

US OR USSR: WHO'S THE MAIN DANGER

The importance of analyzing and understanding the complex international situation cannot be stressed enough. It is absolutely necessary for communists and advanced workers in the US to make an all-sided, independent investigation and analysis of the international situation, and to reach conclusions based on that work. Only from that point can we determine our strategy and tactics in regards to the world situation, and best undertake our proletarian internationalist duties.

In developing a line on the international situation, specifically in determining who is the main danger to the world's peoples and the major source of war in the world today, what questions need to be answered?

First, what is the significance of saying that one superpower or the other, that is, either the Soviet Union or the United States, is the main danger to the peoples of the world?

The results of downplaying the danger of Soviet social-imperialism or of refusing to recognize it even exists are disastrous. When the "Communist" Party USA (CPUSA) and the "Communist" Labor Party (CLP) unite with Soviet social-imperialism and deny that capitalism has been restored in the USSR, they disarm the working class here and abroad by lulling them to sleep in the face of growing war preparations, leaving them ideologically, politically and militarily unprepared to prevent imperialist war or turn it into proletarian revolution. These revisionists are then joined by groups such as the Guardian newspaper and the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) in promoting or downplaying Soviet neo-colonialism in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Any support of the Soviet Union or even the slightest vacillation towards their treachery hinders the struggles of liberation forces around the world -- by pushing the Soviet Union as their ally, and by misdirecting the internationalist duties of workers and communists in the US. The liberation movements can never rely on one imperialism to fight or escape from the other. Thus, we must expose the Soviet Union and its lackey supporters as they deceive the peoples of the world under the guise of proletarian internationalism.

However, there are several problems that can arise if the Soviet Union is considered the main danger internationally. One is underestimating the real strength and danger of the US to the peoples of the world. The recent situation in Zaire has brought forward some analyses, such as that of Workers Viewpoint Organization (WVO), which state that the US imperialists stand helpless, their hands are tied, and they are unable to send troops in as they did in Vietnam. Perhaps the US cannot or will not send in troops, but what about the millions of dollars of US aid pouring into Zaire? What about the 1500 Moroccan troops, and the contingent of Egyptian military experts? Aren't they in Zaire under the direction, and with the financial backing and good wishes of the US imperialists? Is the US really standing helpless? While it is true that the Soviet-backed troops initiated the invasion of Zaire, we can't ignore or belittle the role that the US is playing to maintain its domination over this

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African country! Another serious problem that can arise when analyzing the Soviet Union as the main danger is the line of "directing the main blow at social-imperialism". This is October League's (OL) line, which objectively aids the US imperialists in their struggle for hegemony, and which flirts with the possibility of siding with or relying on our own bourgeoisie to battle the Soviet Union. We must reject any of the anti-Soviet schemes of the US imperialists and their supporters, and not become pawns in their struggle for world hegemony. As communists and workers in one of the superpowers, we cannot forget that our main internationalist task is to overthrow our own bourgeoisie!

Further, there are unscientific and misleading aspects to some of the analyses of the Soviet Union as the main danger. First, there is the tendency to overlook the dialectics of the development and decline of US imperialism. Certainly it is true that the US has been well exposed in the world, and that it is relatively on the defensive in terms of imperialist domination. However, precisely because of these conditions, US imperialism will aggressively increase its efforts, and in new and different forms, to win back lost positions and take over new ones. Egypt is one good example where the US has regained influence, Portugal is another, and the situation in India may prove to be a resurgence for US imperialism. And all of these gains are at the expense of Soviet social-imperialism. Of course, we can't ignore the gains of the USSR at the expense of the US -- for example, Angola and Ethiopia. Again, dialectics and all-sidedness must guide our analysis. Second, the characterization that the USSR is a rising imperialist power is unscientific and misleading. The OL states: "The Soviet Union is the most dangerous because it is a superpower on the rise, while the US is on the decline." Imperialism is the last, highest stage of capitalism, and as an economic system it is dying, decaying, and certainly not rising. The analysis by the Workers Congress (WC), that the Soviet Union is on the offensive and the US on the defensive, more accurately and scientifically explains the situation.

A number of practical questions related to the superpowers' abilities to start and wage a war must be carefully looked into before concluding that one or the other is the main danger. These questions include:

- 1) Military preparations and overall military strength
- 2) Military and industrial technology
- 3) Reserves -- food, manpower, industrial capacity
- 4) Allies -- who? how strong? how reliable?
- 5) Internal political and economic conditions
- 6) External political and economic position

There appears to have been limited investigation around these and other questions in determining the main danger in the world and the major source of war. It's true that the Soviet Union, as a latecomer to the imperialist feast, is aggressively pursuing hegemony in the world -- look at Southern Africa and the intense military build-up in Eastern and Central Europe, for example. It is also true that Soviet state monopoly capitalism of a new type and the Nazi-like fascist state apparatus allows the USSR to move toward putting the entire economy on a war footing, in preparation for imperialist war. However, there are many unanswered questions about the Soviet Union and its ability to effectively wage war. What is the real extent of the agricultural crisis, and how would this affect the ability of the Soviet Union to sustain a lengthy conventional war over Europe? How stable is the Warsaw Pact, and how much can the Soviet Union dictate its needs to them? How does Soviet dependency on Western technology and economic credits affect the industrial development of the USSR, and what would happen if the technology and credits were cut back or shut off? To what extent do the falling labor productivity, strikes, national rebellions, and internal resistance to fascism affect overall Soviet strength and ability to wage war? What about the question of a second front, the People's Republic of China?

Another problem is, how to compare Soviet and US military strength accurately? First, we have to dig through the Pentagon hysteria, which attempts to drum up more funds for the Defense Department (and successfully so -- look at the step-up in US war preparations). Second, there is the problem of comparing quantity and quality, as the

Can't we see
be developing into a
decaying economic system?
good plans to see why they're out

Soviets have definite numbers advantages in many military areas, while US military technology surpasses that of the Soviets. Further, cost comparisons of US and Soviet military expenditures can only be made roughly, primarily due to differing labor costs and the varying numbers of civilians employed in the military by the two countries.

As Lenin said, "Any other basis under capitalism for the division of spheres of influence, of interests, of colonies, etc., than a calculation of the strength of the participants in the division, their general economic, financial, military strength, etc., is inconceivable." (Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism) Because such a comparative calculation of the strengths of the two superpowers has not been sufficiently done, and because of the overwhelming danger that both the US and the Soviet Union present to the world's peoples, we feel it is not correct to label one or the other as the main danger at this time. Therefore, we say that the US and the Soviet Union are the most dangerous imperialist powers to the peoples of the world, are equally the main enemies of national liberation and socialism, and to the same extent represent the major source of war in the world today. The significance of stressing that both superpowers are equally dangerous is that it lays out a strategic plan for aligning the world's revolutionary forces against both the US and the Soviet Union. This does not contradict the fact that one or the other may represent the principal danger to a particular region or country, such as the Soviet Union to Eastern Europe, Angola, Cuba, etc., and the US to Latin America, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, etc. We can also state that the main danger to a particular region or country could change over a relatively short period of time; for instance, in Argentina (see Workers' Press, Vol 3 #5).

It is important to understand that conditions are constantly changing, and that it is imperative to keep on top of all the twists and turns in the international situation. As the Workers Congress states in The Communist, Vol III #9, in "Proletarian Internationalism or Social-Chauvinism":

"We do not speculate as to what historic turns may lay ahead in the course of world revolution. A united front against social fascism, for example, is a possibility we cannot exclude. That, however, is not our strategic plan at this time and under present conditions." Later, they add: "At present the two superpowers together are the main enemy and everything depends on a principled stand toward this question. Until a turn in world history changes that situation, requiring a change in our strategic plan--that is, the whole alignment of revolutionary forces--we must direct our decisive blow at both superpowers." (emphasis theirs)

COMMUNIST CORES : REPLY TO THE LPR (M-L)

(The following is a response by the League for Proletarian Revolution (LPR M-L) to the MLC's article "Build Communist Cores!", Workers' Press Vol 3 #3. LPR reprinted both our article and their response in Resistance, Vol #3-4. Along with their response, we are printing our latest thinking on the question of cores. We believe this interchange to be most productive, and encourage other organizations and individuals to contribute their ideas, criticisms and practical summations.)

THE BUILDING OF CORES, BY LPR (M-L)

There are a number of unities between the position advanced by LPR-ML in January and that submitted by the MLC. These are: (1) that factory nuclei are the basic organizational unit of a genuine communist party; (2) that cores, just as factory nuclei, are clandestine and based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, and that this unity is manifested both in theory and in practice (thus excluding opportunists of all hues). All members of the core are not necessarily in unity with all aspects of the line of the

organization that initiates and leads the core; (3) that the building of cores should be seen in the context of building the party, that theory is decisive in this pre-party period, and that the core is a vehicle for implementing, verifying and developing the line, and for moving forward the building of the party; (4) that the core functions democratically, waging principled struggle, systematically summing up work, and that its goal is to provide communist leadership to mass struggles and organizations, carrying out communist propaganda and agitation. The training of future cadres must be carried out both in the theory and in the practice of proletarian revolution.

The position of the Marxist-Leninist Collective contains a fundamental error: the liquidation of the factory nucleus. The comrades ask themselves: "In this pre-party period, what are the transitional forms which communist organizations must establish within basic industry?" And they answer: "A core is a communist form of organization required in this period when a party does not exist." This is incorrect.

The factory nucleus is the basic form of party organization. In the absence of the party, this form is not eliminated, on the contrary. The development and consolidation of factory nuclei allows Marxist-Leninist organizations and collectives to establish deeper ties within the class, to proletarianize their ranks, and thus move forward the party building process.

There is no contradiction in building of cores and factory nuclei. In fact, they complement each other and they work in coordination both in the pre-party period and once the party is built.

In a factory, we can develop: the factory nucleus - composed of cadres of the organization, and the core - composed of cadres, other Marxist-Leninists, as well as advanced and intermediate workers, and rank and file caucuses or workers' committees that group together any worker that is in disposition to struggle for a democratic union, against national oppression, women's oppression, etc. All these forms of organization allow us to make out of every factory a fortress for communism.

Of all these forms, the most important is the factory nucleus. It is this form which in the last analysis guarantees that the line of the party (today - of the Marxist-Leninist organization or collective) is implemented in the shops. However, only those who know of factory nucleus because they have read it in a book will mechanically say that the way to develop work in a factory is by first developing a factory nucleus, then the core and finally the rank and file caucus. We agree with the Marxist-Leninist Collective in that this is not a mechanical question of first one then the other, independent of conditions.

In practice this varies from factory to factory. To build a factory nucleus, we need to have a certain amount of cadres in the same factory. So, if we begin with the factory nucleus we would have to build it by placing the necessary cadres in every factory we are to work in. What happens if there is only one or two cadres working in a factory? What happens if there is only one contact? In these cases, which are the rule rather than the exception in this period of gathering forces, we first develop the core which has as its aim the creation of a rank and file caucus, development of communist work within the factory, preparation of shop newsletters, the development of a study circle, etc. (There are cases in which the rank and file caucus already exists previous to our work in the factory, in which case we would incorporate the core, as soon as it is formed, into the caucus). Our work within the core, within the rank and file caucus and within the study circle, as well as the communist propaganda and agitation that we put out in the factory allows us to develop, win, train and consolidate the advanced workers that will eventually make up our factory nucleus.

What is important, we repeat, is that the development of factory nuclei is a task for the present moment, not for after the party is formed. In fact, only by organizing ourselves along the lines of factory nuclei, by implementing democratic-centralism and

by practising criticism-self-criticism in our organizations in this pre-party period, will we be able to fulfill our central task: the building of a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party in the US.

Further more, we differ with the views of the Marxist-Leninist Collective on:

- (1) the composition of the cores which is limited by the MLC to Marxist-Leninists and "advanced workers who have been won to communism". LPR-ML includes intermediate workers in the cores it develops, as well as advanced workers who are not communists;
- (2) the basis of unity in the core and that "there has to be unity at least on the following fundamental questions of Marxism-Leninism: recognition of the need for proletarian revolution by armed struggle, the role of the party, the role of the state, the character of national oppression under capitalism..." We believe this is too general a way in which to define the type of unity that has to exist among different organizations, collectives or individuals in order to carry out joint practice. Struggling against the tendency to establish unity exclusively on these terms, we pointed out in our position:

"Let's establish first what we don't mean. Members of the core do not have to agree with every position of our organization. That would be equivalent (complete unity) to placing non-organization members under the democratic centralism (which in practice would turn out to be only centralism) of the organization! This would be in fact an error. Neither do we mean unity on a series of general formulations or abstractions. Fundamental unity is determined not only in terms of issues but more importantly, in terms of how we achieve this unity, how we deepen it and how it is manifested in our common revolutionary practice. Thus, core members not only have unity with the line of the organization on key questions - e.g. need for a Party, proletarian revolution, armed struggle, role of the state, etc. - but also they have been tested in practice in terms of their disposition to (a) struggle for that line, (b) participate in its further development (through 1. implementation of the line and sum-up of the work, 2. study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and 3. criticism and self-criticism). In a nutshell, members of our cores are individuals that have been tested in the heat of the class struggle; individuals that come forward in different struggles that are led by our cores. This 'fundamental unity' will be tested not only by the propaganda carried out with them on a one to one basis, but also by the stand and viewpoint they show towards our propaganda and agitation as well as towards the mass work we are involved in. Recruitment to the core is then based on whether in practice they show in fact that fundamental unity with the line of the organization. (Each core should discuss this question based on particular examples of individuals that the core is in contact with or relating to, in order to deepen our understanding of this. But remember that unity that has not been tested, is no unity.)" (Resistance, Vol. , No. 1)

Overall we see it as positive that other comrades are taking up the question of building cores and urge honest Marxist-Leninists to continue this work and to continue to use the Communist Forum to develop the discussion on this and other important matters.

Here the MLC would like to respond to the LPR's comments, and to sum up our practical experience in building cores, which has served to deepen our understanding.

In our article "Build Communist Cores!" we erred and were not explicit concerning the role of factory nuclei. We agree with the LPR-ML that of all the forms of organization that communists participate in at the workplace, factory nuclei are the most important. The task of building factory nuclei should be taken up now, as LPR-ML stresses, and not wait until after the party is formed. We are attempting to carry this out. However, when conditions do not exist for setting up nuclei, communist organizations must participate in cores, caucuses, workers' committees, etc. In the course of this work an organization must recruit advanced workers and independent Marxist-Leninists, thus creating the conditions for the formation of factory nuclei. Regardless

of whether a core is formed before or after a factory nucleus, there is no contradiction between the two. We agree that nuclei and cores are necessary forms of communist organization which "complement each other and work in coordination, both in the pre-party period and once the party has been built".

What about the composition of cores? We accept the LPR-ML's criticism that our position is too narrow. We originally included in our concept of cores our cadres, advanced workers won to communism, independent Marxist-Leninists, and cadres of other organizations. In summing up our work, and especially in getting clarity on the main tasks of cores at this time, we now include advanced workers who are not yet communists. The recruitment of advanced workers into a core is one of the best ways we have right now to win them over, consolidate them ideologically, involve them in communist work, and train them to be practical leaders of the class. We do have a difference with the LPR's position. The LPR includes intermediate as well as advanced workers in its cores. We see two possible errors here. First, this tends to muddle the distinction between cores, which are a communist form of organization, and caucuses or other rank and file organizations that communists work within. Second, at the same time as LPR calls for wider membership they call for deeper, more extensive unity, less 'general' unity in the cores. We feel these points contradict each other. The LPR says that membership in the core is determined by whether or not an individual has 'fundamental unity' with the line of their organization (which they explain does not mean unity with every position). However, if a worker has 'fundamental unity' with an organization, and is advanced enough to "struggle for that line" (as LPR requires, and which implies an understanding of the shades of difference which often separate Marxism from revisionism), shouldn't such a person be recruited into the organization itself, as well as the core? We use the following criteria for recruitment into the core: (1) agreement with the core's principles of unity, although in the case of an advanced worker some points may not be fully grasped at first; (2) this unity is not just in words; an advanced worker or Marxist-Leninist must show a willingness to uphold and fight for the principles of unity in practice; (3) a willingness to accept communist leadership; (4) agreement to accept binding democratic discipline, and the willingness to carry out the work of the core. Thus we agree with the LPR that the basis of unity within a core cannot be simply a list of general principles.

We may have a further difference with the LPR -- the comrades do not seem to include other Marxist-Leninist organizations in the composition of cores. As we explained in our first article, we believe cores can serve as an important vehicle for joint work between communist organizations. We look forward to more explanation from the LPR on this question.

We were ambiguous in our article about the tasks of a core, listing a number of them without isolating the central task. Further, we were unclear about the relationship between cores and the primary and secondary tasks of a communist organization in this pre-party period. The central task of a communist organization is to build the party, and this is done primarily by uniting Marxist-Leninists and secondarily by winning the advanced to communism. The central task of a core, which is based upon the minimum level of unity necessary to carry out communist work in a particular struggle, is to win the advanced to communism, and secondarily to unite Marxist-Leninists in the process. Thus, for a communist organization participation in cores is part of taking up the secondary task of winning the advanced. A communist organization (or organizations) provides leadership to the core, and the core implements its central task by giving communist leadership to the spontaneous movement, participating in a caucus or other rank and file workers organization, and conducting communist propaganda and agitation. When unclarity or difference of line occurs in the course of this work, the core does sum-up and internal study to try to move to a higher level of unity and facilitate its central task of winning over advanced workers.

In the main, we feel we have unity with the LPR's position on communist cores. We look forward to hearing from other Marxist-Leninists who are attempting to build cores, and push forward the task of building a genuine communist party!

ELECTRONICS AND IMPERIALIST WAR

A brief look at the industrialization of the US economy shows a direct connection between the consolidation of US imperialism and the development of the electronics-aerospace industry, financed by and in service to imperialism. As US imperialism grew and consolidated itself worldwide, so did the need for the most scientifically advanced war materials -- used then to fight their expansionist wars, and now primarily to prop up a shaky world hegemony ('shared' with the USSR). The free flow of finance capital began in the late 1920's, and helped build the start of a new and very profitable defense industry, centered in the south end of San Francisco Bay. But the real boost to the electronics industry came in the preparation for the second World War. Huge government communications contracts were signed to develop two-way radio, radar, and cathode ray technology, with funds for research funneled into Stanford University. Electronic advances were used to weld new metals for bombers and to increase the power output of factories, for maximum production of war goods. The electronics industry grew from \$1 billion in 1942 to \$4 billion in 1943! Companies that got their start in these years include Hewlett-Packard, Varian, Westinghouse, and General Electric. In 1945 Stanford Research Institute (SRI) was founded to do applied research for the Defense Department and the electronics industry.

The hegemony of US imperialism was threatened after World War II by the victorious revolutions in the Eastern European countries and in China, and in the early 1950's by the Korean War. To protect their global interests, US finance capitalists invested in jet aircraft, better communications equipment, highly developed radar, and small missile guidance systems. IBM, Lockheed, and Sylvania got their start at this time, and Lockheed Aerospace soon became the largest employer in the South Bay Area.

The contention between the Soviet Union and the US for world domination has once again stimulated the growth of the electronics industries, with their production of new war goods such as night vision lenses, computers for submarine missile guidance, parts for F-15 bombers, not to mention the multitude of consumer goods. Figures for 1970 show 62% of electronics-aerospace contracts come from the US government, and markets are being sought in other capitalist countries throughout the world.

WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE ELECTRONICS PLANTS

Approximately 75% of all electronics workers are women, and a high percentage of them are national minorities. Wages are generally extremely low, and hiring temporary workers for as much as \$2-3 less/hour than permanent workers, with no benefits, is one reason why the electronics industry, as a whole, has been able to constantly increase its rate of profit. As for health and safety: in 1973, occupational disease reports for women in electrical manufacturing accounted for nearly half of all reports made by women in manufacturing industries! Harmful solvents and acids, which can lead to severe skin irritation, burns, and liver and kidney damage, are commonly used in the production process. And poor ventilation means that fumes from soldering, which contain lead and zinc, are inhaled. How is it possible for the electronics industries to get away with this? One reason is that electronics workers are almost totally unorganized. Unionized plants are almost non-existent, and exact figures are difficult to find. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) is making a few attempts to organize plants in the San Francisco Peninsula, sometimes in conjunction with the International Association of Machinists (IAM). But widespread unionizing has not gone on so far. When companies feel threatened by efforts at unionizing, they often close down and move to areas that will fetch them superprofits (profits above and beyond the 'normal') -- they move to the Black Nation (which includes most of the US 'right to work' states), Puerto Rico, Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea.

Much more investigation needs to be done in the field of electronics, and its role in imperialist war preparations. But at this point, facts show that this is an important area of work for communists. The connection between the expansion of the electronics

industry and the drive towards imperialist war must serve as a focus in our efforts to build a genuine communist party, and win advanced workers to the cause of socialist revolution. As communists attempt to give leadership to the spontaneous struggles of electronics workers, through building factory nuclei and cores, working to bring in unions, etc., we must continually point out the danger of imperialist war and the need to organize against it.

MACHINISTS #68: BUREAUCRATS EXPOSED!

Recently in Local 68, shipyard workers circulated a petition in several yards calling for a special meeting to discuss union contract proposals. Over 100 machinists signed, well over the 100 signatures needed. The response of the union leadership was to arrogantly disregard the petitions. A business agent told the shop stewards who'd circulated and turned in the petitions: "I don't care how many signatures you have, there won't be a meeting!"

This struggle is important to all workers, as many have seen the same thing happen in other unions. The question is: who will control the unions? The rank and file, who are the overwhelming majority, or a few labor bureaucrats, bribed by the capitalists?

On June 30th the contract covering shipyard workers from Los Angeles to Seattle expires. In January, Local 68 held a special meeting to discuss contract proposals. Many shipyard workers raised demands over the bureaucrats' attempts to stifle participation. In addition to a substantial wage and cost of living allowance increase, the workers militantly demanded important contract changes regarding health and safety, seniority, sick leave, travel time, and an equal opportunity apprenticeship program. The bureaucrats said they would "take into consideration" the rank and file demands, and promised to issue "in writing" a list of final proposals. Months passed and the leadership only came out with vague generalizations. Finally a number of workers formally requested another special meeting. This was denied. Then a motion was made at a union meeting instructing the leadership to call a special meeting; it passed though all the bureaucrats voted against it! But they interpreted it in such a way as to justify postponing the meeting indefinitely. Why do these so-called leaders refuse to listen to the rank and file?

We live under a capitalist system, based on the exploitation of the working class by a handful of capitalists, who make enormous profits from the wage slavery of the workers. In their search for maximum profits the capitalists oppress and plunder whole nations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and within the US, extracting superprofits from the masses of people's labor. In Argentina an auto worker is paid less than \$90/month; in Mexico, electronics workers average \$2-5 a day. To hold back the rebellion of the US working class and prevent the overthrow of capitalism, the ruling class has bribed a section of the working class with a portion of these superprofits. Trade union leaders like Meany, Abel and Hoffa on the international level and IAM officials Stan Jensen, Robert Vegas, etc. on the local level, are part of this bribed section. With their high salaries and fat expense accounts (business agents in Local 68 make nearly \$30,000/year), these traitors serve as "watchdogs of capitalism and corrupters of the labor movement", as Lenin said. They openly preach collaboration with the capitalist class. During contract negotiations the labor bureaucrats seek to make a 'settlement' acceptable to the bosses and avoid a strike; therefore, they have to suppress rank and file participation and keep workers as ignorant and unorganized as possible. We can see this process in Local 68. They refuse to call a special meeting as it would encourage rank and file participation and expose their unwillingness to struggle for workers' demands. As one union leader told the shop stewards, "I'm going to do it my way and no one will tell me any different." Right, his way is to sell out the interests of the workers and stand with the capitalists. To turn the unions into organizations which will fight for the interests of the working class, we must build a rank and file movement which can take control away from the labor bureaucrats. To do this we must constantly expose the treachery of bureaucrats like Jensen and Vegas, and drive them out of our ranks!