

THE CLASS AND NATIONAL ORIGIN OF THE "NEW COMMUNIST MOVEMENT" AND OF ITS IDEALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY.

Comrade Stalin taught that "...the origin of social ideas, social theories, political views, and political institutions should not be sought for in the ideas, theories, views, and political institutions themselves, but in the conditions of the material life of society, in social being, of which these ideas, theories, views, etc. are the reflection." (*Dialectical and Historical Materialism* pp. 20,21)

In order to understand why the "new communist movement" carries out anti-Marxist practice and puts forth the anti-Marxist proposition of the idealist conception of history, we must delve not into the "properties" of their propositions and conclusions, but into what is the class composition of the "new communist movement." And in the era of the imperialist stage of capitalism, we must identify what is the national composition of this movement as well.

I. The White or "Anglo" Members of the "New Communist Movement":

The class composition of the "new communist movement" is predominantly petty bourgeois students and ex-students who have recently fallen into or have chosen to become "working class." The national composition of this movement is overwhelmingly US imperialist oppressor nation majority (white) people.

Earlier, in discussing the reasons for the degeneration of the CPUSA, we pointed to the fact that US imperialism expanded tremendously after WWII, and on this basis, possessed the ability to bribe large sections of the working class in the US (north) oppressor nation, while greatly expanding the number of extreme parasitic petty bourgeois professional, sales, management and clerical positions in US imperialist society. This "fact of life" not only played a key role in the degeneration of the CPUSA; but also it is largely out of the parasitic petty bourgeois professionals, et al., the very class forces which were generated by US imperialist expansion and its increased domination of the oppressed nations, that the bulk of the "new communist movement" people came.

Most of the ex-students who have become "working class" recently, passed through the student movement of the US (north) during the mid and late 1960's, and the "student movement" is the only significant mass activity in which they have been active participants. Yet this particular 1960's movement of white (US North) students, was almost totally divorced from the struggle of the work-

ing class in the USA. In fact the US (north) working class was largely hostile to this student movement.

Had such a mass student movement developed in an *oppressed* nation, then in the course of the national revolutionary struggle the students would have been thrown up against imperialism and would have consequently found concrete links with the working class and with working class (Marxist) political conceptions. But when such a petty bourgeois student movement emerges in the chief oppressor nation in the world in the era of imperialism, when, as comrade Stalin taught, one of the three "most important" contradictions is "the contradiction between the handful of ruling 'civilized' nations and the hundreds of millions of colonial and dependent peoples of the world" (*Foundations of Leninism*, p. 14), and when therefore the "movement" is *objectively* neither proletarian nor national revolutionary, then *no* concrete link between these petty bourgeois students and the working class and its (Marxist) ideas is established.

Petty bourgeois elements, especially those who have had contact with the working class, are able to comprehend at least some aspects of dialectics because of the changes in all areas of life which their experience in two socio-economic classes has provided them. But because the particular petty bourgeois elements who for the most part make up the US "new communist movement" are from a *privileged* class within the *privileged* US imperialist oppressor nation, their conditions of life have not forced them to deal with life "in the raw", with the *materialist* essence of life. Hence the "new communist movement" based in this class and in this nation inevitably puts forth an *idealist* as opposed to a *materialist* conception of history.

Consequently, when the students and particularly the ex-students who have recently become workers come into contact with the working class movement, they are disappointed that the workers who they have "idealized" are nowhere near being in revolutionary motion. But precisely because these petty bourgeois forces have recently fallen into the working class they are shocked and appalled by the evils of capitalism that they have just "discovered". They are filled with a desperate urgency for making the revolution and making it *now*.*

Since these students and ex-students have come to the Marxist Movement, *not* on the basis of their own experience in the class struggle of the proletariat against capital or on the basis of the national struggle against imperialism, but on the basis of ideological persuasion, the method of struggle for the revolution which they adopt is to convince the masses by rational argument divorced from the class struggle. Hence, electoral campaigns without prior vanguard work among the masses in their day to day battles are adopted,

*See the brilliant explanation of the material (class) roots of opportunism within the proletarian party presented in J. Stalin *Works* Vol 9, pp.9-12.

as by the CLP; or "advanced", "theoretically correct" slogans are pushed in *mass* leaflets as by the RCP and OL without these groups showing any connection between the theoretical jargon and the practical activity of the masses. Premature electoral struggle spreads bourgeois democratic illusions about the state; while mass leaflets pushing disconnected theoretical dogmas serve only to discourage the working class from taking up the immediate struggle involved and from taking up the struggle for Marxist-Leninist theory and Party-building in the long run.

Lacking the steeled character of long term workers, these petty bourgeois elements of the "new communist movement" can not take on responsibility for accomplishing the actual protracted and difficult tasks that this US proletariat and its vanguard will have to fulfill on the road to revolution. With the majority of these petty bourgeois elements, the "new communist movement" is a *fad*—they go in, and when the revolution fails to come about after they have worked for a *whole* year in a plant, etc., then they abandon this "fruitless" struggle and return to their privileged class origins.

Since the working class in the chief oppressor nation is not nearly the militant fighting force at present that these petty bourgeois individualists had anticipated, the petty bourgeois radicals' unwillingness to participate in the necessary *protracted* struggle leads them to take the burden of accomplishing the revolution off of the shoulders of the (slowly moving) working class, and to put this burden on their own "heroic" shoulders.

Hence, the disdain for the strategic potential of the working class and the toiling masses who are the real makers of history. (This is the foundation for both right and "left" opportunism.) Hence, the approach that the party is everything, while the class and masses are nothing. This leads to a number of erroneous tendencies.

Among the "left" opportunists; the Weathermen, individual terrorism conception of the struggle (whereby the petty bourgeois "heroes" through their daring and provocative acts hope to "excite" the "passive and ignorant" mass to revolutionary action.) is the "all action and no theory" branch. Of course objectively, this kind of struggle under the present relatively "peaceful" conditions, alienates the workers from any form of revolutionary struggle against capital. The opposite branch of "left opportunism" is the "Revolutionary Wing", the "all theory and no action" branch. They are the petty bourgeois "heroes", who through their daring and provocative *thoughts*, (i.e. seeking to find the "magic formula" which will overnight transform the "new communist movement" and the working class into the "Embodiment of the Revolutionary Idea") hope to excite the "passive and ignorant" masses to revolutionary "thought". The "wing" forces tend to negate all mass work and concentrate on education as the means of working class emancipation. Among those groups "in between"

(but solidly in the "left" opportunist branch) are OL and RCP which, as we pointed out earlier, carry out "left" infantile premature action in their impatience with the present actual pace of the ongoing class struggle.

The right opportunist branch of the "new communist movement" is represented by the CLP. The CLP "yeses" the mass movement "to death" in an effort to trick and manipulate the masses, to outsmart the masses into making the revolution even if they don't want to or don't see the need to yet; while at the same time, the CLP "yeses" the people in the "new communist movement" "to death" in hopes of recruiting them to the CLP. The CLP's tailist and liberal approach is based on their extreme dogmatic, mechanical transposition of the ripe revolutionary conditions of the Russian working class of 1917 to the working class of 1976 USA. If the revolutionary US workers are not thinking "revolution" at this moment, it can only be (says the CLP) because of some wrong ideas which the CLP can hustle and jive talk right out of the workers' heads.

However, despite these variations on the theme, armed with their petty bourgeois arrogance, and their common disdain for the masses, linked to their agreement on the idealist conception of history, all of the "new communist movement" come to view "their own" organization respectively as *the* organization which will *force* the workers to make the revolution, whereas Marxism-Leninism teaches us to lead the workers through *their own experience* to conclude the necessity to make the revolution and on this basis to lead them in making the revolution. In opposition to the bureaucratic arrogance of the petty bourgeois "Marxists" of the "new communist movement", Comrade Stalin taught, "...the practical activity of the party of the proletariat must not be based on the good wishes of 'outstanding individuals', not on the dictates of 'reason', 'universal morals', etc., but on the laws of development of society and on the study of these laws." (*Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, p. 19)

II. The National Minority Members of the "New Communist Movement":

There are also many petty bourgeois students and ex-students (as well as some workers) from among the oppressed national minority peoples in the US (north) oppressor nation who compose whole groups within the "Revolutionary Wing" and significant numbers of cadre within the CLP, OL, RCP, etc. Because they are mostly students or ex-students of the oppressed national minorities, rather than of the majority people in the oppressor nation, these forces have a lot more potential for becoming Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries, for by and large they have some vital connection with anti-imperialist struggle, though not nearly the connection that forces have who are directly involved in national

revolutionary struggle for independence of their own territory from imperialism. Yet, as part of the oppressor nation, these cadre are to some extent corrupted by the privileges such as substantial unemployment compensation, welfare, etc. which exist in the US (north)*.

When US imperialism came down with both the "carrot and the stick" on the Afro-American Liberation struggle in the late 1960's (e.g. systematic police assassination of militants, side by side with huge poverty programs, etc.), the imperialists were able to "contain" the Afro-American people at that time. Afro-American militants in the US (north) oppressor nation, instead of seeking refuge and protection among the Black masses in the ghettos, incorrectly sought refuge at the expense of their living connection with the Black masses in an alliance with the petty bourgeois white liberal-radicals, who strongly possessed the idealist conception of history.** Having come largely from the petty bourgeois student strata of the national minority people, and themselves therefore to a large extent having been motivated by theories and ideals to fight against the US imperialists, these militants fell prey to the idealistic conception of history that permeated the white petty bourgeois student movement.

Furthermore, because the focal contradiction in the world has been between the oppressed nations and imperialism, headed by US imperialism, the main forces of the US imperialist repressive apparatus have been concentrated against the anti-imperialist nationalist movements, even where these movements are not proletarian-led. Within the US (North) oppressor nation itself, the movements of those national minority peoples forced from their homelands [in Afro-America and Latin and South America] have been the subject of the greatest repression. It is not surprising then that, when many radical petty bourgeois national minority students turned to Marxism, they took the "path of least resistance" under the pressures of imperialism by dogmatically adopting "pure" "working class", "socialist" politics (i.e. Economism or even Trotskyism) at the expense of the national struggles and oppressed national minority struggles of their own peoples against US imperialism.

*For example, compare the relatively small, starvation, welfare benefits in Mississippi (in the Afro-American nation) with those in New York. Or compare unemployment compensation in Connecticut with unemployment "compensation" in Alabama. Or compare the situation in New York, Connecticut, etc. with the lack of any of these benefits at all in most Latin American nations.

**See Stalinist Workers Group Bulletin No. 5, *The Rising Afro-American Masses Have Forced A NEW CRISIS IN AFRO-AMERICAN LEADERSHIP*, for a timely warning concerning the vulnerability of the Black Panther Party. See also Huey P. Newton, Self Critical Statement, *after the fact*.

It is noteworthy that the Afro-American, Puerto Rican, and Chinese national minority people involved in the party-building movement are mostly in *nationally* based collectives. These groups such as Workers' Viewpoint Organization, PRRWO, Revolutionary Workers League-ML and (to a certain extent) the CLP, have the relatively greater level of commitment and energy drawn from the objectively anti-imperialist position of these national minority petty bourgeois forces etc. But unfortunately, when they grabbed hold of Marxism, these national minority students, etc. influenced by the white petty bourgeois movement and its idealist interpretation of history, grabbed hold only of the *letter* of Marxism and not of its *substance*. Unfortunately, their relatively greater revolutionary energy has largely been channeled into anti-Marxist, anti-revolutionary activity. They are among the most intensely "academic", "literal", "biblical" in their interpretation of Marxism. Their "ideological plane" has in most cases taken them even higher into the clouds and away from the earth than the OL and RCP. As a result of the jargon about "class struggle" and "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the "bourgeois" character of national struggle, these potential Marxists, the more they imbibe this social democratic, petty bourgeois, "average" Marxism, more and more turn *against* the very strengths rooted in their peoples' anti-imperialist struggle out of which they came.

Thus, for example, the CLP was able to convince many Black auto workers who had originally become active in the League of Revolutionary Black Workers under the impetus of the Black Power movement in the 60's, to denounce as "reactionary", the very Black nationalism which had generated their anti-imperialist activities! Meanwhile the CLP substituted for this anti-imperialist petty bourgeois Black nationalism, not proletarian internationalist struggle against imperialism (with which petty bourgeois Black nationalism *against imperialism* is objectively linked), but the petty bourgeois white chauvinism in the form of "average socialism" (with its pro-imperialist content) of the petty bourgeois white students and ex-students of the oppressor nation!

Because of the genuine anti-imperialist aspects of their struggle (and especially because the national struggles of the oppressed peoples have for the past 25 years been the focal contradiction facing international capital), petty bourgeois radicals among the national minority people in the US (north) oppressor nation were able to attract some national minority workers to the "banner" of the "new communist movement" in this period.

If these national minority petty bourgeois and worker members of the "new communist movement" can break with the idealist shell that has contained their anti-imperialist struggle for several years, then the party building movement will be set on a real basis and a genuine multi-national Communist Party of the USA will be much closer to actuality.