

UNITY & STRUGGLE: REVOLUTION OR REFORMISM.

"What is fundamental in Maoism? Political power is fundamental in Maoism." Fundamental Documents, Partido Comunista del Peru, 1988.

The Peru People's Movement (MPP), whose ideological basis is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Gonzalo Thought, upholds the Leninist conception that without state power, all is illusion. Furthermore, we hold that political power can only be achieved through People's War, which will sweep away the old state and replace it with a new state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Towards this end, we uphold the construction of the three basic revolutionary instruments: The Party, the united front, and the People's army, with the Party as the axis. Our conception of the Party is a Party of a new type, one that is entirely geared towards the political and organizational developments that allow the launching of a People's War, and once such a war is initiated, to develop it until the conquest of power.

In addition, given the long history of opportunism and revisionism within the working class movement, as well as the experience of capitalist restoration, we stress the importance of ideology in guiding the construction of the Party and the waging of People's War. We uphold Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) as the universal ideology of the proletariat, which must be applied to the concrete conditions of each country and its class struggle.

Based on the above revolutionary principles, we offer some initial comments on the document "Revolutionaries Unite!" proposed to us by Unity & Struggle and its allies as the basis for political unity leading towards a revolutionary program.

The central slogan "Revolutionaries Unite!" is a fine sentiment, one which must be immediately followed by the question: Unite for what? Here hinges our major difference with Unity & Struggle and its allies.

Our central difference is also on the question of the reconstitution of the Communist Party, a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party in the belly of the beast, which is not even mentioned in the call: "Build an

organization of revolutionaries by putting out the newspaper Unity & Struggle." While we realize that a Communist Party (MLM) cannot be made overnight, and that the stages of building revolutionary cells, and ultimately an organization of revolutionaries are important steps, the leading role of the Party needs to be stressed. Why do you want a Party for? To conquer power through armed struggle, or to wage electoral campaigns to conserve the system?

The document makes several references to democratic struggles, without distinguishing between mass struggles and democratic ones. Furthermore, it states as a central task the construction of a democratic workers' party, which explicitly endorses an electoral policy that eventually will lead to reformism and cooptation. The statement calls to build a united front without a Party, with the good intentions of uniting the "advanced," thus falling into the trap of tailing behind reformists, anarchists, and social democrats, a well-worn path which has been seen time and time again in the United States, Europe and the semi-colonial countries. This political practice may win some crumbs from the bourgeoisie, and it may let you win some local elections at best, but it will not lead to socialist revolution.

ON ELECTIONS: U.S. ELECTIONS AS A HISTORICAL REALITY

"Marx pointed out: Every so many years the oppressed are authorized to decide which members of the oppressor class will represent them and crush them in parliament! That way, elections are merely the method to renew the government administration and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in capitalist societies, even in the most democratic country we could imagine..[From "Against the Constitutional Illusions of a New Democracy!" Central Committee of the Communist Party of Peru.]

"To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament, is the real essence of bourgeois

parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary, constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics." Lenin.

"Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."
Mao Tse-Tung.

"We are politically opposed to reformism. We are revolutionary. We shall never understand the mediocre Social Democrats, those who advocate domesticated socialism and farcical democracy. If revolution demands violence, authority and discipline, we accept them as a block with all their horrors, and without cowardly reservations." J.C. Mariategui, founder of the PCP.

"It is necessary to introduce new forms of struggle as well as new organic forms, new methods of leadership, new and more developed styles of work, which is to say more Marxism-Leninism-Maoism...according to the necessity of seizing power." President Gonzalo, III Plenum.

The above quotes are still valid when it comes to elections in the U.S. It is always true that in bourgeois elections, there is no alternative to the rule of imperialism and the basic policies that the ruling classes have around their electoral campaigns, orchestrated by their corporate and "public" media. For years, the opportunists and revisionists have sought accomodation in the electoral process without success. All they do in every election is to validate the capitalism system.

In essence, any kind of electoral participation contributes to the political functioning and preservation of capitalism. In every capitalist country elections have been the tool of domain by the big bourgeoisie during its periodical renewals. Elections are a means of domination by those who have power. They are not for the people nor they are a tactical tool of transformation (history proves this!), much less a means to overthrow the power of those ruling us. The majority of the people do not vote, and those who do, do so with little enthusiasm. The overwhelming majority of the people are cynical about elections, and rightly so. We should use elections only as a means of agitation and propaganda outside the organizational structure of the bourgeoisie, to arouse enthusiasm for our cause, to overcome the people's skepticism, their memory of

frequent betrayals and their fear of perhaps not catching the few crumbs offered by the bourgeois candidates. Communists represent new politics and must refuse to recognize the legitimacy of such "elections" that validate the monopoly of property and power by the big banks, corporations and other exploiters. These people who are being "elected" are not the pillars of society but the criminal element. In sum, Lenin's use of election in pre-revolutionary Russia cannot be used to justify electoral opportunism since the situation there was different from the one in the U.S. now.

The United States is the oldest bourgeois democracy in the world, with a ruling class attempting to increase the voting franchise for its own benefit. Revisionists have historically participated in elections, but rather than bringing proletarian power closer to being a reality, they have strengthened and consolidated the grip of bourgeois ideology among the proletariat. They have corrupted the people's consciousness and thus, shifted the balance of power against the people. They have reinforced illusions about the nature of this society and about the apparatus of ruling class political control. The fact is that the masses are utterly disenchanted with "electoral" fronts of the "left." Those who insist on trafficking with elections are the political hacks, the office holders, politically connected job holders, contractors, and hangers-on, etc. Feathering their nests is their primary aim, and the possibilities for doing so are in an inverse ratio to the degree they serve the people's interests.

The myths of bourgeois "equality" and "liberty" are inoculated into the people by the almost mystical qualities of the secret ballot. However, this is a class dictatorship where the army and police, the prisons, courts, administration of the state are in hands of one class of people to rule over another class of people. Imperialists also rule by force of arms, by a hidden dictatorship covered behind a thin mantle of "democracy." It is a bourgeois dictatorship that comes out into the open, as people rise up against it.

Enough with the tale that bourgeois elections serve to help organize the proletariat like the CPUSA, SWP and other fake leftists have claimed for years! Have elections give them a taste of power the way Soviets in Russia did or the People's Committees in Peru do? or have they served to lull the masses by creating an

endless circus of bourgeois politicians that exercise their collective wisdom to exploit the people? Unity & Struggle must practice self-criticism for past opportunist practices with the Rainbow Coalition and not drag-in and mislead its allies into this opportunist and revisionist practice.

HOW DO THE MASSES IN THE U.S. VIEW ELECTIONS?

In general, the poor are less likely to vote. Revisionists attempt to bring them to the ballots to vote for the "lesser of the two evils," the Democratic Party or for a "Rainbow Coalition," however, these reactionary efforts have been futile. Younger people are also increasingly skeptical about voting, causing much consternation among the ruling class. The fact that the masses already have some understanding of the bankruptcy of bourgeois democracy works in our favor. We should not give them false hopes by urging them to participate in elections. Do Not Vote, Build the Communist Party for Revolution!

THE TWO PARTY SYSTEM.

Yes. Lenin participated in the reactionary parliament, as long as Communist parliamentarians upheld principles and did not become traitors and social chauvinists. However, the old Russian Duma at least allowed for multiple parties to be elected parliamentary representatives based on their share of the vote. Thus, they have measured their strength among the masses in non-revolutionary times. However, the two party system practiced by the U.S. ruling class virtually eliminates the chance of participation and the illusory "victory" through the ballots. Only opportunists and revisionists would believe otherwise.

VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

Whenever the oppressed masses rebel against imperialism, isn't there always an effort by the bourgeois media and the people's "representatives" to stress voter registration? Is this a way of focussing the anger of the oppressed to bring them to a higher level of political consciousness and activity? Or does it serve to deliver the political energy of the masses into a harmless effort? Only Communists can take up the task of turning spontaneous anger into organized rebellion. How can voter registration serve

as something more than a tool to strengthen bourgeois illusions among the masses?

Opportunists and revisionists have been saying for decades that some voter registration drives are important because they mobilize the masses. For example, the Jesse Jackson campaigns of 1984 and 1988, mobilized masses of Black people to vote, many for the first time. Most of the tiny Left tailed after this movement in some way or another, like the CPUSA, the New Alliance Party, SWP, WWP, etc. The question we raise is: how many of the Black people mobilized by "leftist" activists in support of Jesse Jackson later became Communists? Lenin was clear on the need to work in reactionary parliaments and elections, under certain conditions, with the goal of winning over the backward workers to revolution and Communism; but after participating in each election, how many were won over to Communist positions through these campaigns? The fact of the matter is that these participations have served only the interests of the Democratic Party. It seems to us that an emphasis on voter registration merely puts Communists at the service of the bourgeoisie.

In instances where the masses are actively prevented from voting by the bourgeoisie (such as the struggles in South Africa or during the Civil Rights movement in the U.S.,) may have served to foment revolutionary aspirations, but we must learn from the relative flexibility of the racist bourgeoisie in channeling these movements, to recognize what tactics are helpful and what are not. Their tactics have changed, so ours must change too.

CONCLUSIONS

If the masses are "legally" curtailed to vote, struggles for the right to vote, like elections themselves, are not reactionary in principle. There have been times, chiefly in relation to the national liberation struggles such as during Reconstruction and during the Civil Rights movement, where these were important mass movements that served as the concrete form of struggle of the masses. However, nowadays, the question is how to lead these struggles for economic and political demands, toward revolutionary goals, mainly to conquer power. As part of the national liberation movement of the 1960s, many embraced the strategy of electing Black officials, many of them more avowed anti-communists, which has clearly

enabled the bourgeoisie to create a more "legitimate" and "colorblind" form of oppression and exploitation that sought to neutralize the class rage of Black people, especially the youth. For Communists today, the question of participation in elections is a reformist issue that educates the masses in legal illusions and leads to the conservation of the capitalism system. In this context, the participation of U&S and other groups will be irrelevant to the class interests, since there is nothing to gain from it.

WHY THE "LEFT" IS IRRELEVANT IN THE U.S.

Have U&S studied and learned the lessons of history? Why did the CPUSA collapse? Why can't the RCP (not to mention the reactionary sects MIM or SWP) uphold the red flag of proletarian internationalism? Have U&S made an objective study of U.S. imperialism? What must to be done in this imperialist country?

Let's begin with the subjective factors we believe have caused the failure of the "left."

1. The revisionist ideology. The poisonous influence and dependence on Soviet-imperialists of the ilk of Khrushchev and its surrogates: Castro, Che Guevara, etc. The revisionist ideology has liquidated all the mass organizations in which the CPUSA had influence. [For ideological preparation study the program of the CP of China, 1976, and the Program of the PCP, 1988]
2. The petit-bourgeois component of the leadership that reflected its petit-bourgeois conceptions in the masses.
3. The bulk of the militants who suffered from grave inadequacy of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, primarily a Maoist ideology.
4. No mass work. A Party cannot consist of masses, but must have a mass character. If not, the Party will be dominated by abstractedness and subjectivity. The PCP teaches that first comes action, then theory is straightened and corrected. First, ingrain yourself in the masses, then develop and apply the theory.

Under the above conditions, it is not possible to form the United Front. And it is impossible to undertake

the constitution or reconstitution of the Party. Without working with the correct ideology (MLM), without the oppressed masses being involved, which is the real future of the Party to be formed, and its only possible sound foundation, any effort to unite the "advance" will fail.

In addition to the danger of imperialist ideology, the main danger of U&S and its young allies now is Revisionism.

Here, we list the revolutionary tasks to be done:

1. The working class must have a vanguard party based on MLM, mainly Maoism. Both leadership and cadre must grasp the basis of Maoism.
2. Create new forms of struggle. The great majority of the old and rotten "Communist Parties" are naturally dying in the U.S. Let's learn their mistakes. Create new forms of struggle. Don't do what they did wrong. We know that they lacked a correct line, that should be our focus.
3. Practice proletarian internationalism. The Marxist-Leninist concept has been abandoned. It has developed into Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, it's a scientific advance. It is proven in practice. Look and learn the theory of the People's War in Peru and the World People's War. Uphold the PCP's red flag, and do not hesitate a minute in doing so, it is also yours!
4. Build a Party. Patch work with splinters groups paralyzes work. Work with what you have. Practice determines a correct line. This is proven by the dialectics of social development. Masses make history. In the course of the mass struggle, the Party (or the leading organizing Committee of the Party), works to impart its higher consciousness to the backward segments of the masses, but in order to do this, the Party must learn from the masses, must understand each stage of consciousness of all social strata of the working class as well as the other social classes, must study and "follow" each initiative of the working class. The Party does not invent forms of struggle, the masses do. The Party leads and channels it. For example, how were the People's Committees and the New Power generated? The PCP did not invent them, but it has analyzed the initiative of the masses. How were the Soviets developed? Neither

Lenin nor the Bolshevik Party invented them. They were created spontaneously by the masses to be the form of future Proletarian dictatorship. Lenin knew how to learn from the masses, that's why he became their greatest teacher. That's why, Chairman Gonzalo, the President of the New Power in Peru states: "Leadership must be forged from the masses to the masses." This is very consistent with the PCP mass line.

"Thus, emphasizing the necessity, importance and immensity of the theoretical work of the Social Democrats, I do not have the least desire to suggest that this work must take precedence over practical work (1), still less that the latter be postponed until the former is completed. Only those who admire the 'subjective method in Sociology' or the followers of Utopian Socialism could arrive at such a conclusion." [Lenin's footnote. On the contrary, the practical work of propaganda and agitation must always take precedence because;

1) theoretical work only provides reply to the problems that practical work raises and,

2) the Social Democrats, for reasons over which they have no control, are too often compelled to confine themselves to theoretical work not to value highly every moment when practical work becomes possible."



PRELIMINARY REPLY TO UNITY & STRUGGLE'S STATEMENT "REVOLUTIONARIES UNITE"

Overall, this is a good effort; an important first step in the struggle to unite all who can be united for the overthrow of imperialism, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, leading to communism, a classless society.

But that having been said, we think that U&S's orientation is all wrong and won't lead to a revolutionary path, but rather would lead down the well-worn path of revisionism, to the defeat of the proletariat.

1) "Build an organization of revolutionaries": There's already plenty of organizations of

revolutionaries; another is not needed. What is needed is a Marxism-Leninist-Maoist Communist Party that can lead a proletarian revolution in the US and can win over those revolutionaries in other organizations today who honestly want an end to imperialism.

2) "United Front for Afro-American Self-Determination; part of United Front against Imperialism": There are already several Black United Fronts. They were described in detail in U&S's "The Black Nation, 1993." More African-American Nationalism is not what's needed; proletarian internationalism is. There are many oppressed nationalities in the US. The African-Americans are the most significant single nationality (although Latin Americans taken together are also considerable), but the way to unite the broadest ranks of African-Americans and other oppressed people against US imperialism, is through proletarian internationalism, not through promoting "Black Self-Determination" as an end in itself, or even as an intermediate demand.

3) "United Front for complete social equality of men and women..." It's not clear to us what the term "United Front" means here (or, for that matter in the previous slogan, the term needs to be defined), but the goal cannot be simply "complete social equality..." It must be the overthrow of imperialism and class society in general! Only within the class struggle is there the best basis to overcome the millenias- old divisions and domination of men over women. Only with the elimination of class society can there be full emancipation of women. This is called Proletarian Feminism. We need to base ourselves on this concept, not on anything less!

4) "Democratic Workers Party: "What for? We need a vanguard Communist Party that can lead mass organizations that fight for economic and social demands, within a context of preparing the ground to fight for political power.

A "Democratic Workers Party" cannot do that! It can only confuse the masses by implying that there's some hope for changing things "through the system", which, we, as Communists, as followers of Marxism-Leninist-Maoism, Gonzalo Thought, know is a complete lie!

5) "Win the Advanced to Communism." This is a good goal, but it can't be accomplished within a reformist program that doesn't even mention Communism, much less Maoism, the highest stage of today's Marxism, let alone define it and focus on it. Besides, Communism is an actual material system that can only be established by an armed struggle that overthrows the existing imperialist system on a world scale. To say "win the advanced to Communism" without further elaborating, obscures what communism actually means.

The comrades of U&S tend to believe that a Party can be constituted on the basis of patchwork, on the merging of this group with that, of raiding cadres from this or that group. It even indulges in drawing up a grandiose national program (e.g., The Black Nation) that proposes the "liberation of the Black Belt in the South" before the proletarian revolution or vice versa, without explaining how and when. It is a good summary of struggles of the Black masses, but lacks historical perspective today. Some U&S comrades are even trying to strike bargains with the WWP. The more advanced honestly want to change and assimilate Maoism. But they are being trapped and cannot advance for lack of leadership that only a MLM Party can provide. The end product of all these "activities" is immobilism or a crude reformism. In these times when revolution is the main tendency in the world and the objective economic and political events here and in the rest in the world are favorable to the constitution of the Communist Party.

In the international context, there is a People's War in Peru to learn, and grasp, uphold, and to raise the red flag up and high, to show proudly that revolution is possible, but U&S is still timid and fearful to do so. It appears to use the cat approach, one lick at a time, and runs close to the stove to a warmer spot.

Here are our specific criticisms to the document "Revolutionaries Unite":

"First we recognize the tradition of National Liberation Struggles..." This is wrong. Since 1917, this has been the era of proletarian revolution, not bourgeois revolution. National liberation struggles are part of the era of proletarian revolution, because they contribute to weakening imperialism. But only proletarian revolution will lead to communism. Without the leadership of a proletarian party national

liberation struggles can only lead to a new bourgeois regime, coming under the domination of one imperialist or another sooner or later. The proletariat of all nations needs an end to exploitation, not just change a familiar face as exploiters instead of having as exploiter someone from another nation.

The strength of the oppressed nations and nationalities within the US is that they are overwhelmingly proletarians. They are overwhelmingly part of the multinational working class, and therefore, are in the best position to play a leading role in the overthrow of the imperialist bourgeoisie. This is what we should be recognizing as FIRST and foremost. It is the CLASS struggle, that inevitably leads to the overthrow of the bourgeois class and the dictatorship of the proletariat, in all nations, imperialist and oppressed alike, setting the stage for the transition to Communism throughout the world.

"...a program for the U.S. revolution, containing both its minimum and maximum demands. The minimum demands focus on the struggle for democracy and Self-Determination, the maximum demands must focus on the overthrow of imperialism and the building of socialism and the eventual emergence of Communism."

This remind us of the Trotskyist concept of "transitional demands." This is an advanced imperialist country. Proletarian revolution is what is on the agenda, not the completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution. The interests of the proletariat are to overthrow the bourgeoisie of all nations, and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in as large an area as possible, not to create smaller independent nations where national bourgeois classes can exploit the proletariat of each nation or nationality.

"...the struggle to define what is a revolutionary in the United States." This is referred to several times in the statement. This is not a primary question. Many types of forces can be revolutionary. But only those who base themselves on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism are COMMUNIST revolutionaries, and that's what is key.

Much more central to the struggle for revolution in this country is the need for a genuine CLASS

ANALYSIS of US society. This is a very complex, heterogenous society; many class and national forces interact in complex ways. The economic structure has changed drastically since the Communist Manifesto was written almost 150 years ago; it has even changed significantly in the last 20 years. Communists cannot lead revolution without understanding the class forces that they are working with. This must be a priority, because to attempt to "define what is revolutionary" without understanding the class forces thoroughly, is ineffective.

"We must take from international revolutionary theory, but at the same time be careful to keep in mind that we are building revolution here in the United States in the last part of the 20th Century." The emphasis here is backwards. There has been a very significant revolutionary experience in the world, and first and foremost we must learn from that. And we must apply that experience and that knowledge to the concrete conditions in this country, a country like this which has never existed before, being the one remaining superpower in the world at this time. Revolution has never been made in such a country.

But the lessons from where proletarian revolution has been made are our starting point. They have been paid for by the blood of the masses, and although we have to adapt them to our own situation, what is primary is that we are not starting from scratch. The main point is not the difference of the US from all other previous revolutionary experience, but rather the universality of the principles of proletarian revolution, as summed up in the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

This science has solved the questions, "What is revolution" and "What is a Revolutionary", in the practice of proletarian revolution in other countries.

We need to apply this experience to the US, not re-solve the questions.

What we propose as an alternative is a set of principles of unity as follows:

1) Build a Marxism-Leninist-Maoist party in the U.S. to lead a People's War to overthrow imperialism and build socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the transition to a classless

society, Communism.

2) On the basis of Proletarian Internationalism, unite the various nations and nationalities within the U.S. to defeat white Anglo domination and to break down the barriers of race and nation that keep sections of the people separate from each other, and the oppressed nationalities super-exploited by imperialism.

3) On the basis of Proletarian Feminism, fight for the complete emancipation of women and for unity and equality between women and men within the class struggle, and within society as a whole.

4) Carry out mass work among the proletariat and other sections of the people, developing a national newspaper as the voice of the proletariat and its party and as its primary organizing tool.

CONCLUSION.

At the present time, we see that U&S and our comrades of CU, need to struggle against Revisionism in its ranks. Electoralism must be combated. It will pervert the organization.

U&S and allies need to struggle for the constitution (or reconstitution) of the Communist Party, a genuine MLM Party.

The Struggle on behalf of MLM theory, and against those who propose Revisionism and Social Democracy, cannot be won on the basis of polemics or exchange of letters. It can and will be won on the basis of work amongst the masses, and active immersion in the class struggle, alongside of which, the waging of a sharp ideological struggle, will then have real significance.

N.N.



MLM, PG

Las armas son un factor importante en la guerra, pero no el decisivo. Los hombres son lo decisivo, no las cosas.

MAO



MAOISM AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLES ARMY OF LIBERATION!
EPL

"The principal thing in warfare is people, us human beings, the ideology that moivates us, the class that leads, the interests being defended and the cause being served"
- President Gonzalo (PCP)

APPLY MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM, PRINCIPALLY MAOISM !

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