement in the developed capitalist countries, is

⁴⁹ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 20, pp. 411-412.

⁵⁰ Joseph Stalin, *op. cit.* note 48.

such that the proletariat in the West is unable to render us direct and decisive assistance at the present moment. We have its indirect moral support, and this is so important that its value cannot even be measured, it is inestimable. Nevertheless, it does not constitute that direct and immediate assistance that we need now.”⁵¹

Lenin, Stalin and Mao all maintained these positions while recognizing that the First World countries reaped massive wealth as a result of the super-exploitation of the Third World to the general social-economic benefit of the developed countries. Yet they clearly did not characterize their workers as a LA and enemy of the workers of the underdeveloped countries as MIMP does.

MIMP also cites the existence of bourgeois views and values, and attitudes of national and racial chauvinism on the part of US workers as grounds for characterizing them as a LA and enemy of oppressed nationality and Third World workers. Yet another bogus anti-Marxist view. Marxists recognize that when the bourgeoisie is the ruling class it perpetuates its values across the other social classes through dominating the cultural institutions. This is why the revolutionary Party is needed to perpetuate a revolutionary proletarian culture to combat the prevailing bourgeois culture. As Marx observed in 1845 “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force.”

Recall it wasn't until *after* Marx and Engel's day that Lenin first devised a workable program for developing the revolutionary Proletarian Party. So it is no wonder that as capitalism strengthened its hold in England, Engels saw

⁵¹ Joseph Stalin, “Concerning the Question of the Proletariat and the Peasantry,” January 27, 1975.

an increasing bourgeoisification of the English proletariat, which is inevitable in the absence of a revolutionary Party to organize and lead them. We see the same trend here in Amerika in the absence of a mass based revolutionary Party. In fact bourgeois ideas predominate *even under socialism* minus a persistent series of cultural revolutions to root them out. Mao was the *first* to recognize this and combatted it with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China which he led from 1966 until his death in 1976.

Even before he came to terms with this reality, he recognized and confronted the phenomenon of the masses entertaining national and racial chauvinist and overall bourgeois ideas even after the bourgeoisie had been overthrown. The cure he realized was that the Party educate the masses in Marxism, he said, “bourgeois ideas dominate the minds of those comrades and people who have had no Marxist education and have not grasped the nationality policy of the [Communist Party].”⁵² So another argument of MIMP in support of their VLA line falls flat and is defeated by the words of the very authorities they claim to uphold.

Finally, we come to their main argument that by merit of higher pay the upper strata of workers are an inherently counter-revolutionary LA. Wrong again! Actually Lenin recognized the higher paid workers to be the most potentially revolutionary and the vanguard strata of the working class. Lenin:

“The history of the working class movement in all countries, shows that the better-situated strata of the working class respond to the ideas of socialism more rapidly and more easily. From among these come, in the main, the advanced workers that every working class

⁵² Mao Tse-Tung, “Criticize Han Chauvinism,” March 16, 1953.

movement brings to the fore, those who can win the confidence of the laboring masses, who devote themselves entirely to the education and organization of the proletariat, who accept socialism consciously, and who even elaborate independent socialist theories.”⁵³

And while MIMP promotes the “lower strata” of workers as the more advanced proletarians, Lenin maintained the importance of the “upper strata” as the leadership of “the mass that constitutes the lower strata of the proletariat [who] it is quite possible that a socialist newspaper will be completely or well-nigh incomprehensible to....”⁵⁴ *This* is why Stalin saw the proletariat of the developed countries as the key allies of Socialist Russia.

It is telling that the very strata of workers that these Marxist leaders recognized to be the more advanced and receptive to revolutionary leadership, MIMP denounces as a counter-revolutionary enemy of the proletariat. It simply proves Lenin was right, to allow the PB to lead the proletariat will “inevitably destroy any revolutionary movement” as they “produce the very results which the bourgeoisie need.”

Lenin and company understood, as do we, that the LA is not the higher paid workers per se as MIMP claims. But it is rather those among this upper strata who as leaders within the working class movement (recall Lenin identified the labor traitors as “the labor leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy”) have allowed themselves to be bribed by the bourgeoisie. And they are not bribed with mere higher wages. Lenin noted they are bribed

⁵³ V.I. Lenin, “Collected Works,” Volume 4, p. 280.

⁵⁴ V.I. Lenin, “Collected Works,” Volume 4, p. 282.

“in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert.”⁵⁵ Clearly the LA are those upper strata of workers who were politically conscious and active leaders in the labor movement and organizations who were granted benefits and privileges by the bourgeoisie to – again in Lenin's own words – serve as “the real *agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class* movement, the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, real vehicles of reformism and chauvinism.”⁵⁶ So they aren't merely backward-thinking and unconscious workers who inevitably become bourgeoisified in the absence of a proletarian Party but instead they are conscious workers who deliberately betray the working class and serve the bourgeoisie to mislead the other workers. Which describes precisely the bureaucratic and conciliatory labor union and labor movement leadership and neo-colonial agents who have served to misdirect the workers and oppressed internal nationalities and integrate these oppressed sectors' so-called labor Parties and unions into the mainstream political structures in the developed capitalist countries.

And what MIMP does in effect is to try and divide the proletariat by race and nationality by emphasizing “whiteness” and whether one is a First World worker versus a Third World worker in classifying who is a proletarian or an enemy thereof. This is one of the very reasons Lenin founded the Comintern, namely to combat the PB revisionists who were, as MIMP promotes, advocating splitting the proletariat based upon nationality so they would be effectively pitted against each other in imperialist world wars in service to ‘their own’ bourgeoisie.

⁵⁵ V.I. Lenin, Preface to French and German Edition to “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism.”

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Then MIMP contended that we “made” the most common strawperson argument of the revisionists that the MIM line is wrong because Marx and Lenin never abandoned organizing among Europeans and Americans.” That's *not* what we said. We said not only did they never abandon the imperialist country workers, but that Marx and Lenin banked the very success of the world proletarian revolution on the proletariat of these First World countries. That is was in fact in these countries that Lenin formed the Comintern to organize Communist Parties to give First World leadership to these countries' workers and the world Communist movement. And as we've already shown Lenin, Stalin and Mao clearly saw the First World proletariat *as* a proletariat and indispensable to the struggle of the Third World workers against imperialism.

So Lenin and company totally discredit MIMP's claims that 1) there is not and never has been a proletariat in the imperialist countries 2) there is no need or basis for unity between these workers and those in the Third World, 3) *we* are revisionist for contending that Marx and Lenin always recognized a First World proletariat, and 4) we are First World chauvinists for holding that this upper strata of workers could or should give working class leadership or support to the lower strata of workers, etc.

From here MIMPs anti-Maoist PB revisionist positions only became more apparent.

MIMPs Petty Bourgeois Economism

MIMP went on to say, “If Americans are exploited, then to end exploitation would mean they need to get paid more money.” No Marxist would make such a statement. To end the exploitation of workers they'd need

to be united and organized to overthrow their oppressor capitalist class, to seize state power, and build a socialist society which means for them to exercise all round proletarian dictatorship over the bourgeoisie. As Engels stated, “The only means” of ending exploitation “is political domination of the proletariat.”⁵⁷

MIMP’s promoting higher wages as an answer to capitalist exploitation of the workers is one that every Marxist beginning with Marx himself denounced as a PB position and one Lenin specifically fought as PB “economism”. As said, beginning with Marx such an ‘answer’ has been long rejected. He said, the PB

“far from wanting to transform all of society in the interest of the revolutionary proletariat only aspire to make the existing society as tolerable for themselves as possible.

“...As far as the workers are concerned one thing above all is definite: they are to remain wage workers as before. However, the democratic petty bourgeois want better wages and security for the workers; in short they want to bribe the workers....”

Lenin stated when the workers’ struggle becomes one for only economic gains while revolutionaries refrain from “explain[ing] to them the socialist aims and the political tasks of the movement as a whole” the inevitable result is that “the working-class movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois [in ideology]. In waging only the economic struggle, the working class loses its political independence, it becomes the tail of other parties and

⁵⁷ Frederick Engels, quoted in *Ibid.*

betrays the great principle: ‘the emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working classes themselves.’”⁵⁸ In his essay “What is to be Done?” Lenin pointed out that left to its own

“*spontaneous* development ... the working class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology, *to its development along the lines of the Credo programme*; for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism, is *Nur-Gewerkschaftlerei*, and trade-unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie.

“Hence, our task, the task of [communists], is to *combat spontaneity, to divert* the working class movement from this spontaneous trade-unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary [communism].”

So we have Lenin here explaining that the workers inevitably become bourgeoisified when they are not led by a revolutionary vanguard to understand and pursue the political and class struggle and not merely economic gains. Compare this to MIMP’s revisionist position that says they are justified in refusing the workers revolutionary leadership and to denounce them as enemies *because*, in the absence of such leadership, they are bourgeoisified, and even if they are exploited the solution is to pursue purely economic struggle (for more money). The MIMP line is the exact position Lenin rejects. In fact it is economism.

⁵⁸ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 366-367, 368.

Economism was an opportunist line that wanted workers to confine themselves to the purely economic struggle for higher wages, better work conditions, etc. and to allow the liberal PB to lead the political struggle (the exact position MIMP practices and promotes - it only pays lip service to proletarian struggle). Lenin denounced economism as a liberal bourgeois line in the workers' movement and through his *Iskra* newspaper waged continued struggle against it. But it was in his essay "What is to be Done?" that he decisively demolished economism and elaborated his perspective on the need and role of the revolutionary party in leading the workers movement into a successful revolutionary seizure and exercise of political power. As Stalin was to observe, "[t]he fight of the old *Iskra* and the brilliant criticism of the theory of 'kvostism' in Lenin's pamphlet *What is to be Done?* not only smashed so-called 'Economism', but also created the theoretical foundations for a truly revolutionary movement of the Russian working class."⁵⁹

MIMP's economism further reveals itself in their practicing the sort of political "amateurishness" identified by Lenin that ends in becoming "lost in narrow study circle life...."⁶⁰ As we've noted MIMP admits being a small group that confines its work primarily to prisoner study groups.⁶¹

It is important to note that they arrive at the VLA line by applying an economist analysis which claims First World workers have overcome oppression as a sole consequence of economic benefits. So MIMP's entire claim that US and other advanced capitalist country workers are a LA is based on an explicitly bourgeois (economist) analysis and one which Lenin fiercely

⁵⁹ *Op. cit.* note 48.

⁶⁰ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 217.

⁶¹ *Op. cit.* note 28.

fought against. But they claim themselves to be inheritors of Leninist practice and line.

An additional factor in the higher wages of imperialist country workers includes that historically the proletariat's struggles in these countries where the workers have been more organized and developed and engaged longer in struggle (and met with particularly violent repression at that) against their bourgeois, has won them greater concessions than the less-developed, organized and legally protected Third World proletarians. Yet MIMP considers the mere fact of higher wages as basis for charging US workers to be enemies of their own class. As Marx said:

“By looking only upon the change in wages and overlooking all the other changes from which they emanate, you proceed from a false premise in order to arrive at false conclusions.”⁶²

MIMP's Misrepresentations

In addition to their “strawpersyn” argument which we've addressed above, MIMP made several outright misrepresentations of what we said in our prior article employing dirty tactics of the sort that Lenin critiqued Karl Kautsky for, namely falsely claiming an opponent in a polemic to have made a patently foolish argument and then refuting it as if responding to a position we took rather than one they wholly manufactured.

In one case MIMP claimed we classified as US proletarians those who own \$20,000 cars, \$200,000 homes and multiple hand-held computers. Which refers obviously to the middle class (PB) sector that members of MIMP come

⁶² Karl Marx, *Wages, Price and Profit* (Peking: Foreign Language Press), 1975.

from and not any proletarians we know, especially not those multitudes who live in the urban centers that we come from and is our targeted social base.

In fact at least 40% of Amerikan workers own nothing and most of the rest live one or two paychecks away from homelessness. But, in that MIMP describes “people sitting behind computers typing keys” as non-exploited, they’re again obviously describing their own PB class and furthermore their own peculiar form of political ‘activism.’ And consider too, even if Amerikan workers could be said to enjoy a petty-bourgeois lifestyle, this does not make them enemies to be denounced by revolutionaries. In “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism”, Lenin held the exact opposite. He stated it “is the bounded duty of the party of the proletariat [to] win away from the bourgeoisie the small proprietors who are duped by them, and the millions of working people who enjoy more or less petty-bourgeois conditions of life.”

Then they claimed we said US and Third World workers earn different wages because US labor is “*worth*” more than that of Third World workers. We said no such thing. What we said and repeat is US workers receive higher wages in part because the costs of living and the standard of living are higher in the US than in the Third World. And we cited Marx’s own “scientific” political economic analyses in validation of this point. And contrary to MIMP’s further false statement, where we cited Marx in *Wages, Price and Profit* he wasn't comparing weak versus strong nor skilled versus unskilled workers - MIMP demonstrably doesn't even comprehend what Marx wrote. He was talking about different levels of economic development in different countries as determining higher versus lower wages which again brings us to the point that higher wages does not make First World workers non-proletarian and the enemy of Third World workers.

Let's look at Marx's own study in *Wages, Price and Profit*. Recall that he revealed that the commodity lies at the very core of the capitalist system and its productive relations. What's more is labor power is not only itself a commodity but *the* core commodity of the capitalist system. It's important to point out here that the MIM line has always avoided the fact labor is a commodity in advancing its line that First World workers don't produce surplus value because they claim these workers do not produce commodities at all. But Marx explained, "labor is only a commodity like others," and its costs "correspond to its value. It would be absurd," he said "to treat it on one hand as a commodity, and to want on the other hand to exempt it from the laws which regulate the price of commodities."

He went on to explain that the value of labor itself is what determines the value and cost of all other commodities. "But", he explained "there are some peculiar features which distinguish the *value of the laboring power*, or the *value of labor* from the value of all other commodities. The value of the laboring power is formed by two elements - the one merely physical; the other historical or social." The *physical* element he observed, simply relates to providing for the basic physical needs of the worker and her/his family to reproduce themselves so they can continue to provide their labor power. This is the *COST* of living while the second or *social* element, which is what we referred to as the *STANDARD* of living, Marx explained thusly:

"Besides [the] mere physical element, the value of labor is in every country determined by the *traditional standard of life*. It is not mere physical life, but it is *the satisfaction of certain wants springing from the social conditions in which people are placed and reared up*. The

English standard of life may be reduced to the Irish standard: the standard of life of a German peasant to that of a Livonian peasant....

“By comparing the standard wages or value of labor in different countries and by comparing them in different historical epochs of the same country, you will find that the *value of labor* itself is *not a fixed but a variable magnitude*, even supposing the values of all other commodities to remain constant.”

So in complete contradiction of the MIM VLA line, Marx made clear that different wage levels between different countries inhere in the capitalist system and their different levels of development and standard of living in them. A condition that has of course been enhanced with the internationalization of capitalism under imperialist monopoly which developed after Marx's time. So, different wage levels certainly does not make one more or less a proletarian. Lenin also observed that to presume there could possibly be an equal distribution of wages under capitalism as MIMP implies, “is sheer Proudhonism, stupid philistinism.”⁶³

No Proletariat No State

Yet another Marxist principle proves the VLA line to be absolutely absurd. Namely, that if there is no proletariat in Amerika there by consequence could be no bourgeois nation state. Which sounds like vulgar Intercommunalism.

As we know the state is simply the organized coercive power by which one class exercises its dictatorship over its opposite and irreconcilable internal class. In the case of the *capitalist* state it is a bourgeois dictatorship

⁶³ *Op. cit.* note 13.

over the proletariat principally and other groups, in the case of the *socialist* state it is a dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with other non-proletarian workers over the bourgeoisie. Lenin elaborated these principles refuting the revisionist PB in *The State and Revolution*, August 1917. Here is a key passage:

“The state is a product and manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled. And, conversely the existence of the state proves that class antagonisms are irreconcilable.”

MIMP admits that Amerika is a nation state. Indeed like Lenin, Stalin and Mao they account it an “oppressor nation.” Yet MIMP turns around and claims that the US bourgeoisie has reconciled its contradictions with US workers by means of converting them into a homogenous LA. MIMP also claims New Afrikans and other internally oppressed nationalities are a LA too. If MIMP’s line were correct then the US would not and could not exist as a state.

State power, as Lenin observed, “consists of special bodies of armed men [and now wimyn - Rashid] having prisons, etc. at their command.” He further specified that a “standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power.” It is certainly no doubt that Amerika boasts the world's *largest* prison system and one of its largest and most formidable military/ police apparatuses.

So if we are to believe MIMP that the US has no opposing internal class that is irreconcilably oppressed by the bourgeoisie (i.e. a proletariat), who are

we to imagine are the subjects - and compel such an extensive need - of its massive internal surveillance, police, prison system and standing army? If everyone in Amerika is so securely and happily bribed by and reconciled by the bourgeois ruling class there would and could be *no* such repressive institutions of bourgeois state power in the US.

But here again Lenin reveals the class of people who are inclined to argue such revisionist positions as MIMP does on this point. What is most revealing is that all of what MIMP promotes Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao confronted in their own times and opposed. But here is Lenin:

“On the one hand, the bourgeois and particularly the petty bourgeois ideologists, compelled under the weight of indisputable historical facts to admit that the state only exists where there are class antagonisms and class struggle, ‘correct’ Marx in such a way as to make it appear that the state is an organ for the *reconciliation* of classes. According to Marx, the state *could neither have arisen nor maintained itself* had it been possible to reconcile classes. From what the petty bourgeois and philistine professors and publicists say, with quite frequent and benevolent references to Marx, it appears that the state does reconcile classes.”

And here we come to yet another of MIMP’s revisionist “cardinal principles” that it claims to be Maoist and forbids anyone to disagree with lest they be deemed an enemy. That being what MIMP calls a Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat of the Oppressed Nations (JDPON). Under this notion MIMP says:

“In a dictatorship of the proletariat the formerly exploited majority dictates to the minority (who promoted exploitation) how society is to be run. In the case of imperialist nations, a Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat of the Oppressed Nations must play this role where there is no internal proletariat or significant mass base favoring communism.”⁶⁴

This notion of overthrowing the US ruling class (and there's not even a hint *how* that might be done under MIMP's claimed Maoist leadership) and creating a socialist state run by an *external* Third World proletariat is nonsensical since state power reflects *internal* class contradictions. This absurd JDPON theory is predicated on MIMP's line that there is no First World proletariat because the imperialist countries have reconciled their internal class contradictions by means of paying their workers higher wages than Third World workers receive, and there is thus no internal proletariat to seize and exercise state power. A position that as we've pointed out is refuted by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*.

Any sort of class dictatorship signifies the exercise of state power. How does MIMP suppose state power might be exercised by a Third World proletariat who live *outside* of US borders over Amerika's economic, political, educational, military, ideological and cultural institutions? Apparently they suppose that with the overthrow of the bourgeois state borders will instantly vanish. *That* would be communism, where national states and national borders no longer exist. The instant disappearance of state power is exactly what anarchists call for, and is the very notion Lenin dispelled in his essay on

⁶⁴ MIMP publishes this statement as one of its Cardinal Principles in each issue of *Under Lock and Key*.

the state. The JDPOM reflects exactly what Lenin described as “*petty bourgeois revolutionism*, which smacks of anarchism, or borrows something from the latter and, in all essential matters does not measure up to the conditions and requirements of a consistently proletarian class struggle.”⁶⁵

Path of Least Resistance

MIMP concedes that prisoners will not make revolution, but focuses on this strata because subjectively they’re “on the margins, the weakest links in the system, that is where you focus your energy.” Yet MIMP went on to admit to refusing to do any level of work that genuinely threatens the US ruling class because of fear of repression, which means they are really at best a reformist group. Indeed, they are so frightened that they make a point of hiding from the very people they’re supposed to lead, just as MIM before them hid its members’ identities from their followers under claimed concern to hide from pig repression. Such a concern would have some merit perhaps if MIMP and MIM were actually revolutionary groups.

However MIMP is admittedly no threat and doesn't intend to be, so it has no need to fear retribution and therefore no need to hide. But what really discredits their claims is in today's super-surveillance Amerika, it's rather absurd for MIMP to pretend to believe the pigs don't know who they are when they have a publishing outlet, email and internet accounts, attend rallies, table literature, deliver and collect mail from a decades-old post office box, etc. Is MIMP serious?

What a lot of MIMP followers might find surprising since most of them are racial and national minorities who’ve bought into MIMP’s anti-PB, anti-

⁶⁵ V.I. Lenin, “On the Slogan for a United States of Europe,” August 23, 1915.

white working class, and anti-“U\$A” rhetoric, is MIMists have always been a small clique of PB *white* Amerikans, as many on the outside who’ve interacted with them well know. Enaemaehkiw Tupac Keshena, a past member of the African Peoples Socialist Party who’s long engaged the MIM line, observed that MIMP is among several splinter groups “that emerged from the collapse of the somewhat infamous American white radical group known as the Maoist Internationalist Movement.”⁶⁶ According to its old handbook *What is the Maoist Internationalist Movement?*⁶⁷ the old MIM said it was founded by a majority of national minorities and wimyn, but this composition quickly changed to a majority of white male Amerikans according to various sources that interacted with MIM over its years of existence.

One must question, in light of MIMP’s racial, class and national make-up, whether the insistence on concealing its members’ identities from even its most loyal followers isn’t to avoid having to confront the blatant hypocrisy and contradiction between its years of blistering denunciations of white, PB, Amerikan “settlers”, and the fact that this is the very character of its own membership. Especially given the long historical experience of people of color in Amerika having their struggles and movements coopted, subverted and taken over by “white Amerikan settlers”, which is the theme of the J. Sakai book that the MIMists concocted the VLA line from.⁶⁸ This actually comports more with reality than their claimed concern to avoid pig repression, when they *admit* unwillingness to engage in any political work that might actually provoke any such repression.

⁶⁶ Enaemaehkiw Tupac Keshena, “A Critical Look at the Politics of the Leading Light Communist Organization”.

⁶⁷ *What is the Maoist Internationalist Movement?* (First ed. July 1991/Second ed. September 1995).

⁶⁸ J. Sakai, *Settlers: Mythology of the White Proletariat From Mayflower to Modern* (republished Montreal: Kersplebedeb, 2014).

MIMP is of course fond of advertising that its newsletters are randomly censored by various prisons, as if censorship gives them revolutionary credibility and evidences that their work is the target of pig repression. Quite the contrary, as prison officials frequently and with much greater unanimity and regularity censor cultural publications especially on Indigenous, New Afrikan/Black, Latino history etc., all varieties of pornography - from the mildest to hard core - rap magazines like *Vibe*, *Source*, *XXL* and so on. None of which has the slightest revolutionary orientation. MIMP's greatest "threat" to the status quo we feel is that by promoting Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, they do get prisoners into reading the right material and some, with a bit of critical and persistent study do make the distinction between MIM and MLM, and come to embrace the genuinely revolutionary line. Quite a few of whom are now members of NABPP-PC, or are informed by our analyses and practice.

But on the points of choosing the easiest path and being paralyzed by fear of retribution, let us return to contrasting the line of MIMP with that of MLM.

The claim of pursuing the path of least resistance and greater safety as if politically commendable for communists, flies in the face of MLM. As one of Lenin's closest Party comrades and wife Nadezhda Krupskaya recalled, Lenin's revolutionary Party was tempered by struggling under the most difficult adversities and did not seek comfort and ease:

"Prior to the Revolution of 1905 the Bolsheviks showed themselves capable of making good use of every legal possibility of forging ahead and rallying the masses behind them under the most adverse

conditions. Step by step, beginning with the campaign for tea service and ventilation they had led the masses up to the national armed insurrection. The ability to adjust oneself to the most adverse conditions and at the same time to stand out and maintain one's high-principled positions - such were the traditions of Leninism.”⁶⁹

In “‘Left-wing’ Communism: An Infantile Disorder”, Lenin himself argued at length that revolutionaries must go wherever the workers are, even in the most difficult places, including reactionary trade unions and even the bourgeois parliaments. He specifically opposed the PB line of going where work was easiest.

We of course recognize prisoners in Amerika to be an important strata of the oppressed and, contrary to MIMP’s line, see them as originating from among the proletariat and lumpen (“broken”) proletariat, and as such have the class basis to become genuine revolutionary communists, especially if exposed to a correct revolutionary proletarian line. MIMP does not see prisoners in this light so doesn't work to politicize them to this end.

We do recognize that while on the inside prisoners cannot realistically impact the imperialist system at the point of production, but their struggles and developed revolutionary insight can catalyze work and struggles on the outside. Also, 90% or more of them *will* be returned to society at some point so they represent a vast body of potential revolutionary cadre. And as said, the Prison Chapter of the NABPP aims to educate, organize, unite and enlist them while living and struggling right alongside them, sharing their hardships and learning from their same experiences, not preaching at them from a separate

⁶⁹ Nadezhda Krupskaya, *Reminiscence of Lenin* (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 167.

and isolated position of leisure and privilege, sitting safely behind a keyboard talking shit without a shred of experience nor success in solving any of their problems. Doing as Mao denounced, “trailing behind mass spontaneity waving one's hands and criticizing.” We also have a strategy and program that extends to building outside broadly based revolutionary Parties with roots in all oppressed sectors.

MIMP's exclusive focus on prisoners while calling itself a revolutionary Marxist leadership is contradicted by Lenin, who explained that any such leadership must focus on every strata and build *hundreds* of groups to educate and organize them. Or collapse or end in becoming tiny bureaucratic groups, which is the exact experience of MIM and MIMP. Yet MIMP portrays their tiny clique, commandist posture and self-isolation from the masses as commendable practices. Here's Lenin in his own words; A revolutionary leadership, he said:

“must be sure to organize, organize, organize *hundreds* of circles, completely pushing into the background the customary, well meant committee (hierarchic) stupidities ... Either you create *new* fresh energetic battle organizations everywhere for revolutionary Social Democratic work of all varieties among all strata, or you will go under wearing the aureole of ‘committee’ bureaucrats.”⁷⁰

Also contrary to MIMP's resorting to a small exclusivist organizational response in fear of and response to the history of repression, Lenin in fact “opened wide the doors of the Party” in response to intense repression not only to counter efforts to reduce it to a small localized clique, but because

⁷⁰ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 8, pp. 145-146.

under such repression only the most sincere elements would be drawn to join the Party and face pig attack, thus expanding its ranks with a formidable body of recruits.⁷¹

As for Mao, he of course never shunned difficulty. His position is exactly the opposite of what MIMP has said. Here's what he stated in October 1945:

“What is work? Work is struggle. There are difficulties and problems in these places for us to overcome and solve. We go there to work and struggle to overcome these difficulties. *A good comrade is one who is eager to go where the difficulties are greatest.*”

And again in December 1945:

“We must thoroughly clear away all ideas among our cadre of winning easy victories, through good luck, without hard work and bitter struggle, without sweat and blood.”

Matter of fact Mao not only didn't shun work that might provoke enemy repression, but instead he measured the effectiveness of revolutionary work by how extreme the level of enemy repression it generated. And people like MIMP who aim to reduce and avoid repression he deemed little better than the enemy. In fact the title of his article from which the relevant passage is taken says it all. The title being, “To be Attacked by the Enemy is Not a Bad Thing But a Good Thing” (May 26, 1939). Here's what he said in relevant part:

“I hold that it is bad as far as we are concerned if a person, a political party, an army or a school is not attacked by the enemy for in that

⁷¹ *Op. cit.* note 13.

case it would definitely mean that we have sunk to the level of the enemy. It is good if we are attacked by the enemy since it proves that we have drawn a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves. It is still better if the enemy attacks us wildly and paints us as utterly black and without a single virtue; it demonstrates that we have not only drawn a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves but achieved a great deal in our work.”

MIM's line and practice reflect what is typical of the unremolded PB. As Marx said, they want to make capitalist society as comfortable and tolerable for themselves as possible. MIMP out of admitted dread and a desire to at all costs avoid official attack, refuses to base itself among and unite with the broad masses and on top of this they embrace completely contrived analyses of classes in Amerika so to justify refusing to unite with the actual proletariat in Amerika.

And MIMP demonstrably fears the masses, electing to focus exclusively on prisoners because MIMP fears being challenged, which as Mao observed they could not so easily prevent the outside masses from doing. Whereas they can silence prisoners by threat of withdrawing support, newsletter subscriptions, or their participation in MIMP study groups and correspondence (which reaches a need for social interaction that many US prisoners are torturously denied and thus in desperate need of). And what's ironic is MIMP recognizes all of the foregoing to be PB tendencies and have identified and critiqued them in the practice of others, they just don't want to recognize that *they* practice them and are themselves PB. Maoists practice equally criticism *and* self-criticism.

Racial/National Chauvinism – Tactics of Divide and Conquer

As we've mentioned the work central to the creation of the MIMist VLA line was J. Sakai's *Settlers*⁷² and anti-Marxist analysis of race (which replaces race for class as the principal form of oppression in Amerika). *Settlers* cites episodes from the extensive history of “white” racial oppression of people of color in Amerika and the relative privileged status that “whites” at all social-economic levels have enjoyed at the expense of peoples of color, and which has allowed even working class and poor whites to betray the interests of their counterparts of color. The main theme of *Settlers* is “white” racial treachery, betrayal, brutality and privilege that claims to know no class distinction. The conclusion being that these factors combine to create a uniform class of “whiteness” that has no proletarian sector.

We contrast Sakai's narrow work with the broader and exhaustive works of Marxist proletarian intellectual Theodore Allen, particularly his two volume study *The Invention of the White Race*. Applying a political economic analysis he demonstrates that race and racism were/are created and manipulated by the ruling class as a tool to divide the working class against itself and only to the benefit of the ruling class.

Sakai's work is geared more to the incitement of visceral reactions to the horrors of the practice of white supremacy and driving home the subjective theme of inherent treacherousness of “whites”. This to the end of inciting people of color to look upon all “whites” as a collective oppressor class and to erase the class lines that exist between and separate ruling class and working class “whites”. Sakai's non-materialist study readily appeals to the *affective* mind. Allen's work by contrast materially examines the methods

⁷² *Op. cit.* note 68.

and history behind the ruling class's schemes that created race and racism, and incited workers and other strata against each other in the name of racial supremacy and counter-racial narratives which have perpetuated ongoing racial alienation, competition, subordination and so on. This has served to suppress and divert the collective outrage of the overall oppressed masses into channels that have protected and advanced the wealth, power and interests of the ruling class. Allen also examines how the concept of "whiteness" has been used and serves to blind "whites" to the sufferings imposed by "whiteness" on racialized "others" and he further demonstrates that ultimately "whites" do not benefit from racism or the sense of racial privilege and entitlement. Allen's work is geared more to the cognitive materialist mind that is interested in understanding the origins, roots and purpose of race and racism and how to counter its divisive and often catastrophic impact on oppressed peoples of all colors and especially the proletariat.

Allen's treatment of the question race and white supremacy comports with what Mao himself saw and in fact struggled against with great effect in China. In fact the revolution that he led confronted a condition in China not much different than the racial divisions in Amerika, as between the historically and socially privileged Han majority and many dozens of minority nationalities. As Mao noted:

"Over nine-tenths of [China's] inhabitants belong to the Han nationality. There are also scores of minority nationalities, including the Mongol, Hui, Tibetan, Uighur, Miao, Yi, Chuang, Chungchia and Korean nationalities, all with long histories though at different levels

of cultural development. Thus China is a country with a very large population composed of many nationalities".⁷³

Unlike MIMP and the revisionist VLA line, he didn't account the Han of which he was himself a member, a non-proletarian LA because of its history, up till the period of China's revolution, of relative privilege and domination over the other Chinese groups. Rather, he approached the struggle as one of all nationalities being oppressed by imperialism and the Chinese ruling classes. He also led the struggle of the Han against their conditioned sense of "entitled" social privilege, domination and superiority over others. And not only this but also the need for struggle of the minority groups who also entertain and practice their own forms of chauvinism against the Han and other nationalities. Which is exactly what the VLA line is – a position that postulates the basis for minority national and racial chauvinism against "white" Americans. Here again is Mao:

"[Minority nationalities] inhabit extensive regions which comprise 50 to 60 percent of China's total area. It is thus imperative to foster good relations between the Han people and the minority nationalities. Both Han chauvinism and local-nationality chauvinism are harmful to the unity of the nationalities; they represent one kind of contradiction among the people which should be resolved."⁷⁴

Even after the communist overthrow of the old oppressive Chinese system Han chauvinism persisted in many areas. And Mao correctly identified this as a continuation of feudal and bourgeois ideas which could only be

⁷³ Mao Tse-tung, "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," December 1939.

⁷⁴ *Op. cit.* note 32.

cured by the masses' mastery of Marxism and a correct communist national policy. In his March 1953 article "Criticize Han Chauvinism",⁷⁵ Mao identifies the problem and leads its resolution. Although we previously quoted in part from this article in a different context it warrants quoting here at length:

"In some places the relations between nationalities are far from normal. For Communists this is an intolerable situation. We must go to the root and criticize the Han chauvinist ideas which exist to a serious degree among many Party members and cadres, namely, the reactionary ideas of the landlord class and bourgeoisie or the ideas characteristic of the Kuomintang, which are manifested in the relations between nationalities. Mistakes in this respect must be corrected at once. Delegations led by comrades who are familiar with our nationality policy and full of sympathy for our minority nationality compatriots still suffering from discrimination should be sent to visit the areas where there are minority nationalities, make a serious effort at investigation and study and help Party and government organizations in the localities discover and solve problems. The visits should not be those of 'looking at flowers on horseback.'

"Judging from the mass of information on hand, the Central Committee holds that wherever there are minority nationalities the general rule is that there are problems calling for solution and in some cases very serious ones. On the surface all is quiet, but actually there are some very serious problems. What has come to light in

⁷⁵ *Op. cit.* note 52.

various places in the last two or three years shows that Han chauvinism exists almost everywhere. It will be very dangerous if we fail now to give timely education and resolutely overcome Han chauvinism in the Party and among the people. The problem in the relations between nationalities which reveals itself in the Party and among the people in many places is the existence of Han chauvinism to a serious degree and not just a matter of its vestiges. In other words, bourgeois ideas dominate the minds of those comrades and people who have had no Marxist education and have not grasped the nationality policy of the Central Committee. Therefore, education must be assiduously carried out so that this problem can be solved step by step. Moreover, the newspapers should publish more articles based on specific facts to criticize Han chauvinism openly and educate the Party members and the people.”

Many think that China is and has always been a territory composed of a single race, ethnicity or nationality of people. Not so. Huey P Newton, the BPP's co-founder discovered this upon his 1971 visit to and tour of revolutionary China. But what he also found and was amazed by, was how the revolution had resolved much of the chauvinism and discrimination between groups that Mao identified and led the struggle against. Not only that, but Huey was so impressed by what he witnessed, that it profoundly influenced and informed his own strategy of building self-sufficiency in New Afrikan/Black communities in Amerika, and developing ties to those of other national and racial minorities in Amerika, and also the “white” Amerikan majority. Here's what he bore witness to and its impact on his thinking:

“I saw crystal clear how we can start to reduce the kinds of conflicts that we’re having in this country. I saw an example of that in China ... What I saw was this: when I went there I was very unenlightened and I thought, as it has been said so often, that China would be a homogenous kind of racial/ethnic territory. Then I found that 50 percent of the Chinese territory is occupied by a 54 percent population of national minorities, large ethnic minorities. They speak different languages, they look very different, they eat different foods. Yet, there is no conflict. I observed one day that each region - we call them cities - is actually controlled by these ethnic minorities, yet they’re still Chinese.... I’m talking about a general condition in China where ethnic minorities I’ve observed control their whole regions. They have a right to have representation in the Chinese Communist Party. At the same time they have their own principles.... The cities in this country could be organized like that, with community control. At the same time, not black control so that no whites can come in, no Chinese can come in. I’m saying there would be democracy in the inner city. The administration should reflect the population of the people there.”⁷⁶

Actually the Russian revolution also confronted and overcame a similar condition of contending national and racial groups, of which the Russians were the majority. In fact in his struggle against Stalin for Party leadership following Lenin's death, Leon Trotsky attempted to incite animosity against Stalin because he was a member of the Georgian national minority, which

⁷⁶ David Hilliard and Donald Weiss, eds., *The Huey P. Newton Reader* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002) pp. 279- 280.

Trotsky cited as the basis for what he attacked as a source of genetic inferiority, namely a basic racist attack on Stalin. In his huge biography *Stalin*, Trotsky went to great lengths to undermine Stalin's revolutionary work, life and even "moral stature" as the result of his racial inferiority, first raising the question of whether Stalin had "an admixture of Mongolian blood", then attributed the flaws Trotsky imputed to him as characteristic of Stalin's Georgian ethnicity, where "in addition to the so-called Southern type, which is characterized by a combination of lazy shiftlessness and explosive irascibility, one meets cold natures in whom phlegm is combined with stubbornness and slyness."

Lenin also combatted the national chauvinism which the imperialists incited in the proletarians of their respective countries, to win their allegiance so they'd fight world wars against other proletarians, and carry out atrocities against each other as grim and heinous as those inflicted by "white" Amerikan racists against other so-called races (who were/are actually minority nationalities, i.e. New Afrikans, Mexicans, Asians, Puerto Ricans, etc.).

But Lenin didn't denounce these First World proletarians who were massacring each other by the millions as hopelessly counter-revolutionary, because they'd been manipulated by their "own" national bourgeoisie to commit atrocities against each other, which the so-called revolutionary leadership of the second Communist International supported. Instead he – recognizing that it was a *leadership* problem – founded the Third Communist International (Comintern) to create, coordinate and organize revolutionary ML Parties in the imperialist countries to root their masses in Marxism and "turn the World War into Civil Wars", where the proletarians would instead of killing each other *for* the bourgeoisie turn their guns on their "own" national

bourgeoisie and engage in civil wars to overthrow them. This, as Mao recognized in uniting the various Chinese nationalities against the imperialists and their Chinese bourgeois puppets, is the same ideological political approach we must take to counter national and racial chauvinism in Amerika as opposed to the national/racial chauvinist VLA line that MIMP and other PB “theorists” promote.

Conclusion

The LA is *very* real and has been in control of the so-called labor movement and mainstream labor groups and Parties in First World countries (and in the Third World) since the major imperialist counter-revolutionary drive against Communism post-World War I and especially since World War II. But the unremolded PB has proven to be the most treacherous counter-revolutionary element during this period in undermining and overthrowing socialist struggles and states.

What does history teach us? Who drowned the Paris Commune in blood? - the liberal bourgeoisie. Who was the Russian Revolution made against? - the liberals, Mensheviks and Social Democrats. The Chinese Revolution was made against the formerly revolutionary Kuomintang (KMT) 20 years after the Chinese Communist Party was nearly wiped out by Chiang Kai Chek’s betrayal and the Shanghai Massacre. The formerly revolutionary KDP put down the German Revolution (Spartacist) and paved the way to the Nazi’s rise to power. The Communist Party of India bloodily repressed the Naxalite Rebellion in India. Capitalist restoration in Russia, China, Albania, etc. was carried out by the right wing of the revolutionary movement and leadership. Time and again it has been the PB within the revolutionary movement with its revisionist politics and ideology, the would-be and

formerly revolutionary comrades who have proven to be the die-hard enemies of the proletariat. Mao above all understood this well, and this is why he enjoined us to *not* be liberal and not allow the PB and its contentions to be given sway. The class basis of the ideological and political line is what makes the fundamental difference between the teachings and practice of MLM versus the MIM line. The former is proletarian and revolutionary, the latter is PB and revisionist/ reactionary.

We quite literally could go on and on, but our point is not to harp on MIMP's many errors. Our aim is to point out fundamental harmful deviations from a revolutionary communist perspective and encourage MIMP and their followers and others with similar views to honestly reflect upon, self-criticize and struggle to correct their mistakes. Because as it stands, their line and objective practice (or lack thereof) puts them at odds with the proletariat while they promote in empty words to be its champion. And while we do not account MIMP to be a revolutionary Party of the proletariat, it postures as a revolutionary leadership, so we close with the following quote from Lenin:

“A political Party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfills *in practice* its obligations towards its *class* and the *working people*. Frankly acknowledging a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analyzing the conditions that have led up to it, and thrashing out the means of its rectification – that is the hallmark of a serious Party; that is how it should perform its duties, and how it should educate and train its *class*, and then the *masses*. By failing to fulfill this duty and give the utmost attention and consideration to

the study of their patent error the 'Lefts' ... [prove] that they are not a *party of a class* but a circle, not a *party of the masses* but a group of intellectualists and of a few workers who are the worst features of intellectualism."⁷⁷

Dare to Struggle Dare to Win!

All Power to the People!

⁷⁷ *Op. cit.* note 13.