

# DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 12 OF 16

FOLDER 2

MASS PARTY MOVEMENT  
MCLL POLICY

THE STRUGGLE FOR A MULTI-NATIONAL, ANTI-REVIONIST COMMUNIST  
PARTY

by the Motor City Labor League

The conditions we face in the United States of North America\* are familiar to us all and have been described well in the preceding article. None of us want oppression and exploitation, for ourselves or other people. What do we want? The answer to this question is critical, for our analysis of what we are struggling for is as important, if not more important, than the correct analysis of what we are struggling against. And if we clearly understand what it is that we want, the process of getting there can be more sharply and more correctly defined. Thus, the debate is really around the question of what the party is supposed to DO -- not abstractly, but concretely and specifically.

Those who condemn the inhumanity of the current system under which we live are often open to the concept of socialism as an alternative. But the concept of socialism remains a vague and ambiguous term conoting co-operation, sharing, and better living conditions. And it is possible to relegate the idea of socialism to a utopian perspective -- streets flowing with milk and honey. Those who reject a literal interpretation of heaven often project that same heaven on to a blissful socialism. The other alternative is to treat socialism scientifically. This approach is to argue that the construction of the kind of society we seek is the conscious process of human beings acting on their history, given that they have come to understand certain fundamental laws of social development. This view holds that our capacity to change our lives, our common history, is as amenable to scientific analysis as is our capacity to change our physical environment. This is the concept of scientific socialism and it is based on fundamental and unchangeable laws (would you question the law of gravity because it was discovered several hundred years ago?) which are tested out, developed and applied according to the actual conditions of life which human beings experience.

This introduction to the notion of scientific socialism is necessary as a prelude to this discussion of party building if the debate is one of the application of scientific principles. If, on the other hand, one rejects the notion that it is possible to use a science of human history to guide human activity, then the debate becomes a metaphysical argument or

a power struggle. This article proceeds from the assumption that the struggle which lies ahead is a struggle that can be, and will be, scientifically directed by the science of Marxism-Leninism, applied to the reality of the United States of North America. A botanist would never dispute that the fauna and flora of Vietnam were different than the plants and flowers in the USNA. But the same botanist would think you to be entirely unscientific if you argued that because flowers in Vietnam looked different than flowers in the USNA you should apply different biological principles to their study! Or a physician would readily agree that the Vietnamese have a different incidence of diseases related to the peculiarity of their climate, have different diets and different growth rates but would heartily laugh if you were to suggest that one should not apply the principles of scientific medical research used in the USNA to medical research in Vietnam. And yet, there are those who argue that although the principles of Marxism-Leninism were sufficient for the Bolsheviki, the Chinese, and the Vietnamese, we are "different". Of course we are different! But we are also the same. And the only way to fully understand that contradiction is to understand the notion of the struggle for socialism as a struggle that is guided by a science -- based on fundamental principles which become a guide for action. (Not a dogma for action, but a guide.)

It is difficult for us to understand the concept of a scientific revolutionary process because we are taught that essentially "human nature" is a given -- people will always be greedy, competitive, individualistic, etc. "After all, you can't change human nature!" That is the argument of a ruling class that places workers in a competitive relationship to each other, that alienates human being from human being and then argues that such are the "laws of human nature". Such an argument is idealist. One is given the "idea" of what has been or is to be, and then the argument is made that the reality flows from the idea. Human beings are shaped by their "institutions"; we are what our "values" makes us; etc. etc. The ruling class cannot allow us to believe that large numbers of human beings can intelligently understand how to organize and run their own lives. For us to believe THAT would upset the current class relationships -- where people are socialized into believing the "principles" of democracy and individualism which are supportive of class exploitation and class oppression. It means that if we are to understand our reality scientifically we have to throw off deeply ingrained beliefs and attitudes about what must be, or what can be. We have to redefine our notions of human capacity, human change, historical meaning. The ruling class fights very hard against a scientific analysis of social change. It is much more frightened of the scientific attack than it is of the

mass, spontaneous anger of large numbers of people. Because the ruling class uses science all the time (social science) to manipulate, control, persuade and depersonalize the working class, it understands the power of correctly applied scientific principles. There is a reason why Marxism-Leninism is a taboo.

What follows, then, is a general discussion of the party form necessary to lead the struggle for socialism in the United States of North America.

### The party

For Marxist-Leninists, the question of the party is not a question of what the "American people" need; it is a question of what is needed by the working class. Marxist-Leninists start from the assumption that those most capable of understanding both the oppressive and exploitative features of present day capitalism and the possibilities for the future are those workers who work collectively and co-operatively in production but who, under capitalism, are exploited and oppressed. Marxist-Leninists understand that intellectuals\*\* may also suffer certain forms of oppression and exploitation. But only that class that works together under one common discipline and produces together under one common discipline is capable, as a class, of throwing off the disease of individualism and competitiveness that so pervades this society. Marxist-Leninists do not deny that large numbers of workers also accept competitive and individualistic norms; nor do they deny that intellectuals may come to understand the necessity for proletarian discipline. But Marxist-Leninists understand that it is only the proletariat (working class) which has the material basis for understanding the most fundamental contradictions of capitalism and for understanding the potentiality for the reconstruction of society under socialism.

Most radicals understand that the national minorities of this country get little democracy and a whole different level of justice than do Anglos. It is more difficult for radicals to understand that production workers and lower level service workers (both of whom include a far larger proportion of national minorities and women than do other sectors of the work force) by virtue of position in the working class have little "freedom" outside the formalistic and meaningless "right to vote". These workers are physically repressed at the place of work. Objection to dangerous conditions of work, to being paid less than minimum wage, to corruption in the union -- all such "dissent" is not included in their "rights". These workers understand the brutality with which their rights and basic needs under capitalism

are repressed. They also understand the level of privilege that teachers, professors, lawyers, clergy etc. have in being able to more freely express dissent. Workers understand that the closer one gets to the immediate production of profit, the more threatening it is to the bourgeoisie. Factory workers, hospital workers, miners -- all understand that to talk about socialism, workers' control, and a change in the state apparatus is to invite certain repression -- firing, loss of seniority, blacklisting, loss of pension, and physical intimidation. These workers cannot take three days off to march on Washington; these workers cannot circulate petitions or wear armbands; these workers cannot hold public educationals on socialism (or even attend them). These workers understand that any "socialist party" that attempts to organize them on the principles of "free, open, democratic rights" is joshing somebody -- mainly them. These workers can circulate leaflets inside a plant or place of work; these workers can walk out, strike and hold secret educationals; these workers can prepare to defend themselves against physical repression. But only a party that has the capacity to keep their activity secret, that has the capacity to use the leadership of the working class will be a successful revolutionary party.

This is difficult for many professionals and intellectuals to understand and accept. Intellectuals are among the "elect minds" -- not of the "masses". For intellectuals to bow to the determined will of the majority may be seen as a denial of "individual freedom". And this is the difference between a party based on democratic centralism -- a principle of organization which is fundamentally based on proletarian discipline -- and the call for democracy and autonomy in the party -- a principle of organization that suits the individual needs of intellectuals but not the needs of the working class.

The conditions of workers in the proletariat -- the long hours, overtime, difficult and tiring work conditions -- mean that their capacity to understand the full and political dimensions of their exploitation are limited. Thus, militant workers may strike to protest their unsafe working conditions but will not automatically understand the relationship of their grievance to the Vietnamese struggle, the South African struggle and welfare mothers in the USNA. They will not automatically figure out for themselves the historical patterns of class struggle which took Marx years of library work to scientifically understand. The intellectuals can bring to the proletariat the scientific understanding of Marxism-Leninism and the scope of knowledge and analysis of the entire political struggle that will lift up workers' struggles from a simple economic plane to a political plane. The bringing together, then, of the intellectuals' understanding of Marxism-Leninism and world

outlook and the workers' capacity to struggle, organize, and discipline themselves is the fusing of the elements to create a powerful party for all peoples in the USNA oppressed and exploited by capitalism. A party which can unite public school teachers, hospital workers, sanitation workers, and automobile workers will be a powerful party. A party which can not only unite but educate these workers as to what it is they must resolutely struggle towards; how they are to achieve those aims; and who their allies and enemies are -- is a party that will be an invincible force. This party will organize and lead the working class struggle for socialism. THERE IS NO OTHER PARTY FORM THAT HAS EVER LED A SUCCESSFUL STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM IN HUMAN HISTORY. More precisely, this party will lead the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat -- that is, for the complete suppression of the rights of the bourgeoisie to own the wealth which the workers have produced and to use the labor of others to create profits for themselves. The call for the dictatorship of the proletariat is the call that distinguishes a Marxist-Leninist party from other radical parties. A Marxist-Leninist party understands the absolute necessity of curbing the "freedom of exploitation". Only by the resolute and absolute repression of this "freedom" will people have to opportunity to become truly self-fulfilling.

Right now, 1974, in the USNA

It all sound very good, but for those not accustomed to this form of struggle it sounds fairly obtuse and unrealistic. There is no way to "prove" this argument in the form of scholastic and academic debate. This argument is only proved historically; by the development of Marxist-Leninists of the working class who can build and lead such a party. That process is now occurring. Honest and principled intellectuals who came out of the "New Left" movements of the 60's -- who have become increasingly tired of fighting against the war in Vietnam, for tenants' rights, against the junta in Chile, for welfare reform, against repression in the Black community, for free abortion have begun to understand the contradictions of running from one particular struggle to another. At the same time, militant workers who face increased speed-up, more and more dangerous working conditions and a deteriorating standard of living are tired of getting a few cents more that is eaten up by inflation and the sell-out tactics of the business unions. The conditions for the coming together of advanced workers and Marxist-Leninists is not only a real possibility; it is increasingly a reality. In Detroit we have not only found that larger and larger numbers of church people want to know more about Marxism-Leninism; we have found that larger and larger numbers of factory and service workers want to study Marxism-Leninism. We have found that workers we have struggled with to organize food co-operatives, democratize unions, educate on general issues and fight against national and sex discrimination are demanding that the level of struggle go beyond just their particular fight. For we all have increasingly come to see that as long as our struggles remain isolated we are inevitably doomed to defeat -- no matter how sweet the

initial temporary victory. The struggle to maintain a radical church in the inner city of Detroit cannot be separated from the struggle to protect progressive union leadership in a local hospital (and it is not unrelated that the education committee of that hospital meets in that church). Only a Marxist-Leninist party -- the "general staff" of the working class -- can provide a direction and co-ordination to bring together all the disparate struggles of the working class. Only a party based on a scientific understanding of Marxism-Leninism -- where all members understand fundamental principles and openly struggle around political issues facing the party -- is capable of centralizing the direction and force of the working class movement.

The bourgeoisie has a centralized "general staff" -- the state. The bourgeoisie organizes and collectivizes its class interests in the power which it gives the state. Individual bourgeoisie sometimes suffer, and the bourgeoisie does not always agree on tactics or who is to get what (witness Watergate). But it is clear that the only force capable of taking on the state, fighting the centralized forces of the bourgeoisie, is a party that centralizes, co-ordinates and directs the forces of the working class. "Taking state power" or "making a revolution" does not occur in a single day or afternoon. The revolutionary struggle is a struggle within the working class, first and foremost, and then is a struggle against the bourgeoisie. That such a struggle will be an armed conflict one cannot dispute. But it will be a conflict based on massive general strikes, divisions within the armed forces and the police, and the general break-down of all legitimacy of the state as an expression of the "will of the people". Only a party that can act as the legitimate center of the working class, that can create alternative rules, institutions, and culture, can provide the vehicle for the transition into socialism.

Building a party in 1974 in the USNA cannot be separated from the particular contradictions which we face. One contradiction is that process by which the bourgeoisie divides the working class along nationality lines and sex lines. A party that is to lead all workers must have an absolutely correct theoretical position on the nature and forces of the national oppression of the Negro\*\*\*, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Native American and other national minorities in the USNA. In particular, the party must be prepared to struggle for an analysis that understands the oppression of national minorities to be a form of colonial oppression by an imperialist state against a nation of people. Thus, the Negro people have a national identity, an identifiable national territory. The issue is not "racism", per se, but the imperialist oppression of a nation of people whose oppression was justified by bourgeois ideologies of "racial superiority". Likewise, the party must lead the struggle against male supremacy whereby women are oppressed

as workers and whereby the political leadership of women is held back by bourgeois myths around the nature and "place" of women. The dehumanizing property relationships of "romantic love" and status incorporated in the bourgeois ideology of the family must be defeated.

Another contradiction faced by the new party are those forms of party organizing which claim to be Marxist but which have, in reality, abandoned the fundamental principles of Marxism -- the "revisionists". Returning to the analogy of science, we can easily understand how it is that trained doctors continually struggle against "quacks" -- those who rip-off and mislead people in misery because they do not know where else to turn. This same struggle takes particular form in the political struggle against the Communist Party of the USA which although having led several militant historical struggles of the working class, has fundamentally abandoned the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. We need only to look at the slaughter in Chile -- a country where the Communist party accepted the revisionist line of Moscow and the Communist Party of the USA -- to understand what happens to class struggle which is incorrectly led. If the medical profession put forward a "scientific discovery" (like the "peaceful transition to socialism") that was fundamentally wrong, many people might die before that error was corrected. Likewise, the struggle for correct revolutionary politics is a struggle against fundamental errors that have deep and disastrous consequences. It is not "sectarian" to debate and struggle against those who are committing errors which will injure the working class movement. At the same time, when such errors are committed (for example, doctors for years bled ill patients on the theory that blood letting was a cure) one does not abandon the science (no one would argue that because medical authorities once stood for blood letting we should abandon the scientific principles of medicine!). To reject the incorrect line and errors of the Communist Party of the USA is not to reject Marxism-Leninism. Instead, it is to understand the source and nature of those errors and struggle hard to learn from those mistakes.

And what of religious people?

The science of Marxism-Leninism is a materialist science. It fundamentally rejects idealism as a form of explanation for human activity. On that basis, Marxism-Leninism rejects religious reasoning based on idealist premises. Marxist-Leninists do not reject struggle with, and work with, religious people who unite around common goals in the struggle against human oppression and exploitation. Marxist-Leninists do not insist on acceptance of their ideology as a prerequisite for principled struggle. The argument is an historical one -- not one that is resolved in any debate. Marxist-Leninists do not believe that everyone will come to accept Marxism-Leninism as a world view nor is it necessary that everyone do so. Marxists-Leninists

can work with, respect, and disagree in a principled way, with those who continue to hold world views that differ. Marxist-Leninists in principle oppose manipulation, coercion, and distortion as mechanisms of struggle in the working class. The ideological struggle can only be won by up-front, outright, principled debate, discussion and practise. The principled struggle with religious people is an absolutely essential prerequisite for the coalition of Marxist-Leninist and religious forces in a common struggle against impending domestic facism and continued imperialist oppression. The new party will include some people who come to Marxism-Leninism because of their religious ideals around equality and justice. And the new party will form alliances and coalitions with large numbers of religious people who remain convinced of their religious convictions but come to understand that those convictions are not violated by the struggles undertaken by the party.

\* \* \* \* \*

In so short a space it is difficult to convey all the dimensions of the principles involved in the complex question of party-building. Those who are interested are urged to begin the fight for their education. We have to fight all our anti-communism to acknowledge our need to study Marxism-Leninism. After all, we have all studied very hard -- we have BA's, MA's, PhD's, etc etc and yet we understand that all that study didn't really teach us much of anything after all. So why study more? And yet we also understand that all our previous study has been essentially that which the bourgeoisie wanted us to know; not study that would liberate our lives and provide us the principles for struggle. We must unite our practise as fighters for human dignity and growth with a study that allows us to carry that practise to the resolution of political and social revolution.

Suggested study:

V.I. Lenin, What Is To Be Done?

J. Stalin, Foundations of Leninism

K. Marx and F. Engels, The Communist Manifesto

F. Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific

J. Stalin, History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

(All of the above are available from China Books and Periodicals  
2929 twenty-Fourth St. 125 Fifth Ave.  
San Francisco, Ca. 94110 New York, N.Y. 10003  
900 W. Armitage Ave.  
Chicago, Ill. 60614)

## Notes

\* United States of North America (USNA): This term is used to differentiate the multi-national state of North America from the United States of Mexico or United States of Brazil, etc.

\*\* intellectuals: in this article the term is used to apply to "brainworkers" who have received an above average education.

\*\*\* Negro: The Marxist term defining an historically evolved peoples drawn from various African tribes forged into a cultural whole by the experience of slavery and the development of an economic community in the southern party of the USNA.

FRANK JOYCE?

# MOTOR CITY LABOR LEAGUE

## DETROIT, MICHIGAN

April, 1974

Friends and Comrades,

I am sending the enclosed paper, The Political Line of The Motor City Labor League-Marxist Leninist, to you and a number of others with whom I have worked over the years. Since many may be surprised or initially opposed to the thrust of the paper - the struggle to create a new communist party - I hope some discussion of how I came to be persuaded of its correctness will be useful.

The path to Marxism-Leninism is not an easy one. Capitalist ideology is ingrained in us from birth and reinforced daily. It does not relinquish its grip easily. As in everything else, only struggle produces change. Fortunately, the Motor City Labor League provided an arena in which for more than six months questions of importance to the entire proletariat and the left could be debated in a thorough manner.

Despite thinking of myself as a "Marxist" for sometime, I was not in the leadership of the struggle to win MCLL to Marxism-Leninism and the immediate need for a new communist party in particular. Indeed, on some issues I provided some of the most entrenched resistance. For that very reason, I hope my experience will be valuable to others starting from similar positions and assumptions. My primary objective is to persuade you to read the enclosed paper itself.

Like many others, I had realized some time ago that the enormous energy of the blood, sweat, tears and laughter of the struggles of the sixties had vastly more revolutionary potential than they ultimately realized. There were accomplishments, to be sure. The Vietnamese achieved an imperialist military withdrawal on terms favorable to their continued struggle. More women and Negroes and other national minorities achieved access to the petit bourgeoisie and some expansion of democratic rights. The defensive power of trade unions was extended to some - only to be lost as in the case of the farm workers or reduced as in the case of steel workers. In any case, hardly any of us believes that a great deal was gained by way of fundamentally altering the structure of the imperialist system which led to the rebellions of the 60's in the first place. All of us have been involved in endless discussions, lamenting the anarchy, disorganization, fragmentation, confusion and so on, on the left.

Of the four movements of the sixties: civil rights, anti-war, feminism and the extension of trade unions to public employees, I was an early participant in the first two, directly affected by the third and indirectly by the fourth. In 1960, I spontaneously participated in an anti-discrimination demonstration at a segregated swimming pool in suburban Detroit. In 1963 I left my job as a sandblaster in a carbide factory to work full time for the Detroit Education Project, a tutorial program which became associated with the Northern Student Movement (NSM). In 1965, the racial division in the movement having arrived in NSM a year before it did in SNCC, I helped to found People Against Racism (PAR). It lasted until 1969. I became active as a staff member of the Chicago 7 trial following which I traveled to Laos and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. In 1970 I returned fulltime to anti-war work after an unsuccessful attempt to help organize the Motor City Coalition (MCC), a multi-issue effort to unite virtually every Detroit left group. (I had previously been involved in the early days of the Detroit Committee to End the War and helped to initiate the anti-war congressional candidacy of Jim Lafferty in Detroit's 17th district in 1966). I worked on the People's Peace Treaty, May Day, Medical Aid for Indo-China and the Indo-China Peace Campaign. I traveled to Paris and Montreal for meetings with the Vietnamese.

Throughout these experiences, although understanding and advocating the need for "theory", with the exception of the Vietnamese, I was continuously under the influence of one or another anti-communist ideology. The most important can be identified as follows. First, black cultural nationalism. Bill Strickland, Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X and locally Albert Cleague, were all people that I admired, learned from and worked with or for - particularly Bill Strickland and Albert Cleague. From them I was guided into the view that racism, not class, was the fundamental contradiction, at least here in the United States of North America (USNA).

Through this struggle, I met James and Grace Boggs who influenced my ideological development for many years and with whom I taught two courses at the University Center for Adult Education. The Boggs' have had a major influence on both the Detroit and national movement at each of its phases. Almost everyone on the left has been attracted to them for a time. In retrospect, it is clear that their guiding ideological assumptions remain Trotskyist. Their role I think requires some examination because even though they have become more and more isolated they retain influence with some.

They have been primary advocates of the need for "new theory". Like Marcuse and other American exceptionalists, they argue that conditions of advanced capitalist countries, especially those with a long history of "racism" were beyond existing Marxist-Leninist theoretical analysis and principles. It is as appropriate to say here, I think, as anywhere that my

relatively recent encounter with seriously and systematically, as opposed to superficially, studying what Marx, Lenin, Mao, Le Duan and others have actually said is a very surprising experience. It precisely contradicts everything I was ever told about its being "irrelevant", "passe", "dogmatic", "from another century" or inapplicable because "...this isn't Russia at the turn of the century you know."

The Boggs' never suggested that I do any rigorous study of Marx, Lenin or, for that matter, Trotsky. But they were attractive, like Marcuse who I read and was influenced by, because they were hyper-critical of the CPUSA and the SWP. And almost from the very beginning I had concluded that those two organizations whose practice I watched in both the civil rights and anti-war movements were conservative, sterile, manipulative, bickering and vacillating. I perceived them as tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee.

Ultimately, I concluded that the Boggs' were hyper-critical of everything and that like Marcuse they led at worst to total defeatism and at best to a moral politics of protesting this or that aspect of oppression and exploitation because it is the right thing to do until a theory comes along. (I am indebted to Danny Schecter for the insight about Marcuse and defeatism, for which I will always be grateful). Even following my break with the Boggs! however, I continued to be persuaded that we needed at least to revise Marx and Lenin rather than apply it or quite possibly to invent a new theory altogether to guide revolutionary struggle in the USNA.

Without any thorough examination and repudiation of the Boggs' views I joined in 1970 with the tide of what passed for Marxism-Leninism of the League of Revolutionary Black workers and the Motor City Coalition, some members of which went on to found MCLL. Following the dissolution of MCC, I helped to found the Alliance, a multi-issue group, continued anti-war work and, in the spring of 1971, joined MCLL.

Like many others, frustrated with the fragmentation and drift of the left I was persuaded that some kind of "party" was needed and so pursued many avenues under the name of a Marxist-Leninist pre-party. That aspect of my ideological development can best be understood by reading the enclosed paper, the transcript of the December, 1973 Control, Conflict and Change (CCC) session on FINALLY GOT THE NEWS in which the League of Revolutionary Black Workers is examined and the MCLL 1972 split papers.

As the enclosed paper explains, that split eliminated the most thoroughly bourgeois elements (Justin Ravitz, Ken Cockrel, Sheila Murphy and Jack Russell) from our ranks and brought us to the threshold of the struggle toward a new anti-revisionist multi-national communist party. In that struggle the following questions, though by no means the only ones, were most important and difficult: the role of idealism; the primacy of the

struggle against revisionism and its relationship to social imperialism; the relationship of the party to the masses; the relationship of the national liberation struggles to party building; and racism and the national question. I hope some brief exposition on each will be useful and guide people toward a reading of the paper and beyond to the serious study of the essential works of Marxism-Leninism.

There might seem to be a paradox in regarding ideology as primary and pressing for theoretical struggle as I have and holding that idealism is a formidable obstacle to revolution, especially in the conditions of our time and place. But of course it is not a paradox. Let me try to explain. Idealism is directly linked to the call for "new theory" and re-emergence of anarcho-syndicalism, economism and even Narodnikism (the SLA and Weatherman) in part in direct response to the revisionism/conservatism of the soviet oriented parties. In Italy and the USNA, among other places, we have seen the pattern develop. Here, Marcuse, Stanley Aronowitz, Staughton Lynd and the force around Liberation and Telos magazines are the most influential proponents of the view that capitalism is essentially a state of mind in the heads of the working class. They say our task therefore is to concentrate on the super-structure, or consciousness-raising and improving our communications technique. What we say is not nearly so important as whether the layout is visually attractive or whether we have put it on a video tape. This view leads directly to trying to organize people primarily on their emotional attachments, sexual relationship and psychological state; thus repeatedly cast political struggle into the bourgeoisie bog of personality and power clashes. When presented as a "coherent" political position it attacks Marxism-Leninism as "old", "dogmatic" and inappropriate to our conditions and then invariably goes on to present exactly the same "fresh" new ideas as were attacked and defeated by Lenin when they were put forth by Bernstein, Martov, Luxemborg, Kautsky, Trotsky and others.

I am indebted to Arthur Kinoy for pointing out the following crucial section of Marx's German ideology to my attention with regard to this point. A portion is as follows:

Since the Young Hegelians consider conceptions, thoughts, ideas, in fact all the products of consciousness, to which they attribute an independent existence, as the real chains of men (just as the old hegelians declared them the true bonds of human society) it is evident that the Young Hegelians have to fight only against the illusions of consciousness...the Young Hegelians logically put to men the moral postulate of exchanging their present consciousness and thus of removing their limitations. This demand to change consciousness amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way, i.e. to recognize it by means of another interpretation. The Young Hegelian ideologists, in spite of their allegedly "world shattering" statements,

are the staunchest conservatives." (The German Ideology, New World Paperback, page 41)

Again and again, this position argues that "mass consciousness" is not yet ready for a party and that yet another magazine, or demonstration, or movie or video-tape must be made which will make it possible. At best, this view leads to precisely the situation we now face: a ruling class which is overexposed and under-opposed. Idealists, viewing the world as they do can at best only lead people to call themselves Marxist-Leninists because of their "commitment" to Marxism-Leninism as "theory" or a "tool" but who oppose the most rapid possible consolidation into its organizational form - a communist party. That is opportunism. For, as Lenin says at the conclusion of One Step Forward, Two Steps Back:

"In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organization. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeoisie world, ground down by the forced labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the 'lower depths' of utter destitution, savagery and degeneration (there were 14 homicides in Detroit last WEEK), the proletariat can and inevitably will become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organization, which welds millions of toilers into an army of the working class. Neither the senile rule of the Russian autocracy nor the senescent rule of international capital will be able to withstand this army. It will more and more firmly close its ranks, in spite of all zigzags and backward steps, in spite of the opportunist phrase mongerings of the Girodnists of present Social-Democracy, in spite of the self satisfied exaltation of the retrograde circle spirit, and in spite of the tinsel and fuss of intellectualist anarchism."  
(SWI, 446)

The struggle against idealism, leads directly to the struggle against revisionism and social imperialism. This was for me a difficult point. Why, I wondered, must we fight USNA imperialism AND Soviet Imperialism at the same time? Wouldn't it just be easier to just conclude that because the Soviet Union has helped the Vietnamese they were allies despite Brezhnev, Pepsi-Cola and the Chase Manhattan bank, and that anyone who said otherwise was "dividing the socialist camp?"

Perhaps it would be easier in the short run - but like any other opportunist position, it would be a disaster in the long run. Simply stated, revisionism is capitalism masquerading as Communism. And revisionism in state power, especially one as large, resourceful and global as the USSR IS social imperialism and one isn't therefore taking on TWO enemies but only ONE - Imperialism. To argue otherwise is analagous to arguing that in the struggle against capitalism one should only

attack ~~labor bureaucrats in~~ General Motors and not the UAW. But the analogy is a useful one because what is precisely insidious is that the UAW like the Communist Party of the Soviet Union purports to represent the working class in the class struggle - and indeed some defense against the bourgeoisie in acquiring better terms for the sale of its labor power is provided - but ultimately the relationship between the two perpetuates the very system of exploitation itself. So does the conflict-cooperation between the ruling classes of the USSR and the USNA.

Let me retrace those steps. From its inception, Marxism was attacked as wrong, obsolete, dogmatic and so on. That is to be expected of a revolutionary ideology since there is a class struggle. One of the methods of attack was to adopt the language of Marxism, while gutting it of its revolutionary substance. "Legal Marxists" and Economists were prominent in Russia at the turn of the century just as they are increasingly prominent in the USNA today. As the Bolshevik History, Short Course says: "The Economists no longer dared openly to contest the need for a political party of the working class." (History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Bolshevik, 1939 Edition, page 35)

Today's USNA "Marxists" range all the way from Richard Goodwin, the former Kennedy speech-writer and democratic party reformer, to NAM ideologues Ackerman and Boyte who take pains to tell us that they accept some of what Marx and/or Lenin and/or Mao and other scientific socialists have said. (Beware of people who call themselves Marxists without calling themselves Leninists. They generally agree that Marx was correct in discovering some casual relationship between wealth and poverty but with little else.)

The theory of Marxism-Leninism itself, the legal Marxists and economists argue, must be revised rather than applied. It is defective, they say, by virtue of its age, or country of national origin, although they concede it has done the Vietnamese and others some good and has some useful concepts which we can use as "tools." Some argue that we need an "American" or "Yankee-Doodle" Marxism or socialism, thus perpetuating the very national chauvinism which they claim to oppose when it results in support for My Lai or B-52 raids on Hanoi.

These views share a rejection of Marxism-Leninism as a Science of revolution. They capitulate completely to the bourgeois view that you can't be "scientific" about human beings and human society. (This does not, of course, prevent many such ideologues from accepting titles such as political or social scientist when conferred by capitalist universities). To paraphrase Lenin, no one would argue that we should reject the Arabic number system because of its origins; but there are those who hold that we should reject Marxism-Leninism

because Marx, Engels, Stalin and others were "white" or because socialist revolution was made in China which has many differences from the USNA which proves that it can't succeed here. (Needless to say, Mao Tse Tung and other Chinese leaders applied the science to conditions in China quite different than those in Russia. What if they had rejected it as inapplicable to China's conditions, time and place. The same can be said for the Vietnamese in their struggle against French, Japanese and USNA imperialism and so on.)

In the final analysis, such a position is virtually that of religion. (As near as I can tell the main purpose of the Reader's Digest, recently joined by Melvin Laird, is to publish periodic articles from bourgeoisie physicists about how there is a "God" even though we understand more and more about the material phenomenon of the universe all the time.) Obviously, it is useful to capitalists to promote the view that existing relations of exploitation and oppression are divinely ordained or at least, unlike numbers and atoms and chemicals, sufficiently impossible to understand for us to do anything about them. We can harness the atom but we can't defeat the ruling class. (Even the capitalist revolution had to defeat all sorts of religious ideas and institutions as in the Scopes trial or the struggle to establish compulsory secular education for the proletariat.) It is especially useful to the bourgeoisie, of course, if people claiming to be revolutionaries proclaim this world view from the roof tops and argue that attempts to apply the science of Marxism-Leninism are dogmatic, mechanical, inhumane and so on.

But Chile is only the most recent example of the truth that you cannot defeat the ruling class by adopting its methods and ideology. Either something opposes the capitalist world view or it doesn't. And we have seen over and over again that when the spontaneous mass movement, which results inevitably from the fact of class conflict, unites with pseudo-revolutionary ideology and organization such as that of the Trotskyists and the CPUSA, the result is fragmentation, demoralization and defeat. The proletariat comes to the conclusions, as did tens of thousands of people in the 1960's that if the CPUSA represents Marxism-Leninism then we might just as well have the out and out reformism of McGovern - or turn away from politics altogether, or even go with the fascism of George Wallace.

As Lenin makes clear in What is To Be Done and One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, the struggle against revisionism is particularly important at the time of early party building. That is when "shades of difference" and the lines of demarcation, which will make real vs. paper unity possible, must be drawn. Thus sorting out who is using Marxism-Leninism as a guide to revolutionary action and who is using it to strengthen the bourgeoisie is then CENTRAL to the task of building and guiding the party. We must therefore oppose those who

characterize ideological discussion as navel gazing or seeing how many angels can dance on the head of a pin - to do otherwise is to fail to break with the politics of the sixties and thus to repeat them.

In Detroit it is easy to see the effects of the CPUSA concretely. Their political line reaches into the UAW, the Mayor, and several judgeships. Those who would dismiss the primacy of the struggle against revisionism because the CPUSA is "ineffectual" imperil the proletariat thereby. So-called ineffectual Marxism-Leninism means precisely powerful Imperialism since, as far as I know, no one has put forward a revolutionary theory which opposes capitalism other than Marxism-Leninism. Therefore its weakness is capitalism's strength and we must make co-equal, with other primary objectives, the struggle against the revising of Marx and Lenin into a harmless pseudo opponent of capitalism.

Particularly for those of us with a long history in the anti-war movement, the relationship between the struggle for a new communist party and the struggle to support national liberation struggles is important and often difficult. For all their attempts to distinguish themselves from the "liberals" who believe that Viet Nam was an "accident" of U.S. foreign policy, most anti-war activists have moved toward one form of reformist activity or another. That is, they believe either that the war is "over" or that anti-war work must be co-equal to or more important than the building of an anti-revisionist communist party. Essentially, both still believe that Viet Nam and other instances of USNA foreign aggression and exploitation are policies of U.S. imperialism which, when they have been sufficiently changed by national liberation victories and their USNA support, movements, will make a party possible.

This point is discussed in considerable detail in the enclosed paper, particularly in the quotations from Lenin's polemic against Kautsky, and was crucial in my own development. What I wish to stress here is that to say that the USNA systematically exploits - and always has - other nations is NOT to understand the scientific nature of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism. In fact, often with the best of intentions and frequently with the worst as well, such a position dooms us to a permanent situation of pre-parties and pre-conditions until "conditions" meaning more Viet Nam-like setbacks for imperialism are right to launch a party.

The fact is, I am persuaded, that the need for a party to lead the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie does NOT derive from the condition of strength or weakness of any given imperialist power at any given moment. Conditions, I believe, are ripe for a new party in the USNA but the NEED for a party derives from the basic fact of class struggle which is universal. Lenin did not wait for the Russian bourgeoisie to

suffer massive losses in World War I to start the Bolshevik Party. Indeed the present condition of the anti-war movement, confined as it is essentially to the United Campaign of Congressional lobbying of IPC and other groups, itself is one of the major arguments for the necessity of a party which can bring a scientific and disciplined theory and practice to support for national liberation struggles.

This point is important because there are those who argue that to join the struggle for the immediate creation of an anti-revisionist multi-national communist party is to "abandon" the Vietnamese, Angolans, Chileans and so on. Some argue that to accept the Vietnamese struggle as a major or even the "focal point" of worldwide class at present is an argument against the party. (In fact, much of this argument is based in the rankest hypocrisy. Many of those who argue that devoting ourselves to the primary task of party building is abandoning the support of national liberation struggles will find some other basis of opposition as soon as the Thieu government falls.)

Indeed, since the publication of the enclosed Political Line of the Motor City Labor League, M-L, I have heard that rumors are circulating to the effect that I have been involved in denunciation of and physical attacks on the Vietnamese. Nothing could be farther from the truth. My respect and admiration for the Vietnamese remains boundless. Without their independence from the peaceful transition line of the Soviet Union the entire world struggle would have been set back immeasurably. Without their anti-revisionist communist leadership and the benefit of limited direct contact with them, I would long ago have joined the ranks of those who have rejected Marxism-Leninism altogether in the process of instinctively rejecting the SWP and the CPUSA.

But it is clear to me that the highest form of proletarian internationalism and support for national liberation struggles is attainable not through some vague "international solidarity" or abandoning the class struggle within the USNA but only through the struggle of a vanguard party equipped with the theory and organization of scientific socialism. We have had enough of waiting for the Vietnamese or anyone else to create enough so-called splits in the ruling class to make USNA struggle possible. Proletarian Internationalism in the USNA working class no more derives spontaneously from the communist-lead victories of the Vietnamese, than does class consciousness from a wildcat strike. It must be built as only a movement lead by a communist party can do. How else have the Vietnamese successfully created the mass awareness which distinguishes the "American people" from the American government?

That is also especially important in terms of the relationship between the building of the party and the masses.

From the Narodniks to the economists to the anarcho-syndicalists to the trotskyists, the opponents of communist parties have always sought to cloak themselves as the defenders of the "masses" (even if they themselves only have five members). Names such as "From the Ground Up", the "People's Party", "From the Masses to the Masses" and "A Mass Party of the People" reveal that the trend continues.

Of course the masses make history. Lenin and Plekhanov were completely correct in demolishing the view of the Narodniks and others that only a few great individuals make history. But whether the masses make revolutionary history or not is a function of whether a Marxist-Leninist party has successfully applied Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of its time and place so that the spontaneous mass movement is united with revolutionary theory and organization as opposed to reformist or reactionary theory and organization. Certainly, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the only dictatorship of the majority, can only be made with the participation and support of the masses. But that participation is hardly the result of calling ourselves the "People's" this or the "masses" that.

It is also true, and much is made of it by some opponents of a new communist party, that there is a large "gap" between the "left" and the "people" or the "masses." They contend that is another insufficiently developed "condition." (Another side of this position is the suddenly discovered "condition," by those who have opposed the immediate creation of a party that their "mass work" has succeeded and that therefore the "conditions" are now ripe.)

Lenin discusses this position throughout What is To Be Done. There is, of course, a necessary "gap" between revolutionaries and the proletariat. We have 70 years and more of non-revolutionary class struggle of all sorts to illustrate the truth that such struggle in and of itself does NOT spontaneously result in class consciousness and revolutionary struggle. In addition we are paying a tremendous price for revisionism. The CPUSA and the SWP not only failed throughout years and years of intense spontaneous motion to overcome the anti-communism of hundreds of thousands with whom they came in contact, including myself. For many, they increased it. Of the many errors made there are two I think especially important.

First, the leadership of the spontaneous movements of the 1960's were either avowedly reformist OR revisionist, tailist, spontaneous, anarchist and anti-proletarian in outlook. There was NO gap in consciousness, strategy or theory in what we espoused and thus nothing to really distinguish revolutionary alternative from a reformist one. And if George McGovern or Abbie Hoffman or the Soviet Union are all "socialist" or the alternative to the present system, why bother?

Most of the leadership did not come from the most oppressed and exploited sectors of the proletariat. Women, national minorities and industrial workers were excluded by the line and style of the "movement". Even those who did participate often used the movement to advance their own individual distance from the proletariat, rather than uniting with it, by joining the petit bourgeoisie as politicians, government bureaucrats, media personalities, best selling authors and so on.

No consistent anti-capitalist world view was put forth with the force, enthusiasm, sophistication and resources that a party guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism can command. The left was seen, justifiably, by the proletariat as at best different in degree but not in kind from reformist trade union politics. The failure to defeat or even repudiate the foolishness of Yippeism and the terrorism of Weathermen (to whom I, like many others, was attracted and defended) is only one example. The political disputes of the day were always in terms of tactics such as civil disobedience vs "peaceful" legal or single issue versus multi-issue.

Secondly and equally important, the "left" of the 1960's showed little capacity to defend itself from even its declared enemies and other adversaries. It thus demonstrated little potential for victory. This may be a difficult proposition to grasp. Let me approach it this way.

Perhaps the single most perplexing aspect of the position of those arguing for a "Mass" versus a "Leninist" party is the view that because we live under a "democracy" rather than under an autocratic "Czar" we needn't concern ourselves with the state and thus with clandestine apparatus, professional revolutionaries and training in defending the party and the movement from the political police. Conditions here are different they say.

Yet the very same people who take this position have been some of those most involved and shocked by the revelations of Watergate, the Pentagon Papers, the Media, FBI papers, the Chicago 7 trial, the assassination of Fred Hampton, the Huston plan, the Gainesville 8 and so on and on, concerning the direct intervention of the political police in the movement. They are the first to lament the fact that even reformist and militant leadership has been systematically killed, exiled or driven into ineffectual underground survival. In its funding appeals, for example, RESIST is forced to extoll the virtues of the "invisibility" of the movement (while opposing democratic centralist organizations as "elitist").

The fact is, whether people like to acknowledge the causal connection or not, in the absence of a revolutionary

party, the political police have been quite successful in diverting potentially revolutionary mass movements into what is at best reformist activity. The Black Panther Party, for example, is reduced to a virtual black Salvation Army which runs candidates for local office. (If ever there was an example of the disaster of trying to fight massive state attack with guidance from the revisionist CPUSA, it is the BPP). The anti-war movement, having contributed much to a peace agreement favorable to the Vietnamese revolution, now finds itself with only a handful of forces, most morally motivated, to agitate with congressmen, supreme court justices and former secretaries of defense for its enforcement and implementation. (With some success I might add but that is not the issue here). Many "leaders" have been driven into cynicism, apathy, religion and other forms of dropping out of politics altogether.

Many of those that remain still argue that it is not necessary to have a theory of the state and its strategies of repressing and diverting mass movements. But the present situation did not fall from the sky. Either people are pleased with it, in which case they should simply declare themselves as reformists or they are despite abundant evidence overwhelmingly naive.

The gap between revolutionaries and the proletariat will remain large as long as revolutionaries demonstrate no ability to protect our ideology, organization and cadre from the inevitable attacks of the ruling class.

The opponents of a new anti-revisionist, multi-national Communist party also define themselves as the defenders of "democracy". They attack communist parties as "elitist" and undemocratic. So did Lenin's adversaries 70 years ago. He was completely correct, I am persuaded in arguing that serious struggle against capitalism, required workers' organizations and revolutionary organizations. He said,

I assert: (1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organization of leaders maintaining continuity; (2) that the broader the popular mass draw spontaneously into the struggle, which forms the basis of the movement and participates in it, the more urgent the need for such an organization must be (for it is much easier for all sorts of demagogues to sidetrack the more backward sections of the masses); (3) that such an organization must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity; (4) that in an autocratic state, the more we confine the membership of such an organization to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will

it be to unearth the organization; and (5) the greater will be the number of people from the working class and from the other social classes who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it.  
(SW, Vol. I)

There is hardly space here, in an already very long letter for a detailed discussion of the seeming paradox of the relationship between confining party membership to achieve greater participation in the struggle. Nor is there space for a detailed discussion of the theory of democratic centralism. But the following points must be made.

If bourgeois democracy is the alternative to democratic centralism as I believe it is, it does not produce democracy. Compared to feudalism, of course bourgeois democracy is an improvement. But none of us argues that the present dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (or some other term if you prefer) which prevails in the USNA is actually democracy. That much may be self evident. But the "new left" has produced virtually no democracy either (except, that is, to reproduce bourgeois democracy).

SDS was not democratic, PCPJ and NPAC were not democratic. The list could go on. Indeed the ideology of "participatory democracy" appears at one and the same to have been a haven of national chauvinism, male supremacy and the dictatorship of the petit bourgeoisie which created elites which then naturally enough didn't have the authority or power to combat the overwhelming individualism and anarchy within our ranks. (There is much defensiveness in exchanges in the Guardian and elsewhere about not using people's class origins and background against them. People take such things very personally which misses the point. Petit bourgeois origins are not themselves necessarily "fatal" or permanent. The question is whether or not one is perpetuating the politics consistent with them or repudiating them). The point is that there is about as much relationship between the rhetoric of "democracy and its reality" for a "new left" participatory democrat as there is for a U.S. Senator (who also of course claims to represent the masses).

On the other side, I believe that even though we have understood and practiced it imperfectly at best, the effort to implement democratic centralism within MCLL as we understood it at various stages of our development has made it far and away more democratic than any other organization in which I have participated over the years.

Finally, many people remember me or became acquainted with me through the struggle against "racism". It is very clear that People Against Racism (PAR) dissolved in 1969 precisely because the "ideology" of "anti-racism" - and I would add the corresponding ideology of "black nationalism" -

had run its course as a guide to action. It did not tell us what to do either to improve the objective situation of oppressed and exploited people of color or to defeat the prejudice, white chauvinism and bigotry we encountered amongst anglo-americans. Nor did it provide us with the means to struggle against the global exploitation which robs us all. It separated us organizationally for years from national minorities thus recreating the very division we said we wanted to overcome.

The position in the enclosed paper regarding the national question, guided by the theoretical insight of the Communist League's major work on the Negro Nation, is a giant step in extricating us from that impasse. It is the only thing I have read which seems to follow from principles of national self determination and proletarian internationalism as set forth by Marx, Lenin, Stalin, other Marxist-Leninists and the position of the Third International. That the concept of the Negro Nation seems at first as alien as it does, attests mostly to our unfamiliarity with the science of Marxism-Leninism and our remaining white chauvinism. (For example, we accept it as natural that other countries should be named after the dominant national group even though there are minorities.)

Although the sequence of our paper, owing to the order in which the MCLL convention considered the questions gives it the appearance of an "afterthought", the position was the subject of considerable organizational discussion prior to and throughout the convention process. It is a position integral to any party building strategy. The USNA party must be multi-national. No all-anglo party can pretend to be guided by revolutionary theory let alone carrying on revolutionary practice. What kind of "revolutionary" party, after all, can fail to attract the people that everyone agrees are especially oppressed and exploited? The USNA is truly a "prisoner of nations". Puerto Rico is only the most obvious example of that reality. It can also be seen in every work place and neighborhood where the battle between every ethnic and "racial" group is a constant one. Only a proper understanding of Marxism-Leninism can extricate us from the prison.

Only a party in which the leadership of women is primary can truly be revolutionary as well. Once again the sequence of the paper and for that matter this letter makes the question appear less central than it was in the course of our debates. It is a major focus of our study and our practice.

Despite the length, these arguments are obviously limited. Their objective is to urge you to study the enclosed paper closely and hopefully to encourage you to even more serious study of the science of revolution - Marxism-Leninism. Study does not have a good reputation on the left.

For one thing, it requires considerable discipline and contradicts the notion that we already know everything we need to know to change USNA society. For another, the anti-communists, especially the revisionists, have succeeded in equating study with ineffectual action or no action at all. They have persuaded many that study equals retreat and is by definition removed from practice.

In the first place this leads to a dichotomy we would never make otherwise. If we ran into an old friend and asked what are you doing? and the response was "studying" auto mechanics, even if she or he had been tinkering with cars for years, we wouldn't necessarily say, "Well that's ridiculous, why don't you just fix cars." We would be more inclined to conclude that they had discovered the limits of practice. And if we said, will you fix my transmission?, we would be properly relieved if the reply was, "Not until after I've finished the semester or book or whatever on transmissions." And if the person finished the auto mechanics school, we also wouldn't have any difficulty acknowledging the graduate as an "advanced" mechanic to whom we would prefer to turn. Nor would we assume that upon graduation the person would stop fixing cars. Quite the contrary.

Imperialism does not, as should be clear by now "wither away". Marx never said it would. If we are dissatisfied with the present state of the left, as I know most of us are, and if we acknowledge that capitalism is irreformable and irredeemable, as I presume most of us do, then we must repudiate that past theory and practice which has led us to this point. We cannot make things different by keeping them the same.

The Political Line of the Motor City Labor League, M-L represents a giant step for us in that direction. It would not have been possible without the leadership of the Communist League and I am including a copy of their Party Call-Marxist-Leninist Unite. I am confident many questions will be answered and that those that remain - as many must - will be qualitatively different than those around which we have struggled in the past.

I look forward to getting your reactions, including your disagreements. Struggle is the only way anything changes. I am now working full-time days, so it is best to write, or to call evenings or week-ends.

BUILD A MULTI-NATIONAL ANTI-REVISIONIST COMMUNIST PARTY

In the Struggle,

Comments by Carl Marzani and John French

\*\*\* \*\*

To: Frank Joyce and the Motor City Labor League

From: Carl Marzani

Dear Comrades,

This is a personal reaction to your memo to the Interim Committee on the Proposed Statement of Agreement. It is a first draft, as it comes off the typewriter, so it is bound to be a little repetitious and helter skelter.

The first and most important point to be made is that the Proposed Statement is a series of compromises: i.e. the minimum area of agreement of many disparate personalities and groups which stretch all the way from people with a Marxist-Leninist orientation to people with a communal, anti-political, non-Marxist orientation who nevertheless would like to see a different kind of society and are ready to work with others who also want a different kind of society. What that kind of society would be is difficult to define--the only agreement possible among these groups is that it would be a democratic, open society without a profit system and where individuals are more important than things.

In-trying to establish a mass party of the people, we all have repeatedly emphasized that we all must "agree to disagree," that is that we transcend our own specific theories and ideas of what has caused the present mess in our society and what to do about it, in favor of a broad, and THEREBY NECESSARILY VAGUE CONSENSUS of causation which must be sufficiently clear to insure action. We believe that in the process of action, theories will be clarified and sharpened and gain greater and greater agreement. This is not an anti-theoretical position. On the contrary. The people who have come together, for example, are all vigorous anti-capitalists with a lot of knowledge and reasons for their positions. Moreover the idea of getting together to change the system on a basis of "agreeing to disagree" is itself a theory, a political theory of action as to how the present fragmentation of the left in America can be overcome.

This political theory is analogous to the armed, military theory of the Guevarists: the so-called "foco" theory of armed struggle, which says that any tiny group can start shooting and out of that armed struggle create a class consciousness. I think that theory is erroneous for armed struggle, but the political theory may turn out to be correct. The point is: we are operating on a theory.

"Agreeing to disagree" is a vague anti-theory position slogan; purposely so. If we sharpen it too much, we will get caught in the disagreements. Hence the minimum program. Let me give an example. Your memo objects that there is no mention of "revolutionary theory". At the meeting where the minimum program was drawn up, Frank raised this point and I shared his feeling and supported him. For a variety of reasons, the majority there rejected his proposal, and we acquiesced in good grace. I was not convinced and neither was Frank by the arguments advanced but the rest were and so it was. The point is, had we stuck to our convictions there may not have been a minimum program. The decision always is, in such matters, whether the overall program is good enough, acceptable enough to override whatever disagreement (and conviction) we have on any specific point.

Here a paranthesis. All the people involved in organizing the mass party are individuals who have thought deeply about the various problems, have had experience and have strong convictions. If they didn't they wouldn't be so involved. Such people are not going to change their minds lightly, and only rarely because of arguments. They have to see in life, in the process of developing, where their ideas were wrong--if they were. Therefore; compromise among ourselves is the very essence of the problem. Incidentally, I don't mean that a change of mind can never take place: one of the members of the NIPC, for example, who originally felt very strongly that the party should have

IF  
It's  
Urgent  
I want  
"insure"  
the  
action  
we  
need

No.

the name socialist in it, said at this meeting that he/she had changed his/her mind as he/she had listened to the various arguments against such use.

Since I think this problem of "socialism" is a very key one in our development of a party, and since you put it "first, though not necessarily the most important", let me recapitulate some of the arguments. Since the minimum program is firmly, explicitly, and sharply anti-capitalist it cannot be said that the non-use of the word "socialist" either misleads the masses or imprisons us in the terminology of a capitalist culture. The example of Harrington is given, that we let them usurp the word "socialist". We don't let them do anything of the sort: they took it, and we all know that his movement is not "socialist", he says so, but rather the left wing of the democratic party. It's a demagogic trick, like Hitler using the word socialist in National German Socialist Workers Party, or the radical socialist party in France--which is neither radical nor socialist.

But How To Use?

The point is that the word "socialist" is identified both in the popular mind and in academic circles with existing socialist regimes and parties, so we would be inevitably compared with them and would find ourselves busy differentiating ourselves from them, apologizing for them or attacking them or what have you. We are anti-capitalist, society. We want to get rid of the corporations, the culture, the politics of present American their jobs, their culture, their education. What we want is people's control of take will develop in the process. There is nothing hypocritical about this; there is nothing defensive; there is nothing stultifying. *Yes there is, yes there is, yes there is.*

The same argument applies to "revolutionary party", "democratic centralism" etc. These are all phrases which have a long history and represent specific forms with which many of us, who went through them, now disagree. If you push for them, you break the alliance. Take democratic centralism. *What does centralism mean?* Since democracy means majority rule, and since we agree with that definition, what does centralism bring? Well I'll tell you what it has brought. It has brought the hierarchy of the lesser body being subordinated to the higher body, even though the overwhelming majority of the lesser body disagrees with the higher body. It has led to the CP structure. *Precisely - that's why the new party must be anti-centralism!*

We talk of participatory democracy and we will have to clarify that and we can't do that except pari passu as we experience it--as we go along. Many of us have some more, or less clear ideas as to what we mean, but until put in practice, until there are many, many examples all over the country we will not be able to define it sharply. In the Spanish Civil War, the Durruti column (anarchist) had participatory democracy. The column of 6,000 men was divided into centurias of 100 men and these centurias would get together in groups of 3, 8 etc. whatever was necessary for a specific operation. There was nothing, no hierarchy, between the centurias and the column headquarters.

*Doesn't he think we're in a combat situation?*  
As it turned out, at close quarters, and in my opinion, this structure was too loose for for wartime decisions and actions. But it might very well have functioned splendidly in a peacetime environment. We are now talking about groups of 100, autonomous with- in certain limits, with no hierarchy between them and the top. Now, I suspect that there will be an administrative structure develop if the party ends up in the hundreds of thousands--but we can see to it that these administrators are the servants of the clubs at the bottom and not their masters, so that each member of the party relates to the centers of power, his own local and the national headquarters. Again; this is something that we will learn more about as we work. And as we learn more about our own country as Lynd's article does in the LIBERATION issue, about the United Labor Party in Akron (1946-1952). An excellent article and stimulating as hell.

If we were to take that memo literally, the place for the Motor City Labor League is with the GUARDIAN attempt to form a new communist party without the faults of the old. I don't think they can do it; I think it will be a narrow sectarian party which will

ave all the right Marxist and class struggle concepts and be isolated from the mass of the American people as the CP, the Trotskyists, PLP etc. *> We don't know the facts of our practice - of CL's, etc*

I don't think that's the place for the Motor City Labor League. It belongs in the mainstream of the struggle, bringing its rich practical experience into a mass party, bringing its theoretical integrity to maintain a revolutionary line and correcting reformist trends. We need to wipe out from our minds, in relation to one another, a sense of hostility and class struggle: so and so is a petty bourgeois; so and so is a left wing infantalist etc. We must trust each other politically and intellectually, feel the sense of brotherhood and sisterhood which overcomes and by passes temporary or secondary differences, in every way act as comrades and bring back to that word the sweetness and the passion which makes the struggle against oppression the only meaningful thing on earth.

*Don't believe in internal struggle against petty bourgeois elements*

\*\*\*

Response to articles in Liberation from John French, New American Movement, Amherst, Mass.

Comrades in struggle,

It was good to hear about the initiative being taken by Arthur Kinoy and others in the group working towards a "mass party of the people." The low level of organization and struggle on the left at present is recognized by all and dialogue and strategic discussion is, above all, needed. For this reason I would like to respond to some aspects of Kinoy's paper as printed in Liberation, bearing in mind by agreement with much of what is said, and my conviction of the importance of comradely criticism.

There is, I think, a real problem with the formulation given to the party. It is defined as "alliance of all oppressed classes, nations, groups of people." (1) First

April 14, 1974

Dear Comrades,

The secretaries of the work committees and the central committee have decided the first step in the development of the work committees. This will be to gather information on the organizing work that all cadre are doing and coordinate that into a reporting system. This letter is the beginning of this process and below outlines three areas which require clarity to begin: reasons for the initial work reports, reasons for the continuing process of reporting, suggested elements of the work reports.

#### Why the initial work reports?

1. The work reports bring together information for the CC and cadre about where cadre are placed within the class (work, community).
2. These reports aid in the development of clarity for individual cadre as they look critically at their practice over the last period, examine successes and failures, and help us begin to understand and implement criticism-self-criticism.
3. The work committees will be the collective process for learning from our history and moving to implement the political line in all our work once the information is gathered from the work reports.
4. The information provided in the reports, which demonstrate how cadre are grounded in the class and what they've learned, will facilitate and link the CC's leadership in implementing the political line of the MCLL.
5. Through writing the initial report the work committee will further (than we have in the past) assess consciousness of the class and those that cadre work with.

#### Reasons for the Continuing Process of Reporting

1. The reports will provide clarity for the CC in implementing the political line through the information gathered on a regular basis from all cadre.
2. The reports aid in developing clarity for cadre in understanding their practice and the development of the fractional method of work.
3. The gathering of information lays the foundation for the process of criticism-self-criticism in relation to the political line, and the correction of errors.
4. The process of reporting develops and collectivizes the ability of cadre to assess the movement and consciousness of the class and where they work, with this ability we will be better able to develop correct strategy and tactics to apply in our work.
5. The report system will be important in the strengthening of democratic-centralism in implementation of the political line.
6. The continuing process of work reports and their importance will be better clarified and understood in the process of collective struggle once the work committees begin to meet.

#### Suggested Elements of the Work Reports

1. General information about the work place - size, location, products produced, materials used, who owns it, strategic importance, etc.
2. General information about the work force - size, age, sex, national make-up, where folks live, etc.
3. History of struggles and movements within the particular workplace - unions, unionization, walkouts, strikes, newsletters, caucuses, social organizations

Suggested Elements of the Work Reports (continued)

4. Influence of other left (Trotskyist, CPUSA, Farmworkers, etc.) and communist groups - cadre, literature, caucuses or formations
5. What has been your strategy where you work before the development of the MCLL political line?
  - a. What is the political and personal base you have developed with co-workers?
  - b. To what extent are you exposed or secure politically?
  - c. What tactics have you used in union meetings or caucus meetings (if you have one)?
  - d. What literature or leaflets have you distributed at the work place? - how, to whom, how regularly, which literature
6. Assess democratic or progressive forces or individuals at the place of work - people who have shown and/or are open to strong anti-capitalist and/or socialist politics, who show collective work methods, progressive stands on the national question, women, Watergate, Vietnam, and other important issues
7. Evaluate the positive and negative aspects of your previous strategy of organizing at the workplace.
8. List your present assignments and groups or activities you relate to - how consistently?

We have no set time limit for the submitting of these reports to the work committee secretaries. This is because study is our top priority and we can't let that get drowned by our practical work. We would like to set a target of two weeks, but cadre cannot sacrifice study to meet this target.

We suggest that the initial work reports be about 1000-1500 words (one single spaced typed page is about 600-650 words). Although there's lots of information to cover we must strive to be clear and concise. Some will have a little more and some a little less - that's okay and understandable according to the situation.

Comrades are encouraged to work seriously on these reports and contact the work committee secretaries for any questions or disclarity that arise. We are absolutely open to supporting and assisting cadre in this task and we understand that it will be difficult for some (if not many!). The process of reporting is essential to fashioning the organizational fist - the unity of will - which we need to destroy the decadent capitalist rule and build socialism in the USNA, now within the MCLL and soon within the communist party of a new type which we have seriously begun to build.

**BUILD A MULTI-NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY OF A NEW TYPE!!!**

**MAKE EVERY FACTORY OUR FORTRESS!!!**

**WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD UNITE!!!**

In love and struggle,  
Susie - 883-1542  
Vicki - 873-1929, 873-0865  
Mark - 873-1929, 873-0865