

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

The Workers' Advocate

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Proletarian Internationalism or Petty-Bourgeois Nationalism:

SHOULD THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY OF THE WORKING CLASS BE DIVIDED ON THE BASIS OF NATIONALITY?

Statement of the Chicago Branch of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA

Right from the start, our Party and its predecessors have held that the American working class needs a single party to guide its struggle. All workers, regardless of nationality and regardless of whether they are immigrants or native-born, should unite in the struggle against the common capitalist enemy. The unity of all workers is the only way they can let their superior numbers and organization come into play in the struggle to overthrow their oppressors.

The Second National Conference of our Party again emphasized this crucial Leninist teaching in analyzing how to push forward the struggle against racism and national oppression and to bring proletarian leadership to this struggle. It dealt with this question from many angles. It discussed the work of our Party in the present-day movement. And it analyzed the historical experience of the black people's movement in the mass upsurge of the 1960's and 1970's. It showed how, as the black working masses rose up in struggle, they organized themselves in various forms. It was necessary both to support the revolutionary spirit of the masses and link up with the mass upsurge, and to find ways to deal with mistaken orientations that damaged the struggle, such as petty-bourgeois nationalism and the influence of reformism.

On the Publication "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano"

The question of whether there should be a single party uniting the workers of all nationalities or whether the proletarian party should be divided on the basis of nationality is, of course, not just a historical question. It comes up repeatedly due to

the pressure of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalism on the communist movement and revolutionary activists.

Recently, for example, two activists in Chicago have put out the first issue (June 18) of a small publication entitled "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano". This bulletin is not the publication of any party or group, but is simply the work of two individual activists. It is mainly composed of several articles on Mexico and Colombia; as such, it is one of many leaflets and publications that appear on such questions. But it also takes up the question of what political party should guide the struggle of the Mexican nationality community in the U.S. and organize the immigrants. It gives a profoundly erroneous stand on this question, holding that the immigrants should be organized separately from the rest of the working class. It is only this aspect of the "Boletin" that concerns us in this statement.

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The "Boletin" does not call for the immigrants to unite with the other revolutionary workers in the U.S. in a single revolutionary party to guide the struggle of the entire working class. Instead, it presents as Marxist-Leninist and internationalist the stand that the Mexican immigrants should organize separately as external organizations of a party based in Mexico.

As well, it is possible that the authors of the "Boletin" hold that the same path should be followed by immigrants of other nationalities, who should also not concern themselves with the building up a revolutionary party in the U.S. but instead form branches of parties formed in other countries.

In this regard, it is notable that although the authors of the "Boletin" have claimed to be firm supporters of the building of a genuine communist party for the U.S. and of the MLP, USA as being precisely that genuine communist party, their publication leaves out mention of the Marxist-Leninist movement in the U.S. altogether. This apparently is part of their orientation that immigrant workers should not take seriously support for a revolutionary party in the U.S.

The "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano" holds that only a party based in Mexico can guide the struggle of Mexican immigrants. Presumably the Mexican nationality communists are only to work with other Mexicans. And it claims, in its introductory note "To Our Readers", that it will concentrate its work among immigrants, particularly Mexican and Colombian immigrants. This is one of the contradictions that its wrong stand entangles it in, as the two activists that put out the bulletin are not of Mexican

nationality, nor do they have much knowledge of Mexico or of the Mexican nationality community in the U.S.; at most, one of these activists had worked briefly in the Mexican movement. If it is possible for them to deal with the serious issues of organizing among the Mexican immigrants in the U.S., then why do they think it is impossible for a communist party of the entire working class to do so, a party with experience in the struggle against the oppression of the Mexican nationality people and in work to support revolution in Mexico?

The publication of the "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano" is only a minor event. Yet the issue raised is a major question of principle that will repeatedly come up again and again as the masses rise in struggle, just as this issue did in the 1960's and just as it did back in the early days of the Communist International when the C.I. helped the Communist Party of the U.S.A., then a revolutionary party, find the correct solution to this question. Therefore, particularly as the publication of the "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano" appears at a time when our whole party is studying the national question as part of the work begun by the Second National Conference, we wish to take this occasion to once again clarify the basic Marxist-Leninist principles on this question.

**Proletarian Internationalism or
Petty-bourgeois Nationalism?**

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What is at stake is a crucial principle of party-building. Should all the workers in an individual country unite together to form a single revolutionary, Leninist Party? Or should the workers movement in the U.S. be divided into dozens of different parties, one for each nationality? In our opinion, this is a fundamental question of Leninist communism; it raises the question of petty-bourgeois nationalism or proletarian internationalism.

Proletarian internationalism holds that workers of all nationalities should unite. This unity is not just a unity in words or in fine sentiments uttered on ceremonial occasions, but it must be a solid unity cemented by unity in common organizations. There must be only one communist party in each country: and this party should lead the struggle of the workers of all nationalities, and it should unite the workers of all nationalities in its organizations.

Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism, on the other hand, divide the workers.

This division of the workers can take the form of open chauvinism and the direct fanning of hatred among the different nationalities. But there is also a more subtle, refined method of disrupting the workers' movement. Petty-bourgeois nationalism, for example, especially when it takes on Marxist colors, often claims to support the rights of all nationalities and to give some type of support to the struggle of the workers of other nationalities. But this type of nationalism combines high-sounding words about the equality and equal rights of all nationalities with the advocacy of the splitting up of the workers' movement of a country according to nationality. By dividing the workers, petty-bourgeois nationalism sabotages the workers struggle, including the struggle against racism and national oppression.

Thus, instead of dividing the workers with crude hatreds, petty-bourgeois nationalism often divides them with "refined", "high-minded" and even "revolutionary" sounding phrases; but it has a similar result all the same — it divides the workers, sows distrust among the workers, and paralyzes the revolutionary struggle. In our view, insofar as the authors of "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano" adhere to the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalist policy of splitting up the workers' party according to nationality, they depart from Marxism-Leninism and harm the very thing that their paper is supposed to accomplish — increasing the support in the U.S. for the revolutionary movement in other countries.

Lenin and the Communist International on Party Building

Lenin laid great stress on the need for all workers living in one country, whether immigrants or native-born, whether of oppressed nationalities or of the oppressor nationality, to be in the same

party, the same trade unions, go to common schools, etc. On this basis, the famous Communist or Third International insisted that its American section, the Communist Party of the USA, should unite the workers of all nationalities that live in the U.S., whether East European, black, Mexican, Asian, or white Anglo-Saxon. The immigrants were not to form separate parties, or to organize branches of the party in the homeland to guide their struggle in the U.S., but to unite in the Communist Party of the U.S.

All activists who have respect for the historic role of the CI should pay close attention to this experience. The CI did not organize multiple branches in the U.S., but insisted on the unity of the workers in the U.S. in one single party. This was also its line in general around the world: there were different parties for different countries, but within each country there was only one party.

A Dividing Line with Opportunism

In fact, the solid organizational merger of the workers of all nationalities, including the immigrants, in the single communist party was one of the features that distinguished the CPUSA, as a branch of the Third International, from the old, sold-out Socialist Party of the U.S.

The Socialist Party of the U.S. was dominated by the right-wing and center factions, which took chauvinist stands, especially towards the black people, the Asians, and the Mexican people.

The European immigrants, the East Europeans, Scandinavians, Italians, South Slavs and others, got better treatment from the SP. But in this regard the SP resembled, in part, a federation of different nationality groupings rather than a united party of action. The immigrants generally were ignored and found themselves in separate "language federations", and the party as a whole was a loose combination or federation of the immigrant organizations" with the rest of the party.

The left-wing of the Socialist Party fought some of the racism of the right-wing and centrist leaders. When the left-wing was expelled from the Socialist Party and set upon the path of organizing a communist party in the U.S., the CI gave it much crucial political and organizational help. Part of this help was dramatically reinforcing the struggle against national oppression, showing its importance to the revolutionary struggle in the U.S., and directing the building of the party on a truly proletarian internationalist basis.

The CI showed that the party must be concerned not just with European immigrants, but also with the struggle of the black people, the Mexican people, the Asians and other peoples overlooked and denigrated by the right and centrist leaders of the Socialist Party.

As well, the CI insisted that there must be solid organizational unity of the workers of all nationalities. The CI did not consider it correct that the immigrant workers should be separated off into separate language federations. (Most of the language federations had been part of the left-wing of the SP and had been expelled along with the rest of the left-wing, and they played a major role in establishing the CPUSA.) Instead the CPUSA embarked on a protracted process of gradually integrating the immigrant workers into the basic work of the CPUSA. For a time the CPUSA had language branches, which were successors to the foreign language federations, and later it still had certain international branches (which were not overseas branches). But, it sought to have the immigrant workers in the same basic party organizations alongside other workers, and its progress in doing this appeared to be particularly connected with the establishment of committees in factories and other workplaces as the primary party organization.

This did not mean eliminating the foreign-language press, but it did mean ensuring that the foreign-language press dealt with the general class struggle in the U.S. as well as events in the homeland or in the foreign-language community. Nor did it mean eliminating special organizations in the party to ensure the vigorous development of foreign-language work. Nor did it mean eliminating special organizations to draw in immigrants to the revolutionary workers' movement; in 1925, for example, while abolishing the language branches, the CPUSA called for the organization of broad workers' clubs for foreign-language workers that would embrace both party and non-party workers. Clearly, however, there is a big difference between language federations serving as the primary organizations of the Party, and workers' clubs which were one of the wide variety of workers' organizations of different types that surround the party.

It can be noted that the petty-bourgeois nationalist plan of the "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano" of organizing the immigrants into separate parties from the other workers is, in a way, even more backward than the organizational plan of the old Socialist Party. The plan of the "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano" would split the immigrants into different parties altogether, whereas the Socialist Party was, in part, a federation of different immigrant groupings.

And the petty-bourgeois nationalist plan is even further behind the C.I., which was not satisfied with separate immigrant language branches, but insisted that parties ensure that the immigrant workers and workers of the oppressed nationalities take full part in all the revolutionary work of the communist party, side by side with workers of all other nationalities.

Does Uniting in a Single Party Mean abandoning the Struggle Against Racism and National Oppression?

Petty-bourgeois nationalism feeds on the feeling that, if the class-conscious workers of the oppressed nationalities unite with the workers of other nationalities, it means abandoning the struggle against national oppression. But the experience of the CI shows that this is not true. It was precisely the CPUSA, in its revolutionary years, with its united workers organizations, that waged an unprecedentedly powerful struggle against racism and national oppression. It was precisely the Socialist Party, with its relegation of the nationalities into their own cubbyholes, that was riddled with chauvinism at worst, and passivity at best, on the question of racism.

When we say that the Mexican immigrants should join in a single party with the other workers, we are not talking about just any party. We are talking about a truly communist party, just as the CPUSA was before it fell prey to revisionism, and such as the Marxist-Leninist Party of the USA is today. Such parties lay full stress on the importance of the fight against racism and national oppression. Such parties lay full stress on rendering proletarian internationalist support for the revolutionary struggles in other countries.

Indeed, our Party has regarded with the utmost enthusiasm both the struggle of the oppressed nationalities against racism and national oppression and also the solidarity of the immigrants for the struggle in their homelands. Our Party and its predecessors have consistently advocated that the immigrant workers should a) support the revolutionary struggle in the homeland, b) fight against the special oppression of the community in the U.S., and c) take part in the general revolutionary movement as full members of the American working class. And we have consistently worked to bring out the entire working class in defense of the immigrant workers (and their descendants, the native-born workers of the oppressed nationalities) and in solidarity with the revolutionary struggles around the world.

It is clear that the building and strengthening of genuine communist parties is the only true bulwark against the racist bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation.

And indeed, if the Mexican immigrants in the U.S. are to wage a serious struggle against racism and national oppression, they must take account of the class struggle dividing the U.S. into hostile camps. In the long run, they have only two choices in looking for allies in the U.S.: to look to the revolutionary workers' movement and its allies, or to look to the bourgeoisie and its followers from the sold-out section of the petty-bourgeois.

No matter how convenient it may seem at first to organize a separate party, solely of Mexican immi-

grants, the very first hard struggles will raise the issue of who to unite with in the U.S. And to organize separately is implicitly to abandon the standpoint of supporting revolution in the U.S., for can one seriously think of a revolution in the U.S. led by several dozen parties -- one for the white Anglo-Saxons, one for the Mexican immigrants, one for the blacks, one for the Dominicans, one for the Filipinos, one for the Trinidadians, one for the Puerto Rican immigrants, etc. etc?

Petty-bourgeois Nationalism had its Heyday in the Late 1960's and Early 1970's

As far as the Marxist-Leninist movement goes, petty-bourgeois nationalism had its heyday in the 1960's and early 1970's.

Previously, for many years the organizational unity of workers of all nationalities had been a question taken for granted in communist circles: the teachings of the Communist International, and the successful uniting of the nationalities inside the CPUSA during its revolutionary period, had answered this question in the most emphatic way possible.

But the CPUSA had long been a corrupt shell of a party by the time the big upsurges of the latter 1960's took place. The utter degeneration of the CPUSA meant that the revolutionary movement in the U.S. had to painfully answer anew all the basic questions of communist tactics, strategy and organization. The degeneration of the CPUSA cut off the traditions of communism from direct and living contact with the the American revolutionary movement.

Thus, the revolutionary activists of the period of the mass upsurge of the 1960's and early 1970's tried many things. They went through many torments to find their way to communism. Petty-bourgeois nationalism was one of the roadblocks that hindered the struggle; but petty-bourgeois nationalism was often able to deck itself out in shining colors as the alleged alternative to revisionism and to the old, discredited leaders of various types.

Maoism Took Up Petty-Bourgeois Nationalism

The Maoists and "three worlders" were especially susceptible to petty-bourgeois nationalism. For this and other reasons, in the early 1970's there was a proliferation of groups of "national Marxist-Leninists" --Marxist-Leninists of only a certain nationality.

It is interesting, however, that within a few years, all of these groups that survived, if they represented any serious trend among the activists, come out in favor of forming a multi-national party -- i.e. a party uniting the different nationalities. This evolution took place even among the Maoists and even among activists that had come up originally in

petty-bourgeois nationalist groups; such an evolution was in itself a striking indication that the idea of dividing the revolutionary party according to nationality was untenable.

It is notable that the authors of the "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano" have failed to deal with this history of the American revolutionary movement. If they had studied the history of the American communist movement, or if they took seriously the guidance given by the C.I. to the American communists, or if they paid attention to the recent history of the mass upsurges of the 1960's and early 1970's, they would surely have thought twice before advocating a path that has been discredited several times over. (Indeed, if they had studied the history of the Mexican movement in the U.S., they would have realized their mistake as well, for the Mexican class-conscious workers have had a very impressive history of striving to unite with the workers of other nationalities.)

But those who ignore history and theoretical questions as allegedly being unpractical frills often find that they are condemned to repeat the errors of the past.

Win the Masses for Proletarian Internationalism!

Of course, it is not enough to know the principles of communism; it is necessary to work hard to win the masses over to communism and proletarian internationalism. As the Second National Conference of our Party stressed, new waves of working class activists rise in the struggle in their own way. They begin a valiant struggle but are under the influence of various backward ideas including petty-bourgeois nationalist ideas concerning organization. It is necessary to find a way to help move these masses forward, to encourage their struggle and link up with it, and not to write it off due to the mistakes and wrong directions that come up at first.

This does not mean trailing behind whatever is fashionable, but paying close attention to the mood and temper of the revolutionary masses. Only in this way can one judge what is a step forward for the masses newly stirring in life and what is a deadend.

But this consideration, if anything, reemphasizes the need for the Marxist-Leninist activists, for those who have come to see the truth of the Leninist teachings, to fight all the more staunchly for proletarian internationalism. If the Marxist-Leninists are not inspired by proletarian internationalism, if they do not move heaven and earth to find the way to show the masses the necessity for proletarian internationalism and the harmfulness of petty-bourgeois nationalism, then they betray the great banner of Marxism-Leninism and make a mockery of the honored name of communist.

**Only He is a Marxist-Leninist Who
Works to Build the Party**

Of course the Marxist-Leninist activists themselves go through a process of gaining experience and better understanding of the Marxist-Leninist methods of work and organization. Marxist-Leninists do not spring into existence perfect and ready-made, but learn through taking part in the struggle and from taking a serious attitude to the Leninist theory. Marxist-Leninists aren't born immune from petty-bourgeois nationalism or any other problem, but, if they take communism seriously, they can and will learn to overcome these errors and to become proletarian internationalist activists.

For one thing, Marxist-Leninists must be fighters, participants in the revolutionary class struggle. They cannot sidestep the struggle in the country they reside and define themselves as bystanders. And the practice of this struggle itself shows the need for proletarian internationalist forms of organization.

Marxist-Leninists are duty-bound to pay close attention to revolutionary theory, and step by step increase their use of this theory to orient revolutionary practice. And this theory shows the need to unite all the workers who live in a country, independent of their nationality or land of birth, in a

single party.

Marxist-Leninists are duty-bound to pay close attention to the history of the Marxist-Leninist and revolutionary movements of the country. And this history shows one the experience of the CI and of the CPUSA, in the days it was revolutionary, in uniting the workers of all nationalities.

And above all Marxist-Leninists must abide by the party concept, and this means supporting the Marxist-Leninist party of the country in which they reside. If a person calls himself or herself Marxist-Leninist, but fails to take seriously the Leninist theory, fails to take seriously the history of the communist movement of the country, and fails to go all out to support the Marxist-Leninist party of the country in which they live (or to rebuild a new party in those countries where no genuine communist party presently exists), then such a person risks misusing the great banner of Marxism-Leninism and turning it into a mere sentimental label.

In order to keep sharp the revolutionary cutting edge of Marxism-Leninism, in order to carry the struggle against Maolism through to the end, in order to carry through in building the revolutionary party of the Leninist type, all communist activists must take up the banner of proletarian internationalism and fight against the influence of petty-bourgeois nationalist views.

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**FROM THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE SECOND CONGRESS
OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY, USA
Fall, 1983**

**On the Unity of Workers of All Nationalities
In a Single Party**

"There must be only one Marxist-Leninist party in each country. The proletarian movement needs unified leadership. Only a unified, class conscious vanguard can successfully lead the entire working class and revolutionary movement of the country and concentrate the energies of the working masses so that they make the supreme effort required to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie.

"Furthermore, the genuine communist party must not be a federation of different national groups, but must unite unconditionally the workers of all nationalities of the given country. If the proletarian party were simply a federation of national groups, or if there were separate parties for the workers of different nationalities in the same country, it would lead to chaos, to splintering the working class movement and reducing it to a weak and fragmented federation. Instead, the party must unite the workers of all nationalities and itself vigorously lead the struggle against national op-

pression.

"Although there must be only one party for each country, sometimes a party has to have certain organization in other countries. The Bolsheviks, for example, had certain party organization abroad prior to 1917. But this is not incompatible with the principle of one party, if a distinction is maintained between the work that is part of the revolutionary movement in the host country, and that hence should be done by the party of that country, and the work that is a direct part of the revolutionary work in the homeland, even if circumstances force it to be conducted outside the homeland. [For example, the Bolsheviks published the famous newspaper Iskra outside Russia and smuggled it back inside. If a party today had to publish its journal in the U.S. and smuggle it back into the homeland, then this would be work that is a direct part of revolutionary work in the homeland. — ed.] Our Party extends the hand of fraternal proletarian internationalist cooperation to such overseas party organizations of other parties."

(From the resolution "On the Relations Between the Marxist-Leninist Parties".)

Against the Oppression of the Mexican Nationality

"There are over ten million people of the Mexican nationality in the U.S. This includes both those who have been born in this country as well as recent immigrants from Mexico. They too suffer from vicious oppression by the American bourgeoisie. Gripped by grinding poverty, they are discriminated against and are targets of racist terror. Alongside other Spanish-speaking peoples, they are deprived of their language rights. And since this nationality includes large numbers of recent immigrants, they are constantly subject to harassment and persecution by the immigrant authorities. ...

"The Mexican nationality masses have been in the thick of many major battles against capitalist exploitation, national oppression and U.S. imperialism. Mexican nationality workers were a major force in numerous important workers' struggles in the 60's and 70's, such as the strikes of the farm workers and clothing workers. The Mexican nationality workers and youth also waged many battles against racist oppression and actively took part in the struggle against U.S. aggression in Viet Nam. They have always sympathized with the revolutionary movement in Mexico and the struggles of the toiling masses there.

"Today too the masses of Mexican nationality are stirring into action. The Marxist-Leninist Party takes an active part in the struggles against the oppression of the Mexican nationality. The Party encourages the mass struggles to defend the undocumented immigrants and against police brutality. It works to strengthen the involvement of Mexican nationality people in the solidarity movements with the revolutionary struggles in Central America, in Mexico, and so forth. And the Party works to organize the Mexican nationality masses in the fights against unemployment, the Reaganite cutbacks, etc. In these and other struggles the MLP works to organize the masses and to bring the weight of the entire working class to bear against the special oppression of the Mexican nationality people."

(From the resolution "The Struggle Against Racism and National Oppression")

In Defense of the Immigrant Workers

"The capitalist rulers of the U.S. have always singled out various sections of immigrant workers for harassment, discrimination and persecution. In times past, Irish, Italian, Eastern European and other immigrants were subject to this sort of treatment. Today the brunt of the attacks falls on immigrants from the oppressed nations of Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and Africa. ...

"Those without documents, the so-called 'illegal' immigrants, face the worst situation. The capitalists and their apologists are raising a big chauvinist hysteria over the question of the undocumented

immigrants. Seeking to cover over the failures of the capitalist system, the capitalists and labor bureaucrats blame the undocumented immigrants for unemployment in the U.S. The capitalists, in reality, are not against exploiting the labor of the undocumented workers; they are only against giving them rights. The labor of the undocumented immigrants is very useful to the capitalists as a form of semi-slave labor. At the same time as they make fat profits from this labor, the capitalists organize systematic terror against the undocumented workers so that they cannot fight back against their brutal exploitation. Chauvinist hysteria against the undocumented workers is useful to reinforce this terror and to split the immigrant workers from the rest of the working class. ...

"The immigrant communities in the U.S. have always been centers of organizing by political activists in support of the progressive and revolutionary movements in their homelands. This activity has an enlivening influence on the revolutionary movement in the U.S. and has been a sharp thorn in the side of both the U.S. government and various reactionary and fascist governments abroad. ..."

"The Marxist-Leninist Party opposes all attacks and persecution of the immigrant workers. It stands for full equality and rights for all immigrants, documented or undocumented. The oppression of a sub-caste of immigrant workers is an attack on all the workers. The MLP urges all the workers to come to the aid of their fellow immigrant workers."

(From the resolution "The Struggle Against Racism and National Oppression")

The Marxist-Leninist Party is the Party of All Class-Conscious Workers, Whether Immigrant or Native-Born

"The Marxist-Leninist Party considers the immigrant workers as part of the American working class. Thus it encourages the immigrant workers to join in the class struggle and revolutionary work against the U.S. capitalist rulers.

"Since the immigrant workers face not just exploitation as wage slaves but also special oppression, the Marxist-Leninist Party supports the immigrant working masses in fighting back against discrimination, persecution and racist attacks. It encourages all workers to defend the immigrants.

"Also, since the immigrant workers have close ties and deep interest in the revolutionary movements in the homelands, the Marxist-Leninist Party encourages and supports revolutionary work in support of these struggles.

"The Marxist-Leninist Party holds that there can only be a single vanguard for the working class of each country. The MLP is the party of the class conscious workers of all nationalities, foreign or native born, immigrant or citizen

"The principle of one party for the U.S. working

class does not, however, mean that parties of other countries may not have certain organizations in this country. The principle is upheld if a distinction is made between the work of organizing the immigrant communities, work that is part of the American revolutionary movement, and hence should be directed by the MLP, and the work that is a part of the revolu-

tionary work in the homeland. The MLP extends its hand of fraternal proletarian internationalist cooperation to such overseas party organizations of other parties."

(From the resolution "The Struggle Against Racism and National Oppression") <>

LENIN ON THE UNITY OF THE WORKERS OF ALL NATIONALITIES IN A SINGLE PARTY

"The interests of the working class demand the amalgamation of the workers of all the nationalities in a given state in united proletarian organizations -- political, trade union, co-operative, educational, etc. This amalgamation of the workers of different nationalities in single organizations will alone enable the proletariat to wage a victorious struggle against international capital and reaction, ..." (From "Resolution on the National Question" in "Resolutions of the Summer, 1913, Joint Conference of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. and Party Officials," Collected Works, vol. 19, p. 428)

"The sum-total of economic and political conditions in Russia therefore demands that Social-Democracy should unite unconditionally workers of all nationalities in all proletarian organizations without exception (political, trade union, co-operative, educational, etc., etc.). [Lenin wrote this when the communists as well as the reformists called themselves "social-democrats" - ed.] The Party should not be federative in structure and should not form national Social-Democratic groups but should unite the proletarians of all nations in the given locality, conduct propaganda and agitation in all the languages of the local proletariat, promote the common struggle of the workers of all nations against every kind of national privilege ... " (From point 8 of "Theses on the National Question", Collected Works, vol. 19, p. 249)

"The national program of working-class democracy is: absolutely no privilege for any one nation or any one language; the solution of the problem of the political self-determination of nations, that is, their separation as states by completely free, democratic methods; ...

"Working-class democracy counterposes to the nationalist wrangling of the various bourgeois parties over questions of language, etc., the demand for the unconditional unity and complete solidarity of workers of all nationalities in all working-class organizations -- trade union, co-operative, consumers', educational and all others -- in contradistinction to any kind of bourgeois nationalism. Only *this* type of unity and solidarity can uphold

democracy and defend the interests of the workers against capital -- which is already international and is becoming more so -- and promote the development of mankind towards a new way of life that is alien to all privileges and all exploitation." (From Section 1. "Liberals and Democrats on the Language Question" of "Critical Remarks on the National Question," Collected Works, vol. 20, p. 22)

Lenin on "The Nationalist Bogey of 'Assimilation'"

In the following quotation, Lenin refers to the struggle against the oppression of the Jews and the Ukrainians. Lenin referred to the Jews as "the most oppressed and persecuted" nationality in Tsarist Russia; they occupied something similar to the position of the black people in the U.S. The Ukrainians were also bitterly humiliated inside Russia. It is notable that the issues Lenin raises apply both to the Jews, for whom there was no question of the self-determination of a separate Jewish territory, and the Ukrainians, for whom the self-determination of the Ukraine was a major issue.

Note that the "Bundists" Lenin refers to are Jewish would-be Marxists who advocated bourgeois nationalist and petty-bourgeois nationalist ideas. (And note that the term "Great-Russian" is not praise of the Russians, but simply the name of the main Russian nationality, the oppressor nationality in the Tsarist Empire.)

"Mr. Liebman, who faithfully conveys and repeats the stock arguments, or rather, tricks, of the Bundists, has qualified as 'the old assimilation story' the demand for the unity and amalgamation of the workers of all nationalities in a given country in united workers' organizations ...

"Whoever does not recognize and champion the equality of nations and languages, and does not fight against all national oppression or inequality, is not a Marxist; he is not even a democrat. That is beyond doubt. But it is also beyond doubt that the pseudo-Marxist who heaps abuse upon a Marxist of another nation for being an 'assimilator' is simply a nationalist philistine. In this unhandsome category of people are all the Bundists and (as we shall

shortly see) Ukrainian nationalist-socialists such as L. Yurkevich, Dontsov and Co. ...

"Take Russia and the attitude of Great Russians towards the Ukrainians. Naturally, every democrat, not to mention Marxists, will strongly oppose the incredible humiliation of Ukrainians, and demand complete equality for them. But it would be a downright betrayal of socialism and a silly policy even from the standpoint of the bourgeois 'national aims' of the Ukrainians to weaken the ties and the alliance between the Ukrainian and Great-Russian proletariat that now exist within the confines of a single state. ...

"...The Ukrainians' striving for liberation is opposed by the Great-Russian and Polish landlord class and by the bourgeoisie of these two nations. What social force is capable of standing up to these classes? The first decade of the twentieth century provided an actual reply to this question: that force is none other than the working class, which rallies the democratic peasantry behind it. By striving to divide, and thereby weaken, the genuinely democratic force, whose victory would make national oppression impossible, Mr. Yurkevich is betraying, not only the interests of democracy in general, but also the interests of his own country, the Ukraine. Given united action by the Great-Russian and Ukrainian proletarians, a free Ukraine is possible; without such unity, it is out of the question.

"But Marxists do not confine themselves to the bourgeois-national standpoint. ...

"Mr. Lev Yurkevich acts like a real bourgeois, and a short-sighted, narrow-minded, obtuse bourgeois at that, i.e., like a philistine, when he dismisses the benefits to be gained from the intercourse, amalgamation and assimilation of the proletariat of the two nations, for the sake of the momentary success of the Ukrainian national cause.... The national cause comes first and the proletarian cause

second, the bourgeois nationalists say, with the Yurkeviches, Dontsovs and similar would-be Marxists repeating it after them. The proletarian cause must come first, we say, because it not only protects the lasting and fundamental interests of labor and of humanity, but also those of democracy; and without democracy neither an autonomous nor an independent Ukraine is conceivable. ...

"If a Ukrainian Marxist allows himself to be swayed by his quite legitimate and natural hatred of the Great-Russian oppressors to such a degree that he transfers even a particle of this hatred, even if it be only estrangement, to the proletarian culture and proletarian cause of the Great-Russian workers, then such a Marxist will get bogged down in bourgeois nationalism. Similarly, the Great-Russian Marxist will be bogged down, not only in bourgeois, but also in Black Hundred nationalism [the Black Hundreds were murderous gangs of ultra-reactionaries, somewhat similar to the American Ku Klux Klan--ed.], if he loses sight, even for a moment, of the demand for complete equality for the Ukrainians, or of their right to form an independent state.

"The Great-Russian and Ukrainian workers must work together, and, as long as they live in a single state, act in the closest organizational unity and concert, towards a common or international culture of the proletarian movement, displaying absolute tolerance in the question of the language in which propaganda is conducted, and in the purely local or purely national details of that propaganda. This is the imperative demand of Marxism. All advocacy of the imprecation of the workers of one nation from those of another, all attacks upon Marxist 'assimilation', ... , is bourgeois nationalism, against which it is essential to wage a ruthless struggle." (From "The Nationalist Bogey of 'Assimilation'", Ch. 3 of Critical Remarks on the National Question. See Collected Works, vol. 20, pp. 27, 28, 30-31, 33) <>

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STALIN ON THE UNITY OF THE WORKERS OF ALL NATIONALITIES IN A SINGLE PARTY

"We have still to settle the question of how to organize the proletariat of the various nations into a single, common party. One plan is that the workers should be organized on national lines -- so many nations, so many parties. That plan was rejected by the Social-Democrats. [This was written before the communists discarded the name "social-democrat" and left it to the reformists.--ed.] Experience has shown that the organization of the proletariat of a given state on national lines tends only to destroy the idea of class solidarity. All the proletarians of all the nations in a given state must be organ-

ized in a single, indivisible proletarian collective.

"Thus, our views on the national question can be reduced to the following propositions:

...

"d) A single, indivisible proletarian collective, a single party, for the proletarians of all nationalities of the given state." (From "Report on the National Question" at the Seventh Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks), April 24-29, 1917. See Stalin's Works, vol. 3, p. 58.) <>

**Where petty-bourgeois nationalism inevitably leads:
ADVOCATING SPLITTING THE PARTY ON THE BASIS OF NATIONALITY PAVES THE
WAY FOR SPLITTING THE TRADE UNIONS ON THE BASIS OF NATIONALITY**

By the Chicago Branch of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA.

The first issue of the "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano" advocates that the Mexican immigrants should form branches of a party in Mexico, and is silent about the role of the immigrants in building a single revolutionary party for the entire working class in the U.S. In general, it appears that the authors of the "Boletin" are flirting with the idea that the immigrant communists should be split off from the rest of the communist movement in the U.S. and that there should be separate parties for each nationality.

We do not know whether the authors of the "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano" also advocate that trade unions and other organizations comprised of workers should be split up according to nationality. Do they think that only the Marxist-Leninist party should be split up according to nationality, but the trade unions, mass anti-racist organizations, schools, etc. should be integrated? But whatever they finally decide about the trade unions and other organizations, the fact is that the plan for splitting up the political party according to nationality inevitably paves the way for splitting up the trade unions, mass anti-racist organizations, anti-imperialist organizations, and all other organizations with worker membership. Petty-bourgeois nationalism, as a mass trend, has its own logic, independent of whatever plans the authors of "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano" may prefer.

Consider the question of why communist, class-conscious immigrants would not join a Marxist-Leninist party of all the workers of the country in which they reside. The main reason would have to be distrust of the party and of the class-conscious workers of that country. The immigrant communists would have to fear that the party would not pay attention to the defense of the immigrants and to proletarian internationalist work supporting the struggle in their homeland. It would mean that the communist workers of various nationalities, instead of working hard to overcome any obstacles to unity, would instead be giving way to distrust of each other.

But if such an attitude of distrust is created among the communists of different nationalities, than what type of attitude will exist among the workers who have still not awakened to class-consciousness? Can it be believed that the communists will distrust each other, while the less advanced and even backward workers will cooperate perfectly in the mass organizations? If the communist immigrants are trained to distrust, if not dislike, the

communists of other nationalities, even though these communists are working hard to build up a revolutionary workers party of the Leninist type, then what must the ordinary immigrant think about the stand of the less advanced and even backward workers found in trade unions and elsewhere?

In such an atmosphere, where will the immigrants find the conviction that the problems that arise among the less advanced and even backward workers of different nationalities can be overcome, if they see that the communists of different nationalities cannot overcome these problems and forge a solid unity? If the communist activists cannot unite across nationality lines, despite the fact that they vow their loyalty to proletarian internationalism, fight day in and day out against U.S. imperialism, and throw themselves into the battle against racism, then how can one dream of organizational unity among the non-communist workers?

Clearly, once distrust is generated among the communists, sooner or later the distrust must extend to splitting up many of the other organizations of the proletariat. If an atmosphere is created in which the advanced, class-conscious workers can't unite, then it will become useless to talk about the unity of the working class as a whole.

**The Unity of the Party is Necessary
to Provide Unified Leadership
to All Working Class Organizations**

The disunity caused by splitting the revolutionary party according to nationality can be seen from another angle as well. Leninism holds that the working class must build and use a variety of organizations to wage its struggle against the exploiters and for socialist revolution. Leninism stresses that this variety of organizations doesn't split up the efforts of the working class if there is a revolutionary political party, a communist party, to provide overall guidance. To carry out a revolution, the proletariat needs a "general staff," so to speak, to ensure that its struggle is waged in a coordinated way, and that "general staff" is the party.

But if the party is split into different national parties, if there is no single party, but dozens of different parties guiding different sections of the workers, there can no longer be any thought of the revolutionary struggle having a single "general staff." If the party is split into different national parties, then the main orientation it will be giving to the other parts of the working class movement is that they too should split into competing national sections.

Let us look at what comrade Stalin said about the

role of the communist party as the unifier of the working class movement in his well-known book "The Foundations of Leninism." Chapter VIII of this book is entitled "The Party." In subsection 3, entitled "The Party as the highest form of class organization of the proletariat," Stalin dealt with the problem of how the different parts of the working class movement could avoid working at cross purposes.

First Stalin posed the question:

"...The Party is the organized detachment of the working class. But the Party is not the only organization of the working class. The proletariat has also a number of other organizations, without which it cannot wage a successful struggle against capital: trade unions, co-operatives, factory organizations, parliamentary groups, non-Party women's associations, the press, cultural and educational organizations, youth leagues, revolutionary fighting organizations (in times of open revolutionary action), Soviets of deputies as the form of state organization (if the proletariat is in power), etc. ... But how can single leadership be exercised with such an abundance of organizations? ... The question then arises: Who is to determine the line, the general direction, along which the work of all these organizations is to be conducted? Where is the central organization which is not only able, because it has the necessary experience, to work out such a general line, but, in addition, is in a position, because it has sufficient prestige, to induce all these organizations to carry out this line, so as to attain unity of leadership and to make hitches impossible?

Then Stalin stressed that it is the existence of an active communist party that provides the answer:

"That organization is the Party of the proletariat.

"The Party possesses all the necessary qualifications for this ...

"The Party is the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.

"This does not mean, of course, that non-Party organizations, trade unions, co-operatives, etc., should be officially subordinated to the Party leadership. It only means that the members of the Party who belong to these organizations and are doubtlessly influential in them, should do all they can to persuade these non-Party organizations to draw nearer to the Party of the proletariat in their work and voluntarily accept its political leadership.

"That is why Lenin says that the Party is 'the highest form of proletarian class association,' whose political leadership must extend to every other form of organization of the proletariat. ...

"That is why the opportunist theory of the

'independence' and 'neutrality' of the non-Party organizations, which breeds independent members of parliament and journalists isolated from the Party, narrow-minded trade-union functionaries and co-operative officials who have become philistines, is wholly incompatible with the theory and practice of Leninism."

The party must work hard to provide the centralized leadership for the whole revolutionary movement of an entire country, but how can it do this if there is more than one party for the proletariat of that country?

The United States has dozens of different nationalities, and the immigrants and the other workers of the different nationalities have historically played a big role in the working class movement. Indeed, it would be a chauvinist illusion to believe in a socialist revolution carried out without the participation of the immigrants and other workers of different nationalities. But how could centralized leadership be provided by several dozen different parties?

It is clear that if the party was split into separate parties for the different nationalities, it would not only destroy any hope of centralized leadership for the revolutionary struggle, but would exercise a tremendous influence in favor of splitting the other working class organizations as well.

Is There Any Experience of What Happens When the Party is Divided on the Basis of Nationality?

This is not just a speculative theory. It has been verified over and over again by the experience of the working class movement.

Naturally, to find this experience, one cannot refer to the experience of the parties of the Communist International, because they were built on the basis of uniting the workers of all nationalities. Anyone who takes seriously the teachings of the C.I. and of Lenin on the building of genuinely revolutionary working class parties must uphold the view that there can only be one communist party for each country and that the party in the U.S. should embrace all nationalities, including the immigrants of different nationalities.

But abundant experience exists on the harmfulness of splitting the working class party on the basis of nationality. For example, Lenin and Stalin, in their writings on the national question, referred to the experience of the Social-Democratic Party in Austria. This party flirted with petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalism, and the result was both splitting up the party and, eventually, the trade unions. Indeed, the result was that sometimes workers of one nationality, out of nationalist resentments, broke the strikes of workers of other nationalities.

Listen to how Stalin describes this deplorable

experience of the Austrian social-democrats. First he showed how "cultural-national autonomy" was a bourgeois nationalist idea. Then, in the passage we will quote, he showed the harm it did when it was inserted into the program of the Austrian social-democrats. He showed that first it led to splitting up of the party along nationality lines, and then the splitting up of the party led to the splitting up of the trade unions.

"...It [cultural-national autonomy] prepares the ground not only for the segregation of nations, but also for breaking up the united labor movement. The idea of national autonomy creates the psychological conditions for the division of the united workers' party into separate parties built on national lines. The breakup of the party is followed by the breakup of the trade unions, and complete segregation is the result. In this way the united class movement is broken up into separate national rivulets.

"... As early as 1897 ... the once united Austrian Social-Democratic Party began to break up into separate parties. ... Matters have finally come to such a pass that in place of a united international party there are now six national parties, of which the Czech Social-Democratic Party will not even have anything to do with the German Social-Democratic Party.

"But with the parties are associated the trade unions. In Austria, both in the parties and in the trade unions, the main brunt of the work is borne by the same Social-Democratic workers. There was therefore reason to fear that separatism in the party would lead to separatism in the trade unions and that the trade unions would also break up. That, in fact, is what happened: the trade unions have also divided according to nationality. Now things frequently go so far that the Czech workers will even break a strike of German workers, or will unite at municipal elections

with the Czech bourgeois against the German workers." (Ch. IV. "Cultural-National Autonomy," from Marxism and the National Question, Works, Vol. 2)

Petty-bourgeois Nationalism Has Its Own Logic

When the Austrian Social-Democrats adopted various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist clauses in their program, they did not intend to see the party split into six squabbling pieces, the trade unions divide along nationality lines, and the workers scab on each other. Instead, they thought that they were ensuring a stronger and broader movement.

But bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism has its own logic. Once it is set into motion, it is this logic, and not the good intentions of the mistaken advocates of petty-bourgeois nationalism, that determines the results.

Thus it is with the theory advocated by the authors of "Boletin Colombo-Mexicano." In advocating that the Mexican immigrants should not unite with the other workers in a revolutionary party for the U.S., but should instead form branches of a party in Mexico, they are reinforcing petty-bourgeois nationalism. By flirting with the idea that the party should be divided according to nationality, they are spreading petty-bourgeois nationalism. And the logic of this nationalism leads eventually not just to disintegrating the party, but to breaking up the trade unions and other organizations as well.

There is only one choice: proletarian internationalism or the nationalist disruption and splitting up of the workers' movement. And it is only proletarian internationalism that can provide the revolutionary workers' movement with the solidity and unity that it needs to carry out the class struggle and overthrow the capitalist exploiters in a socialist revolution. <>