

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 12 OF 16

FOLDER 15

CC MCII PARTICIPATION

by the Motor City Labor League

5/12/74

Each and every revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party has been formed over a protracted period of time, repudiating at each stop of its formation recurring assaults of opportunism. In the period prior to the formation of a party, opportunism manifests itself historically in opposition to such formation. But when such opportunism has been ideologically smashed and the party moves forward, opportunist trends attempt to assert themselves again. Having lost the battle against the formation of a revolutionary party, opportunists attempt consciously to undermine the revolutionary development of the party.

We in the Motor City Labor League have recently been through a protracted struggle to win the organization to support for the actual creation of a revolutionary and communist party, as our first and most important priority. Two lines to the struggle have emerged quite clearly. One line, that of the great majority, supports the immediate creation of the party, the heightening of organizational discipline and ideological struggle in the interests of proletarian revolution. The other line, that of what was a clear minority, is the line of modern day opportunism; a line which although now presented in a highly sophisticated manner manifests the confusion of a trend attempting to "wriggle like a snake between two mutually exclusive points of view".

A brief history of the struggle between trends within the Motor City Labor League is necessary to clarify the basis of our opposition to "A Study Group" participating in the Continuations Committee. For purposes of this paper we will simplify the tendencies within the organization to three -- the Party Building tendency, the center and the opportunists. As the struggle proceeded various individuals changed their positions within the three tendencies, but at this time we consider the main analysis to revolve around the political lines of the two main tendencies. At the close of the convention the Center tendency united with the party building tendency. The opportunist tendency left the organization-- to attempt to continue their struggle within the Continuations Committee.

The early stage of struggle for the formation of a new communist party began with a formal proposal by a member of the Central Committee, ~~Ray~~, to the Central Committee, that the Motor City Labor League seek amalgamation with the Communist League. This proposal, although met with majority opposition, was considered a fundamentally important proposal which necessitated further Central Committee discussion. The organizational situation at the time was particularly weak. Tensions, both subjective and political, ran high; the proposal to amalgamate with the Communist League increased these tensions by posing two quite clear directions and the necessity of a choice. The direction of the amalgamation proposal was to move consciously toward integration with anti-revisionist, multi-national communist forces. The other direction was to continue as we were, an "independent circle", empirical and eclectic in our theory, objectively tailist in our practice, and sectarian and national chauvinistic in our relation with other circles. It was at this juncture (prior to systematic discussion within the Central Committee) that an opportunist tendency first and clearly emerged. NJW issued the initial attack on the emerging Party Building tendency. To quote from her letter: (9/7/73)

GAD is a consciously integrated law firm which has developed and continues to develop into a strong political organization in the city....~~Ray~~ is now

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...I believe it is essential to analyze sycophancy in relation to our own organizational development and history in the City over the last few years. (Do any of us have the right to exist or can we both literally and politically/theoretically survive without a black organization (or blacks) in tow?)...A strategy to combat racism is essential in the metropolitan area in 1973 and is directly related to work in the industrial sector. But is our resolution or strategy for combating racism, ie. resolving racial and sexual class divisions, amalgamation, integration, dissolution, guilt, black leadership trips, vanguard positions, or white slavery? People where I work know black people are not their enemy. But they are afraid to go south of eight mile, Does a merger with CL dispel this fear or organize class consciousness? Who/what is our enemy? Racism? Sexism? Imperialism? Capitalism? The ruling class? Not just theoretically but tactically in mass organizing arms. We are still not certain. ...Communist League... What do they want? They are Marxist-Leninists committed in this period consciously and deliberately to organizing the industrial sector. They are a national organization committed to building a M-L national party. I think they want two things from MCLL: access to the GAD law firm and our national reputation on the left...What do we want? What will we gain/lose? What does the class gain/lose short range and long range? Black people are stronger where I work because there is a CL. White people are getting stronger where I work because there is an MCLL. Who/what will be stronger/weaker if there is a merger at this time? What is our position on metropolitanism? Our strategy for uniting the city and the suburbs? the north and the south? Detroit and Pontiac? Detroit and Boston? Detroit and Muskegon? Detroit and Philadelphia? Detroit and Royal Oak? Detroit and South Dakota? Detroit and Ohio? ETC. ...Information is power. Information analyzed, developed, studied, and consolidated in strategy, tactics, and organization is politics. (emphasis in original)

The response to this paper solidified the nucleus of the Party Building Tendency. To quote from the paper written in response by S & P:

...
It seems clear that the effect if not the intent of these statements and questions is to raise the issue of "split paranoia" and to undermine RG's ability to politically struggle for his position.. It is not as if NJW attacks RG's political position, disagrees with it and points out what are to her errors in its position, strategy or timetable, No! She puts forward certain statements of "fact" which are in fact untrue and raises countless "questions" in a manner which question RG's motivation, his honesty and his operating under the democratic-centralism of MCLL. It raises those doubts as to Ron's motivation so that Loyal MCLL cadre move off of a "protect the Org" agenda rather than openness to change and sharp political struggle. Nancy has made serious charges, both directly and by innuendo without any real investigation or basis in fact.

top lines:

pursuing an objective - the merger of MCLL and CL. He has let it be known to a few cadre that he is prepared to split MCLL and take as many cadre as possible

or basis in fact. This says to us that she does not understand the most basic principles of comradely relationships...

But her classic statement is what needs more precise analysis:

"But is our resolution or strategy for combating racism, i.e. resolving racial and sexual class divisions, amalgamation, integration, dissolution, guilt, black leadership trips, vanguard positions, or white slavery?"
(emphasis ours)

Can one even try to contend that this sentence is written by one trained in Marxism-Leninism; is it the precise kind of analysis that we must demand of each other?

A particular criticism must be leveled at the use of the term white slavery. Historically this term has had only one meaning in this country: it has always been used to refer to the making of young white women prostitutes especially when that was done by Black men. To be charitable, we assume that NJW had other definitions in mind, but the use of this emotion laden term without any more concern that one "win" an argument is absolutely irresponsible. The term however may refer to white organizations being put into "slavery" by Black organizations but then what is the objective basis for saying that anyone is making such a proposal? Or NJW may be saying that merely following the leadership of a predominantly Black organization is a form of "white mental slavery"; but that interpretation is equally difficult to find any factual basis for supporting. The most important point that we want to make is that in these "political" debates either we have imposed a degree of discipline or we don't. If there is no standard then we have achieved little; to be sure, we must be polemical at times but the use of this kind of emotionalism is clearly incorrect and subject to severe criticism.

Later on in reference to CL, NJW states:

"People where I work know black people are not the enemy. But they are afraid to go south of eight mile. Does a merger with CL dispel this fear or organize class consciousness?"

Our straight up answer to that question is that it might very well dispel the fear of going south of eight mile. It is possible to show that principled relationships are not only possible but actually exist, then that knowledge is one weapon against fear.

We interpret the sum total of all this to represent a political position. The

political position in effect is that whites and blacks should operate in separate organizations, that the level of racism in this country at the present time means

that comradely relationships cannot be created. We believe that the following statements from NJW's paper lead to our above conclusion when read in the context of her entire paper:

1. "GAD is a consciously integrated law firm..."
2. "(Do any of us have the right to exist or can we both literally and politically/theoretically survive without a black organization (or blacks) in tow?)"
3. "But is our resolution or strategy for combating racism, i.e. resolving racial and sexual class divisions, amalgamation, integration, dissolution, guilt, black leadership trips, vanguard positions, or white slavery?"
4. "People where I work know black people are not their enemy. But they are afraid to go south of eight mile. Does a merger with CL dispel this fear or organize class consciousness?"

Above all this paper is in our view an attempt to undermine RG's position from which he can struggle, to raise distrust of the amalgamation position and to raise doubt as to CL's political relation to us. The paper is unprincipled in nature and content and is above all an incorrect way to carry on political struggle and debate.

.....We believe that in the process of the ideological consolidation within MCLL that the struggle that takes place be as political and as comradely as possible.. ...It is our ability to struggle sharply, politically and with the objective of unity in mind, that will see this process be extremely extremely beneficial for the growth and development of the MCLL. ...Around the question of separatism or the multi-national Marxist-Leninist party S and P takes a position counter to that of NJW. We believe that we must move to create a multi-national communist party. Our time table may differ as to our perspectives on arriving at that stage, but not our position on it. A multi-national party with a Marxist-Leninist understanding of the right of nations to self-determination, would be a real step forward in overcoming those divisions created among us by the bourgeoisie. It would increase class unity practically, by setting an example of principled relations between different nationalities. I would help unify the class so as to better struggle against imperialism."

So, the initial lines of the struggle were drawn. Each and every time the emerging Party Building tendency put forth its political lines within the organization those in the leadership of the emergin opportunist tendency attacked it. Each and evey time the political arguments were put forth, a larger section of the organization moved closer to full support for the Party Building Tendency. As this process repeated itself, the opportunist tendency would appear to adopt the very line of the Party Building tendency, conducting themselves in a way exposed by Lenin:

When we speak of fighting opportunism, we must never forget a characteristic feature of present day opportunism in every sphere, namely, its vagueness, amorphousness, elusiveness. An opportunist, by his nature, will always evade taking a clear and decisive stand, he will always seek a middle course, he will always wriggle like a snake between two mutually exclusive points of view and try to "agree" with both and reduce his differences of opinion to petty amendments, doubts, innocent and pious suggestions, and so on and so forth.

p. 437 V.I. Lenin, Vol. I, Selected Works

The next skirmish was begun by the Party Building Tendency putting forth its perspective and strategy on the need to form an anti-revisionist, multi-national, communist party. The emerging party building tendency wrote:

"We can see that a party is necessary to bring about a socialist revolution in the U.S. and elsewhere. We must examine more of what the party is, how it is structured, its' composition, which in the U.S. must raise the question of a multi-national party.

There are many who in the abstract might call for a communist party or agree to its necessity. We must understand that to "agree" or to call for a party without a strategy (as to how revolutionaries move to create the party of the working class) is to be unwilling to confront the class struggle with a Marxist-Leninist perspective, i.e. it is to be reformist, a vascillator, revisionistic and an opportunist. To mouth the slogans and not move with the forces present, in a given period, toward the creation of a communist party when the objective and subjective conditions demand one is to sell out to the bourgeoisie. That is not to say that there will not be disagreements in the strategy that will have to be struggled through until the correct line prevails.

We will get nowhere and will be putplaying into the hands of the bourgeoisie if we do not examine the questions previously raised and deal with them coming from the concrete material conditions present in 1973."

It is our task to learn from history from the combined experience of the working class and revolutionaries all over the world and to apply that knowledge, theory and understanding to the concrete conditions present in the world in 1973. We must attempt to understand what difference it means to live in 1973 rather than in 1848, 1870, etc. where there is International Capital and an International Proletariat as well as a Socialist camp. To do this we must study Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Ho Chi Minh, Le Duan, Mao Tse Tung, Troung Chinh, Enver Hoxha, Amilcar Cabral, Antonio Gramsci, etc., the History of the International Communist Movement and that of the Communist Party of the U.S. (Revisionist)!

It is our belief that without the Party the working class cannot organize and overthrow the capitalist.

"...if we unite all the forces of the awakening proletariat with all the forces of the Russian revolutionaries into one Party which will attract all that is vital and honest in Russia. Only then will the great prophecy of the Russian worker-revolutionary, Pyotr Alexeyev, be fulfilled: "the muscular arm of the working millions will be lifted, and the yoke of despotism, guarded by the soldiers' bayonets, will be smashed to atoms." Lenin, Urgent Tasks of Our Movement, Nov. 1900

As well the Party and the class need a Scientific theory to guide their actions. The theory of Marxism-Leninism is one that has been tested out for over 100 years in the U.S.S.R., Germany, Rumania, Albania, Poland, Hungary, China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Italy, France, England, and the U.S., etc. We learn from the theory of Marxist-Leninists and their practice around the world, from their successes and their mistakes. We must take the theory and practice, transfer the laws to our situation, and learn from the practice, practice; bearing in mind the changes in historical period, geography, aspects of the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. We however must not become American Exceptionalists. i.e. we're different here, the theory is outmoded. We cannot be uncritical, for we have need to temper and mold a Vanguard Party which will lead our class to victory. We need a Revolutionary Party with a Scientific Theory...

In this period we believe that we should do two things to carry out the perspective that the creation of a party in this period is our main objective.

1. Evaluate our practice to see what does not conform with this line. Move in the areas where we can begin M-L educationals, develop a stronger base within the work place and especially within the industrial proletariat. The educationals would be, in embryo form, the intermediate forms that were discussed in the Trade Union Paper. We must create a newspaper whose purpose is to reach the advanced workers and move their consciousness to a communist one, towards a party.

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2. We should begin systematically learning about, finding unity where it exists, and struggling through disagreements with the various circles that are out there. For it is all of us that will bring about the creation of a party. We do not want three parties or a group carrying out incorrect politics because we did not struggle with them toward a correct line. We must come to understand the diverse perspectives and practice exhibited by the various circles and move to create Marxist-Leninist unity among us. We can and should begin, where appropriate, to engage in joint work with these groups and seek to overcome the incorrect sectarianism and raise the real differences that divide us. We all need to build stronger bases and carry on struggle to clarify our line and theoretical positions.

We are not strong enough to create the party now. There are certain criteria that have to be met for the creation of a communist party.

1. A base in the class and the increasing contact with and education of advanced workers.'

2. Struggle having taken place between various circles, and groups which cannot yet be considered circles, around analysis of : the world situation, the U.S. situation, perspectives and line on trade unions, national question, women question, revisionism and certain strategic views. First we must find out what there is unity on and what differences there are. Lenin wrote that in the beginning of a party shades of difference can later fortell vast differences. We must struggle through those shades of difference to a higher stage of unity. More discussion, struggle and talk. All of which will move us into certain joint work. Perhaps the creation of an all U.S. newspaper weekly, etc.

These two criteria must be moved to be fulfilled as rapidly as possible. We must move with the creation of the Party as our number one priority which affects all our work. We estimate that it may take up to two or three years to carry on the necessary work. We must strive to make that estimate wrong. We must move as rapidly as possible. For we find ourselves in a period when the industrial proletariat is more active than has been true for many years and when the mood both within circles and within revolutionary minded people the question of the party is taking a front seat. We must strike while the iron is hot....

We believe that in the spirit of attempting unity and engaging in principled struggle to move us all forward that we should become part of the CL Continuations meetings here and in Chicago if possible. We further believe that we should go to the May Congress. And to the extent that MCLL has achieved explicit political positions that we should express them at the Congress and struggle around them; that if a material analysis of class conditions in May and forces present at the Congress mean that we should not declare a party at that time then we should struggle around that position.

To quote from Lenin and Stalin:

"The Party must, first of all, be the vanguard of the working class. The Party must absorb all the best elements of the working class, their experience, their revolutionary spirit, their selfless devotion to the cause of the proletariat. But in order that it may really be the vanguard, the Party must be armed with revolutionary theory, with a knowledge of the laws of the movement, with a knowledge of the laws of revolution. Without this it will be incapable of directing the struggle of the proletariat, of leading the proletariat. The Party cannot be a real Party if it limits itself to registering what the masses of the working class feel and think, if it follows in the tail of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to overcome the inertness and political indifference of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to rise above the momentary interests of the proletariat, if it is unable to elevate the masses to the level of the class interests of the proletariat. The Party must stand at the head of the working class; it must see farther than the working class; it must lead the proletariat, and not follow in the tail of the spontaneous movement...."
Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, April, 1924...

We would appreciate criticisms, disagreement, agreement and support. We would have preferred to talk to everyone in the organization but obviously no one has the time. We are very aware that we cannot express our positions as well as we would like to on paper, if people have questions about areas which are unclear please ask. We must break down the lack of struggle around the questions that confront us and in that way build our common trust and willingness to struggle further, among ourselves for Unity and Against the Bourgeoisie for the Victory of the Working Class.

CREATE A MULTI-NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD UNITE

This position was attacked by the emerging opportunist trend:

" A dangerous tendency is developing within the organization at this time. Lenin is being used as a smoke screen for ideological struggle...As a result, ideological struggle is being turned into bourgeois academic competition... [yes it was comrades, by opportunists[...Unfortunately the point is not whether

or not there should be a party....The point is to develop an analysis of where we are in America in 1973 in the historical process on the road to socialist revolutionThe paper fails to deal with any of these questions...It is contemptuous, ~~underdeveloped~~ underdeveloped to the extreme, arrogant, and unscientific...dogmatism and unscientific use of Lenin...."

Paper authored by PC and adopted by a motion of the A&P Commission (passes 6-3; all "yes" votes were in the minority who subsequently left the organization).
Emphasis added.

Attempts at ideological struggle were met by attacks of dogmatism, by cries of "being clubbed over the head", by what could appear, upon reflection, as attacks whose thread of unity was in opposition to reality and Marxist-Leninist principles and laws. IF in fact, that trend already supported the creation of a party, why was it necessary to attack the CALL for a party? IF, in fact, PC, NJW, and DD united with the science of Marxism-Leninism why did they consistently attack the use of the science? To quote:

Ideological debate within the organization seems to have come to a virtual standstill...as cadre...wade through endless volumes of Lenin..

It should be sufficient to point out the level of underdevelopment (of the Party Building Tendency) and move on toward the development of actual theory and strategy.

Ibid.

Where were we to move "on" to? Apparently not to Lenin -- in fact, where they would have had us move was to the realm of amorphous and vagueness from which we had come-- not to debate the question of a multi-national, anti-revisionist communist party of a new type, but to "develop some (what?) clear political positions, some clear political lines, from which we can clarify a strategy for revolutionary action". Who could we develop "some clear positions or lines" without the intense study of the science of proletarian revolution -- unless, of course, the objective of proletarian revolution was itself the source of disagreement?

By the time the Motor City Labor League began the formal convention process two clear strategies had emerged. The Party Building strategy advocated immediate and intense grounding of all cadre in the science of Marxism-Leninism, and participation in the Continuations Committee, with the clear objective of the most immediate creation of a new communist party. The other tendency, including both the center and the opportunists favored "joint work and struggle" with other progressive and socialist communist circles. The opportunist trend clearly opposed participation in either the Continuations Committee or the scheduled August convention.

But the main battlefield, the key question in resolving the political line of the Motor City Labor League was focused on our line on revisionism. The fully developed Party Building Tendency had taken an uncompromising position against revisionism, naming it as a main enemy of proletarian revolution.

Is the Soviet Union social imperialist and does it promote a revision of Marxism-Leninism? We assert that the answer is yes, the USSR is revisionism incarnate....We also understand the absolute necessity for the destruction of revisionism, that tool of the bourgeoisie cloaked in Marxist-Leninist terminology which subverts the revolutionary potential of our class as we struggle towardthe creation of the classless international society...this history lays the material base for why we must ideologically destroy the revisionist CPUSA."

"The Present Theoretical Work of the Party Building Tendency", p. 1, pp 24-5

What was the political line of opportunism?

"Soviet social imperialism may represent a new form of imperialism on the rise in the world....It may represent a new mode of social production and a new set of classes and class struggle....to diffuse the movement and attack the ruling class of the USSR as an equal enemy, particularly when objective conditions indicate not, and revolutionaries around the world do not agree that they are, is to revise Lenin's position on the national question."

paper by PC, February 10, 1974 (emphasis added)

It is crucial to understanding the opportunism and spontaneity of "A Study Group" to analyze these particular lines. First, of course, to say that social imperialism MAY represent a new form of imperialism is classic -- either it does, or it does not. Either they believe that the Soviet Union is social imperialist, or they do not. Either they will take a principled position or they will not. They will not.

Secondly, the argument that we should not systematically oppose revisionism and social imperialism is apparently based on the assumption that revisionism and social imperialism are not as "equal enemies" as U.S.N.A. imperialism. Is revisionism a tool of the bourgeoisie? Should the bourgeoisie be attacked in all its manifestations or only a few? Has revisionism misled the proletarian movement or not? Should we wait patiently by while thousands are slaughtered in Chile so that the working masses spontaneously and through the loss of blood come to identify revisionism as an enemy ideology? We hold that it is the absolute responsibility of principled communists to provide LEADERSHIP, not TAIL BEHIND the working masses. Finally, whether or not "revolutionaries around the world" (one might ask -- which revolutionaries?) agree that revisionism and social imperialism are equal enemies which USNA imperialism is NOT the question, unless we are committed to a position of all unity and no struggle within the communist movement.

On Feb. 18, the opportunist tendency issued a call to a meeting for the purpose of building their tendency. It read, in part :

The following points of unity are assumed for attendance:

1. We are anti-revisionists who do not theoretically agree that revisionism or social imperialism are primary enemies at this stage, nationally or internationally.".....

This is the position that split the centerists, once and for all, from the opportunists.

We could go one and on. The process of struggle within the Motor City Labor League was full of twists and turns, fully as complex, though not as significant historically, as the Second Party Congress of the RSDLP. (Our situation could more aptly be characterized as "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back".) It is necessary, however, to spend some brief time in analyzing the final document of the opportunist trend, "From the Masses, to the Masses". So that all may be clear that THERE HAS BEEN NO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THEIR POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM, BUT ONLY A CHANGE IN THEIR TACTICAL APPROACH.

A discussion of the final pre-split paper of A Study Group must focus on three questions, separate but interrelated. First, their continued bowing to spontaneity. Second their continued vacillation on the question of revisionism. Thirdly, the general nature of their opportunism in the context of the present struggle within the USNA on the question of the formation of a multi-national, anti-revisionist

communist party.

"Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the only choice is either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not yet created a "third" ideology, and moreover, in a society torn by class antagonism there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology.) Hence to belittle socialist theory IN ANY WAY, TO TURN ASIDE FROM IT IN THE SLIGHTEST DEGREE means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is much talk of spontaneity. But the SPONTANEOUS development of the working class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology...it is our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is to combat spontaneity, to divert the working class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social-Democracy."

What Is To Be Done? Int'l Publisher
p.41

"Theory alone will never mold a party or a revolution. It is the practical experiences of the masses, their political experience which creates the conditions for revolutionary consciousness, not the mere study of the classics. This applies as much if not more so for communists who intend to lead the revolution."

"From the Masses To The Masses" p. 37

What could be more clear? The "practical experiences of the masses" is their "political experience". The practical experiences of the masses "creates the conditions for revolutionary consciousness". It could not be any more clear, not any more wrong, this is the politics of Russian Economism, German Bernsteinism, this is the politics of opportunism. Instead of holding high the banner of socialist ideology as the scientific approach to proletarian revolution, "From The Masses To The Masses" holds high the practical experiences of the masses, and belittles the science referring to it as "the mere (MERE???) study of the classics" (What classics, maybe we could include Plato, or Malthus -- for they are "classics" of the bourgeoisie?) As for communists, why communists should rely even less on the science of proletarian revolution than the masses. Apparently, communists are supposed to "lead" the revolution from behind the masses -- unless the assumption is that the less one understands and studies the science, the more one is ahead of the masses. In either case, from "behind" or "ahead", communists not absolutely grounded in the "classics" of proletarian revolution, such "communists" will lead the masses nowhere except to further exploitation and oppression at the hands of the bourgeoisie.

"A communist does not withdraw from the struggles of the masses to prepare for revolution or to build the party of the proletariat, and then return to "lead the masses" with a correct line or organization.. A communist builds the party and formulates its correct lines by forging a higher level of unity and struggle within (sic) the context of the political experience of the masses."

"From The Masses To The Masses" p.37

What is being said in this paragraph? A communist "does not withdraw from the struggles of the masses to prepare for revolution or to build the party of the proletariat". We now find that "the mere study of the classics" is withdrawal from the masses. This amounts to a complete rejection of socialism, for a rejection of theoretical work, is a rejection of one of the greatest tools of the proletariat. A rejection of the primacy of proletarian science is no service to the masses, but the most profound disservice. It is the task of communists to master the science,

so that the science may be taken to the masses.

"In particular, it will be the duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old world outlook, and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, since it has become a science demands that it be pursued as a science, i.e., that it be studied. The task is to spread with increased zeal among the masses of workers the ever more clarified understanding thus acquired, to knit together ever more firmly the organization both of the party and of the trade unions..."

Engels, as quoted by Lenin in What is To Be Done?
Int'l Pub. p. 28

I is not "withdrawal" from the masses to study the science, to engage in theoretical work, but rather it is study of the science that prepares the communists for the task of leading the masses and forming the vanguard party of the proletariat.

What does "From The Masses To The Masses" have to say about theory and ideological struggle explicitly in the period referred to as "party building"?

"And the relationship of communists to the masses and to the events of the day are the ground upon which the party builds itself and outlines the strategy and tactics for the revolution. Party formation can not be taken as a mystical event which will suddenly clarify all things and make all revolutionary work possible. We believe that it is absolutely necessary for all serious communists to participate actively in party-building strategies at this time, and establish organizational priorities to be consistent with this process. It is not our theory alone which we bring to the party-building process. It is our experience and knowledge gained in the course of the struggles of the masses and the advanced elements of the class. To divorce theory from practice and take only theory to this process, would be a serious error for a communist. The application of the mass line. "from the masses to the masses", must be a part of the party-building process as well as the general process of revolution."

"From The Masses To The Masses " p.41
(emphasis added)

What is the "relationship of communists to the masses if not that of vanguard fighters for the interests of the masses?

What is Lenin's view of theory in the period just prior to the formation of the RSDLP?

"Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity. Yet for the Russian Social Democrats the importance of theory is enhanced by three other circumstances, which are often forgotten: first by the fact that our party is only in the process of formation, its features are only becoming defined, and it has as yet far from settled accounts with the other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten to divert the movement from the correct path ...Under these circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an "unimportant" error may lead to most deplorable consequences, and only shortsighted people can consider factional disputes and strict differentiation between shades of opinion inopportune or superfluous. The fate of Russian Social Democracy for very many years to come may depend on the strengthening of the other shade.

"Secondly, the Social Democratic movement is in its very essence an international movement. This means, not only that we must combat national chauvinism, but that an insipient movement in a young country can be successful only if it makes use of the experiences of other countries...He who realizes how enormously the modern working class movement has grown and branched out will understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to carry out this task."

What Is To Be Done? Int'l Publ. p. 25-6

Of course theory should not be divorced from practice -- but we must be absolutely clear that the proletariat has only two weapons: ideology and organization. To belittle the crucial importance of theory in the formation of our party is tantamount to renouncing the guiding force of the proletariat and leaving our class doomed to eternal wage slavery.

Furthermore, "From the Masses To The Masses" has no real grasp of the simple fact that theoretical work is practical work:

"These people who cannot pronounce the word "theoretical" without a sneer, who describe their genuflections to common lack of training and backwardness as a "sense for the realities of life," reveal in practice a failure to understand our most imperative practical tasks. To laggards they shout: Keep in step! Don't run ahead! To people suffering from a lack of energy and initiative in organizational work, from a lack of "plans" for a wide and bold activity, they prate about "tactics as process"! The worst sin we commit is that we degrade our political and organizational tasks to the level of the immediate, "palpable", "concrete" interest of the everyday economic struggle...."

What Is To Be Done? Int'l Publ. p. 103

Enough! We must continue on through our very practical task: that of exposing the theoretical opportunism of this trend!

What of the continued opportunist vacillation, "wriggling like a snake between two mutually exclusive points of view" on the question of opportunism. Is this policy continued by From the Masses To The Masses? Their paper does finally admit that the Soviet Union is revisionist and is social-imperialist. But what is their stance toward this counter-revolutionary force?

"In terms of its relationship to the oppressed nations, the U.S.S.R. has to, at various times, act like a socialist nation in terms of material support for socialist national liberation movements. From the perspective of the oppressed nations, motivation is of secondary importance to the fact of receiving material support for armed struggle and socialist revolution. This contradiction in which the Soviet revisionists are caught, has been turned to the advantage of socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles, and strengthened these forces in the face of the primary enemy, US Imperialism (sic)."

"From the Masses To The Masses" p.2

So! The treachery of the Soviet revisionists is actually to the advantage of socialist revolution, if only socialist revolutionaries were wise enough not to attack revisionism, an application of the old opportunists saying "don't bit the hand that feeds you", or consider the "motivation" of acts of the revisionists! Not to consider the "motivation" of acts of primary importance, is simply another manifestation of bowing to spontaneity, of refusing to put theory in command of practice. If the proletariat chose not to consider the "motivation" of the bourgeoisie we would end up thanking them for paying us wages!!

As the comrade Enver Hoxha states:

"Speculating with the contradictions which they have with the United States and with the aim of concealing their betrayal, the Soviet revisionists try to pose as anti-imperialists, as if they, too, oppose the policy of aggression and war of the US imperialism. But their "anti-imperialism" of the revisionists is a hoax, a device to deceive the people, to split their anti-imperialist unity, to sabotage the revolution. Any illusion about the "anti-imperialism" of the Soviet revisionists would be very dangerous, with grave consequences for the revolutionary struggles of the peoples."

Report to the 6th Congress of the Party of Labor of
Albania 1971 p. 30

It is most disturbing to note that From The Masses To The Masses is unclear as to whether or not revisionism and social-imperialism have had any actual effect on proletarian revolution or the dictatorship of the proletariat. While stating that the U.S.S.R. and the CPSU have succumbed to revisionism and have become social-imperialist, they are so busy trying to defend their opportunist positions that they say:

"For the countries of Eastern Europe, Albania, and China, the increasingly imperialist character of the U.S.S.R. poses a particular national threat, since these are the areas of the world in which the US power-brokers are least likely to interfere in if the U.S.S.R. moves to attack socialism."

"From The Masses To The Masses" p. 12
(emphasis added)

If the U.S.S.R. moves to attack socialism??? Unite with reality!! Consider the case of the Soviet proletariat! The revisionists have usurped power from the Soviet proletariat, a most heroic proletariat who have sacrificed generations of sons and daughters to build the dictatorship of the proletariat, to establish and defend the first socialist state. They have supported the destruction of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Yugoslavia, Romania, Poland, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, militarily attacked the proletariat of Czechoslovakia, attempted to turn the international proletariat against the Peoples Republic of China and the Peoples Republic of Albania. They have distorted and smeared one of the proletariat's greatest leaders, Comrade Stalin, and by doing so have attacked the very history of the proletariat. They have mis-led the struggle of the proletariat by their rotten theory of "peaceful transition to socialism" and have caused thousands to die unnecessarily. They have colluded with US imperialism and opened a second front against the international proletarian revolution. They have supported and encouraged the revisionism and misleadership of the CPUSA -- leaving the proletariat in this country unarmed.

The very nature of revisionism and social-imperialism is to attack socialism, There is no "if" about it. US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism are not two rungs on a ladder, with the US imperialists being the top rung and therefore the first to be attacked. US imperialism and Soviet revisionism are both very dangerous enemies, moving on the proletariat from the front and from the rear, colluding with each other to destroy socialism, each trying to gain the advantage over the other.

Before summing up the general opportunism of this trend in the context of the formation of a new communist party, it is necessary to speak for a moment of their opportunism in questions of organization.

Prior to the formal defeat of their tendency in the MCLL Convention, From The Masses To The Masses proposed that "2. the organizational principle of the Motor City Labor League is democratic centralism,...5. The whole organization must observe unified discipline and security: The individual is subordinate to the organization, the minority is subordinate to the majority, the lower level is subordinate to the higher level and the entire organization is subordinate to the Central Committee (between conventions which shall be held at least once every twelve month period.)"

"From The Masses To The Masses" The Proposed structure for the Motor City Labor League

Quite a clear position on the relationship of the minority to the majority! But what happened when this tendency found itself in the minority? First, at the last session of the convention, when all their proposed lines had been voted down, they proposed that the basis of unity between their minority and majority was not subordination, but phillistine political bargaining. Either we would adopt six lines which they considered the crux of their position, and distribute the full line of "From The Masses To The Masses" along with the political line of the organization and publish each vote and each ammendment (accepted or not), and guarrantee that equal representation of the "minority and the Majority" would be assigned to represent the MCLL on the Continuations Committee OR THEY WOULD SPLIT. That is not subordination, it is an opportunist attempt at political blackmail.

When this attempt failed, they tried to turn the responsibility back on the majority. In their formal announcement of having left the organization they said:

"We are leaving the MCLL because we are unable to unite with all the political lines adopted at the convention. Resolution of the contradicitions between minimum and maximum political lines around which we must unite in order to move forward were not resolveable within this circle. We believe this will continue to be a difficult and essential problem to solve as we build the party and that it is dialectically linked to the question the convention failed to solve; that is, how do minorities, tendencies, and/or factions and the use of democratic centralism function within circles during the party-building process and prior to the party's formation."

So simple. Having become a minority, they lost all memory of their own position of the relationship of a minority to a majority, and are suddenly confused on whether democratic centralism should function. It is one thing for a study group to be developing toward democratic centralism in this period of party formation -- it is quite another for a minority to be fleeing from it.

To conclude -- a brief look at their general opportunism in the period of party formation. They actually set no priorities, and take no position on the relationship of the three main trends of the day. The three trends can be summarized as 1. the Marxist-Leninist trend supporting the immediate formation of a communist party of a new type, 2. an opportunist trend which has opposed the creation of the party, in favor of bowing to spontaneity by building the "workers movement" and building the "united front against imperialism". 3. an opportunist trend which opposes the creation of a Marxist-Leninist party in favor of a party of the petty-bourgeoisie - "A democratic mass party". To quote:

"The number one priority in the next period is the grounding of communists and advanced workers in the science of Marxism-Leninism. This is dialectically linked to the simultaneous work of party-building/party formation, and the work in the united front against imperialism!"

"It is necessary that all three of these tactics be employed as top priorities within the period of bourgeois democracy..."

"If we do not continually strengthen our ties with the masses, if we do not lend an ear to the voices of the masses, teach them, and learn from them, then the new party will not be able to become a mass party, competent and alive enough to lead the entire class."

"From The Masses To The Masses" pp. 48, 48, 49. (emphasis added)

To quote from Comrade Stalin:

"The Party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements. The source of factionalism in the Party is its opportunist elements."

"In one way or another, all these petty-bourgeois groups penetrate into the Party and introduce into it the spirit of hesitancy and opportunism, the spirit of demoralization and uncertainty. It is they, principally, that constitute the source of factionalism and disintegration, the source of disorganization and disruption of the Party from within. To fight imperialism with such "allies" in one's rear means to put one's self in the position of being caught between two fires, from the front and from the rear. Therefore, ruthless struggle against such elements, their expulsion from the Party, is a prerequisite for the successful struggle against imperialism."

"The theory of "defeating" opportunist elements by ideological struggle within the Party, the theory of "overcoming" these elements within the confines of a single party, is a rotten and dangerous theory, which threatens to condemn the Party to paralysis and chronic infirmity, threatens to make the Party a prey to opportunism, threatens to leave the proletariat without a revolutionary party, threatens to deprive the proletariat of its main weapon in the fight against imperialism."

Foundations of Leninism Peking Ed., p. 115, 116.

DEFEAT OPPORTUNISM !!

BUILD A MULTI-NATIONAL ANTI-REVISIONIST COMMUNIST PARTY !!

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD UNITE !!

TO: CC

FROM: EX REL

RE: RECOMENDATIONS TO MEMBERSHIP

I
The external relations committee supports in principle:

1. The most rapid possible building of a ^{Communist} Party of a New Type. (6-0-1NJW)
2. The establishment of relations with other M-L circles, emerging circles and the continuations committee 7-0-0
3. Joining the continuations committee at the close of the convention. (5-2NJW, L.B.)-0)

6-2-1
(2B, R) (KB)

II
To that end, we propose the following:

1. That the Motor City Labor League seek a meeting with CL ~~mm~~ to clarify information and positions, with questions to be developed in commissions, prior to the end of the convention. (7-0-0)
2. That MCLL seek meetings with O.L. and BWC relative to their views on points one and two of the preceding principles, prior to the end of the convention. (X 7-0-0)
3. Following the convention that we seek meetings with OL, RU, the Capital Collective ~~and BWC~~ to discuss positions and establish relations. (7-0-0)

and other M-L org's