

"WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, UNITE!!"

WORKERS' PRESS

THE POLITICAL ORGAN OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST COLLECTIVE

PARTY BUILDING: UNITE MARXIST-LENINISTS, WIN THE ADVANCED TO COMMUNISM!

Currently there exists much confusion and lack of clarity within the party building movement. The tasks of Marxist-Leninists in this immediate period have not been clearly defined. Concrete plans for building the party have not been advanced. For the most part, polemics have not focused on differences of principle.

Our strategy in the current period, the strategy of all Marxist-Leninists, is to build a genuine communist party. We are in a pre-party period, when the principal task of Marxist-Leninists is to unite separate Marxist circles, to "weld the core". This pre-party period corresponds to the years 1884-98 in the history of the Bolshevik Party:

"...the years 1884-94 were a period of victory over Narodism and of ideological preparation for the formation of a Social-Democratic (Communist -- ed.) Party, and the years 1894-98 a period in which an attempt, although unsuccessful, was made to weld the separate Marxist organizations into a Social-Democratic Party..." (History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course, p. 30)

We are not presently in a situation similar to the "first period" in the development of the Bolshevik Party as outlined by Stalin in his article "The Party Before and After Seizing State Power", when the principal task was to win the advanced to communism. During this first period in the Soviet Union, the party had at last been put on a firm basis -- in 1903, at the Second Party Congress, the program was adopted and party rules were established; thus, the ideological and organizational foundation of the party had been laid. Moreover, for several years prior to 1903, "Iskra", the newspaper founded by Lenin, had given ideological leadership to the movement and linked up the separate Marxist circles in preparation for the Second Congress.

It is clear that our movement has not reached such a stage. What, then, are our tasks? During this pre-party period in the US our two tactical tasks are to unite Marxist-Leninists and win the advanced to communism. The task of uniting Marxist-Leninists, however, is necessarily primary at this point. Why? Currently, there is no party. To what, then, are advanced workers won? A limited number can be recruited into separate groups and collectives. However, the process of winning over, training, and recruiting advanced workers by different organizations and local circles is not the same as a party winning over the advanced. The party is formed on the basis of a common program, tactics, and organization. Unity of various organizations is forged in the struggle around political line, verified in social practice. Hence this unity of will, unity of action, embodied in the party, the centralized leadership and guidance of the party, facilitates and accelerates the process of winning over the advanced. Similarly, once the advanced have been won over, this new quality, the party, makes it possible to win over the broad masses of workers. This dialectical relationship between quality and quantity has been summarized as follows:

"With the appearance of a new quality, new quantitative relations come into effect, so that we may also speak of the

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transformation of quality into quantity. The high quality of class consciousness, discipline, organization and firmness of principle of the Communist Party, which at first represented the numerically small, but actually most advanced section of the proletariat, subsequently resulted in the Bolshevik Party's being able to assume the leadership of the movement of millions. Thus in the course of time, quality was transformed into quantity." → (Adoratsky, Dialectical Materialism)

The task of uniting Marxist-Leninists is primarily theoretical, particularly the drawing of clear lines of demarcation in the struggle against all forms of opportunism and revisionism. (See Workers' Press Vol 2 #12: "Party Building -- Strategy and Tactics") Our task is to unite all genuine Marxist-Leninist forces and those advanced workers who in this immediate period have become communists. By understanding the correct relationship between uniting Marxist-Leninists and winning over the advanced, we are able to grasp the link in the chain which advances the entire process of fusing socialism and the working-class movement. The LPR formulated these concepts as follows:

"The party must be composed of workers, yes, but workers that are Marxist-Leninists, and not of advanced elements who are not yet communists. So it is our task to unite those that are Marxist-Leninists, and not confuse proletarian class with proletarian party or advanced elements with Marxist-Leninists. Secondly, the characterization of primary and secondary contradictions is not so much to ascribe importance to one or the other, but to determine HOW the process develops, WHAT moves it forward, WHICH aspect when resolved helps to resolve the other, what is the RELATIONSHIP between all aspects, NOT to the exclusion or exaggeration of one or the other." (Resistencia, Vol 7 #5)

This does not mean that the secondary aspect in this period, the primarily practical tasks of winning the advanced, is liquidated. To draw such a conclusion would be idealism, the separation of theory from practice. If ideological and political struggle are divorced from practice, this breach can only lead to left errors. Theory and practice are inseparably linked and interconnected.

Our practical tasks are to integrate with the most oppressed and exploited strata, give communist leadership to the spontaneous movement, conduct communist propaganda and agitation in order to win over as many advanced workers as possible (given the limitations of individual groups and circles). This fusing of socialism and the working-class movement is essential in order to: 1) test and verify political line in practice; 2) insure the social base of the party is proletarian. The advanced must then be trained in revolutionary theory and practice, through participation in study circles, factory nuclei, and eventually, Marxist-Leninist organizations. They must become "worker intellectuals" capable of leading the class struggle and, as Lenin said, trained "to respond to all cases of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter what class is affected".

The present disunity of Marxist-Leninists urgently requires that concrete steps be taken to weld the core, a communist party. History has shown again and again, as the general crisis of capitalism deepens, as crises of overproduction are prolonged and aggravated by the deepening of the general crisis, and as the bourgeoisie moves towards fascism and imperialist war to maintain its rule, the upsurge of the spontaneous working-class movement will inevitably occur. Indications of this are all around us; the recent wildcat strikes of coal miners are most notable. The critical question is: will there be a genuine communist party which can give leadership, a conscious and planned direction to the spontaneous movement, and ultimately lead the class in the overthrow of this imperialist monster?

The MLC has put forward two proposals for uniting Marxist-Leninists:

- 1) Joint theoretical work on programmatic questions, to take place principally in forums!
 - 2) Joint practical work in factory nuclei (see Workers' Press, Vol 2 #12)
- We invite criticism and suggestions on these proposals, and urge other groups to put forward concrete plans which can resolve the current disunity and lead to the formation of the party.

MEXICO: THE STRUGGLE INTENSIFIES

In 1917, the 7-year long Mexican Revolution, the first peasant revolution of the 20th century, drew to a close. The individual struggles of the Indians, campesinos, and workers had united in a great wave that swept away the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz. Yet the central demand of the Revolution -- "Tierra y Libertad", "Land and Freedom" -- remained largely unfulfilled. Even so, the government of Francisco Madero (who had turned on the revolution after Diaz' defeat in 1911) was forced to include a land reform program in its 1917 Constitution as a way of getting the revolutionaries to lay down their guns. This program, Article 27 in the Constitution, prohibited any individual from owning more than 100 hectares (247 acres) of irrigated land. It is still the law today. Yet hundreds of wealthy Mexicans get around it by owning land in their children's or their workers' names. Individuals own huge haciendas, covering thousands of acres, while at the same time there are five million landless agricultural workers -- three times as many as in 1950.

Sixty years after the Revolution, the land problem in Mexico is far from settled. While there have been land takeovers for the last few years, in recent months they have grown much greater in number and scope. Thousands of campesinos have taken over lands in the rich farming areas throughout the country, particularly in the two northwestern states of Sinaloa and Sonora. The bourgeoisie's response has been violent: on October 24, 1975, ten campesinos were slaughtered and dozens wounded in a rain of gunfire from army and police rifles at El Chaparral, Sonora. There have been many such incidents in the last two years.

The rich farming valleys of the Mexican northwest could be mistaken for California's Imperial or Salinas valleys. In fact, most Mexican farms are owned or financed by US corporations, such as Del Monte or Safeway. In Mexico, as in the US, agribusiness is big business: 60% of all the fresh vegetables consumed in the US from December through May are from Mexico; mechanization in Mexican agriculture is displacing workers at the rate of 30,000 jobs a year. Furthermore, the unemployment rate in the northern states of Mexico (e.g., 50% in Chihuahua) has been increased by the closing of many "border" factories, such as in the electronics industry. This industry, owned by US corporations like Motorola and RCA, originally fled to Mexico in search of lower wages and taxes. Now, with the growing unionization movement of Mexican workers in the border industry, these corporations are picking up stakes again and leaving for central or southern Mexico, or the Caribbean, in search of still cheaper labor power. Many workers and campesinos, suddenly jobless again, are forced to cross into the US where, as "illegal aliens", they may be hired for slave wages if they are hired at all, they may be used as strikebreakers, they are blamed for the lack of jobs, and used as an excuse for attacks on all workers and national minorities.

The battle in Mexico grows fierce, despite the pacifism and reformism of many of the leaders. The land seizures threaten powerful Mexican and US capitalists. In April, 30 US Congressmen sent a letter to President Ford saying that Mexico was "going communist". Then, in September, the Mexican government, responding to the demands of US imperialism, dealt a severe blow to the already hard-hit masses by devaluing the peso. In effect, the devaluation decreased the wages of the workers and increased the superprofits of US imperialism. Powerful forces in both the US and Mexico would like to bring about a coup d'etat similar to the one in Chile in 1973, given this growing upsurge in the spontaneous struggle of peasants in the countryside, and workers in the cities.

Workers in the US must do everything in their power to prevent this. We must expose and denounce the schemes of the US imperialists and their Mexican lackeys. We must render concrete political and material assistance to the struggle of the Mexican people against fascism and imperialism. Our most important long-range task in the US in support of the Mexican workers and peasants is proletarian revolution -- the overthrow of our own bourgeoisie!

DRUGS: A SOCIAL DISEASE

Drug addiction is spreading like an epidemic in the United States. This is not surprising, since drugs are used by many to 'escape' the oppression and misery which capitalism breeds. The problem of drug addiction affects all classes and nationalities in the US to some degree, but most affected are those most oppressed by the capitalist system: national minorities and working people. The problem seems insurmountable. Every approach by the US government to the drug plague has been doomed to failure. Again, this is not surprising, since the oppressors cannot solve a problem that they have created. To some, it seems that there is no solution. But one nation which had a drug problem as great as ours did cure the disease -- the People's Republic of China. Let's compare the two approaches to drug addiction: the socialist solution and the capitalist "attempt".

HOW DRUG ADDICTION WAS SOLVED IN CHINA

In old, semi-feudal, imperialist-dominated China, opium-smoking and heroin usage was rampant. The British colonizers introduced the drug traffic as a way of making huge profits and to weaken the struggle of the Chinese people against colonialism. The corrupt Kuomintang government, led by Chiang Kai-shek, also used the drug trade to increase revenues, by re-selling confiscated drugs. The results of imperialist oppression in the form of drug trafficking were disastrous. To pay the pusher, daughters and wives were sold into prostitution or slavery. Boys were sent to the coal fields to die by the hundreds. Addicts roamed the country, begging. Whole regions of China were devoted to growing opium poppies, while famine raged.

After the October 1st Revolution of 1949, the Communist Party of China began an all-out campaign to end the drug problem in China forever. Under the leadership of the Party, peasants were persuaded to plow under their poppies and plant food crops. Most complied immediately, since they knew the government had guaranteed a good price for the crops. By 1951, poppy cultivation had ceased to exist. It was more difficult to eliminate the addicts because dealers were able to smuggle in supplies from British-controlled Hong Kong. The Party and government, in order to enlist the support of the masses of people, launched a massive education program called the "ban opium" movement. Gigantic rallies were held. Confiscated opium and smoking equipment was publicly burned. Several of the largest drug dealers were caught and sentenced to life imprisonment. On the local level, small study groups were held in every neighborhood and in the countryside. Opium, it was said, had "turned people into ghosts". Now it was time to "turn the ghosts into people". Healthy and strong people were needed to join in China's reconstruction. Neighborhood committees held special education courses for families of addicts to teach them not to be ashamed of their addicted relatives, but rather to help and support them in kicking the habit. Group leaders explained how the addicts were victims of foreign imperialism, which forced opium on them to make them weak and easily controlled. Motivated and supported by the genuine concern of neighbors and family, many addicts were able to cure themselves in their own homes. Those cured were given training and placed in useful jobs.

By 1956, the drug problem in China had been eliminated completely. What was the key to this great accomplishment? First, it was the overthrow of colonialism and imperialism, the primary cause of drug addiction. The revolution eliminated the class oppression which forces so many onto drugs, and put a stop to the profits from the drug trade reaped by the imperialists and their Chinese puppets. Second, during the early period of socialist construction, the masses of Chinese people were educated and mobilized, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, to combat this great evil.

HOW DRUG ADDICTION IS DEALT WITH IN THE US

Look around your community -- the evidence of increasing use of illegal drugs is all around us. Recent reports in the Oakland Tribune reveal that in one housing project, San Antonia Villa, a \$10,000/day drug traffic is conducted by one gang. Some residents call it and East Oakland a "heroin supermarket". The results in terms of crime, human suffering and waste, are staggering.

Yet what does the US government do to cope with this terrible situation? It offers "bandaid" solutions to the public, and collaborates in private with the international Mafia, the biggest drug-pushers throughout the world. The CIA uses these gangsters to put down national liberation movements and other anti-imperialist forces. For example, the Mafia attempted to assassinate Fidel Castro shortly after the Cuban Revolution, at the request of the CIA. In fact, after World War II the CIA virtually restored the Mafia gangs in Italy and France to combat the so-called "red menace". It did the same in Korea in the 1950's and in Vietnam in the 1960's. In return for their "services", the US government supports and protects the drug trafficking of the Mafia and other criminals.

In response to exposures of some of this blatant collaboration, the government has made moves to cover its tracks. One way has been to set up so-called "treatment programs" for addicts -- methadone maintenance programs. These programs have met with little success; the drug problem continues to grow. Methadone maintenance, which started as an experiment by doctors in New York in 1965, was meant to cure heroin addiction. In fact, it essentially does no more than replace heroin addiction with an addiction to methadone, another drug. And the US government calls this a "cure"! There are presently 450 federally-funded methadone maintenance programs in the US, and almost 85,000 people on methadone. In short, the government has become the pusher, profiting from and controlling methadone addiction, and calling this a "solution".

The miserable failure of the US government and the great success of the People's Republic of China in dealing with drug addiction is again not surprising. Addiction is not simply a medical problem or a criminal problem. It is a political and a social problem, as the people of China have demonstrated, and can only be solved politically. In the US, this means the overthrow of capitalism and the building of socialism, a system based on production to meet the needs of the majority of people, not for the profits of a few.

IMPERIALIST INVESTMENT IN THE BLACK NATION

While the bourgeoisie raves about the "New South" and its "surging prosperity", or the movement of industry from the North to the South, they not only ignore the historical super-exploitation of the Black Nation, but, more importantly, the reason for the recent increase in investment of monopoly capital there. Intensifying competition between imperialist nations leads them all over the globe in search of markets that will yield the highest profits possible. In the Black Nation they've found not only an abundance of cheap natural energy sources, and comparatively lower taxes, but a large supply of cheap, unorganized labor power. This last factor, what the capitalists call "untapped labor pools", is the main reason they are able to reap superprofits, or profits that are above and beyond those which are customary. It is also the main reason why, within the last 16 years, the annual gross regional product for the Black Nation has doubled, to \$263.9 billion. This "favorable investment climate" has not only attracted capital from the Anglo-American Nation, but European, Japanese and Canadian capital as well; countries like West Germany (chemicals), Sweden (auto), Japan (zippers), England (Barclay's Bank), Canada (telecommunications), France (cement and tires), and Italy (petrochemicals). Reflecting this fact is Atlanta, Georgia, which has in the last 6 years become the home of 55 corporate and regional headquarters, including the consulates of South Korea and Brazil. It is important to note that this increased export of capital to the US and the Black Nation by other capitalist countries is an indication of their growing strength and the relative decline of US imperialism.

In the last 30 years, the ranks of the Southern industrial proletariat have increased tremendously. Within this period of time, agribusiness giants like Holly Farms, Stokely Van Camp and Ralston Purine, through mechanization and consolidation of large plots of land, have decreased the number of small farms by 50%, to 1.1 million.

Millions of farmers forced off the land have no choice but to seek jobs in urban industrial areas. Among these are Black tenant farmers, whose numbers decreased by 68% between 1964-69. Taking advantage of the desperation of these workers for jobs, by using terror and racism in their union-smashing drives, the Southern bourgeoisie has been able to increase the exploitation of Southern workers to the point where their wages are, on the average, \$30/week lower than their counterparts in the Anglo Nation. Bourgeois statistics show that the per capita income in Mississippi is 31% below the average in the Anglo Nation.

The textile and auto industries offer the best examples of superexploitation in the Black Nation. General Motors has most recently located 7 of its 9 newest plants in the Black Nation, where wages are from \$1-\$1.20/hour less than Northern workers'. For their Packard Electric Division in Clinton, Mississippi, this means an extra \$2 million annually in profits. In the past two years all unionizing attempts at GM plants have failed. The capitalists at GM are using racism, outright terror, and threatening to fire workers in order to maintain their superexploitation of the Southern workers. The situation in the textile industry is much the same. Non-union textile mills pay approximately \$2.30/hour, which in 1975 allowed textile workers to make just 61% of the national average. Annual sales amount to between \$16-18 billion. Once again, because of the high percentage of Black workers in the mills, racism has been used by the capitalists to further divisions among workers; union representation has even been equated with a Black "takeover". Phone tapings and mass firings are not uncommon. Consequently, the last 20 years has seen a drop in organized workers in the textile industry; now only 5% of the workforce is unionized.

Along with Latin America and Puerto Rico, the Black Nation is part of the main reserves of US imperialism. During periods of economic crisis, the bourgeoisie does all it can to shift the crisis onto the working class in general, and particularly onto the workers of oppressed nations within the US. The export of capital to the Black Nation is a clear example of this. Due to the lower wages and unorganized workforce, products manufactured in the Black Nation are highly competitive on the international market. However, the intensified exploitation and the proletarianization of the workforce which results from the export of capital produce new objective conditions. As the recent strikes and organizing drives in the textile mills in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina and Oneita, South Carolina have shown, these changed conditions tend to break down the national differences and increase the awareness of the need for trade unions as a form of organization of the working class. Not only do class contradictions between the proletariat and bourgeoisie intensify, but the national struggle of the oppressed Black Nation against US imperialist domination reaches new heights. The growing struggles for democratic rights and against fascist terror, the struggles of Gary Tyler and Joanne Little best exemplify this trend. As workers of the oppressor nation we must give full and undying support to these struggles.

The MLC's full position on the Black Belt South, "Free the Black Nation", is presently undergoing a review by the organization.

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