

How to Support/Oppose the Draft

The emergence of the widespread mass movement against the draft has sent the patriots of the Communist Party (ML) and the Menshevik Minutemen of the so-called Revolutionary Workers Headquarters (often referred to as simply "The Mensheviks"—the sniveling band of apologists for U.S. imperialism that were thrown out of the RCP for opportunist antics deserving of their namesakes in Russia in Lenin's time) scrambling into action. Their mission: to see to it that the anti-draft movement does not threaten the military and political preparations of the U.S. imperialists for the coming war with the Soviet Union.

The CP(ML) and their social-chauvinist allies have become complete apologists for the U.S. ruling class. They are naked defenders of U.S. war preparations against the Soviet Union. They make clear their bitter opposition to any movement which might weaken even in the slightest degree, U.S. preparations for the 3rd World War. And all of this is only dressed up in the thinnest and most perfunctory "left" terminology—more often, in fact, lapsing into ravings which rival the most rabid right-wing politicians and columnists.

After Revolutionary May Day Brigade members were arrested in Atlanta, they were taken to the Atlanta City jail. The following is a letter from a woman they met there.

Some people who say they are revolutionists have told me revolution is impossible for the foreseeable future. I've met some of these people because I've always been a person who speaks out. The government hates me but I don't love them too much either. These revolutionists with nervous breakdowns should get out of the way and start living in the real world. The October League (CPML—RW), has never impressed me because I hate groups that use Black people and treat all people in a condescending way. If they don't think poor Blacks and whites are going to make revolution, why don't they come into these jails and talk to the people and learn about people's lives. Why don't they go to the projects and schools too. I was very impressed by your group, you don't water down revolution, I like that. I'm not ready to join yet but I am a supporter. I'm a rebel, maybe I'm a communist too, though I still think there is a God. In a way I'm glad you people got sent to jail—there's so many people who need to be made aware. Right on to May Day, I'll be there in or out of jail.

A woman prisoner in Atlanta City jail

P.S. Bob Avakian may just be the leader we need. I want to read his program for revolution and get more about that revolutionary science.

In brief, the CP(ML) and the whole trend they represent are consciously playing the part of agents for U.S. imperialism. This is as much as admitted in the pages of *The Call* itself. Carl Davidson, one of the moldy opportunists whose retarded prose the CP(ML) tries to pass off as "theoretical" warns in a signed article in the March 24th *Call* that "the anti-draft movement could be turned into a pawn for those whose real aim is to weaken the U.S. for the sake of strengthening the Soviet military buildup." Does the CP(ML) distinguish those who "wish to weaken the U.S." in order to further the evil designs of the Kremlin from those who wish to weaken the U.S. imperialists in order to create more favorable conditions for revolutionary struggle—who not only wish to weaken them, but to overthrow them? Of course not. It no longer occurs to them that it is possible to be something other than a tool of one or another imperialist superpower.

CP(ML) Chairman Mike Klonsky, for example, explains in a signed article in the Feb. 18 issue of *The Call* that "as for China's new relationship with the U.S. (as a U.S. running dog—RW), it has been brought about by necessity. China is not in a position to take on both superpowers equally at the same time, nor is any one else." Klonsky clearly sees the only alternative to "taking on both superpowers at the same time" as capitulating to one or the other. This capitulation "brought about by necessity" is very convenient for the CP(ML), providing them with an excuse to seek cover under the wing of the U.S. ruling class. But the RCP, for example, has not capitulated and will not—and yet we do not "take on both superpowers equally at the same time" either. While exposing the fact that both superpowers are still equally the main enemies of the people of the world, our Party concentrates our main fire where it belongs—at the U.S. imperialists, the superpower it is our responsibility to lead the working class and the masses of people in overthrowing.

Davidson's article, at first glance, appears to be no more than a clumsy and unconvincing exposition of the most backward conceivable position on the theme of its title: "Why Oppose the

Draft? (And How to Go About It)." But a closer look reveals that the article isn't quite as clumsy as it seems—or rather, it is intentionally clumsy and unconvincing. For the fact of the matter is, the CP(ML) does not really oppose the draft at all, and the real purpose of Davidson's piece is to make people wonder if the draft should not actually be enthusiastically supported.

Indeed, in the very same issue as Davidson's article, the following letter supporting the draft appeared in *The Call's* "Letters" column:

"I have been reading your paper for some time now and have come to rely on it for solid analysis of world and national events. I am a World War II veteran and work at Boeing in Seattle.

"I do have one criticism, however, of a recent article in the February 11th issue. The column on 'Women and Revolution' by Ellen Blum seems to oppose the draft. While this position may have been good in the past, we should take the world's new reality seriously.

"Isn't there a tendency in the article

not to grasp the serious danger to peace posed by the now fascist Soviet Union? I remember in the 1940s how the hated Trotskyites took a similar position toward the Nazis and, under a sneaky 'left' cover, opposed the United Front against Hitler."

Following this letter, there's a note: "For more on this question, please see Carl Davidson's article on Page 10 in this issue." This pro-draft letter (clearly either written or commissioned by *The Call* staff) is obviously designed to encourage the reader to "keep an open mind" while reading Davidson's piece—which itself argues for the draft while keeping up a bare pretense of "opposition."

Davidson's article pretends to survey the history of the "perspective of the working class" on the draft. In particular, he singles out the American Civil War as a case in point:

"The draft instituted by Congress was blatantly discriminatory in favor of the

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International May Day Message from Jamaican Revolutionaries

When the Masses Unite, All Reactionaries Will Tremble

We came to the U.S. already hating the oppression of our people in Jamaica by U.S. imperialism. We came looking for genuine revolutionaries to unite with, in common struggle, to get rid of U.S. imperialism. We found the RCP and we found Revolutionary May Day. We were always told how strong the U.S. is supposed to be and how everybody in the U.S. loves this empire. But we have seen through building for May Day that thousands here in the U.S. are longing to do the system in. May Day 1980—millions of people around the world will march, taking history into their hands. And millions are watching to see if workers in the U.S. will now march side by side with workers of the rest of the world.

We will be marching with you and we hope to see May Day in Jamaica.

The RCP has a weapon to fight this system and that is Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought. We as members of the Youth Forces for National Liberation (YFNL) are preparing for revolution in Jamaica. To win our liberation the tentacles of imperialism must be chopped off in our country. We have fought first British and now U.S. imperialism. While people all over the Caribbean are fighting now against U.S. imperialism, Soviet imperialists are peeping through the back door. We cannot trade a black dog for a monkey. We strongly support the RCP in the battle for Revolutionary May Day. We believe May Day will be a sparking light to shine the path to revolution in the U.S., which can only inspire further millions the world over in struggle for our liberation.

"In no way should the taking of 'independent historical action' by the advanced section of workers in this country, even if it is relatively small at this time, be underestimated or downgraded. . . . With the development, and especially full ripening, of the situation, with millions awakening for the first time, the thousands who rally now around the revolutionary banner of the international proletariat become millions, ultimately tens of millions. . . . and the thousands and tens of thousands who have been trained in 'normal' times become the leaders of millions and tens of millions."

**Bob Avakian
Chairman of the RCP Central Committee**

Draft

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rich and against the working people, and a movement developed against it. This movement was seized upon by pro-Confederate bankers in New York who instigated large anti-draft riots that also turned into pogroms against Blacks. The anti-slavery forces and socialists of the time opposed this anti-draft movement and helped recruit soldiers for the Union armies, since their main task was to smash slavery."

All this boils down to is to call on the masses to defend the U.S. imperialist system of wage slavery under these "new conditions" today, using the preposterous analogy with the Civil War against the Confederate slave owners as an "historical precedent." Davidson wishes us to swallow the analysis that the coming war between the U.S. imperialists, who have enslaved more people around the world and in the U.S. itself than any other empire in history, and the Soviet social-imperialists who are rising to seize this empire as their own, will actually be a struggle between the U.S. "anti-slavery forces" versus the Soviet "slave owners." Davidson tries the old Kautskyite (after the German Social-chauvinist Karl Kautsky who betrayed the working class with the approach of WWI) trick of making capitalism "look good" by comparing it to slavery or feudalism. "Kautsky" (in Lenin's words) "like a school master who is become as dry as dust from repeating the same old textbooks on history, persistently turns his back on the 20th century, and...incredibly tediously chews the old cud over the relation of bourgeois democracy to absolutism and medievalism." And what Davidson wishes to cover up with this historical rag-chewing is the fact that the U.S. and Soviet systems of wage slavery and imperialist exploitation are equally reactionary—they are both worse and they must both be overthrown.

And why does Davidson make a special point of saying that "the socialists of the time...helped to recruit soldiers for the Union armies, since their main task was to smash slavery"? Since elsewhere in the same article he "explains" that the main task today is to "oppose Soviet hegemonic expansionism," he is obviously clueing his readers into the fact that the time is not far off when the CP(ML) will be helping to recruit soldiers for the U.S. Army, and that the current fig-leaf "opposition" to the draft is merely a transitory tactic. (Undoubtedly, CP(ML) members have been privately briefed on this already.) This is also made clear further on in Davidson's article, where he says that "the movement must link up to the wide sections of the working class and minority youth, including those who might not oppose the draft. Many of these have rejected pacifist and anarchist arguments against the draft, but still want to fight the war danger. This would include the many young people who have been compelled to enlist in the military out of economic necessity." It is only too obvious that when Davidson speaks of GI's fighting the "war danger," he means fighting the Soviet Union—certainly not rebelling against the U.S. imperialists! If Davidson got wind of the young soldier doing revolutionary agitation in the barracks, he would certainly report him to the company commander—in the lofty interests of the "broad front against hegemonism."

The "analogy" Davidson draws of the situation prior to World War II is so thick with implication that the CP(ML)'s current "opposition" to the draft is only a very temporary tactic. On the eve of the U.S. entry into World War II...the main aspect of the conflict was seen as a just fight to defeat the fascist power. There was very little opposition to the draft and the progressive forces, including the communists, did not oppose it." Since in the next breath Davidson describes the international situation today as "especially similar" to the events leading up to World War II, the message is inescapably clear even to the dullest of

The *Call's* readers: we, too will soon drop our token opposition to the draft and call for all out and unqualified defense of U.S. imperialism.

The sight of these "communists" sweating and agonizing over the possibility that the masses might not march loyally into the meat grinder of the Third World War would cause hysterical laughter if it weren't so criminal and disgusting. And the clear reason for the CP(ML)'s decision not to come out publicly in support of the draft at this time—the only position which logically stems from their reactionary social-chauvinist line—is even more disgusting: to their dismay, a large mass movement against the draft has rapidly sprung up, and they fear being utterly isolated from this spontaneous movement (and therefore unable to serve the U.S. imperialists within it) if they admit their true position and the reasons for it.

Of course, the policy of actively working for the defeat of one's own ruling class in an imperialist war, the line Lenin fought for during World War I against the social-chauvinists of the Second International, isn't even mentioned in Davidson's article. Lenin, whose party alone had withstood the tide of social-chauvinism and betrayal of the working class which swept through the Second International at the outbreak of the war, led the Bolsheviks and the masses to victorious revolution in the wake of the Tsar's defeat by the Germans. This tremendous victory touched off revolutionary storms throughout Europe, including a massive revolt of millions of German soldiers against their own government in 1918 and the brief establishment of a revolutionary regime in Germany itself. But nothing could be better calculated to bring howls of anguished rage from Klonsky & Co. than to suggest that these historical lessons might be more useful to the workers as the criminal holocaust of imperialist war approaches than reminiscences of how the socialists covered themselves in glory by recruiting soldiers for the Union armies.

As for World War II, while Davidson says that "the main aspect of the conflict was seen as a just fight to defeat the fascist power," this is once again a hopeless distortion of the facts. The fact is that it was only the invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany, and the consequent necessity for the international proletariat to defend the world's first socialist state, that fundamentally altered the character of the war. In that situation, it was necessary for communists in the United States and other allied countries to make temporary adjustments in the class struggle in the interests of the alliance between the Soviet Union and the Allies against the Axis. Not in the least did the bogus issue of the "fascist powers versus the democracies" make the difference between World War I and World War II. Up until the German invasion of the Soviet Union, World War II was a war between two imperialist camps to redivide the world and that's all it was. And even after the Soviet Union was attacked, the imperialist aims of the powers who found themselves in alliance with the Soviet Union did not change into some noble "fight for democracy."

Indeed, it must be emphasized that, despite the special circumstances of World War II, the Communist Party in the United States and other western countries made the extremely serious error of totally liquidating the class interests of the proletariat and shamelessly promoting just such a bourgeois view of the character of the war—a line they gravitated towards because it would "spontaneously" go down easier with the masses and avoid trouble with the ruling class. The myth was spread far and wide that the temporary alliance between the Soviet Union and the allies would or could carry over into some sort of permanent peace time cooperation. Preparation for revolutionary struggle was completely forgotten (if it had not already been forgotten long before). Illusions of a millennial utopia of class peace between the "good imperialists" and the working class were fostered, and the proletariat was seriously weakened in its ability to wage struggle in the post-war period. The only argument that could possibly (though

not necessarily) require a tactical adjustment similar to that of World War II is one that the CP(ML) does not even dare to make: that the survival of a socialist country was threatened by attack from another imperialist power. This is revealing, because it is well known that Klonsky & Co. follow the baton of revisionist China, which still claims to be "socialist," and whose foreign policy is currently based on an alliance with the U.S. imperialists against the Soviet Union. Why don't they make loud use of this argument, false as it would be in reference to China and in a situation before the war had even begun or an attack by the Soviet Union on China had even materialized? Because basically the social-chauvinist line of the CP(ML) is not determined by "orders from China" but by their own counter-revolutionary nature. And quite simply the American people are not much interested in defending today's China so what would be the point in making a big deal about it. Klonsky likes the revisionist traitors that run China because he likes revisionism, and also because he hopes the support of a "patron power" like China will help to further his smelly little career, and aid him in ingratiating himself and his organization with the U.S. ruling class—which is his ultimate strategic objective.

The CP(ML)'s line on the draft is a gross example of slavish service to the bourgeoisie, carried out in a craven, cringing, cowardly, and sneaky way. But far from being in any way particularly atrocious, it is right in line with a whole series of equally reactionary positions on any subject, run out in exactly the same slimy way—with the convenient "Letters" column consistently serving to run out more blatant versions of the counter-revolutionary lines taken in the paper's editorials. Want to see an article (supplemented by a letter) endorsing President Carter's heroic fight to enforce a boycott of the Moscow Olympics? March 24th issue of *The Call*, page 12. How about an "interview with an Iranian Communist" which demanded the release of the hostages being held at the U.S. embassy, condemns the militants at the embassy as "acting like another government within a government" and hails the election of the pro-U.S. Bani-Sadr government as "a good step in the centralization of political power in Iran"? Same issue, page 8. Or take the most recent issues of *The Call*—which by the way, feature interesting changes in the masthead. The slogan on the masthead "People of the World Unite to Defeat Imperialism" which had already been amended from the earlier "People of the World Unite to Defeat U.S. Imperialism"—has now been dumped entirely. So has the legend, "Organ of the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist"; in its place, the words "Voice For Socialism In The United States" are inscribed on the masthead—clearly a bid to be perceived as a respectable, law-abiding, social-democratic journal of

opinion, about as dangerous as the "democratic socialists."

The April 7th issue has a great "Letters" column. One letter criticizes a recent *Call* article on the victory of the U.S. hockey team over the Soviets during the Winter Olympic games as "one-sided": "The main factor in people's excitement was that the underdog U.S. team pulled off an upset" crows L.T. of Boston. "It was something for people to be proud of, to celebrate." Another letter regarding the arrest of 48 Iranian students in Monroe, Louisiana for disrupting the speech of a representative of the Shah opposes the arrests on the basis that the students "...are guests in our country, and we must extend them every guarantee of our Bill of Rights if we are to endure as a nation under laws. Trying and jailing them is not going to bring one hostage home; rather we should extend our own precious rights and our courtesy to all Iranians in this country and thereby set the example."

What commentary can do justice to such garbage? In defense of *The Call's* reader correspondence, however, it must be said that although they all appear to be incredibly backward, at least they have the courage to flaunt their backwardness naked and unashamed, instead of running around in a G-string like Carl Davidson, Mike Klonsky and the rest of the CP(ML) social-chauvinist strip-teasers.

The social-chauvinist rationale for claiming—well in advance of the war itself—that the working class and the masses must rally behind the red, white and blue is quite simple: "the Soviets are the aggressors;" they are trying to take away the U.S. empire. Precisely what we hear and what we will be hearing in increasingly strident terms from the U.S. imperialists themselves. Precisely what the CP(ML) and their ilk hope the ruling class will like hearing from them; and they hope to be rewarded richly for services rendered as they fill a need for "progressive patriotism" with a thin "socialist" veneer.

Clearly, the CP(ML) and the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters (whose "anti-draft" leaflets call for strengthening the U.S. defense budget and sanctions against the Soviet Union to make it "a pariah in the world community of nations"), are basing all their dreams and hopes for the future on the U.S. imperialists emerging triumphant in the coming war; they expect to reap rich rewards, there is no doubt of that. No wonder they devote so much frenzied activity to trying to stomp out anything which might prove a threat to the stability of U.S. imperialist rule or—especially—to smooth buildup of its war machine, and the willingness of the masses to fight and die for the oppressor. But these imperialist apologists' view of the future is as twisted as their summation of the past; and particularly their view of who will be stomping on what in the coming crisis is completely upside down. □



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