



SUPPORT
EVERY
OUTBREAK
OF PROTEST
AND
REBELLION

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The following two articles, "Support Every Outbreak of Protest and Rebellion" and "It's In Your Hands—100,000 Co-Conspirators NOW" appeared in the Revolutionary Worker in December 1980 (RW Nos. 84 and 83 respectively). The immediate context of their appearance was a concentrated effort at culminating a battle to increase the distribution of the Revolutionary Worker newspaper to the 100,000 level. This battle had already been going on for a number of months and had been accompanied by open debate in the pages of the Revolutionary Worker (referred to as the "100 Flowers" debate) over the role of the newspaper and the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA's central task, "Create Public Opinion...Seize Power." These articles are being reprinted here because they address major questions of orientation for the revolutionary movement in breaking with the influence of reformism and in beginning serious and all around preparation for proletarian revolution. In reprinting, we have edited out the opening section of "It's In Your Hands..." which was very particularly addressed to the tasks at hand at that time.

Erratum:

On page 23 of this pamphlet, the second sentence of the first full paragraph should read: The problem revolutionaries have to address is not that the masses are not active enough and we have to concoct some activity for ourselves to substitute for them.

It is crucial for all those who desire revolution but who do not see how to work for it today, or do not fully grasp (or agree) why the newspaper is now our main weapon, to see that far from being "paperwork" or aimless educational activity, the wielding of the paper as our main weapon now, and the current campaign for 100,000 sustained readers as the immediate battle in that, is the concrete and practical plan for actually building the bridge to the future. What we are doing today—principally creating broad revolutionary public opinion around major questions of the day and further building and strengthening revolutionary organization in the wake of the newspaper—is accumulating revolutionary strength. What is required today is, as Lenin put it in *Where To Begin*, to "lay siege to the enemy fortress," in order to prepare to launch an assault at a later date, in tempo with the development of the objective situation. Without this preparation, it will not be possible to determine when the time is ripe nor to accumulate the forces required to carry out and lead such an uprising—which as Lenin pointed out will require a "revolutionary organization, capable of combining all the forces and of leading the movement *not only in name*, but in deed, i.e., *an organization that will be ready at any moment to support every protest and every outbreak* and to utilize these for the purpose of increasing and strengthening the military forces required for decisive battle."

The siege has begun! But these links to the future must be developed and strengthened, through all the twists and turns of the class struggle, and utilizing all its diverse currents and tributaries for a single revolutionary purpose. The revolution will not, as we have said before, be a straight line affair—nor is it today. Through wielding the newspaper as the main weapon today we must gather the forces, train the troops, by raising the consciousness of the broad masses of workers and other strata; and from all

the diverse and varied manifestations of protest and struggle among the broad masses—the broad social movements of today—direct the anger and discontent of the struggling masses toward the source of misery—the capitalist system—and the solution—its revolutionary overthrow—and bring forward and train leaders from among the workers and other oppressed and struggling people, leaders for the inevitable assault.

What does it mean to “support every protest and every outbreak”? The masses awakening to political life see a contradictory situation—the heightening contradictions in the world and the fact that the class-conscious revolutionaries are relatively small in number—and want to know how are we actually going to be able to be in a position to launch a successful seizure of power when the situation ripens, how can we do what has to be done today to carry this out. And not only is it a matter of grasping the urgency of the situation, the heightening of contradictions, but the possibilities, the tremendous opportunities in today’s situation for gathering revolutionary strength. While the question of supporting the outbreaks of protest and rebellion among the masses does not exhaust our central task—“create public opinion . . . seize power”—it is an extremely important part of building the bridge to the future. The present period is not one where millions and millions in this country are aroused, in action against the system, or even one where people in really vast numbers are politically thrashing things out on the same level as happens on the brink of a revolutionary situation, but there is certainly “thrashing” going on and there have been some very significant developments in the recent period. Outbreaks of protest and rebellion among the masses have increased; the rebellions against national oppression in Miami, Chattanooga, Wrightsville, and most recently street fighting at New York’s Sydenham Hospital in Harlem, mass outrage in Atlanta, Buffalo and elsewhere over the murders of Black people, outrage and action against the Greensboro verdict on the Klan; the struggle of the Native Americans against government land seizures; the anti-draft and anti-nuclear movements among the youth and sections of the petty bourgeoisie, the outpouring of protest among women against oppression and degradation, significant developments among artists and musicians, and other signs of protest from various quarters.

The revolution in Iran and the revolutionary struggle of the people in other countries in the recent period have placed both tremendous opportunities and increased demands on the revolutionary forces in this country as a detachment of the international proletariat. And we have seen the impact of the Iranian revolution, the revolutionary struggles in Central America and other parts of the world, as well as events such as the Soviet

invasion of Afghanistan, where millions of people are suddenly engaged in active debate on world affairs and seeking answers to fundamental questions.

Clearly the question of how to “support every outbreak of protest and rebellion” and “how to utilize these for the purpose of increasing and strengthening the military forces required for decisive battle” is before the class-conscious forces and will increasingly be a pressing and urgent matter; and this is true on a world scale, not only in relation to the struggle of the masses in this country but internationally. And contrary to the Economist view which worships at the tail of the mass movement and “regards it as something that *relieves* us of the necessity of conducting revolutionary agitation,” the spontaneous struggles of the masses are “something that should encourage us and stimulate our revolutionary activity.”

In the article, “100,000 Co-Conspirators NOW—It’s In Your Hands” (*Revolutionary Worker* No. 83, Dec. 5, 1980), we pointed out that the two Economist views on the central task expressed in the 100 Flowers campaign*—“patient education” and “we need something more concrete—a visible force” to inspire the masses—“both proceed from an entirely wrong idea of ‘what is the problem?’ The problem revolutionaries have to address is not that the masses are not active enough and we have to concoct some activity for ourselves to substitute for them. The problem is, in fact, that we are lagging behind the opportunities in today’s situation. Once again we see how Economism is precisely an ‘incomprehension, even defense of lagging.’ It is *our* activity, specifically activity of exposure centered around the newspaper, that must be raised. Although it is not now a period characterized by major upsurges of struggle, these are growing in intensity. And when they do occur, as around Miami or Iran for example, inevitably the revolutionary forces lag behind.”

Of course to be able to “seize upon and direct toward the revolutionary aim, the many diverse strands and streams in which the class struggle breaks out—the many different ways that ‘communism springs from every pore’ of society” and to grasp how the central task and the central role of the newspaper is key to doing this, one must understand that these diverse ways that the class struggle breaks out are *favorable* soil for the Party and the class-conscious proletariat and other revolutionary-minded people and in what way. One form that the defense of lagging has taken, has been to simply not even include these outbreaks and protests or the mood of the masses in analyzing the present situation. Related to this blind pessimism, which sees no opportunities in today’s situation, is the equally

* The “100 Flowers campaign” refers to a debate in the pages of the *Revolutionary Worker* in 1980 over the central task and, in particular, the role of the newspaper.

pessimistic view which looks at the contradictory aspects of today's situation, specifically the minor crises, in a very one-sided and metaphysical way and "sees" only "difficulties." Such a view, which makes the absurd claim of a "realistic" appraisal of the situation, is quick to point out only the strength of the imperialists, only the "average," or more to the point the *backward*, among the masses, the fact that the social movements of today are in large part among non-proletarian strata, that they are led by various opportunists, reformists and outright agents of the bourgeoisie, etc., etc., etc. Similarly, while people influenced by this view may be somewhat encouraged at an outbreak such as the Miami rebellion, they are just as suddenly demoralized when it does not turn into the "revolution" itself and therefore come to the conclusion that not much can be done or carry on like a "voice in the wilderness" or a hero looking for some place to display his prowess.

But we must be clear that this one-sided blindness and its cousin, absolute silence on the minor crises in today's situation, are nothing but a justification for lagging behind these developments. They underestimate the developments in the objective situation, including the spontaneous struggles of the masses, precisely because they *underestimate* the role of the class-conscious element—the Party and the class-conscious workers and revolutionary-minded people, armed with a revolutionary line and a powerful weapon—the *Revolutionary Worker*. In a bizarre way, this pessimistic view can't see the opportunities because it expects too much of spontaneity—it expects the spontaneous movement to relieve the conscious forces of the task of *leading*, to *spontaneously* act in a thoroughly revolutionary way or *spontaneously* analyze itself from a revolutionary standpoint, to somehow assume the responsibility of the vanguard; therefore, this view is incapable of analyzing and grasping the significance of developments in the mood and activity of the masses. Lenin's answer in *What Is To Be Done?* to the Economists of his day who accused him of "belittling the spontaneous element," is both revealing and relevant on this point. He said: "We would ask our philosophers how may a deviser of subjective plans 'belittle' objective development? Obviously, by losing sight of the fact that this objective development creates or strengthens, destroys or weakens certain classes, strata, groups, certain nations, groups of nations, etc., and in this way serves as a premise for a definite international political alignment of forces, for determining the position of revolutionary parties, etc. If the deviser of plans did that, his guilt would not be that he belittles the spontaneous element, but on the contrary, that he belittled the *conscious* element, for he would then show that he lacked the 'consciousness' properly to understand objective development. . . . If certain

'spontaneous elements of development' can be grasped at all by human understanding, then an incorrect estimation of them will be tantamount to 'belittling the conscious element.' But if they cannot be grasped, then we cannot know them, and therefore cannot speak of them." (*What Is To Be Done?*)

It is no wonder that the agnostics cry out, "Is it possible!?!"—because they don't "see anything out there." They act like Sisyphus, condemned by the gods to roll a huge rock up a hill forever (inevitably the rock rolled back down the hill), but what they really don't see is that it is their own defense of lagging behind the developing objective situation, the advanced workers and the outbreaks and protests of the masses—that is the *rock* they are rolling.

Minor Crises—Revolutionary Crisis in Embryo

It is the contradictions of the imperialist system worldwide that come to the fore, causing "disruptions" of the "normal routine," breaking the surface calm, causing the "minor crises" which provide fertile ground for revolutionary work. As Lenin pointed out in "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," "Every 'minor' crisis . . . discloses to us in miniature the elements, the rudiments, of the battles that will inevitably take place on a large scale during a big crisis." What is revealed in these "minor crises"? The different class forces, not only in their ideology but in practice; the nature of the state—the bourgeois dictatorship, the fundamental weaknesses of the imperialist system; all of this provides fine opportunities for the revolutionary forces.

In the minor crisis which erupted, for example, when the Iranian masses seized the U.S. embassy, and millions, including the backward, were drawn into political life in the U.S., when the ruling class, in an attempt to whip up national chauvinism, "let the genie out of the bottle" by drawing the masses into political life, we saw how in all the turmoil there was favorable ground for revolutionary agitation, for concretely training the masses in proletarian internationalism, for the revolutionary line to have a tremendous impact in that situation, and for the actual accumulation of revolutionary strength. As Bob Avakian pointed out in "Coming From Behind to Make Revolution," "True, this is on a certain level, within a certain limitation, but even with that some people make a leap to becoming revolutionaries by going through the whole experience of a crisis like that around Iran and seeing in a very concentrated way what the class interests are—a concentrated expression of them, as they are arrayed against each other in this battle. And if you grasp those things, you can recognize the potential that we have emphasized (Lenin is the one that we really

learned this from and he stressed it very emphatically—that you can see people doing this, this kind of phenomena going on, in a miniature way in such minor crises); and if you apply the scientific method, you can certainly grasp the possibility for it on a massive scale when there is a full development of a revolutionary situation.”

The minor crises are both a training ground in preparation for the revolutionary crisis of the future and actually afford great possibilities for “preparing minds and organizing forces” for revolution right now. These minor crises present in *embryo* what the revolutionary situation of tomorrow will be, and one very important point to grasp about the nature of such crises, in opposition to the view of the Economists, is that neither the period leading up to the development of a revolutionary crisis, nor the revolution itself will be a textbook affair, or as Lenin sarcastically put it:

“So one army lines up in one place and says, ‘We are for socialism,’ and another somewhere else and says, ‘We are for imperialism,’ and that will be a social revolution!

“Whoever expects a ‘pure’ social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.” (“The Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up”)

To bemoan the fact that the social movements of today are not “pure” and are led by sundry political reformers and opportunists or to become fascinated with the tactical struggle against the opportunist leaders in an attempt to wrest control of the movement from them in one fell swoop, or to wail at the array of class forces in the field, is both silly and wrong. Even in a revolutionary situation Lenin makes the point that the masses are drawn into political life by the “upper classes” themselves. Aren’t the advanced, revolutionary-minded today looking for answers to some fundamental questions, aren’t they “on their own” attempting to combat the bourgeois leadership, picking up one philosophy or another, that is, what is at hand, in order to do this? How this “pure” revolution point of view expects to *lead* in a revolutionary situation—when millions and millions are suddenly confronted with very pressing problems, including the very real possibility of actually overthrowing the old regime, when in fact there will be not only different forces but actually different armies in the field—really does boggle the mind. Which is of course really the point, because the Economists really don’t expect to lead—not lead a revolution that is. The reason for the close link between Economism and this “pure” revolution point of view is 1) the fascination of the Economists with leading a big mass movement *right now* no matter what the political basis of that leadership and 2) their annoyance at the disruptive influence of other class forces and (heaven forbid) politics, and their insistence that the workers’ atten-

tion should be directed to their own posteriors and not toward such matters as the whole world, imperialism or (heaven forbid, again) state power.

Not only is the revolution not “pure” in the sense that there are different class forces in the field and diverse manifestations of protest and outbreak, but neither does it develop in a straight line in the sense that there is simply a quantitative buildup of outbreak after outbreak. As Lenin pointed out, the revolution cannot be regarded as a single act, but “as a series of more or less powerful outbreaks rapidly alternating with periods of more or less intense calm.” The ability of the class-conscious vanguard to be able to remain firm in principle and flexible—to be ready for everything—is of crucial importance. This is because it is almost impossible to foresee when periods of outbreak will give way to periods of calm, and also because things turn out differently in some important respects than the revolutionaries anticipate. It is only the consistent revolutionary work carried out around a political newspaper which affords such flexibility. As Lenin put it, “it is ridiculous to plead different circumstances and a change of periods: the building of a fighting organization and the conduct of political agitation are essential under any ‘drab, peaceful’ circumstances, in any period, no matter how marked by a ‘declining revolutionary spirit’; moreover it is precisely in such periods and under such circumstances that work of this kind is particularly necessary, since it is too late to form the organization in times of explosion and outburst; the party must be in a state of readiness to launch activity at a moment’s notice.”

The point here about the need for flexibility and to be ready for everything is not just so the revolutionary forces can be ready for the next minor crisis, unless one wants to try and adapt Lenin to the left-Economist line which sees no further than next week (but a word of warning on this score, many have tried and failed). The point is to prepare in an all-around way for further ahead, for revolution, utilizing every minor crisis, every outbreak for gathering strength for the decisive assault, while constantly preparing the masses and carrying on revolutionary work in any period. Speaking about the developments of the objective situation on a world scale, Marx wrote to Engels, “. . . in developments of such magnitude twenty years are no more than a day, though later on there may come days in which twenty years are embodied.” Lenin, referring to this point, wrote, “At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of this objectively inevitable dialectics of human history, on the one hand, utilizing the periods of political stagnation or of sluggish, so-called ‘peaceful’ developments in order to develop the class-consciousness, strength and militancy of the advanced class, and, on the other hand, directing all the work of this utilization towards the ‘ultimate

aim' of that class's advance, *towards creating in it the ability to find practical solutions for great tasks in the great days, in which 'twenty years are embodied'.*" (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, "Karl Marx"; italics ours—Ed.)

On a world scale, one could hardly call the present period "sluggish," and while there are no guarantees that a revolutionary situation will develop in this country, or that if one does a successful seizure of power is a sure thing, still, the imperialist crisis and the accelerating moves toward war heighten both the possibilities and the urgency of preparing for such historic moments when the possibility of a revolutionary seizure of power in one or a number of countries will present itself to the international proletariat. Utilizing every minor crisis, every outbreak of protest and rebellion towards the revolutionary goal and as Lenin put it towards creating the ability in the proletariat "to find practical solutions for great tasks in the great days in which twenty years are embodied," is a very important part of this preparation.

Economism and the "Class Point of View"

Many of the outbreaks and protests among the masses in this country develop among the non-proletarian strata or at least do not take the form of movements of the working class, although there are often numbers of workers involved in these outbreaks. But even where the workers are not involved from the start, these movements, protests and rebellions exert influence on the workers themselves. It is also the case that "spontaneously" advanced, revolutionary-minded workers are attempting "on their own" to support such outbreaks and to influence the broader masses of workers. But the Economist line often balks at supporting such outbreaks of protest and rebellion, saying that such support for the protests among the non-proletarian strata departs from the "class point of view." (It might briefly be noted here that this same Economist line which hurls accusations of departing from the "class point of view" one day is quite capable of *tailing* the politics and ideology of these non-proletarian strata the next, but more on that later.)

Lenin posed the importance of supporting every outbreak of protest and rebellion from the standpoint that the immediate task in Russia was the overthrow of the autocracy. He argued that although the revolution in Russia was a two-stage revolution, that the proletariat should lead the bourgeois revolution against the tsar, quite a revolutionary idea at the time, and one that was bitterly opposed. While the revolution in this country is a single-stage proletarian revolution, our strategy for revolution *is* the united front, led by the class-conscious proletariat. While we cannot

in the scope of this article go into the alignment of forces in this united front, we would refer the reader to our *New Programme and New Constitution*. Any serious consideration of actually carrying out this united front strategy, will appreciate Lenin's answer to the Economists of his day who complained, using the all too familiar excuse that the communists did not have time or the *forces* required to "go in all directions," that is, among all classes and strata of the people, "We Social-Democrats cannot simultaneously guide the activities of various opposition strata, we cannot dictate to them a positive program of action, we cannot point out to them in what manner they should fight for their daily interests. . ." And Lenin reorted, "It goes without saying that we cannot guide the struggle of the students, liberals, etc., for their 'immediate interests,' but this was not the point at issue, most worthy Economist! The point we were discussing was the possible and necessary participation of various social strata in the overthrow of the autocracy; and not only are we *able* but it is our bounden duty, to guide *these* 'activities of the various opposition strata' if we desire to be the 'vanguard.' Not only will our students and liberals, etc., themselves take care of 'the struggle that will bring them face to face with our political regime'; the police and the officials of the autocratic government will see to this more than anyone else. But if 'we' desire to be advanced democrats, we must make it our business to *stimulate* in the minds of those who are dissatisfied with university, or only with Zemstvo [rural council—Ed.], etc., conditions the idea that the whole political system is worthless. *We* must take upon ourselves the task of organizing an all-round political struggle under the leadership of *our* Party in such a manner as to obtain all the support possible of all opposition strata for the struggle and for our Party. *We* must train our Social-Democratic [communist—Ed.] practical workers to become political leaders able to guide all the manifestations of this all-round struggle, able at the right time to 'dictate a positive program of action' for the restless students, the discontented Zemstvo councillor, the incensed religious sects, the offended elementary school teachers, etc., etc. . . ." (*What Is To Be Done?*) Is there any doubt that what Lenin means by a "positive program of action" at the right time is the overthrow of the tsar? And is there any doubt that his argument is right to the point today?

In opposition to the Economist tendency to narrow the field of influence of the Party and "divert" the workers' attention to their own narrow interests, only Marxism can open up the *widest perspectives*, revealing the diverse ways that the class struggle breaks out, the different forces and their motion and direction, and the means by which the class-conscious forces can lead and unite all the streams of struggle into a raging torrent aimed squarely at the "omnipotent" state. Only Marxism can thoroughly reveal

the revolutionary elements in today's non-revolutionary situation and particularly how they can be utilized to gain revolutionary strength for the decisive battle.

The masses must be won to see that it is not just national oppression, or police terror, or rape or nukes or the draft or even war, but that every outrage is a manifestation of the capitalist system and the rule of the capitalist class and there is only one solution to all of this—mass armed proletarian revolution; the Party must carry out this kind of all-around political work in these struggles and win the revolutionary-minded people from other strata from fighters for one to fighters for all. How, pray tell, we might ask the Economists, is such a united front to be forged unless the class-conscious forces not only support every outbreak, but work in this way to unite all the streams of class struggle into one raging torrent? And how, we might ask, is the proletariat to lead, how are advanced workers ever to raise their understanding and act in a class-conscious manner, exerting influence on these movements and developing their ability to find practical solutions in those days ahead when leading the masses in armed insurrection is the order of the day, unless the communists “go in all directions,” that is, among the different classes and strata, spreading the lessons of the outbreaks of protest and rebellion, analyzing every event from the most revolutionary standpoint in the pages of the revolutionary newspaper?

In fact, this is precisely a “class point of view”—the interests and requirements of the class-conscious proletariat.

This brings us to another aspect of Economism and its waving of the banner of a “class point of view.” One of the features of Economism in our movement is its constant uttering of the phrase “working class” *ad nauseam* and its inclination to narrow the interests of the working class to “a Big Mac and fries to go.” But the class-conscious *proletariat*—those who have nothing to lose but their chains—want and need to know about all classes and strata and must be trained to respond to every outrage from a communist viewpoint and no other. “Those who concentrate the attention, observation and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly upon itself alone are not Social-Democrats [communists—Ed.]; for its self-realization is indissolubly bound up not only with a fully clear theoretical—it would be even more true to say not so much with a theoretical, as with a practical understanding, of the relationships between *all* the various classes of modern society, acquired through the experience of political life.” (*What Is To Be Done?*)

As we have pointed out, in the article “100,000 Co-Conspirators NOW...” (reprinted in this pamphlet) mentioned above and elsewhere, political exposures are a fundamental condition for raising the revolu-

tionary activity of the masses. Those who truly desire to raise the activity of the masses must, as Lenin put it, “increase their own activity,” principally in political exposure. And while the tasks of the communists in the outbreaks of rebellion and protest among the masses do not exhaust the all-around exposure of the imperialist system, cardinal questions of “affairs of state,” etc., the analysis of these outbreaks, the different class forces, their lessons and significance, is an indispensable part of this all-around picture. To shrink from confronting the complexities of the various class forces and outlooks in the field, or to desire to somehow “insulate” the masses from such influences, or to treat the masses as though they were empty heads into which communists pour the truth—“spontaneously revolutionary, if only one could get it through their thick heads”—is simply to abandon the masses to spontaneity. People will try out a lot of different ideas before they are convinced of the need to take up the science of proletarian revolution which offers not one iota of “painless progress” in the resolution of their problems, before they are convinced of the necessity and possibility for mass armed revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. As Lenin pointed out in *What Is To Be Done?*:

“In order to become a Social-Democrat [communist—Ed.], the worker must have a clear picture of the economic nature and the social and political features of the landlord and the priest, the high state official and the peasant, the student and the tramp; he must know their strong and weak points; he must see the meaning of all the catchwords and sophisms by which each class and each stratum *camouflages* its selfish striving and its real ‘inside workings’; he must understand what interests certain institutions and certain laws reflect and how they reflect them. But this ‘clear picture’ cannot be obtained from books. It can be obtained only from living examples and from exposures, following hot upon the heels of what is going on around us at a given moment, of what is being discussed, in whispers perhaps, by each one in his own way, of the meaning of such and such events, of such and such statistics, of such and such court sentences, etc., etc., etc. These comprehensive political exposures are an essential and *fundamental* condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity.”

The outbreaks and minor crises of today provide not only fertile ground for linking up with and raising the revolutionary sentiments of the masses to a class-conscious position, but also fertile ground for training the masses to be able to recognize different trends and political lines, to distinguish between demagoguery and a genuinely revolutionary line and program. This is essential to enable the class-conscious proletariat to lead the revolutionary movement, to respond to these outbreaks in a revolutionary manner, and to increasingly become a material force in society,

demonstrating the ability to lead in the twists and turns of the class struggle. The proletariat must be trained to recognize, not only how it is the “same dark forces” oppressing different sections of the people and in what way, but also to grasp deeply that only through armed revolution can the evils of imperialism be swept away and to distinguish the communist viewpoint from every other.

Revolutionaries cannot be reared in a hothouse. As Lenin pointed out, “Working class consciousness cannot be genuinely political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all* cases, *without exception*, of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter *what* class is affected. Moreover, to respond from a Social-Democratic [communist—Ed.] and not from any other point of view. The consciousness of the masses of workers cannot be genuine class-consciousness, unless the workers learn to observe from concrete, and above all from topical manifestations of the intellectual, ethical and political life of these classes; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of *all* classes, strata and groups of the population.”

Forces Required for Decisive Battle

It is a basic law of history that where there is oppression, there's resistance. The masses are going to rebel against their oppression, at different times and in various ways, different classes and strata, bringing with them all their prejudices and contradictory aspects, say “to hell with this” and rise up, protesting their situation and seeking a way out. And the question for the class-conscious revolutionaries is, is this fine or is it terrible? Is this a good thing or a bad thing for the international proletariat, and what do you do? Do you stand at the side criticizing and gesticulating, do you tail after the masses, cheering them on militantly, or do you go into the midst of the struggle, in order to raise the consciousness of the masses, and to utilize these outbreaks for the purpose of, as Lenin put it, “increasing and strengthening the military forces required for decisive battle”?

The minor crises and outbreaks of today are fertile ground both for accumulating revolutionary strength and training for the future, as we have said, but the ability of the revolutionary forces to maximize the experience of these minor crises is directly related to how well we grasp the central task and the newspaper as the main weapon now. In arguing against the Economists of his time, Lenin put a great deal of emphasis on the question of supporting every outbreak of protest and rebellion among all classes and strata, based on and in relation to all-around political agitation. (He did not, nor do we, mean literally *every* outbreak. Lenin was no worshipper at

the feet of “motion for its own sake”—of localism and spontaneity. He understood that *major* political events were far more important for training than minor ones, and that it would be particularly around these that the masses would be brought into significant political struggle. Lenin's point about “*every*” referred to *all* classes and strata, and was aimed especially at the Economists who wanted to restrict the scope of exposures from covering every sphere of society.) At the same time he stressed that the mass movement does not “determine” the tasks of the communists, certainly not in the Economist sense of “that struggle is desirable which is possible and the struggle which is possible is the one that is going on at the given moment.” So why then did Lenin put such emphasis on these outbreaks? It was not, nor is it today, from the standpoint of tailing them. Lenin really didn't give a damn about leading a non-revolutionary mass movement and neither do we; he viewed everything from the standpoint of the revolutionary struggle for power. But Lenin pointed out that he is no communist who does not support *every* revolutionary movement and every protest against tyranny and he is no communist who is not *ahead* of everyone in advancing the most revolutionary appraisal of every given event and the most revolutionary solution. In confronting the question of what does it mean to support every outbreak of protest and rebellion, it is extremely important to grasp that the main task of the communists is to *divert* the spontaneous struggle of the masses, particularly the proletariat, to a revolutionary struggle. This means preparing the masses to go over from the spontaneous struggle they are waging to something different—an organized offensive to seize power from the capitalist class. The importance of diverting the spontaneous struggles cannot be underestimated, because in and of themselves these spontaneous struggles will never lead to a successful revolution even when a revolutionary situation develops and it is truly the case that millions and millions are aroused and in the streets.

While the task of diverting the movement cannot be carried out apart from the struggle of the masses, the spontaneous struggles themselves will not give rise to a revolutionary solution to the contradictions which give rise to these outbreaks in the first place. This understanding can only be “brought from without,” by the most advanced elements representing the revolutionary class. And while the revolutionary movement which will be required to carry the struggle through to the end can only be forged through the twists and turns of the class struggle raging throughout society, the whole task of diverting the movement is in fact a protracted process of struggle *against* spontaneity. Aah, there's the rub!

The spontaneous struggles of the masses are part of the objective situation for the class-conscious forces. The question is how to lead them.

Fundamentally, leadership means political leadership, not the left-Economist view of grabbing organizational leadership—"hire us, fire them," or concocting some "visible force"—a handful of heroes to march around inspiring the masses with their "take care of business" concreteness—or the straight-up reformism of leading the fight for reformist demands in the "day to day struggle." Again, the central role of agitation and the newspaper as the main weapon is crucial. As we have pointed out, the Party's press, particularly its newspaper, while it must be wielded in itself as the main weapon in preparing for revolution, also serves as an overall guide for extensive spoken agitation and propaganda that must be carried out by Party members and supporters. Mainly through these same means, written and spoken, the Party and those under its leadership must support every major outbreak of protest and rebellion among the masses and assist the struggling masses to both unite more broadly and fight more powerfully and to more consciously aim their fire against the bourgeoisie and the imperialist system and link themselves with the class-conscious proletariat and its revolutionary aims.

This does not mean that the Party and those under its leadership may not provide tactical leadership in these outbreaks, but even the question of tactical leadership must be viewed from the standpoint of the revolutionary goal, as Stalin pointed out in *Foundations of Leninism*: "The point here is not that the vanguard should realize the impossibility of preserving the old regime and the inevitability of its overthrow. The point is that the masses, the millions should understand this only from their own experience. The task is to enable the vast masses to realize from their own experience the inevitability of the overthrow of the old regime, to promote such methods of struggle and forms of organization as will make it easier for the masses to realize from experience the correctness of the revolutionary slogans."

Even in the outbreaks of today, the question arises among the advanced of how to go over to a more consistent and thoroughgoing struggle. The masses themselves begin to run up against the limitations of the spontaneous struggle; they begin to see even in an embryonic way that something more is required. People's eyes open up in an even more pronounced way in the midst of these struggles, especially the independent, political and most of all revolutionary struggles of the masses. They start looking for answers about how are we going to once and for all get this system off our backs. This becomes especially sharp when the bourgeois state comes in and puts down these rebellions. The cry that went up in the Miami rebellion from revolutionary-minded people that, "We needed a revolutionary organ and a revolutionary organization" is an example of

this. With this we heartily agree; in fact we have such an organization—the Revolutionary Communist Party—and such an organ—the *Revolutionary Worker*. But if this is taken to mean that the main way that such an organ and such a Party is to lead is by transforming the spontaneous struggles, as they are today with the present alignment of forces and under present conditions, in a straight-line fashion into a revolutionary struggle, this is a mistaken idea of diverting. It will only lead to discouragement, and ultimately crash on the rocks of reformism. Diverting the spontaneous struggles cannot be taken to mean that the goal is to divert each spontaneous struggle in and of itself into a struggle for revolution. This would result in bouncing between sectarianism and reformism and would definitely go against materialism—a revolutionary situation requires more than one struggle, no matter how "well led." The point is to carry out the task of diverting in a protracted way, in the course of ebbs and flows, concentrating especially on the *advanced* masses, so as to prepare for the time when the conditions are ripe for the diverse struggles to go over to a struggle for political power.

The minor crises and outbreaks like Miami are an embryo of the revolutionary crisis of the future, they are not the same thing. The revolution that we are preparing for is not the same as "two, three, many Miami's," to take only one example. As we pointed out in *RW* No. 83, "revolutionary action, once undertaken, also plays the role in this period of creating public opinion for the seizure of power. In the wake of the Miami rebellion, for example, it is clear that its overall significance in this period was its awakening and stimulating effect on the consciousness of the proletariat and oppressed worldwide—a 'manifesto' written with fire and guns." But the idea that the role of the communists in supporting every outbreak is to clone the spontaneous uprisings of the masses is itself a form of tailing spontaneity, another form of searching for something more "concrete" than our central task, which is not separate from but comprehends revolutionary action. In a number of these recent outbreaks, the masses rose against their oppressors with revolutionary violence, even arms. What this indicates is that the masses have summed up some lessons from past experience, have deep and burning questions, and desire to *act*; this only further heightens the responsibility of the class-conscious proletariat not to act like cheerleaders but to meet the requirements of the advanced and raise their political consciousness as well as that of the broad masses, while learning from these outbreaks. The wrong notions of what it means to divert the struggle will ultimately leave the masses empty-handed and disarmed. If work does not proceed from the standpoint of "preparing minds and organizing forces" and the central role of revolutionary agita-

tion and the newspaper as the main weapon, when the struggle ebbs, what will be left? Fond memories of a battle well fought!?! The masses do not need such *memories*. What they require is revolution. They need themselves to be trained to utilize every outbreak of protest and rebellion for the accumulation of forces required for decisive battle, they need to be part of the grand conspiracy whose main weapon today is the revolutionary newspaper which raises their political consciousness, sustains them through all the twists and turns, the periods of calm and outbreak, keeping their consciousness tense, and trains them to assess every event in society and throughout the world from a communist point of view and from the standpoint of how things stand *vis-à-vis* the revolutionary seizure of power.

While mainly the question of support of these outbreaks of protest and rebellion is through the newspaper and through agitation both written and spoken, on this basis it is crucial in relation to major outbreaks of struggle to mobilize other sections of the masses, especially the proletariat, to support these outbreaks by revolutionary action. Again the key link in this is in organizing wide striking political exposures. The remarks of the advanced worker which Lenin refers to in *What Is To Be Done?* are to the point: "... talk less about 'raising the activity of the masses of workers'! We are far more active than you think, and we are quite able to support, by open street fighting, demands that do not promise any 'palpable results' whatever! And it is not for you to 'raise' our activity, *because activity is precisely the thing you yourselves lack!* Bow less in worship to spontaneity, and think more about raising *your own* activity, gentlemen!"

While, as we have pointed out, the question of supporting every outbreak of protest and rebellion and of utilizing these for the accumulation of military forces required for decisive battle does not exhaust our central task, but rather is comprehended (included) in it, neither does this exhaust the task of all-around exposure in the newspaper, but it is an important part of the central task and an important part of the newspaper playing the role of artillery. In these outbreaks of protest and rebellion, the newspaper presents a broad, sweeping view to the masses. It arms them to see not only how the struggle they are waging is part of the overall revolutionary struggle, but with a living picture of the capitalist system and the understanding that there is only one solution—mass armed revolution under the leadership of the class-conscious proletariat and its Party.

In turn, reports and analysis of these outbreaks and broad social movements in the newspaper become part of this overall picture enabling the Party and the revolutionary masses to see the different class forces in the field, keep pulse on the development of the revolutionary movement and where things stand *vis-à-vis* the seizure of power. In particular, in

relation to these broad social movements, which as we have pointed out are today often among non-proletarian strata, these exposures not only educate the broad masses, especially the proletariat, but arouse a section of them into action. Not only does this have a tremendous revolutionizing effect on these workers, but the impact of the class-conscious proletariat taking the political stage in support of these movements is extremely significant, exerting tremendous influence on the broader masses of workers and on other classes and strata broadly throughout society. This whole process is very important in actually forging the united front, and the leadership of the proletariat of this united front. And while this will certainly come out in a concentrated way as a revolutionary crisis develops and matures, it is both necessary and possible to carry out this kind of revolutionary work in relation to the outbreaks of protest and rebellion among the masses and the broad social movements of today. To imagine that all this can wait for some future date would be a grievous error.

It could mean missing the revolution, which, once again, will "require a revolutionary organization, capable of combining all the forces and of leading the movement *not only in name*, but in deed, i.e., *an organization that will be ready at any moment to support every protest and every outbreak*, and to utilize these for the purpose of increasing and strengthening the military forces required for decisive battle." The current campaign for 100,000 *RW*'s offers great opportunities for advances on this front, preparing for the future armed seizure of power. For as Lenin also pointed out:

"Those who make nation-wide political agitation the cornerstone of their program, *their tactics and their organizational work* as the *Iskra* does, stand in least risk of missing the revolution. The people who were engaged over the whole of Russia in spinning the network of organizations linked up with an all-Russian newspaper not only did not miss the spring events, but, on the contrary, enabled us to foretell them. Nor did they miss the demonstrations that were described in the *Iskra*, Nos. 13 and 14; on the contrary, they took part in those demonstrations, clearly appreciating their duty of coming to the aid of the spontaneously rising crowd and, at the same time, through the medium of the newspaper, helping all the comrades in Russia to become more closely acquainted with the demonstrations and to utilize their experience. And if they live they will not miss the revolution which first and foremost will demand of us experience in agitation, ability to support (in a communist manner) every protest, ability to direct the spontaneous movement, while safeguarding it from the mistakes of friends and the traps of enemies." History tells the rest: those that lived and remained firm in principle did not miss the revolution but took part in one of those rare moments in history and witnessed the fruit of the all-

around and all-embracing political agitation—that work, which as Lenin said, “brings closer and merges into a *single whole* the elemental destructive force of the crowd and the conscious destructive force of the organization of revolutionaries.” □

It's In Your Hands— 100,000 Co-Conspirators *NOW*

“Create public opinion . . . seize power” is no literary task. As Bob Avakian, the Chairman of our Party’s Central Committee recently pointed out, “To underscore the significance of this advance in our understanding of central task—and of the newspaper as our main weapon, in its various aspects—it can be truly said that it is only with these advances that we have really arrived at and begun to develop an actual plan for how to make revolution, for how to make all our work concretely build toward the goal of an eventual armed uprising and civil war. This is not to say that previously we did not carry out revolutionary work (with whatever weaknesses and errors there may have been in our line and actions), nor that we did not have a basic strategy—the united front—for revolution (for the necessary approach to the question of the alignment of class forces). But it is to say that it is only with the forging of the line on central task, as represented by ‘create public opinion . . . seize power,’ and the wielding of the newspaper as the main weapon, that we could really begin to forge the links between our work in this period and the actual mass armed struggle for power in the future.”

Marxism is a wrangling *ism*, as Mao said, and this understanding of our central task, and the role of the paper, has had to contend with opposing views. One such view is the strategy of terrorism, the belief that the system can be brought down in a war of attrition by the armed actions of a relative few, or, in another slightly different version, that the broad masses will be stimulated into revolutionary activity by the heroic armed actions of these few. While this strategy was not much argued for in the pages of the *RW* in the 100 Flowers debate, terrorism does have influence among revolutionary-minded people who are burning with impatience to see this system finished off. While without this kind of spirit of revolutionary im-

patience, nothing can be accomplished, and while having this oppressive imperialist system gone yesterday would be none too soon, still this does not make terrorism a correct revolutionary strategy and, in fact, is opposed to the most necessary work of creating public opinion to seize power, and is opposed to the building of a Party to carry out especially this urgently necessary political work. In all this, terrorism shares much with the rightist and Economist forms of opposition to our central task which are today far and away the principal obstacle to revolutionary work. Precisely because of this, such rightist forms, not terrorism, are the subject of our main argument. A full reply to the strategy of terrorism is beyond the scope of the present article, but Comrade Avakian did recently address some of these questions in his reply to a letter from a "Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations" (*RW* No. 75, now reprinted as a pamphlet). Still, it can be briefly said that a strategy of military attrition or "urban guerrilla warfare" misses the fact that an imperialist state such as this one can only be overthrown by the conscious action of great masses of people in the form of mass armed insurrection, followed by civil war. And as for "excitatory terror," Lenin, in his book *What Is To Be Done?*, replied in a way that not only hit the terrorists, but also, even today in this country, urges us forward to correct the shortcomings in our own revolutionary work:

"Are there not enough outrages committed in Russian life that special 'excitants' have to be invented? On the other hand, is it not obvious that those who are not, and cannot be, roused to excitement even by Russian tyranny will stand by 'twiddling their thumbs,' watching a handful of terrorists engage in single combat with the government? The fact of the matter is that the masses of the workers are roused to a high pitch of excitement by the abominations in Russian life, but we are unable to collect, if one may put it that way, and concentrate all these drops and streamlets of popular excitement, which are called forth by the conditions of Russian life to a far larger extent than we imagine, but which it is precisely necessary to combine into a *single* gigantic torrent." And Lenin goes on to call terrorism and Economism "merely two different forms of *evading* the most pressing duty that now rests upon Russian revolutionaries, namely to organize comprehensive political agitation." (FLP edition, pp. 95-96)

This "most pressing duty" is, of course, coming into being in the face of resistance. But it *is* being born. Like all new things, it is struggling to grow, and strengthening itself in the process. The "100 Flowers" campaign has performed the service of bringing opposing lines into the open and increasingly stimulating many comrades to raise their own understanding of our central task and join the struggle to uphold it in theory, and carry out practice under this guidance. One such tendency that has appeared and

been fought is the line that surveys the present situation and sees little going on, little basis for our revolutionary line. According to this view, we are "too far ahead" and the central task tends to be perverted into some sort of aimless process of patiently educating people, of "changing people's minds." Another view more openly loses patience with persevering in our central task, feeling that "in addition" we must undertake something "more concrete." Specifically, the argument has been raised, we need a "visible force" of advanced workers who the Party would call into action in various ways in order to awaken and stimulate broader ranks onto the revolutionary path. This, it is argued, is even key for raising interest in the newspaper.

It must be said that another virtue of the "100 Flowers" debate was to reveal how Economism is not at all a "dead letter" in the revolutionary movement today, and, in fact, is the principal obstacle to be overcome in revolutionary work. And all this also shows how the campaign for 100,000 co-conspirators is a powerful blow in theory and in practice against this backward trend. For despite their obvious differences, both are Economist. Both are marked by what Lenin termed "the principal feature" of Economism: "... its incomprehension, even *defense, of lagging*, i.e., as we have explained the lagging of the conscious leaders behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses." Lenin goes on to say, "the characteristic features of this trend express themselves in the following: with respect to principles, in a vulgarisation of Marxism and to helplessness in the face of modern 'criticism' . . . ; with respect to politics, in the striving to restrict political agitation and political struggle or to reduce them to petty activities . . . ; with respect to tactics, in utter instability . . . ; and with respect to organization, in the failure to understand that the mass character of the movement does not diminish, but increases, our obligation to establish a strong and centralised organisation of revolutionaries capable of leading the preparatory struggle, every unexpected outbreak, and, finally, the decisive assault." ("A Talk With Defenders of Economism") Both these trends that have emerged are especially "a defense of lagging" in regard to strengthening the key link in all our work today: carrying out exposures of all manifestations of tyranny and oppression, here and internationally.

Preparing, Not "Patient Education"

To see our task as "some kind of patient education" is to miss the whole point. In this view the situation appears bleak, lifeless, empty of contradictions and empty of opportunities. This is a static and one-dimensional view of the situation today, to say the least. What about the developing crisis of U.S. imperialism? What about the "mini-shocks" that

hit the system even now, as it moves toward war? What of the forces being drawn into political life today, the movements against the draft, nukes, women's oppression, and what of rebellions like Miami? Simply pointing out that things are not as advanced in the development of the mass movement as they were in Russia at the time Lenin wrote is hardly the point. It misses what is in store for U.S. imperialism. But even more important, it raises "Lenin's conditions" in a vain attempt to attack Lenin's revolutionary political line. Lenin laid stress on the fact that at all times, communists had to pay special attention to the *advanced* workers, and not remain fixated on the spontaneous level of the mass movement. Whatever the level of the mass movement, the masses would not go forward unless leaders for the struggle were trained—and Lenin stressed that the essential part of the training was learning through exposures, about all aspects of political life. With its flat and lifeless view of the present situation, one could hardly expect this "patient education" line to produce revolutionary exposure despite its pretensions about upholding the newspaper and the central task. This is not the revolutionary view of the central task as "the bridge from the present to the future" as our Party's *New Programme* puts it. It is, at bottom, the Economist view of marking time, waiting for a "big mass movement" to push things along.

This Economist view "forgets" that the central task is not simply "create public opinion" but "create public opinion . . . seize power." This is not only a question for the future, but affects our work in the present. In this light, our work is not so much "changing minds" as it is "preparing minds and organizing forces" through the events of the day for the final assault ahead. Once again, topical exposure is key in this process. If our task is seen simply as "changing minds" and "patient education," this would amount to reducing our work to sterile, stale and sectarian activity separate from the diverse strands or streams in which the class struggle breaks out. Real revolutionary work today means being able to seize on and direct all these streams toward the revolutionary aim. In this, the paper is indispensable in building today for the revolutionary prospects ahead.

And what of the trend that says it "wants more action" in the form of a "visible force"? Is such a view more revolutionary, or at least more "action oriented" than our Party's central task and main work around its newspaper? Not at all. Only more narrow in its conception of revolutionary activity. Lenin's remark (quoted earlier) about the striving to restrict political agitation and political struggle or to reduce them to "*petty activities*" is right to the point. Apparently the thinking is that somehow the existence of a force of people running about from here to there will somehow answer people's questions and inspire them. In this narrow view,

people apparently have no political questions other than, "how do we get things moving?", and the task is to present them with the "proof" that "something's going on after all." Well, how about the preparation for revolution represented by 100,000 *Revolutionary Workers*. That's no "small thing" going on!

All these Economist views are proceeding from an entirely wrong idea of "what is the problem?". The problem revolutionaries have to address is not that the masses are not active enough and we have to ~~conduct~~^{CONDUCT} some activity for ourselves to substitute for them. The problem is, in fact, that we are lagging behind the opportunities in today's situation. Once again we see how Economism is precisely an "incomprehension, even defense, of lagging." It is *our* activity, specifically activity of exposure centered around the newspaper, that must be raised. Although it is not now a period characterized by major upsurges of struggle, these are growing in intensity. And when they do occur, as around Miami or Iran, for example, inevitably the revolutionary forces lag behind.

In the important article, "Crucial Questions in Coming From Behind" (*RW* No. 68, now available as a pamphlet) Comrade Avakian refers to Lenin's example in *What Is To Be Done?* of an advanced worker putting political demands on communists and points out that "the real problem is not at all that such workers do not exist" but that those who deny it "do not know where to look for them or how to recognize them—even though and even when they pass by them or perhaps bump into them every day." Lenin's worker makes a very relevant point, ". . . *talk less about 'raising the activity of the masses of workers'!* We are far more active than you think, and we are quite able to support, by open, street fighting, demands that do not promise any 'palpable results' whatever! And it is not for you to 'raise' our activity, *because activity is precisely the thing you yourselves lack!* Bow less in worship to spontaneity, and think more about raising *your own* activity, gentlemen!" And the activity Lenin calls for here is activity centered around a newspaper "precisely in the form of live *exposures* of what our government and our governing classes are doing at this very moment in all spheres of life." (p. 92, FLP) It is precisely to raise this activity, to respond to this challenge, that the 100,000 *RW* campaign has been launched.

Exposures—The Key Link

Why is organizing political exposures such an important question—the key link, in fact, in carrying out our revolutionary preparation today? Because, as Lenin put it, "The masses *cannot* be trained in political consciousness and revolutionary activity in any other way except by means

of such exposures." (*WITBD?*, p 85)

A newspaper is central to organizing the work of political exposure, which consists mainly in agitation (one or a few basic ideas presented to a mass of people) and secondarily in propaganda (many ideas which will be understood in their entirety by only a comparatively few people). A newspaper constantly hounds and exposes the bourgeoisie and produces in its readers a clear picture of events in the society, arming hundreds of thousands simultaneously with a common revolutionary viewpoint. And, in addition, in relation to key outbreaks of struggle, a paper plays the role of guiding, and organizing further advances in these struggles toward the revolutionary goal, exposing the enemies' maneuvers and the twists and turns in the struggle and laying the basis for future advances. All this is exactly the "activity" required by the developing world situation.

This exposure is very *practical* activity. It is well worth quoting at some length from *What Is To Be Done?* to make this point. In order to develop class consciousness, workers must gain a clear picture of the nature of the system here and internationally and of *all* the different classes in society, as Lenin says, "not so much with a theoretical as with a practical understanding." And he says this "cannot be obtained from any book. It can be obtained only from living examples and from exposures that follow close upon what is going on about us at a given moment; upon what is being discussed, in whispers perhaps, by each one in his own way; upon what finds expression in such and such events, in such and such court sentences, etc., etc. These comprehensive political exposures are an essential and *fundamental* condition for training the masses in political activity." (pp. 86-87)

Good exposure, or agitation, rouses discontent among its audience. And here lies the basic reason why these exposures, far more than any calls for a "visible force" or other sorts of "more concrete" activity are the key to all-around political activity, including mass political struggle. This is why, if the masses of people do not yet respond with intense revolutionary activity to various outrages of the system, then we must not blame them, but blame ourselves for, as Lenin put it "being unable to organize as yet sufficiently wide, striking and rapid exposures. . ."

In *What Is To Be Done?*, the important point is made that,

"As for calling the masses to action, that will come of itself as soon as energetic political agitation, live and striking exposures come into play. To catch some criminal red-handed and immediately to brand him publicly in all places is of itself far more effective than any number of 'calls'. . . [And Lenin also called for organizing] wide, striking and rapid exposures of all the shameful outrages. When we do that (and we must and can do it), the

most backward worker will understand, *or will feel*, that the students and religious sects, the peasants and the authors are being abused and outraged by those same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life. Feeling that, he himself will be filled with an irresistible desire to react. . ." (pp. 87-88)

The Economist line that calls for a "visible force" reverses the actual relationship between a newspaper (with its basic content of exposures) and bringing a section of the masses into political action. It is not mainly, as this line would have it, the "visible force" of people acting that will provide the conditions for selling larger numbers of newspapers (as if this were the basic goal anyway, instead of preparing for revolution). Instead, it is mainly the other way around—the exposures in the pages of the paper that will bring forth revolutionary activity among the masses in many "unexpected" ways full of the revolutionary initiative and creativeness of the masses.

This, in spite of attempts to say otherwise, is precisely the point of the "Crucial Questions. . ." article by Comrade Avakian, referred to earlier. When he is speaking of the burning necessity of straining against the limits in "the sphere of political action, especially the class-conscious action of the advanced workers," the Chairman's point is not based on a "visible force" or mainly on "calls to action" outside the sphere of our central task, and separate from the ongoing work centered around the newspaper. Quite the contrary, he writes, "And, once again, in doing this the strengthening of the Party's ability, politically and organizationally, to carry out work of this type—and especially to wield the *Revolutionary Worker* to the fullest, in the hands not only of Party members but also broader and broader ranks of the workers and other oppressed masses—is overall the most decisive thing."

It is precisely through this process that a class conscious force is called forth into action, around key events. This is a living, changing, force, something in motion. To view it any other way is frozen, stiff, metaphysical thinking. It was through this process, centered around the paper, that a class-conscious force took historic action on May 1st 1980 in this country. But it would be wooden and downright silly and turning the gains of May 1st into their opposite to think, "OK, this class-conscious force was born on May 1st. We know them all, we've got their phone numbers, so let's call them into action." No, the actions of a class-conscious force of proletarians are something far more dynamic and growing than that—in short, it is centered around that most broad and flexible work built around the *Revolutionary Worker*.

In addition to all this, and even more fundamentally, the line that a "visible force" and calls to action are key in bringing the masses into activi-

ty departs from the basic materialist law that "oppression breeds resistance." Far more than any number of such "calls," the very workings of this oppressive system, here and internationally, bring people into motion against it. This emphasizes all the more the crucial role of the conscious work of revolutionaries. This work, and exposures in particular, play the role of focusing up this struggle over key political questions, of sustaining it and of guiding the whole process toward the ultimate revolutionary goal.

In this light it is clear that political action, mass struggle, is not something separate and apart from (or above) our central task of "create public opinion. . . seize power" but is in fact comprehended (included) in it. This is so in a number of ways. First and foremost it is because it is precisely *on the basis* of the exposures carried out as the main ongoing work of revolutionaries that they are stimulated, guided and sustained through twists and turns. It is also true that revolutionary action, once undertaken, also plays the role in this period of creating public opinion for the seizure of power. In the wake of the Miami rebellion, for example, it is clear that its overall significance in this period was its awakening and stimulating effect on the consciousness of the proletariat and oppressed worldwide—a "manifesto" written with fire and guns. Searching for something "more concrete" than this central task is a dead-end, and ultimately Economist, journey. "Create public opinion. . . seize power," with our main weapon today, the *Revolutionary Worker*, is both an urgent task and a description of a whole process—"the bridge" from the present to the future decisive revolutionary assault.

Great Potential

Today, while there are Economist falterings before this great task, the overall trend is one of tremendous progress, both theoretically and in the realm of consciousness transforming matter. The influence of the *Revolutionary Worker*, the roots of the conspiracy, have extended far more broadly and deeply than before. The role of the networks of this paper as hubs of all-around revolutionary activity has begun to come into flower. In the wake of major events in society, most recently the "hunting license" innocent verdicts handed the Klan in Greensboro, *RW* distributors have been sought out by others to get down on the meaning of these events. In some cases, based on the exposures and line of the paper, these forces have initiated various forms of protest on their own, often reporting later to the paper.

Circles of revolutionaries have begun to form up around the paper, and other, already existing circles—a feature of the movement in the upsurge period of the '60s—have been found and contacted through the work

of the paper and have been influenced in varying degrees by its line (often these groups are studying the *RW* in relation to other political papers). Such circles have been contacted among many sections of the people, including youth, vets and immigrant workers. Progress toward drawing them toward a common line, a common conspiracy, has been made.

The influence of the *RW* has been spread into various social movements in ways unheard of before. While in many cases our exposures are weak on the questions of the day with these movements, the paper has begun to change this situation by "stretching a line" into them, influencing people, learning more. Contacts have been established through the paper with immigrant proletarians and students, and initial steps toward more foreign language editions have been taken. These contacts have included recently arrived Cubans and Vietnamese, who have life stories that are damning exposures of revisionism and imperialism—and blows to the self-serving U.S. imperialist propaganda around these "boat people." All this is vital material for further educating the proletariat in this country about U.S. and Soviet imperialism, and the historic role of the international proletariat.

Advances are being reported and summed up, and there is a far more concrete sense of the areas where new, major advances can be made. All this has been accomplished along with more professionalization of the revolutionary ranks. A new situation, providing the basis for a new leap, has arisen.

Looking to the future, despite the puny voices of dismal pessimism, we—the revolutionary forces—are not at all in a bad position. True, there has not yet been the experience of an attempted revolutionary struggle for power in this country—and the task of revolution in any advanced imperialist country like this is unprecedented. But as Comrade Avakian has put it, "We are coming from behind, but we are not coming from nowhere." As one important part of this, there has been the experience of the '60s in this country. True, the '60s was not a revolutionary situation or an attempted struggle for power. But it was a significant revolutionary upsurge, which has left a revolutionary heritage that is part of today's situation.

Going back a dozen or so years, to the highpoint of the popular upsurge, and it was the popular movements, even the revolutionary forces within them, that had the initiative, with the ruling class definitely on the defensive politically. The way popular opinion was divided at the time was not at all unfavorable to the movements, and this was true even in the proletariat, where the movements of the time were not centered and where the ruling class still had enough material reserves to make significant conces-

sions to keep things relatively quiet.

If one were to imagine transferring that kind of situation into the objective conditions that might be developing in the coming years, with a worldwide conjuncture of war, crisis and greatly increased chances of revolutionary opportunities internationally, then some interesting possibilities start appearing. Of course, the '60s did not open up the prospects of a struggle for power, in the U.S., but in a sense that is just the point: the position of the imperialists was less precarious then, it was not "all on the line"; they still had adequate reserves to fight a war and grant some concessions at home—and enough freedom to cut their losses and get out of the war before graver developments took place for them internationally. But what of the coming conjuncture? And what if, into the "'60s alignment" of forces described above, were added a significant section of the proletariat, and a deeper crisis in the ruling class? What would be so terrible about *that* objective situation for the beginning of a serious revolutionary struggle for power? And isn't it just the point that the crisis ahead looms far deeper, making such developments all the more possible? So while there are no guarantees, and while we are definitely "coming from behind," the situation is not bad at all.

So here enters what history has taught is the decisive element in any such ripening situation—the existence of a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party armed with the correct line. The existence of such a Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, is another advance over the 1960s. The significance of the central task of "create public opinion... seize power," the potentially crucial difference that 100,000 *Revolutionary Workers* a week could make, all this has to be seen in the light of the future struggle for power. Today we are making significant preparations for a future revolutionary possibility, should it arise, and to make our best contribution to the international proletarian revolutionary struggle. We are laying practical ground work and, politically, we are clearing away the obstacles and litter of reformism and Economism that could stand in our path and even block our eyes from seeing a revolutionary opportunity if one arises. This political campaign for 100,000 *Revolutionary Workers* is another major road-clearing operation on the path to revolution. And its time is *now!*

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Erratum:

On page 23 of this pamphlet, the second sentence of the first full paragraph should read: The problem revolutionaries have to address is not that the masses are not active enough and we have to concoct some activity for ourselves to substitute for them.