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by *Bill Epton*

THE BLACK LIBERATION STRUGGLE
(Within the current world struggle)

The Black Liberation Struggle Within The Current World Struggle

(Bill Epton's Talk at Old Westbury College)

INTRODUCTION

This speech has its roots in many discussions that took place between 1970 and 1971 among Marxist-Leninist forces and among activists in the Black Liberation movement. Some parts of this speech appeared in the only issue of **Proletarian Cause** magazine, published in 1972.

Between the time of this publication and when Bill Epton delivered this speech on February 21, 1976 at a Black History month seminar at State University at Old Westbury in New York, it has had several revisions.

After the speech was delivered, a group of participants in the seminar met and discussed its content and line. The speech was then distributed to a few comrades and friends around the country who offered comments, criticisms and suggestions. We took them into account and made the necessary corrections. The results follow.

My topic tonight, as listed in the outline, is "The Changing Political Struggle in the U.S.". I am not sure whether or not this is an accurate description of how I view the present struggle in this country. There have been some changes in the various methods of struggle. Those forces that are in the struggle may shift from time to time, but the fundamental essence of the political struggle and its focus has not changed. So, I would like to speak to one aspect of the political struggle that has gone through many changes, but whose fundamental characteristics have not changed. That struggle is, **"the political struggle of Black people in the United States for democratic rights—the struggle for socialism."**

In the course of this discussion, I will spend some time discussing the "new" emerging "dogmatists" that have once again attached themselves to the Black people's movement. They are not "new" in the sense that they have not been here before, but they are "new" in the sense that they now parade around as **the** "Marxist-Leninists."

If some of you can recall ten years or so, you will remember some of these same people preaching in the same old dogmatic style, denouncing everyone who did not follow their "line". They were the ones with "the" only correct position. They accepted cultural sloganeering and reactionary nationalism in the same dogmatic, myopic, one-sided, sloganeering and unthinking manner that they now espouse their own brand of Marxism-Leninism. But we will go into this later.

I would like to speak about the Black people's movement and one possible method of solving our problem.

The principal contradiction in the United States today is the contradiction between the U.S. capitalist system (which has reached its highest and most ruthless stage as imperialism) and the U.S. working class.

U.S. imperialism is presently strong, but this is a temporary condition; in reality, it will grow weaker and weaker as the downtrodden masses rise up, strengthened by unity in oppression to defeat it. It has lost its initiative all over the world and is being surrounded by the oppressed peoples of the world, led by the "Third World".

Within the general working class struggle in the U.S., Black people—particularly the working class has consistently played a vanguard role in the struggle for the basic democratic rights of the entire working class, and for the black masses in particular. A clear example of this vanguard role can be seen in the struggle to end discrimination in the use of public transportation, the right to sit and eat where one chooses, the right to decent housing the right to non-segregated quality education, the right to vote and the right to bear arms in self-defense. This leadership also gave rise to the anti-war movement, the movement in support of national liberation struggles, the student movement, the fight of women for their democratic rights and the raising of the question of armed struggle as a viable tactic to achieve these democratic rights. Many of the tactics that shaped the mass movement of the 60's and 70's grew out of the struggles waged by the black masses. These struggles are objectively a struggle for socialism, and the struggle for socialism is the struggle for Black Liberation. The particular way that Black people fight for socialism is in fighting for Black liberation.

Because of the years of slavery, oppression and brutalization heaped upon the black masses, in particular, and other oppressed minorities, and because of the racism injected into the white working class by the U.S. ruling class, the principal contradiction affects the Black working class much more acutely than it affects the white working class. We will discuss here the particular nature of the contradiction between U.S. imperialism and the Black masses and how it affects the changing political struggle in the U.S.

U.S. imperialism is the most rabid, most ruthless and vicious system that has ever existed on the face of the earth. It has the blood of millions of people on its hands. Its crimes against humanity knows no parallel. By W.E.B. DuBois' estimate, 60 million Africans died in the slave trade alone. To this, we must add the rape, plunder and almost complete annihilation of the Indian "nations" of North America. When the day of reckoning comes, the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America will be among the first to get their debt in blood paid. The Japanese civilians who fell victim to U.S. imperialism's bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki will also present their "bill of particulars". While the U.S. makes up 6% of the world's population it consumes 60% of the earth's consumable resources every year! It is, without a doubt, "the common enemy of the people of the world".

This is not an accident, nor a quirk of history. It is the natural course of development of capitalism as it grows and expands into imperialism.

In what Lenin called a "brief definition" of imperialism, he gives a definition that "will embrace the following five essential features:

1. **The concentration of production and capital developed to such a stage that it creates monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life.**
2. **The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation on the basis of "finance capital" of a financial oligarchy.**
3. **The export of capital, which has become extremely important, as distinguished from the export of commodities.**
4. **The formation of international capitalist monopolies which share the world among themselves.**
5. **The territorial division of the whole world among the greatest capitalist powers is completed.**

Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the partition of all the territories of the globe among the great capitalist powers has been completed."

Lenin goes on to say that "politically imperialism is in general a striving towards violence and reaction" (V.I. Lenin, **Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism**, Vol. V, Selected Works, p. 81-83). Lenin saw and correctly analyzed this development over 50 years ago and we see it in operation today.

The other side of this development is that it is forced to set itself up in opposition to the vast majority of the peoples of the world. Thus, it is in contradiction to the revolutionary aspirations of the people's of Asia, Africa and Latin America who want independence, peace and democracy.

Lenin analyzed an imperialism that emerged out of a developed capitalist system. However, an entirely new phenomena has emerged on the world scene—an imperialism that did not emerge out of capitalist development but emerged after a socialist system was overthrown. We will not go into this phenomena in depth here, but we will present this brief outline:

Lenin correctly described the development of the imperialist system as an outgrowth of and the highest stage of capitalism. He also fought against the attacks on socialism and warned and educated the Soviet people that a reversal was possible. It was this reversal that

created the objective conditions for the Chinese and Albanian Communist Parties to study concretely this phenomena and, it was out of this study, that the cultural revolution was launched in China and the struggle against bureaucracy in Albania. A reversal did occur in the Soviet Union and socialism was overthrown. Out of this, an imperialism with a new face emerged.

The USSR's historical development is not the same as the classical historical development that Lenin described. It gives money and arms to national liberation movements. It parades around carrying the banner of Lenin, Stalin, the heroic Soviet working class and socialism. It tries to identify itself with the defeat of German fascism—in a word—it is riding high on the backs of the glorious history of the Soviet working class, its party and its leaders.

It is also in contradiction with U.S. imperialism and, **unlike U.S. imperialism, the major capitalist enterprises are in the hands of the state and not individual or "private" corporations.** As a result, in many respects, it may appear to have many of the characteristics of U.S. imperialism that developed out of capitalism, but when one examined it closely, one will find that this new imperialism—Soviet Social imperialism—has "new" and more complex forms of contradictions.

In the world today, there are the following main forces that are in various stages of contradiction:

1. There is the "First World". This comprises U.S. imperialism and Soviet social imperialism (socialism in words, imperialist in deeds.). Soviet social imperialism is presently stronger militarily than the U.S., but this has very little meaning since they are both capable of destroying each other and the world, with the amount of nuclear weapons they have acquired. Although the Soviet Union is weaker economically, than the U.S., it is politically stronger on a world scale because it is a young and vigorous imperialism. The Soviet Union, therefore, has a dual character.

It has many of the features of its predecessor, czarist Russia. In reality it appears young, vigorous and vibrant, but it has "feet of clay". It also has the advantage that in this period of history when the world is looking to socialism as the answer to the problems that plague mankind, the world looks for socialism where it first appeared.

While U.S. imperialism and Soviet social imperialism are two imperialist countries that are in contention all over the world to grab the resources of other countries, and jockey to achieve military advantage, they are also in collusion to guarantee that no one else emerges to challenge their superiority.

2. Secondly, there is the "Second World": Comprised of Western Europe, Canada and Japan. They, in the main, represent an old, dying and decaying imperialism. They are much weaker militarily than both the Soviet Union and the U.S. but they can be pivotal because of their high degree of industrial development; and because of this high degree of industrial development, they can collectively pose an economic threat to both the U.S. and the Soviet Union. However, they are not unified enough to accomplish this, are suffering economically the same as U.S. imperialism because the current economic crisis is a crisis of world capitalism and therefore affects them also.

3. The hub of all of the contradictions in the world today is the "Third World".*

* The original term "Third World" grew out of the first "Bandung Conference" held in the city of Bandung, Indonesia, that comprised many countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The "first world" was the capitalist countries, the "second world" was the socialist states and the "third world" was the so-called underdeveloped countries.

Collectively, the Third World countries contain the major raw materials in the world, the population and the land.

At the moment, they are, in the main, tied to the economic strings of U.S. imperialism, and, a few are tied to some of the countries of the second world. Of course, if they sever these economic ties they would be outside of the cycles and crises of the capitalist world.

In terms of conventional warfare, it is not a major military threat to either the U.S. or the Soviet Union. But that is not necessarily the way wars will be fought, and the method depends on the people (people's war in China, Indo-China, Albania, etc.). Whenever an imperialist power attacks a Third World country, that country, its people and its revolutionary leadership can resort to people's war. It was this kind of war that drained the U.S. in Indo-China, and no imperialist power is looking for that kind of war again.

Many of the third world countries are forming new economic and political groupings that can be the forerunners of a break with dependence on the imperialist market. This will enable them to break away from one crop economics and they will no longer be providers of raw materials and cheap manpower and consumers of finished industrial products.

These emerging economic and political groupings among Third World countries can be found in the Caribbean, among Latin American countries and most African countries, in the Middle East, the OPEC countries (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), Asian and Southeast Asian countries. They all come together in the "77 group", comprised of many of the third world countries, which is leading the attack on the multi-national corporations.

Obviously, the third world countries are not yet a monolithic bloc, there are contradictions between some of them and of course, they all have internal contradictions. But, in the main, the principal contradiction is between them and U.S. imperialism and, to a lesser degree, Soviet social imperialism. In some cases, primarily in Somalia and Cuba, the principal contradiction is between these countries and Soviet social imperialism. Thus, the world is in great turmoil, contradictions are all around us and neither of the imperialisms can rest in peace.

At home, U.S. imperialism finds itself in one financial and economic crisis after another. A few statistics will illustrate the magnitude of the economic crisis that is facing U.S. imperialism today. We must fully understand that these are not just abstract figures but, (in fact,) represent the suffering and misery that the working class is being forced to endure.

Benton C. Leavitt, Director of the Federal Reserve Division of Banking Supervisors said that in 1974, 38 major banks were on a "problem list". In 1975, that figure rose to 65. In 1973, banks with "deficiencies" held deposits worth \$4 billion. In 1974, banks with "deficiencies" held \$51.9 billion in deposits. Chase Manhattan and First National City Bank are both on the problem list. In the first 10 months of 1975, 11 banks went bankrupt, the highest number since 1942, the last official year of the depression. Altogether in 1975, 13 banks failed completely and went out of business. In addition to all of this, 63 bank holding companies are shaky and under investigation.

1975 was the worst year for the U.S. economy since the depression years from 1929 to 1942. The Gross National Product took a 1.8% dip in 1974 and a 2% dip in 1975—this has not happened since World War II. If we look at the main props of U.S. capitalism—auto, housing, construction, oil and manufacturing,—we can clearly see that the economy is in the worst state that it has been in a long time.

Housing: In 1974, construction starts on housing declined 68% from 1973. 1975's rate of

starts fell to its lowest since 1946. The amount of unsold houses are estimated at 380,000.

Auto: 1974 saw 24% fewer cars sold than in 1973. 1975 added another 9% decrease. Most of the contradictory and conflicting statements, for sale and propaganda purposes, about increases, etc., are all done around these lower levels of production.

Steel: Production fell nearly 20% in 1975 from the 1974 level. This is equivalent to the 1955 level of production that was 106 million tons. The steel industry operated at only 70% of its capacity in 1975.

Oil: 40% of the oil consumption in the U.S. comes from foreign countries, and domestic production has declined steadily since 1971. In fact, the daily crude oil products fell 4½% and natural gas products fell 7%.

Manufacturing industry: The manufacturing industry is only operating at 67% of capacity which is the lowest level since the end of World War II.

A few more economic indicators will further illustrate the magnitude of the present crisis. Corporate profits in 1975, after taxes, were 17% high rate of inflation. U.S. capitalism must therefore increase its profits from somewhere else—and that is on the backs of the U.S. working class.

Bankruptcies in the first ten months of 1975 reached 9,090. This represents a 8% increase over 1974. One of the most spectacular bankruptcies ever, was the billion dollar W.T. Grant business. In 1972, it had a peak volume of 1.8 billion dollars with profits of \$11 million. Banks who had over a billion dollars in outstanding loans will not be paid—and this will further increase the instability of the banks. Nearly 75,000 Grant workers have lost their jobs. This was the second largest bankruptcy in U.S. history.

Here in New York City, the government is in a \$2 billion hole but that is only an ant hole compared to the estimated \$100 billion deficit chasm that the U.S. government has written into it's 1976-1977 budget. In addition to the deficits that New York City has, it has lost approximately 100,000 jobs in the wholesale and retail sectors between 1969 and 1975. These jobs are gone forever!

It is clear that the U.S. government tries to solve its problems the same way that New York City tried, i.e. to borrow more, lay off workers and cut back on social programs. But unlike New York City, the federal government can just print more money as they need it—which only contributes to the vicious inflation cycle. The rate of inflation is officially listed at 7%.

What has been the affect of the crisis on the general working class? Unemployment is at 8.5%, the highest rate since 1941. This can be translated into nearly 8 million people. A report done by the Urban League however, raises serious doubts about the validity of these figures. They say that it is double this, that, in fact, 15 million people are out of work and 3 million are semi-employed. There are 46 million people living in poverty and 15 million of these are living on the bare minimum of social security benefits.

It would be fool hardy to think that just because U.S. imperialism is in direct contradiction with the masses of Asia, Africa and Latin America and is being confronted by the contradictions arising in its own population that it is going to lay down and die. Nothing is further from the truth. Even though we know that, in the long run, we will defeat U.S. imperialism and that it is basically weak, it is very strong in the short run and has many weapons at its disposal that we must take into consideration. Thus:

“... we must despise the enemy with respect to the whole, but we must take him seriously with respect to each and every concrete question. If we do not despise the enemy with respect to the whole, we shall be committing the error of opportunism. Marx and

Engels were only two individuals, and yet in those early days they already declared that capitalism would be overthrown throughout the world. But in dealing with concrete problems and particular enemies, we shall be committing the error of adventurism unless we take them seriously". (Mao Tse Tung, Speech at the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, November, 1957)

U.S. imperialism has not laid down. It is fighting back with the tenacity of a cornered rat. It is supplying and tutoring every feudal and fascist government in the world. It is arming itself with weapons of mass destruction. It is huffing and puffing and blustering all over the world trying to frighten and cower people. Yet, even with all of this, the people will not be cowered: They are organizing and fighting back. They are dealing powerful blows to U.S. imperialism and its lackeys. Even though U.S. imperialism possesses these weapons, they are in opposition to the people, and because of this, it is missing **the most powerful of all weapons, the support of the masses of people!**

This fact is visible in this country too; for it is being forced to fight back just as hard at home as it does overseas. In addition to passing a whole array of anti-labor and anti-strike laws, the imperialists have unleashed a barrage of attacks against oppressed minorities in the U.S.

Historically we have been accustomed to view fascism in its classical form as it emerged and developed in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan. But there are more subtle forms in the U.S. that come gift wrapped as "democracy", "right under law", "protecting the minority from the tyranny of the majority", and other forms of racism and national chauvinism. Using these covers, all kinds of repression can take place. When the people begin to see through these guises and fight back, U.S. imperialism will begin to remove its iron fist from inside its velvet glove.

That is as the crisis of imperialism deepens, it will be forced to resort more openly to fascist-type oppression. This is a sign of weakness—not strength. For the U.S. would like to rule in the "same old way" with all the trappings of democracy—it makes them look better and it helps to fool the people. But now that internal contradictions are sharpening, compounded by external contradictions, it is retreating to fascism—their last resort. In the U.S. fascism has taken a more open form as racism. It can no longer hide its bloody hands! It is waging an unjust war of oppression against the peoples of the world; for it is becoming more and more isolated. It has few friends in the world: a handful of degenerates like itself. Hundreds and thousands of people are being brought closer to the realization that there will be no freedom or liberation for the American people unless U.S. imperialism is overthrown.

The crisis of imperialism and the ensuing squeeze on the working class has bred opposition to foreign wars, an intensification of the general decay of capitalism and a growing unrest on the part of the working masses.

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At present, U.S. imperialism has directed its major thrust at the vanguard of the struggle for liberation and socialism in the U.S.—the Black Liberation Movement. It is because of the Vanguard nature of this struggle, the developing Black Liberation Movement (BLM) and the primary role of black workers that U.S. imperialism uses its most vicious and inhumane tactics to suppress us. Shootings, murders, tear gas, torture, slum living, (education, break up of family structure, uncollected garbage, poor sanitary conditions, poor or no medical care), jailings and dope are reserved for the black masses—in a word, the most vicious, fascistic type of oppression. **Although the entire U.S. population is under bourgeois fascist**

rule, the more overt, brutal and repressive aspects of it are vented on the black community through police harassment, illegal search and seizure, false arrests, interrogations, beatings, etc. Poor and working class white people are also victims of this fascist type repression, but less overtly. It should be made clear that every piece of "anti-black" legislation and "law and order" bills that are passed in this country also apply to the white working class. Most recently, the ruling class has been enacting various types of legislation that in appearance seem to bestow upon black people more democratic rights—i.e. the various busing decisions and the Supreme Court decision on seniority. None of these decisions directs themselves to or penalizes the real enemy of the people and the real practitioners of racial discrimination. These decisions are so constructed so as to pit white workers against black workers and further divide the class.

Those of us who live in black and other third world working class communities see daily, the miserable and inhuman conditions that our people are forced to live under. Some statistical data will serve to substantiate what we see.

More than 26% of Black people are unemployed and the number is rising rapidly.

The median income for black families is \$7,800 while, for white families it is \$13,400. These figures are somewhat inflated, but the disparity is real enough. Income differentials however, do not present a true picture of the disparities that exist between black and white families in this country. Differences in wealth accumulation, which includes not just income, but property accumulated, gives a clearer picture. The average white family who has an income of between \$7,500 and \$10,000 has a net wealth of \$16,441, while a black family with a comparable income has a net wealth of only \$6,021.

Three times as many black women are heads of families as white women. Half of the black population between the ages of 19 and 16 is unemployed, while among whites, the figure is one-quarter. White people born in 1973 can be expected to live, on the average, 7 years longer than a black person born in 1973.

Nationally, one in ten housing units occupied by blacks lacked some or all plumbing facilities. Among whites, the figure is one in twenty.

The prison population in the U.S. is roughly 250,000 and half of those incarcerated are black, even though we make up only 11% of the population according to government statistics. Of the 162 persons sentenced to death in the U.S. as of December 31, 1973, 81 or half, were black.

Ever since black people were brought to this country as slaves we have been subjected to the most brutal forms of exploitation and oppression. As a result of this superexploitation of the black masses, in general, and the black working class in particular, we are forced to fight harder and more consistently to achieve our freedom. Because of these conditions and the antagonistic contradictions with U.S. imperialism, the black people have been thrust into the vanguard role of the U.S. revolution.

In this very complicated struggle that has many twists and turns we find that the Black liberation struggle has characteristics of a national liberation struggle but, is being conducted in the most highly industrialized country in the world by an **industrial proletariat**. Thus, we have to combine the relevant features of a proletarian socialist revolution with the unique qualities of a national liberation struggle that apply to our particular conditions.

In the unfolding and making of the revolution in the U.S., it is necessary that we make an analysis of the classes that exist in the black community and their relationships to the Black liberation movement and in the long run the proletarian revolution.

The U.S. government claims that there were 24 million black people in the U.S. in 1974 or 11.4% of the total population, although the actual population has long been in dispute. In

1974, 53% of black people still lived in the South, 39% lived in central cities, 24% in non-metropolitan areas and 17% in the suburbs. Let us now examine the classes that exist in the black community.

PROLETARIAT

By far, the overwhelming majority of black people are proletariat. There are over 7 million Black working people employed in various industries, from domestics to steel workers. They are concentrated in the basic industries—auto, transportation, textile, steel and the service industries. Black people represent $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of all blue collar workers in steel and metal fabricating, food processing, meat packing, railroading, medical services and communications. They are also concentrated in the centers of the large industrial cities. The black workers “own” very little and what they do “own” is a result of “credit buying” at high interest rates so they are constantly in debt. All they really own is their labor power which they are forced to sell cheaply.

This is the class that daily suffers at the hands of the bosses and the slumlords. This is the class that daily fights, in a thousand and one ways, to protect its class interests against the U.S. ruling class. This is the class that produces the wealth in the factories, the shops, the mines, etc. They are the ones that can organize against imperialism where it will hurt the most—at the source of their profits.

The black working class has consistently fought militant fights against the bosses and the capitalist system. They have very few illusions about where they can “climb” under capitalism. They, in reality, “have nothing to lose but their chains.” Their position gives them the responsibility of being the most advanced force for revolution in the United States.

Black workers have the organizing skills and the discipline that they learn in the shops and in the unions and it is in their most direct interests to overthrow U.S. imperialism. Black working men and women are stable and the chance of them wavering is very small. They have been born into the working class or have just recently entered it and the odds are, that they will remain workers the rest of their lives.

However, the other side of this contradiction is that U.S. propaganda about the “American dream” has affected the entire working class, including black workers, and we will find some black workers who have bought “hook, line and sinker” the notion that they too, “can make it” in the “system”. This illusion is often shattered by the harsh reality that their race and class position that black people are in is a barrier to their “making it.” In this process, we may find some black workers passing over to the side of the enemy, but this will only be a small minority.

The black working class is the class that can give leadership to the BLM and therefore, play a leading role in the socialist revolution. It is a contingent of the entire working class of the world and surely a part of Marx’s description that “of all classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.” (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, **Manifesto of the Communist Party**).

SHARECROPPERS, TENANT FARMERS, FARM LABORERS AND SMALL FARMERS:

The U.S. Department of Labor says that there are approximately 370,000 black “farmers and farm workers”, as of 1969 in the U.S. Due to the nature and history of farming in this country, the greater preponderance of black farmers and farm workers are in the south. Even though among black people, “farm laborers” tend to be part of the working class,

“small farmers” part of the petty-bourgeoisie and “share-croppers” and “tenant farmers” part of the semi-proletariat, their history and development in the south tends to obscure these differences. In addition, because of the mass migration from the land to the large industrial cities in the north and south, these groups are rapidly disappearing.

The income of black farm workers is far below that of black workers and far below the poverty line, as determined by the government. They are forced to live from “hand to mouth.” After the tenant farmer pays his bills, if he is lucky, he will break even. After the sharecropper turns over to the plantation owner his share of the crop and pays his debts, he is barely able to take care of his family. **At times, the sharecropper, the tenant farmer and the owners of poor unproductive farms have to sell their labor as farm workers or industrial workers just to get by. Their main trend is towards becoming members of the proletariat.**

Because of mechanization there has been an appreciable decline in the number of “farmers and farm workers” in the south. Nevertheless, in the plantation south, the cost of labor is so cheap that some of the plantation owners can still make huge profits off of the hand labor, as opposed to full mechanization. These super profits are one of the primary reasons why this feudal kind of production still exists even though it is on a small scale. Many of the farmers have been forced off the farms and have moved into the ghettos of the rapidly industrializing cities of the south. They are a natural and powerful ally of the working class and also “have nothing to lose but their chains” in making revolution.

They work from sun-up to sundown—men, women and children. There are no bourgeois laws that even protect their most elementary rights like wages, hours and working conditions. They live under wretched conditions and are subject to all sorts of diseases and malnutrition. They have been maimed and intimidated since the beginning of slavery, and it continues today. Sharecroppers tend to view the land they work as not being their own. Thus, they have no basic ties to it. As a result, they leave the first chance they get and are the core of the early and heavy migration out of the south to the northern industrial cities.

The other side of the contradiction is that they have been tied to doing things in the “same old way.” They have a tradition of being slow to respond to change and have a strong individualist outlook. They are geared to private means of production. They always talk about having a “little land of my own where I don’t have to work for nobody”, or getting a “little plot of land to work and hunt”, or “raising a few pigs and chickens for myself” and so forth and so on. They tend to vacillate because they see in the proletarian revolution a threat to their little one family individual farm. The proletariat, to them, in many cases, represents “outsiders.” This vacillating side is the minor part of the contradiction. Even though we must be ever so watchful and wage continuous ideological struggle against the “old way” we must never lose sight of their close relationship to the working class and their revolutionary potential.

We can also add to this group the migrant workers. As a group, they are basically farm workers who own absolutely nothing, are systematically denied the most basic and elementary education, have no bourgeois rights at any level, live under the most abysmal conditions, and, in fact, are held in virtual peonage. There is no question that the proletarian revolution will be a “festival” for them. Their exploiters have traditionally been black “overseers” and they have been physically and socially brutalized and degraded by these overseers. This experience tends to make them suspicious of all those who come to them and attempt to win them over to the side of the revolution. It will take a great deal of care and ample demonstration in practice by the revolutionary forces before the basic suspicions of the migrant workers will be overcome.

UNEMPLOYED AND LUMPENPROLETARIAT:

Many black workers are caught in the employed-unemployed cycle. Because they cannot accumulate seniority, due to the "last hired, first fired" principle, a large portion of them spend a great deal of time between jobs. So, many of the unemployed are displaced workers. The other side of the coin is that, especially among youth, some have never worked in their lives.

A clear distinction should be made between those who are in the employed-unemployed cycle, those who collect unemployment compensation between jobs or who find other legal means to eke out a living, and those who have given up the idea of working or who have never worked and who make a "living" by exploiting working people. Many of the "hard core" unemployed and the youth are forced to steal in order to feed themselves and their families.

The unemployed, who are between jobs, and those who never worked and who are looking for work, and who have a working class outlook are true sons and daughters of the working class and are a force for revolution. They live in abject poverty and exist on a hand to mouth basis. Many are either from the farms or are no more than one generation removed. They constitute the largest majority of the unemployed.

On the other hand, there are those who are lumpen: unemployed and have never worked, have worked and have given up going back or looking. They exist by living off the working class like parasites. It takes the form of peddling shoddy goods, stealing, peddling dope and numbers, muggings, etc. They are generally called "hustlers." They are not a reliable force even though it is capitalist exploitation that has forced many of them to resort to their anti-social behavior. Their behavior tends to be highly individualistic and will unite with the "highest bidder."

It is among this section of the population that the U.S. ruling class recruits its spies, assassins, informants, agent-provocateurs and dope peddlers. Some of them who have not entered into the direct pay of the ruling class can be an ally of the working class, but must be closely watched and guided every step of the way along the path of their development.

PETTY-BOURGIESIE

Small shopkeepers, "professionals"—doctors, lawyers, teachers, college students, some high-level civil servants, etc. make up this class. In a category called "professional and technical" the U.S. Department of Labor gives the figure of 700,000 and in the category titled, "Managers, Officials and Proprietors" they give the figure of 250,000. Since the U.S. government has been trying to wipe out the working class statistically and put them in the "middle class" and therefore say that the working class is vanishing, we must view these figures with the greatest skepticism. Many of these jobs and "positions" are working class jobs, and have only been given titles outside of the working class. This is part of U.S. imperialism's attempt to dampen the class struggle.

But, nevertheless, a black petty-bourgeoisie does exist. The small shopkeepers are self-exploited and are forced to work 10 to 15 hours a day to make a living. Some have a second job. In most cases, both adults in the family must work. What little "profit" they make, they make off the backs of the poor working class who are forced to live in ghettos, and many times, have no other place to shop. They charge high prices for shoddy goods and are strong advocates of that part of black nationalism that pushes "buy black." They are often squeezed by the large chain stores. Their entire existence is lived on the border of bankruptcy.

The black professionals, even though they are financially better off than the small

shopkeepers, are caught in the same kind of bind—U.S. imperialism and its racism will not allow them to fully develop. In spite of this, they still strive to “make it” under capitalism. They too, in the main, make a living off the black ghetto community and exhibit a strong capitalistic tendency to protect their own financial interests.

Within this class there are those that can identify with the working class and understand the racial aspects of the struggle. On the other hand, we find those who only understand the racial aspects because it fits into their aspirations as exploiters. And finally, we find a very small handful who identify completely with U.S. imperialism and who view the exploitation and suppression of black people as being in their interests.

The latter are out and out enemies of the black masses and should be treated as such, but the others tend to waver and can be won over to the side of the revolution. Many of them work for a living, and, in effect, sell their labor power, but at the same time, they talk and act in a manner that says clearly, “we are educated and we have made it and we know what’s best for the movement.” Some talk down to black workers and put on airs. Some even hold black workers in contempt.

With the tremendous upsurge of black militancy and rebellion in the 1960’s some felt as if they were caught in the middle. They didn’t know which way to turn. The racism of U.S. imperialism would not let them become full members of the imperialist system and they were afraid of the black working class. Many of them, at that point, had decided to sit on the fence. On one hand, while they recognized the strength and revolutionary potential of the BLM, they didn’t want to give up their “privileged” position and their Brooks Brothers suit (or even their dashikis).

On the other hand, it must be remembered that it was the black petty-bourgeoisie who, during the late 1950’s and early 1960’s led the civil rights movement and paved the way for the level of struggle and gains in the mid and late 60’s. We think that in the main, the majority of the black petty bourgeoisie can be won to the revolution and are a progressive force (most of them either came from the working class or are only one generation removed). Which way they go depends on how the revolutionary movement deals with them.

BOURGEOISIE

If we use the Marxist-Leninist definition (those who own the means of production) a black bourgeoisie does not exist. By 1972 there were 195,000 black owned business enterprises with total receipts of \$7.2 million. This represented a 20% increase over the number of firms that existed in 1969 and this paltry \$7.2 million is a 60% increase in gross receipts since 1969. Is there anyone who wishes to argue that a black bourgeoisie exists?

Even though there may be a handful of blacks, who call themselves “black capitalists” and may own an insurance company, or be on the Board of Directors of a bank in the ghetto, or an athlete or “entertainer” who has accumulated a million dollars, they in no way determine the course of the U.S. imperialist system.

More recently the U.S. ruling class has been systematically building up a whole new strata of black entrepreneurs to act as a buffer between itself and the black masses. Many of them have been created through various government sponsored programs and grants. Most notable of these are Jess Jackson and his PUSH and Floyd McKissick. The main function of this strata of the petty-bourgeoisie is to siphon off the militants and confuse the black masses and, where possible, divert the BLM. The current depression is wiping them out fast!

* * * * *

Based on this analysis, it is clear that at least 95% of black people are a force for revolution and can be united. They can be united around working class demands which may seem to take the form of racial demands—which are not in contradiction. There will be times when what appears to be demands based on race, appear to be primary and class demands secondary, and then it will shift to class demands becoming primary. Even when it appears that the racial form of the struggle has developed to a primary position it will, in fact, still be an integral part of the proletarian revolution.

There are contradictions that exist within the BLM—the primary one being between the working class and some of the petty-bourgeoisie. These contradictions will center primarily around the world outlook of the petty-bourgeoisie, which on the one hand can take the form of reactionary nationalism, individualism, their wavering and their fear of the masses and, on the other hand, the proletarian ideology of the working class. These are non-antagonistic contradictions and can be resolved within the framework of revolutionary struggle under the direct leadership of the working class and its party. If, however, these non-antagonistic contradictions are not handled correctly, they can easily become antagonistic. Except for a few lackey's and traitors who openly work for U.S. imperialism against the interests of the black masses, the overwhelming majority of black people can be united to play their role in defeating U.S. imperialism.

* * * * *

There are some obstructions in the path of the U.S. working class, in general, and in the black liberation movement, in particular, in our march towards proletarian revolution. Among those are:

1. White racism and its companion, national chauvinism
2. Intra-class divisions
3. Reactionary nationalism
4. Dogmatism
5. Male Chauvinism

WHITE RACISM*

Racism is to be found in every aspect of life in the U.S. It has its roots firmly planted in the economic base and is supported in every part of the superstructure (politics, ideology, religion, legal system, the educational system, etc.)

The reactionary U.S. government will always use this trump card when it finds itself under seige by the oppressed peoples of the world and at home.

This weapon is used to prevent the working class from uniting, it is profitable (billions of dollars are made in extra profit every year by capitalism because of the differences in wages between black and white workers) and it confused the working class as to the nature of the real enemy.

There are some white workers who are conscious of the fact that they are in a privileged

*Racism is a social phenomena that divides black and white workers subjectively along racial lines and objectively because more surplus value is extracted by the ruling class from the labor of black workers than is extracted from white workers and because of their different relationship to the means of production. These differences constitute the material basis of racism.

position because of the racism of the U.S. imperialist system, and they get a few extra crumbs because of it.

Marx made it quite vivid as far back as 1846 when he said:

“Direct slavery is as much the pivot of our industrialization today as machinery, credit, etc. Slavery has given value to the colonies; the colonies have created world trade; world trade is the necessary condition of large-scale industry. Thus, before the traffic in Negroes began, the colonies supplied the Old World with only very few products and made no visible change in the face of the earth. Slavery is therefore an economic category of the highest importance. Without slavery, North America, the most progressive country, would be transformed into a patriarchal land. You have only to wipe North America off the map of the nations and you get anarchy, the total decay of trade and of modern civilization.” (Marx letter to P.V. Annenokov, Marx & Engels Selected Works, p. 675).

As a result, the slavery of the African peoples in the U.S. helped in the development of the white industrial proletariat and to whatever better living, working and social conditions they enjoyed over that of black people. Not only did they experience these better conditions over the Afro-American population but also over the world proletariat. In 1916, Lenin said:

“The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of numerous branches of industry, in one of numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to corrupt individual sections of the working class and sometimes a fairly considerable minority, and win them to the side of the capitalists of a given industry or nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the partition of the world increases this striving. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism, which revealed itself first and most clearly in England, owing to the fact that certain features of imperialist development were observable there much sooner than in other countries.”

Since Lenin made this penetrating analysis, Western European imperialism has sharply declined and U.S. imperialism has emerged as the dominant imperialist country. Because of this dominant position and the super profits gained, U.S. imperialism was able to extend its bribes to even larger sections of the working class than just the “labor aristocracy.” At the same time that U.S. imperialism was extracting super-profits off the backs of the African slaves, it was maximizing its profits off the backs of the white working class.

It staggers the imagination when one attempts to calculate the fantastic amount of capital accumulated and the enormous profits the reactionary U.S. ruling class has made because of the direct slavery and wage slavery of the Afro-American people. In order for them to continue to make these super-profits off the oppression of the black working class, U.S. imperialism has carried on a systematic campaign throughout its controlled press, other mass media, and its educational system to vilify black people and preach their “inherent inferiority” and other such trash. Because of this campaign many white workers mistakenly think that this racism is in their interest.

This racism also expresses itself against Mexican-Americans, native Americans, Puerto Ricans and, of course, the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Also, here, white workers recognize that they are materially better off than their counterparts in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. And it’s probably virtually impossible to find one white worker who does not understand that, in the U.S., there is a distinct disadvantage in being black.

White workers are materially better off because of the higher rate of productivity and

many years of intense class struggle to win these better conditions. In addition, U.S. imperialism is able to make certain concessions to the U.S. working class because of the super-exploitation of the peoples of the world that has brought it super profits. These conditions have led to a form of national chauvinism among some white workers (and a few black workers also).

The leadership of the trade union movement has also played a role in the development and perpetuation of racism in the U.S. From its inception, the organized labor movement in this country has been economistic and racist. As long as the goals of organized labor remain economistic, racism assumes a perverse logic because the bargaining position between organized labor and capital can be improved by excluding black labor from the job market and even from the reserve army of that particular area of work that is unionized. Even though the bosses will bring blacks into a particular job when there is a particular need, there are some jobs that black people can never have under capitalism.

But there is another side to this question and that is the unsolvable contradiction between U.S. imperialism and the working class. As long as capitalism exists, it must not only extract super-profits and exploit the oppressed peoples of the world, but it must also oppress and exploit its own working class. That is the law of the development of capitalism and imperialism and only proletarian revolution can change it. So the ruling class will try to continue to squeeze profits out of the white working class and attempt to convince them that their misery is the fault of blacks. However, sharpening contradictions are preventing them from maintaining the economic and social differentials that exist between black and white workers.

The white working class has a long history that goes back to the American Revolution, where they have fought bloody battles in their own class interests against the ruling class. Their contradiction with U.S. imperialism is a class contradiction and therefore irreconcilable under capitalism. In the final analysis, they must seek and find unity with their class brothers and sisters if that contradiction is to be dealt with.

White workers must be brought to understand through class struggle, political education and ideological remolding, that racism is slowing down human development, including their own. They must understand that every crumb and penny "extra" that U.S. imperialism may give them over black workers is directly the result of profits derived from super-exploitation of oppressed peoples at home and around the world. It must be shown to them in direct confrontation with the ruling class that U.S. imperialism is also their mortal enemy. They must learn that they will never be really free from exploitation unless they come out and fully support the BLM. White radicals, progressives and Marxist-Leninists must play a key role in the shops, in the communities, in their organizations, in their unions and in the schools to wage class struggle against racism.

All of these areas must become battlegrounds and living classrooms in the study and application of how to wage battles against white racism and support for the Black Liberation struggle, allied with other Third World people in the U.S. as the most militant, progressive and vanguard force of the proletariat for real democracy, peace and socialism in the U.S.

This battle will be long, complicated and a difficult one that will see all kinds of roadblocks and detours in our path. We must learn how to smash them, not get sidetracked, properly analyze each situation, grasp and learn to apply Marxist dialectics and win battle after battle until we are victorious.

Even if, to many, the white working class seems to be "backward", that is only looking at it one-sidedly and not properly analyzing the inherent contradiction between capitalism and

the working class. What will emerge and come into being will be a closer unity between the white working class and the BLM. We therefore view the white working class as a revolutionary force. Thus, there can be no proletarian revolution in the U.S. unless the BLM and the white working class unite under one banner led by the entire working class and its Marxist-Leninist Party.

INTRA-CLASS DIVISIONS

The reality of American society is most accurately represented by an increasing polarization between the vast majority which must sell its labor power in order to survive, and the shrinking minority who own and control the means of social production and, therefore, can live without working. Leaping over its original bounds this wage relationship has been extended beyond the classically defined industrial proletariat to encompass those involved in office work, the sales effort and all but the upper reaches of the corporate and governmental bureaucracies. It has been estimated that by 1969 89.5% of the labor force had become wage or salary earners while only 9.1% remained self-employed. On the one hand it is the development of the process of producing and reproducing surplus value under the conditions of monopoly capitalism which has been the motive force for this polarization. On the other hand this polarization has a revolutionary potential which capitalists must address in order to maintain their class rule. Francesca Freedman in her illuminating article 1 on class fractions outlines the process by which capitalism attempts to defuse this development:

“ as the objective conditions different groups of workers face become more alike, the need to divide them on an ideological basis becomes even more acute. As objective differences between workers decline, subjective divisions must be more frantically shored up by management, so that workers are kept from recognizing their essential unity as a class. These divisions must appear—both to capitalist and to workers—to arise naturally out of the technical requirements of production (regardless of the social formation to which they belong) or out of “human nature.” 2

Thus the emergence of new sectors of the economy—such as service and sales—with their characteristic work forces, the evolution of an occupational hierarchy within the working class, the apparent differentiation between mental and manual labor, productive and unproductive labor all this becomes the objective basis for the increasing subjective divisions of the working class characteristic of monopoly capitalism.

This subjective differentiation general to the entire working class is increasingly being seen in the black working class section also. Black proletarianization has increased the occupational differentiation within the black working class both in terms of the numbers of economic sectors in which a significant black presence is found as well as the more numerous occupational levels attained by blacks within the job hierarchy. Mistakenly, this increasing occupational differentiation has been viewed as the process by which blacks have attained “middle class status”, or in other terms have emerged as a “black bourgeoisie.” It

1. Freedman, F. “The Internal Structure of the American Proletariat: A Marxist Analysis” **Socialist Revolution** #26. October-November '75, p. 50.

2. Op.Cit. pp. 53-54.

was E. Franklin Frazier who identified the objective basis of this "black bourgeoisie" and exposed its essentially mythical existence. He noted that:

"The black bourgeoisie is constituted of those Negroes who derive their incomes principally from the services which they render as white collar workers (and skilled laborers). Despite the dreams of Negro leaders at the turn of the century that Negro businessmen would become organizers of big industries and large financial undertakings, Negroes have not become captains of industry nor even the managers of large corporations. Through the slow occupational differentiation of the Negro population, which was accelerated as the result of the migration to northern cities and the changes in the American economy during two world wars, a class of white collar workers has acquired a dominant position among Negroes. What has come to be known as "Negro business" has consisted chiefly of a few insurance companies, of a number of smaller banks and newspapers, of small retail stores, restaurants, undertaking establishments, and similar enterprises which serve the needs of the segregated Negro communities." 3

While Frazier penned these lines over 25 years ago, contemporary developments have more than reinforced the wisdom of his farsighted and accurate analysis. We see then that the so-called "black bourgeoisie" is in reality merely a fraction of the black working class. Its objective reality can scarcely lay claim to petty-bourgeoisie—let alone bourgeoisie—status. However, the appearance of significant numbers of black workers in the service and surplus value sectors of the economy as well as the opening up of occupations from which black workers were previously excluded *de jure* and *de facto* has made petty bourgeois ideology a real and presently dominant force within the Black working class. The force of petty bourgeois ideology in the Black working class is buttressed by the appearance of material achievement through occupational differentiation and a general move away from the occupations associated in the popular mind with the working class. As a centrifugal tendency within the black working class, petty bourgeois ideology must be resolutely combated. In this protracted struggle objective reality is on our side. While the process of capital accumulation creates the necessity for subjectively fractionalizing the working class, the material basis of this fractioning, (i.e. occupational differentiation) is being undermined by the secular trend to "de-skill" occupations as the accumulation process develops so as to maintain and, if possible, increase the rate of surplus value and thus the rate of profit. Even the clerical occupations, a large component of the so-called white collar occupations are being subjected to the same alienating routine as the industrial work force. Over time, therefore, there is no position in the occupational hierarchy which is sacrosanct or whose status position will not ultimately be debased. We must bring to the attention of those members of the working class generally and its black segment in particular, who are imbued with petty bourgeois ideology, that they aspire to jobs and status which are transitory and fleetingly attainable. . . if at all. Especially for black workers, these positions have been attained only at a time when they have already begun to lose their mystique and remunerative potential. In the face of capitalism's tendency to divide subjectively what is objectively united we must uphold the fundamental unity of the working class and develop a realization of this fundamental unity in the working class generally and among black workers in particular.

3. Frazier, E. F. **Black Bourgeoisie**. Free Press 1957, New York. p. 43.

REACTIONARY NATIONALISM

One of the major aspects of the present situation in the U.S. has been the concerted attacks against the black masses, the vanguard of the proletarian revolution. Thus, it is counter-revolutionary and reactionary to raise black nationalism and white racism in the same breath. It would also be sheer folly not to actively unite and support the entire black masses—all levels and strata that can be united in the battle against U.S. imperialism.

To raise the nationalism of the black masses in the same way and in the same breath as the racism of white people is to deny the oppression of black people. The racism perpetrated by U.S. imperialism, which has deep roots among the white masses, is in every way, at all times and without exception reactionary, anti-working class and counter-revolutionary. Black people, in turn, respond to this racism and their class oppression by raising their own class interests and racial consciousness. [The anti-racist struggle is just another form of the class struggle.]

The nationalism of black people in general, and black workers in particular, is a motive force that brings them into sharp conflict with U.S. imperialism. It is a revolutionary and powerful force for fighting for the entire working class in the U.S. and internationally. Therefore, to put nationalism and racism in the same light is to look at the developing struggle one-sidedly and undialectically. To put into practice this erroneous political theory is to put into practice a counter-revolutionary line. The main content of nationalism, as it expresses itself among the black population in the U.S., is its anti-racism and not what is called nationalism in the classical sense—that of a people struggling to drive out foreign invaders and liberate their nation. It was this anti-racism that accounted for the immense popularity of Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X among the black masses.

At the same time, not to see the other side of nationalism is also one-sided and undialectical. Nationalism also has a reactionary side which has its roots in pettybourgeois ideology. This is also a reaction to white racism and emerges as cultural nationalism, back to Africa and black capitalism. These movements are essentially defeatist, no-struggle and exploitative. They represent only a handful of individuals, have very little following and are counter-revolutionary. They can, however, become a powerful force if the working class does not take the leadership of the BLM. The nationalism of the former is progressive and revolutionary, while that of the latter is regressive and reactionary.

DOGMATISM

Many of the cultural nationalists have re-emerged in the black people's movement as "Marxist-Leninists"—"instant revolutionaries" who have come to lead black workers to emancipation. They have brought with them the same dogmatic style of work, the same fervor and blind headlong rushes that characterized their other chameleon changes in the past. In just a little while, we will see these "instant Marxist-Leninist" leaders off to some other crusade with the same headlong blind dash into whatever else is popular that they feel they must lead.

Some of these people take themselves seriously, so I think that we should give them the benefit of the doubt and look at them seriously. But like everything else in the world in this country, and therefore in the "left," developments have a historical basis. In addition, because we attempt to look at these developments dialectically, we can see that what happens in the general left movement in the U.S. has its reflections specifically among forces in the black community who consider themselves "left." Thus, I will try to look at this entire development historically.

There is a serious problem that exists within the U.S. left movement today that began

with the birth of the first socialist state in 1917. The problem is essentially the inability of the "left" forces to apply the science of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the U.S. Since the "left" movement has always been a movement led by the petty-bourgeoisie in the U.S., the petty-bourgeoisie brought with it into the movement a style of work and thinking that, to a large degree, negated complex, analytical and scientific thinking. They brought with them the concept of "follow the leader" and thinking and learning by rote has wreaked havoc in and among the left forces in this country and in the people's movement also. By people's movement I mean the tenant's movement, the anti-war movement, trade union movement (as opposed to its leadership), the student movement, etc., in a word, all those progressive movements that are fighting for the democratic rights of the people.

After the first worker's revolution was successful in Russia in 1917, the young, militant and revolutionary communist movement in the U.S. took that as their model—and rightfully so. I use the term "model" because it was a revolution that had seized state power in the name of the working class and could be looked at in order to aid us in shaping our course of action. But there were others, whom we shall call the "dogmatists", who did not see the Soviet Union as a "model" that we could learn from, but rather, saw it as a "jig" that we could clamp on to the U.S. and shape our struggle accordingly. For those of you who do not know what a "jig" is, let me explain: On assembly lines when thousands of parts have to be made exactly alike there is one piece, called a jig or mold, that is clamped on the unshaped or unmolded piece of material and an exact duplicate is shaped. These people I am referring to wanted to mold the U.S. exactly like the USSR. In fact, in the south they formed organizations that were set up as "peasant" organizations and "peasant and worker" organizations. I don't recall when I have heard of "peasants" existing in this country. Be that as it may, let's move on. Some of the sharecroppers and tenant farmers and farm laborers may have had some similar characteristics as the Eastern European peasants right after the Russian revolution but they surely did not go through the same historical transition from slavery, feudalism, serfdom and then peasantry. In the context of the U.S. experience, they were slaves, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, small scale farmers and farm laborers.

One other example and then I will move on. A friend of mine who was then a leader of the U.S. Communist Party ran for political office in the Bronx in the 1920's and 1930's under the slogan of establishing a "Soviet of the Bronx." How do you like that for creativity?

Well, this kind of thinking also had its application to black people. At a meeting in Moscow in 1928, which brought together some of the leading Marxists in the world, a decision was made that the "Negro question in the U.S. is a national question", that black people in the southern part of the U.S. (specifically the black belt counties) constituted a nation, using criteria that was established for the concrete conditions that existed in pre-revolutionary Russia. Again, these were very specific conditions that had their roots in the centuries of historical development in Russia and did not fit like a jig on the development of black people in this country. But more on this later.

Thus, a pattern of thinking in the "left" established itself and is still with us today. Throughout the 1920's, 30's, 40's and 50's, the American communist movement twisted, reversed and contradicted itself based on internal or external developments in the Soviet Union. The fault for this cannot be laid on the doorstep of the Soviet Union—even though they were not completely innocent.

The Soviet Union, under the leadership of the great Lenin, established a new society—the dictatorship of the proletariat—where the proletariat, the workers, the majority of the people had power to determine their own destiny. They had no model to follow, they were charting a new course. Under the guidance of Lenin and Stalin, using Marxism as their

guide, they began to build a socialist society. Sometimes they made mistakes. It was difficult to deal with the form and method of how to fight old ideas (bourgeois or ideas of the ruling class under the old society) and the people who had them (this is called the class struggle). The difficulty in this was the problem of now having state power and having to constantly fight against the old backward ideas that existed in their ranks and among the people. This is the question of how the class struggle is carried out after the workers have seized power. On top of all these internal problems, the Soviet Union was completely surrounded by capitalist enemies who left no stone unturned in their attempts to overthrow the worker's state.

Given this complex internal and external situation, many winds were blowing out of Moscow and every time a new one blew, the CPUSA caught a new cold.

When the revolutionary leadership of the Soviet Union was completely usurped by anti-communist forces, the Albanians and the Chinese, using the dialectical and analytical method of thinking, broke with these regressive forces. Many other left forces around the world also made the break. Of course, the same thing happened here in the U.S.—a tiny handful of Marxist-Leninist broke with the CPUSA and formed the Progressive Labor Movement, which later became the Progressive Labor Party.

This anti-revisionist movement was a good and healthy development. At that particular time, the developments that were occurring in the Soviet Union were described as revisionist, i.e. the revision of the science of Marxism, distorting it and, in the main, turning it into its opposite. Many leftist recognized the errors and the capitulationist policies of the CPUSA. The developments in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and the slavish attitude of the CPUSA highlighted this recognition. Thus, a so-called "new" anti-revisionist "left" was born in the early sixties. But like all "new" births, the child will carry with it many of the traits of its parents. So, the "new" anti-revisionist "left" came into being with many of the non-dialectical, non-analytical, non-scientific and "repeat-after-me" rote kind of learning and thinking.

Many of us have not learned our lesson well. We have physically and in many cases, ideologically, broken with the corrupt CPUSA but we have not broken with them in style and method.

One of the many great contributions to the peoples of the world by the Albanians and Chinese Communist Parties is their struggle to develop methods of carrying out the class struggle under socialism—a most fundamental problem that could not be solved in the Soviet Union under Stalin. This struggle, which is far from over, will continue years and years after the establishment of socialism, reached its height during the "Cultural Revolution" in China.

The Cultural Revolution was the culmination of the years of struggle that followed the break with the Soviet Union because there were many revisionist forces at all levels of leadership in China. Similar developments occurred here. Because we broke physically with the revisionist CP did not necessarily mean that we thoroughly broke with their style, method and political outlook. You must remember, as I outlined earlier, we learned our style and method by rote in the CP and the CP had nearly a 55 year history of existence and close to 100,000 members at one time so their influence is not easily wiped out!

So, by rote, many of us followed the developments in China and copied them in our notebooks. We tried to adjust the jig or mold to fit our concrete conditions in the U.S. and twisted, turned, reversed and contradicted ourselves based on China's internal and/or external political development and line. The results were predictable.

As the Chinese went through the very complicated struggle of the "Cultural Revolution",

they used M-L as their guide under the leadership of Mao Tsetung. They also made mistakes, had to change course, contradicted themselves, and, at times, had to reverse themselves. That is the Chinese experience that happened under very specific conditions, at a specific time in history, and in China that has a specific history that goes back hundreds of thousands of years. Well, how did our "new left" forces deal with this development?

They used their typical dogmatic, non-analytical, non-scientific and learners and doers by rote method of viewing this historical event. They claim to want to be followers of the Chinese and followers of the M-L method of analysis, but in reality, they have made a mockery of the great Chinese experience. They have insulted the names of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung and they have abominated the science of Marxism-Leninism. What they did was to once again follow in the footsteps of their revisionist predecessors of the CPUSA. Being too lazy to learn the M-L method, as used by the Chinese CP, they decided to copy instead. And in the "repeat after me" manner of thinking, they attempted to apply the Chinese experience to the concrete conditions of the U.S. I'll give just three of the most glaring examples to illustrate my points.

During the period leading up to and during the cultural revolution, the major external publications that came from China were not always in the hands of the M-L forces. And, at times, the political line of those publications would reflect the line of those forces in control—be they "ultra-leftist", revisionist or Marxist-Leninist. That was basically an internal Chinese problem that was resolved when the Marxist-Leninist forces gained ascendancy. But, in this country, the political line of some of the M-L forces shifted and changed correspondingly, and, to my knowledge, they never knew why their political lines were bouncing all over the place.

A second example. For many complicated reasons, the Chinese chose to support all three of the movements who claimed to be fighting the Portuguese in Angola for national liberation. They also chose not to support anyone of them after a date for independence had been established. They chose, instead, to support the concept of a coalition government representing all three factions. They also chose to withhold support and recognition of the MPLA as the legitimate representative of the Angolan people.

I am sure that there are many reasons why the Chinese decided to take these positions, which I will not go into here, but the main point that I am trying to make is that some of the "dogmatic", unthinking, non-analytical, non-scientific and follow-by-rote forces on the "left" in this country followed each one of these positions of our Chinese comrades without thought to their meaning or their application to the concrete conditions that exist here in the U.S. In fact, at one demonstration in the heart of Harlem on 125 St. and 7th Ave., in a community that has at least 30% unemployment, deteriorating housing, a serious drug addiction problem, police repression, etc., some of these dogmatists held a rally in "support" of Angola and carried banners that called on Black people of Harlem to "defeat Soviet social-imperialism."

Now that the Chinese are no longer calling for a coalition government and when they say the "MPLA is the legitimate representative of the Angolan people", so too will our "dogmatists" say "MPLA is the legitimate representative of the Angolan people."

Again, with these dogmatists we have to look outside of the borders of this country, outside of the experience and history of the Afro-American people and outside of the concrete conditions of the U.S. revolutionary experience to find the source of their political line and development. What they wanted to find out was how to solve the problems of the development of the black people's movement in this country. So, they once again looked to China, found a situation that they considered similar, found a word to go with it and, voila,

they now have a line on the race question in the U.S.

Here is how it happened. In China, there are many national groups that had many centuries of development in specific areas of China. Before China became a unified state many of these national groups were independent nations. Through wars of conquest, these independent nations were brought under the control of a unified China. So today, the Chinese government rightfully characterizes their country as multi-national, i.e. composed of many national groups that have this specific historical development.

Well, our dogmatic non-thinkers said "Ha. . . . Now I have the answer. The struggle in the U.S. is "multi-national." All they have to do is to combine the decision made in Moscow in 1928 that came from the Russian historical experience with the historical experience of the Chinese and take the jig and fit it over the black people in this country and answer to the questions facing the black movement.

If our struggle is "multi-national", therefore using the Marxist definition of "national" as being a nation, then we are once again back to the decision made in Moscow that we are a nation and have the "right to self-determination" which includes the right to secede, i.e. the right to set up a new nation and declare our independence from the U.S. government! Some of the dogmatic non-thinkers go this far; others go halfway and say we have the "right to self-determination" and still others just say that we are an ill-defined nation or "a nation of a new type" and other such gobbledegook. And then there are the real slippery ones who talk of multi-national as not meaning any nation but some other ill-defined "something else."

And keeping in line with their predecessors in the CP, and PL after it too became a dogmatic sect, they multi-nationalized black people's organizations out of existence.

According to their bourgeois logic (as opposed to M-L scientific analysis) they say that if we have a "multi-national" struggle then we must have "multi-national" organizations and if we have multi-national organizations then we don't need black organizations. So they liquidate the black organizations—exactly the same way the CP did in the 40's and 50's and PL did in the 1960's. Events have come their full circle, except this time with a new cover.

Our strategic goal is "workers of the world unite." Applied to the U.S. we advance the strategic slogan, "U.S. workers unite to defeat imperialism." Tactically, this will mean that we will have many organizational forms that will strive towards our strategic goal. One of these tactics is the formation of black mass organizations. But our instant Marxists do not understand the difference between strategy and tactics so they are confused and advance strategic goals and slogans as tactical ones and therefore put forth organizational forms that do not correspond with the period that the black liberation movement is in.

The black people's movement has a tremendous job ahead of itself and it most assuredly does not need these "instant M-L leaders" to take it down the wrong path. When they were "cultural nationalist" black people did not follow them and there is no reason to believe that black people will follow them with their false Marxism!

MALE CHAUVINISM

It is clear for all to see the important position that black women represent in the working class and among the black masses. The class and racial oppression of black women was quickly established with slavery and played a vital role in their political development. Because of this oppression and political development, black women play a vital role in maintaining the racial unity of black people. Some black men, often confronted with tremendous obstacles and facing many daily setbacks, find themselves in a position where they cannot support their families. In order for their families to get relief, they are forced to flee, leaving

their wives and children. Others just desert out of sheer hopelessness. Thus, the burden of raising a family and being the "breadwinner" falls on the shoulders of black women.

Who, but these women, who have suffered hundreds of years of degradation, insults and burdens beyond relief can tell what it means to live under capitalism? They have been consistent, glorious and staunch fighters. They constitute half of the black population and are, without a doubt, a force for revolution. Who would be stupid enough to go into battle with only half of the available troops, when all can be put into battle? Why should the black proletariat go into combat against U.S. imperialism disunited? Obviously it would be stupidity of the highest order!

But isn't this happening to a large degree today? Even though our black women play a decisive role in production, in raising the family and in political struggle, and are more exploited than even the black man, the chauvinism of the black man serves to keep not only black women from fully developing but also prevents black men from fully developing.

There can never be a revolutionary movement, not to speak of a revolution, unless the power and strength of black women is brought into full play. This means that male chauvinism (the so-called superiority of men over women) must be defeated and ground into the dust.

The oppression of black women by black men, a by-product of capitalism, must cease! It is counter-revolutionary and reactionary. Black women are more exploited than black men. In addition to being exploited as workers and as women, they are exploited because they are black.

It is precisely because of the position of women and the brutal exploitation of black women, in particular, that they are an important revolutionary section of the working class. They are the most oppressed, have very few illusions, have had a high degree of political development, and will therefore fight back just as hard and, in most cases, even harder than the men. Recent history has shown that black women have taken leading roles in the fight for better housing, welfare rights, against police terror, against drugs, in trade union struggles. Black men must play a key role in defeating male chauvinism and uniting the black working class.

As the working class generally will be led by black Marxist-Leninists in the BLM, black women will play a leading role among these black working class revolutionaries.

The black people's war is a just war against our oppressors. It is a part of the worldwide revolutionary movement. We have many friends and allies.

CONCLUSIONS

The struggle of black people for their liberation is a struggle in the interests of the overwhelming majority of mankind. The Black people can in no way achieve complete liberation without first overthrowing U.S. imperialism. Since 1964, the concrete conditions and the level of struggle has qualitatively changed and a leap has occurred from the bourgeois-democratic demand of civil rights to the demands of armed struggle, revolution and socialism. This is the new feature of the BLM and the general working class movement in this country.

In the process of grinding U.S. imperialism into the dirt, the entire working class and its allies will be brought into the fight and will see that they can never be fully liberated unless they give all out support to the BLM. This, of course, will tie U.S. imperialism down on its own home ground and make it less capable of sending its troops to suppress other oppressed peoples fighting for their liberation.

There is no question that the racial oppression of black people has acted as a motive force

for black people to identify with oppressed peoples of the Third World. And, to a great degree, this identity is based on color oppression. We view this identity, based on color oppression, as an integral part of the worldwide class struggle and class unity of the oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, against imperialism and colonialism. It is a positive force that has contributed to raising the class consciousness of the black masses.

It is U.S. imperialism that has taken over and developed, to a high degree, racism and white supremacy, pushed it on to an international level and used it as an instrument of class and national oppression. And it is a fact that, in the contemporary world, the number one class enemy of the oppressed peoples of the world is the U.S. imperialist system, that has always been represented by a class that represents white racism.

Therefore the struggle of the black masses is an integral part of the struggle of the revolutionary peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Because of the peculiar development of the black people in this country, their movement has characteristics of a national liberation struggle. Yet the struggle of the industrial proletariat is a struggle for the overthrow of the fascist bourgeoisie, for socialism and for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Therefore, the BLM will be a united front comprised of workers, farmers, students, and sections of the petty-bourgeoisie. It will adopt those relevant characteristics of a national liberation movement and will be led by the entire working class and its Marxist-Leninist party.

Black women comprise half of the black population and are in a strategic position to push the revolution forward. There can be no proletarian revolution in the U.S. unless the power and strength of black women is brought into full play.

Therefore, the BLM must have as one of its major tasks the defeat of male chauvinism and the complete liberation of black women.

Because of the numerical weakness of black people and their need and desire to bring the strength of the entire working class into full play as part of its working class emancipation process, the BLM will not, by itself, attempt to defeat U.S. imperialism, even though it will play a leading role. It must organize and unite whoever it can on a principled basis.

In many respects, other oppressed minorities such as Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Native Americans, Asian American and other Hispanic people have also suffered at the hands of U.S. imperialism to the same degree and in much the same way that black people have.

Therefore, it is in the fundamental interests of the liberation of the entire working class that there be unity of all oppressed minorities. Only when the oppressed minorities can unite with the white workers can the entire working class unite and achieve its liberation.

White racism is a noose around the neck of the entire working class in the U.S. It stifles their political, economic and social development. This racism prevents the working class from fighting as a "class-for-itself." It reduces the sharpness of the class struggle and gives U.S. imperialism a little added room to roam the globe in its attempts to oppress the peoples of the world. It is a stumbling block in the path of black people in their fight for liberation.

Therefore, one of the foremost tasks of the proletarian revolution is the defeat of white racism, and its partner, national chauvinism, through sharp class struggle, political education and ideological remolding.

U.S. imperialism is the most vicious and ruthless system that has ever existed on the face of the earth. Its murderous drive for maximum and super profits knows no bounds. As has been demonstrated for over 300 years, it will not hesitate to maim, rape, murder and

massacre to achieve its ends. The oppressed peoples of the world and the oppressed workers in the U.S. can no more "peacefully co-exist" with U.S. imperialism than a sheep with a wolf!

Therefore, the only correct strategy for the revolutionary movement is armed struggle adopted to the concrete conditions of a highly concentrated industrial country.

And finally, none of the above can be accomplished without two fundamental ingredients—the science of Marxism-Leninism, applied to the concrete conditions of the U.S. and a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party.

Thank you!

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