

REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST CAUCUS Newsletter

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Strike of Austin furniture workers over right of collective bargaining.

LABOR AND LA RAZA

It is the duty of Marxists to oppose all forms of oppression and exploitation and to unify all the oppressed in a common struggle against the bourgeoisie. The vanguard of this fight--the proletariat--must be indivisible; therefore, to aid in unity, Marxists pose transitional demands which attack special oppression and cut through bourgeois-created divisions in the working class. It is on this basis that Marxists must deal with the history and special problems of different sections of the working class.

Self-Determination for the Mexican N People: Use and Abuse

The Leninist position on self-determination for national minorities has a dual purpose, On

the one hand, it is designed to eliminate a certain form of oppression. On the other hand, it is designed to destroy the illusion that the miserable living conditions of national minorities are caused primarily by national rather than class oppression.

Despite the fact that most Chicanos are immigrants, flooding into the Southwest particularly after the ban on European immigration in the 1920's, the Chicano areas represent something of an extension of the Mexican nation within the territorial boundaries of the United States. These areas were conquered by the United States in the expansionist Mexican-American war of 1846 or forced from Mexico in the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. The significant presence of a Spanish speaking

population in these areas conquered from Mexico makes the Chicano question a genuine national question, equivalent to many situations (e. g. the Vietnamese in Laos) in which members of one nation live in the border areas of a neighboring country.

If the Chicanos in areas where they are a majority desire to become part of the Mexican state, we, as internationalists, would have to support that decision. However, most Chicanos do not want to become part of Mexico, as it now exists, because the standard of living is much lower and because the Mexican national government is viciously oppressive of the masses, as indicated by the massacre of students to create law and order for the Olympic games. The feeling that they are foreigners in the United States, combined with a desire not to return to present day Mexico has given birth to the ideology of a separate Chicano nation. But a Chicano "nation" does not exist. The Chicano question has a national character solely by virtue of the historic relations between the United States and Mexico. The Chicanos are different from other immigrants because they are concentrated in areas bordering on and conquered from the country they come from. Moreover, strong ties to neighboring Mexico prevent the easy assimilation of Chicanos into the American national culture.

However, the national fate of the Southwest is not to be solely determined by the sentiment of the Chicano population. The stripping of the Southwest from Mexico, like the conquest of Puerto Rico, stand as symbols of brutal American imperialism. A revolutionary government in the U.S. would have to correct these historic injustices and win the confidence of the Latin American masses by transferring a substantial section of the border areas back

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Neither People's Peace Nor People's War: INDOCHINA MUST GO COMMUNIST!

Many radicals, disillusioned with the flag-waving patriotism of the clergy-liberal CP-SWP led antiwar movement, were drawn to the People's Peace Treaty as a positive way to show their solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution. But the People's Peace Treaty embodies precisely those politics which have prevented the Vietnamese Revolution from reaching a victorious conclusion. Twice the Viet Minh, predecessor of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam (DRV) and the National Liberation Front (NLF), won complete military victory only to snatch political defeat from the jaws of military victory through a People's Peace Treaty-type settlement. The March 6 accords of 1946, signed by Ho Chi Minh, allowed French troops back into Indochina. The 1954 Geneva accords, backed both by the Soviet Union and Communist China, gave back South Viet Nam, which the Viet Minh held, in exchange for elections which were of course never held.

People's Peace

The People's Peace Treaty asks that the Americans and Vietnamese recognize the "independence, peace and neutrality" of Laos and Cambodia, along the lines of the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Conventions. But the Geneva accords recognized, not the Cambodian and Laotian Communists and national liberation fighters, but their butchers, members of the royal families handpicked for their ruthlessness in dealing with real independence fighters and for their subservience to French imperialism.

The People's Peace Treaty calls for a "provisional coalition government to organize democratic elections." Coalition governments by their very nature are unstable formations in

which either the Communists throw everybody else out (DRV) or else are tossed out themselves, which is more likely. Those who would learn from history, instead of endlessly repeating mistakes, would do well to study the Laotian events from 1956 to 1958, which parallel almost exactly what the PPT projects for South Viet Nam after the withdrawal of U.S. troops. The Pathet Lao did quite well in the elections held after the Vientiane Agreements (1957), whereupon they were thrown out

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REVOLUTIONARY OPPOSITION IN BOSTON UAG

BOSTON--Saturday, June 5, the University Action Group (UAG) of Boston held a national conference, attended by about 125-150 people, to make plans for fighting threats by the Harvard Administration to fire Hilary Putnam, philosophy professor and Progressive Labor Party member, for participation in the successful disruption of a right-wing, Young Americans for Freedom-sponsored teach-in. The conference agenda also included points on the political perspective of UAG, lessons of the past year, and ways to fight bourgeois ideology and culture in the University. Progressive Labor Party (PL) members and sympathizers (Worker-Student Alliance) had taken the lead in forming the UAG after they were expelled from the New University Conference a little over a year ago.

THE "LEFT-CENTER" COALITION

People are won to UAG on the basis of fighting imperialism, racism and male chauvinism

and on the importance of a working-class perspective. The UAG declares that, "UAG believes that only in alliance with working people can an effective movement for progressive change be built." But by not providing a socialist alternative and by limiting itself to essentially protest politics, the basis of agreement of UAG is little more than a liberal approach to the working class to fight certain very general injustices.

As the year progressed, it became clear that the problems of UAG are not simple errors that can be "corrected," but rather are built into PL's concept of a "left-center coalition," which PL defines in "Road to Revolution III" as uniting with various sectors on the basis of "our /PL's/ mass line on whatever issues workers and others deem important at any given moment."

PL, reacting empirically to Maoist sellouts
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LA RAZA

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to Mexico. The Chicanos would then be free to decide whether to return to Mexico with these areas or definitely opt for settlement in the U.S.

National Rights and Nationalism as an Ideology

Nationalism is both an ideology and a "sentiment" associated with the rise of national bourgeoisies, intent upon winning the most favorable conditions for exploitation of their "own" workers without interference from foreign bourgeoisies. The Marxist attitude toward nationalism was formulated by Marx and Engels for the era when capitalism, and hence nationalism, combined progressive with reactionary features. It was reformulated by Lenin for our era, the highest stage of capitalism, characterized by the straining of productive forces (including labor) against national barriers which hinder their development. Hence, we use Lenin as a guide, for what he wrote on the national question retains its relevance and truth.

The Leninist position on the national question separates the legitimate right of the oppressed nation for equality from the illegitimate right of the national bourgeoisie to exploit human labor. Lenin wrote: "The national programme of working class democracy is: absolutely no privileges for any one nation or any one language..." (Lenin, Critical Remarks on the National Question and The Right of Nations to Self-Determination, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968, p. 8) but he has harsh words for petty-bourgeois chauvinists who advocate the ideology and sentiment of nationalism: "The place of those who advocate the slogan of national culture is among the nation-

alist petty bourgeois, not among the Marxists." (p. 11). Modern linguistic science has validated what Marxists have known all along: no language, hence, no national culture based on language, is innately superior to any other.

Furthermore, Leninists avoid both the chauvinist error of blindness to special (including national) oppression, and the idealist error of seeing real, material, class struggles as motivated by sentiments, beliefs, and cultural aspirations. It is true that legitimate class struggles can be coopted by petty bourgeois movements and confined to nationalistic aims, but Marxists always try to prevent this and lead the struggle on to the total abolition of classes and national boundaries. Leninists use the dialectical approach, which advocates the equality of different sectors of the oppressed in order to unify the masses against the bourgeoisie and their ideological lackeys, the nationalists.

How the SWP Renders Lenin More Profound

The Socialist Workers Party has cynically and self-consciously distorted Lenin on this crucial point in order to justify their tailing of virtually every nationalist in the whole world. Thus, the SWP supports uncritically the petty bourgeois and idealist "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan", formulated by the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference of Aztlan, in 1969, which calls for a new nation of "Aztlan" in what is now the American Southwest. It is not surprising that misguided youth could conclude that Chicanos "must use their nationalism as the key or common denominator for mass mobilization and organization." It is criminal, however, for an ostensibly Trotskyist group to endorse this. Indeed, Antonio Camejo, a leading SWP'er, reveals a bottomless pit of renegacy as he honky-baits white workers and claims that Chicanos in the Southwest have been an oppressed nation since the coming of the anglos (in the 1800's). The bulk of Chicanos in the Southwest are the product of im-

migration from Mexico in the 1900's. Chicanos identify themselves either as U.S. citizens or as Mexicans, and not as some lost tribe of "Aztlan", which never existed except in the minds of the petty bourgeoisie and their tailist friends.

Toward a Bilingual Southwest Culture

Chicanos are an urban minority group, and their residential segregation reflects class oppression and class snobbery. Cultural nationalists try to discover a romantic purity in segregated barrio life, but no area of forced segregation, where people are compelled to endure a low standard of living can lay the basis for liberation or the advancement of human culture. The development of bicultural forms in the Southwest requires equality between the English and Spanish-speaking workers; mutual recognition of equality further cements class solidarity.

Essential to achieving such equality is the elevation of Spanish to a recognized standard language in the Southwest. This will go a long way toward making the Chicanos not feel like foreigners in their own country. Moreover, bilingualism has a positive value for the entire labor movement, which is an international movement. Chicanos, through their use of the Spanish language, can be the force which links the aspirations of the North American workers to the workers of Mexico and Latin America. Therefore, we struggle to make Spanish a standard language in the educational system, the mass media and other areas of social life.

La Raza Unida Party

La Raza Unida Party is a petty bourgeois electoral-oriented party, which developed from the school walkouts in Crystal City, Texas. Chicano students demanded badly-needed reforms, including bilingual education.

On April 4, 1970, the new party, La Raza Unida, swept the school board elections, and on April 7 won the city council elections in Crystal City and two other small towns. In power, the party has initiated worthwhile reforms and has helped organize a teachers' and public employees union. But while the politics of this third party have a definitely progressive and populist tinge, due to its origins and constituency, it is fundamentally an electoral

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INDOCHINA

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of government, and following various "democratic" maneuvers the U.S. resumed aid to the Royal Laotian army, which became the only foreign army in the world wholly supported by U.S. taxpayers. Coalition governments only serve to confuse, disarm and retard the class struggle, as recent examples, Allende in Chile and Bandaranaike in Ceylon, demonstrate.

People's War

People's War is merely the extension of the class-collaborationism and nationalism embodied in the People's Peace. Lin Piao describes People's War as: "To rely on the peasants, build rural base areas and use the countryside to encircle and finally capture the cities." Thus, People's War is a war waged without the participation of the working class. People's War is also a strategy for the "rural areas of the world" (the under-developed countries), not the "cities of the world" (the industrial countries). Further, the revolution in the "rural areas of the world" is divided by Lin Piao into two distinct stages: the national-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution. The two stages must be kept distinct since the national-democratic revolution "embraces in its ranks not only the workers, peasants, and the urban petty bourgeoisie, but also the national bourgeoisie and other patriotic and anti-imperialist democrats." Obviously if the national-democratic revolution began to perform socialist tasks such as the expropriation of the national bourgeoisie, then the national bourgeoisie would soon depart from its ranks. People's War is a military strategy for a war of the national-democratic revolution (including the national bourgeoisie in its ranks), fought without the workers, in the countryside of underdeveloped countries. Nowhere do Mao, Lin Piao or Giap claim that People's War is a strategy for workers, for revolutionary work in the cities or in the industrial countries or during a socialist revolution. In fact, none of these "revolutionaries" or their co-thinkers have any strategy for a proletarian socialist revolution.

According to Lin Piao "the socialist revolution is the inevitable sequel to the national-democratic revolution." But if the socialist revolution, which means the destruction of the national bourgeoisie as a class were truly an inevitable sequel to the national-democratic revolution, then the national bourgeoisie will not join a movement which promises, if successful, their destruction. No matter how oppressive the national bourgeoisie may find colonial or neo-colonial subjugation, it knows that its survival is contingent on the continuance of that subjugation. Therefore, for national independence to be consolidated after anything resembling People's War, the national bourgeoisie must be smashed!

Even where People's War has been militarily successful, the democratic tasks still remain on the agenda and the socialist revolution is anything but inevitable. The price paid for "using the countryside to first encircle, then capture the cities" has been economic mismanagement and stagnation even within the context of a planned economy and socialized production, and the complete absence of workers democracy (for which Maothought and six-hour Castroite tirades are no substitute) and the isolation of the revolution in one country.

Who are the "People"?

The fundamental flaw of the People's Peace Treaty is that it ignores the class reality of the struggle in Indochina. It states that the "American and Vietnamese people are not enemies." Then why did the war happen? The "People" is not the enemy precisely because in modern society, torn by class conflict, individuals and groups act and react as classes. The undifferentiated "People" can be neither enemies nor allies because they have no social reality. "Power to the People" is as meaningless a formulation as "Amen". Marx, in his Critique of the Gotha Program is a trenchant critic of such formulations as "People's Party", "People's State" and "international brotherhood of Peoples" which confuse and hide the reality of the class struggle, which is a struggle between different classes of "People".

The Socialist Workers Party has built a consciously anti-class peace movement. By basing the peace movement on "the masses" (another euphemism for "the People") the SWP attempts to cover over its welcoming of bourgeois politicians into the movement. The SWP is consciously class-collaborationist and must be politically destroyed as an obstacle in the road of proletarian revolution, along with the CPUSA and the People's Peace Treaty.

Class War

Instead of People's Peace or People's War, Trotskyists advocate class war. Trotskyists believe that the urban working class must lead the peasants. What is required is a proletarian vanguard party with a program for international working-class revolution, not a Stalinist party with a peasant-based and nationally-limited program. The proletariat in "rural areas" as well as in industrial centers, following in the footsteps of the Vietnamese Trotskyists, must raise once again the banners of the October Revolution and the Fourth International of Trotsky!

RMC NEWSLETTER

No. 8

July 1971

RMC Coordinator: Mark Tishman
Newsletter Editor: Helen Cantrell

The RMC Newsletter is published by the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus. We seek to build a revolutionary socialist youth organization which can intervene in all social struggles armed with a working-class program, based on the politics of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

UAG Conference

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and betrayals, has taken a "super-proletarian" and subjectively revolutionary turn, while at the same time not decisively breaking from its Stalinist roots. PL's refusal to break from Stalinism and come to an understanding of Trotskyism, the only consistently revolutionary theory, has led to its present crisis. While calling for the dictatorship of the proletariat, PL is unable to formulate a strategy to lead the working class to a socialist victory. Instead, PL falls back on the organizational practice it knows best, the Stalinist "left-center coalition."

In practice, this has meant that socialists within an organization such as UAG must water down their politics so as to be more acceptable to the "honest center" people who are attracted to UAG solely on the basis of a not very well defined opposition to racism, imperialism and male chauvinism. It is not the role of socialists to organize liberals into an organization in which they will feel "comfortable," which means an organization which avoids internal political struggle. In order to avoid political debate which it can't handle, PL ends up having "secret" socialist positions.

By pursuing a policy of hidden socialist policies within UAG, PL lays the organization open to the onslaught of bourgeois ideology. Plenty of liberals know how to harvest the organizing work of those radicals who resist the step from essentially protest politics to a unifying socialist consciousness. The betrayals of the SWP and YSA in building the liberal-dominated SMC and NPAC (National Peace Action Coalition) are well known. The lessons of their capitulation must be learned by all radicals. Only the most uncompromising fight for a socialist program can stand a chance of defeating the tremendous

and well-organized pressure of U. S. imperialism's ideology.

RMC INTERVENES

The RMC intervened in the Conference, proposing that UAG become an openly socialist organization. A long position paper entitled "For A Revolutionary Socialist Youth Movement," submitted to the Conference included the following proposal:

"By not being an openly socialist organization, UAG has not only hurt itself through large attrition, but also has hurt the working-class movement by being extremely lax in developing any theoretical work or in linking concrete struggles to a specific program. The lack of any Marxist theory which would order struggles according to priorities, scope, resources, etc. has led to jumping from campaign to campaign without winning very much and without developing any strategic understanding within the ranks of UAG about how to really win and how to really link up with the working class. We therefore propose that UAG become a socialist organization, with stated socialist goals and a program of transition which would visibly bridge the current state of the movement and the goal toward which we are heading. . . We think that the majority of the people in UAG consider themselves socialists and that people attracted to UAG in the future will be attracted by the clarity that a socialist analysis brings."

It went on to propose that UAG should open discussions with SDS concerning a merger around the perspective of building a socialist youth organization. Finally, a broad program was proposed, including; 1) support for campus

unionization drives; 2) formation of a united front defense of Hilary Putnam and all communists and radicals, 3) intervention in the anti-war movement around an anti-imperialist working-class orientation; 4) initiation of study and discussion on unemployment and the economic crisis, bringing a socialist analysis of unemployment to the fore and agitating for labor strikes against unemployment. More general programmatic bases of a future UAG orientation included labor strikes against the war; a workers' party based on the trade unions; control prices, not wages; for strike action against layoffs; expropriation of industry under workers control; union action against racial and sexual oppression; victory to the Vietnamese revolution.

INTERVENTION A SUCCESS

The proposal was greeted with considerable interest by many UAGers uncommitted to any faction. Members and close sympathizers of PL reacted with hostility, calling it "anti-communist red-baiting" and accusing one of its authors of being "a conscious agent of the ruling class"! The proposal was tabled on PL's initiative during the afternoon session, after half of the original 125-150 people attending had left. Although the proposal was organizationally defeated, the RMC has talked with a number of independents who have been extremely dissatisfied with the PL leadership of UAG; several have indicated an interest in returning to work within UAG on the basis of agitating for the substance of our proposal. At this point, the RMC sees the intervention as a success, with a great deal of future potential for winning people to our program for a socialist youth organization, --Revolutionary Marxist Caucus of UAG

LETTERS:

ON HOMOSEXUAL OPPRESSION

TO THE EDITOR:

I'd like to comment on the article titled "On Homosexual Oppression: Left-Wing Puritanism" that appeared in the last RMC Newsletter (No. 7, April '71). A number of excellent points are made, but on the whole, the article is politically inadequate. I think it is important for us to distinguish between the gay movement, the women's movement, and the black movement--or, between racial oppression, the oppression of women, and the oppression of homosexuals. As Marxists, we know that the working class is the agent of revolution. We are very concerned with divisions which prevent the class from acting as a homogeneous, independent political force. In this country, the primary division in the working class is the racial one. Accordingly, the fight against racism must be point one in any program for the trade unions. Male chauvinism and the consequent divisions it produces in the working class require that the fight against the oppression of women also be a priority in programmatic demands for the union movement. As workers, blacks are doubly oppressed, women superexploited--both groups are used by the capitalists to drive down the wages of the working class as a whole, and are used to politically divide workers against themselves, weakening their collective fighting strength against their class enemies.

I do not think that homosexuals are a superexploited group of workers, nor do I think that homosexuality is presently a dividing issue among workers in the class struggle. It is clear that the oppression of homosexuals is a direct function of the capitalist state, which is interested in preserving the unity of the monogamous family (the basic economic unit of the capitalist system), to which homosexuality is a threat.

Whereas I'm in favor of analyses of the oppression of homosexuals appearing in the RMC Newsletter (as I would be to see articles on art, ecology and so on), I think such articles should make the political priorities for Marxists clear, as I've outlined above,

We argue in SDS for a socialist intervention in the women's movement, for example, but I do not think we would argue for SDS to orient organizationally towards the gay movement.

Comradely,
Libby Scheier
Stony Brook RMC and SDS
* * * * *

(The author replies):

The article "On Homosexual Oppression: Left-Wing Puritanism" (RMC Newsletter #7, April 1971) was aimed specifically at exposing the anti-socialist puritanism of Progressive Labor's approach to social questions. The main point was that Marxists must sometimes take backwardness among workers into account tactically, recognizing that "the struggle for social revolution cannot center around issues of special social oppression," but must never endorse this backwardness by trying to get close to workers on the basis of false consciousness.

In emphasizing the particular polemic against PL's puritanism, however, the article was not comprehensive. Comrade Scheier's letter is extremely valuable because it seeks to place the question of homosexual oppression in a broader context: its relation to the class struggle and particularly the parallels with the special oppression of blacks, women, etc. The bulk of the women's liberation movement accepts as axiomatic that women and "gays" are oppressed in the same way and are therefore natural allies.

Now, it is certainly true that women's liberationists and militant homosexuals are "natural allies"--in the sense that all sections of the oppressed are potential allies of the working class in the fight to overturn the capitalist social order in favor of a socialist system which can eliminate all forms of oppression and exploitation. As the article points out, however, most women's liberation (and homosexual) activists have not come to the recognition that only the working class has the social power to overthrow capitalism.

Further, much of the reactionary ideology which perpetuates the oppression of women (the family, sexual morality, society's definition of "masculinity" and "femininity" etc.) also oppresses homosexuals. In addition, homosexuals, like all specially oppressed groups, are oppressed in the work force--hence their high concentration in the more marginal economic sectors. But there is a difference between the oppression of homosexuals and that of women, in structure as well as magnitude.

The ideology which oppresses women and homosexuals has a material base--the super-exploitation of women workers (i. e. they frequently receive less pay for doing the same work as men). This situation, in addition to providing the bosses directly with extra profits, allows the working class to be divided along sex lines, and this division hinders the ability of the class as a whole to struggle (as ethnic, national and racial divisions do). Women workers have always been used under capitalism as a vast reserve pool of labor, to be absorbed into the work force when needed, and laid off en masse in slack periods. The oppression of women and its justifying false ideology are used to attack the material conditions and combativeness of all workers: male workers are reluctant to struggle for the rights of women workers; women workers, repeatedly betrayed by conservative union "leaders," are traditionally less union-conscious than male workers and can be forced to play the role of scab labor. Homosexuals, by way of contrast, are often degraded and victimized as individuals, but are not as a group used to structurally divide the class--through pay differentials, separate unions, etc.

Finally, regarding orientation toward "gay liberation" groups, etc., our orientation toward any section of the radical movement should be determined by its program. The explicitly bourgeois politics of many groups (like the middle-class reformist NOW, for example) would make an entrism policy on our part a waste of time. But any organization of the oppressed which recognized its struggle as part of the fight for proletarian revolution would certainly be of interest to and a valuable ally for the Marxist movement.

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LA RAZA

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third party, with limited goals and a national-ist perspective. Most likely, the pressure of class struggles will tear La Raza Unida into its basic components: the left-wing will become labor organizers, the center and right will dissolve into the Democratic Party. Because the leadership of La Raza Unida focus their efforts almost exclusively on winning city council elections in various towns, and because the program of La Raza Unida is vague and "class-independent," while at the same time profoundly reformist--we characterize it as a petty bourgeois party, and our attitude is one of opposition and sharp criticism. Our tactical approach is somewhat more friendly, as we seek to break the ranks and the best of the leadership of La Raza Unida away from classless third party-ism, and win them to the fight for a workers party. Chicanos are definitely in motion, as evidenced by the Chicano Moratorium movement and the organizing efforts which went into building the grass-roots of La Raza Unida Party. Chicanos can form the backbone of the Texas chapter of a nationwide labor party. They can play a vanguard role as union militants and Trotskyists, leaders of the triumphant communist revolution.

Religion: Tool of the Bosses, Opium of the People

A significant development of the Chicano struggle is the organizing of farm workers by Cesar Chavez and UFWOC, leading to the grape and lettuce strikes. This spurred a unionizing drive in Texas in the summer of 1966 when Eugene Nelson from the National Farm Workers Association helped organize the Independent Workers Association. It called its first strike around the demand for a minimum wage of \$1.25 for field workers, but the strike was broken when the union failed to mobilize enough force against the use of the injunction by the growers. This was partly due to the civil libertarian approach of the union leadership, which operated on the principle that the strike was morally just, but did not necessarily see it as a class issue which could win the support of Anglo workers. This approach is modeled, perhaps, after that of Cesar Chavez, who justifies the farm workers struggle in mystico-religious and nationalistic, rather than class, terms, teaching Chicano workers to rely on fasting, prayer, nonviolent resistance, and support from liberal "friends of labor" such as strikebreakers Kennedy and Yarborough.

Despite the liberalism and religiosity of their misguided leadership, Chicano workers have forged ahead in organization and have provided the labor movement with a model of rank and file militancy. The tragedy of the Teamsters-UFWOC jurisdictional dispute was that it was finally settled organizationally with no attempts to involve the rank and file of both unions in joint political discussion around the issues at stake, particularly the highhanded treachery of the Teamsters leaders who signed sweetheart contracts with the bosses above the heads of all the workers involved. Such discussions could have turned the Teamster rank and file into allies of the farm workers and induced them to dump their misleadership. The class consciousness and solidarity of the Chicano workers can win them a leading role in the labor struggles of this decade, if the Chicano labor movement is able to avoid the twin pitfalls of religion and nationalism.

A Program for Chicano Labor

While we recognize the national aspect of Chicano oppression, our main orientation toward the Chicano population is as intensely exploited workers. The Chicano population is overwhelmingly low-skilled labor. In addition to Chicanos, Mexicans commuting across the border still provide U.S. bosses in the Southwest with a reserve labor supply at relatively low wages. The availability of commuter labor depresses all wages in Texas, a state which still enforces right-to-work laws and bans the closed shop, union shop, dues check-off, mass picketing and secondary boycotts and strikes.

PL REFUSES REVOLUTIONARY SUPPORT

NEW YORK--The following letter was sent to the Progressive Labor Party in response to its public call for a May Day march to "Join PLP and all militant workers in the fight for workers' power and socialism". Additionally PL had circulated such slogans for the march as "6-Hour Day for 8-Hrs. Pay!" and "Drive U.S. Imperialism Out of S, E, Asia Now", sentiments the Spartacist League and Revolutionary Marxist Caucus are in agreement with. To our proposal of a United Front--a temporary coming together of separate workers' and radical organizations in agreement with the demands of the demonstration but under their own banners--PL refused at first to receive the offer and then even to answer it.

This sectarian behavior is in keeping with the way the march was organized. The call to "Join PL and all militant workers" was in fact not issued to "all militant workers" and certainly not to any militant workers in any political tendency other than PL. As a consequence the march celebrated not May Day but Progressive Labor. PL's sectarianism can only serve as an obstacle "in the fight for workers' power and socialism" and does a disservice to the international proletarian significance of May Day.

The only violence that occurred at the march was instigated by some members of PL against Spartacist salesmen. This is a betrayal of the most elementary principles of proletarian democracy and everything May Day stands

for. We hope that the comrades of Progressive Labor will see the importance of repudiating such sectarian and self-defeating violence and recognize the importance of the Leninist tactic of the United Front, in particular its application in defense of the workers' movement and adjust their practice in the future.

* * * 27 April 1971

Dear Comrades:

We are in political solidarity with the international working class significance of your May Day march. You have issued a general public invitation for the march to "Join the Progressive Labor Party and all militant workers in the fight for workers' power and Socialism".

If it is agreeable with you to march unitedly, the Spartacist League and Revolutionary Marxist Caucus of SDS would like to participate under our own banners bearing slogans consistent with the aims of the May Day march.

Additionally, since we have heard rumors that various revisionist and nationalist groups have threatened to attack the march we are prepared to assist in defense of such a proletarian May Day march.

Fraternally,
Joel Salant
NYC Spartacist organizer

Mark Tishman
RMC National Coordinator

Today Chicanos constitute 15% of the population of the Southwest. They are about as urbanized as anglos and blacks; 1/3 earn under \$3000 a year; 79% have unskilled or semi-skilled jobs; their unemployment rate is twice that of Anglo workers. The relative poverty of Chicanos is not mainly the result of super-exploitation--that is, lower pay for identical work--but of their concentration in lower-paying jobs. In the 1920's Chicanos began to move out of agriculture to industrial manual jobs where they are concentrated in light industry and receive relatively low wages. In comparison to Anglo workers, Chicanos are grossly underrepresented in white collar occupations and are disproportionately employed by low-wage and non-union employers. The urban barrio does contain a small middle class of professionals and of Chicanos employed in jobs dependent upon their community, but even they have lower-than-average earnings ratios. This in itself argues against the practicality of self-sufficient economic communities of Chicanos and exposes the plan for "community control" of local businesses as a way of depressing the living standard of Chicano workers segregated in their barrios. In a centralized capitalist economy, "community control" would place the workers of a particular geographic and/or ethnic "community" under the "control" of petty capitalists, who usually pay even lower wages than large corporations and are usually more oppressive to their labor. Economic development of black and brown labor requires, not "community control" of ghetto and barrio businesses but industry-wide wage standardization, since wage standardization is always associated with higher relative earnings. As a more far-reaching goal, wage equalization of all job categories is necessary, by raising the lowest wage levels up to the standard of the higher ones.

Wage standardization comes about through unionization and the closed shop. However, the conservatism of the traditional union leadership is an obstacle, as these labor lieutenants of capital resist organization of the unorganized and most helpless workers. As a result of their conservatism, of which a large component is acquiescence to institutional racism, wage standardization in certain highly skilled industries is also associated with low minority group employment. Thus, the fight for the closed shop must be linked to intensive organization, otherwise Chicanos will suffer increased unemployment; this fight must also be linked to the demand for a shorter work week, otherwise a growing reserve

pool of unemployed will lower all wages in the region, resulting in more of the surplus value accruing to capital, hence an increase in the power of capital over all labor, black, brown and Anglo.

Since most urban Chicanos are either wage workers or welfare recipients; and most rural Chicanos are migrant agricultural workers--it follows that the "Mexican problem" is a working-class problem which can be solved only by a fight to replace the traditional union misleadership with militants who will wage a struggle against unemployment with the demand for a shorter work week, public works programs and a guaranteed job (not income). If the work week were shortened with no loss in pay, enough jobs could be created instantly to end unemployment for all oppressed groups. This would be in the interests of all workers, who presently must compete amongst themselves for jobs in a shrinking job market.

The fight for equality is transitional in that it goes over into the fight for socialism. It is also a fight which crosses national boundaries. Urgently needed is economic development on both sides of the Rio Grande, to raise the standard of living of both sections of labor, so that mass migrations and commuting will no longer be necessary. Organized labor, both Anglo and Mexican, has always been instinctively hostile to immigrants because of their depressing effect on wages and their use as strikebreakers. But so long as workers must migrate to prevent poverty and starvation, it is the duty of the labor movement to welcome them and to organize them into unions.

The final solution to the problem of migrations and economic development is, of course, one which the bourgeoisie has bequeathed to the world dictatorship of the proletariat.

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