

National Minorities in the Labor Movement

This article is a continuation of the report on the Communist League's labor conference which was held in April of this year. It will deal with the unorganized, unskilled and unemployed sections of the labor movement.

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN LABOR AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

In the working class today the national minority workers, specifically the black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Indian, etc. are the most revolutionary, the most progressive or to put it another way, the most class conscious section of the working class.

Why is this? Plain and simply because they have always been pushed to the bottom of the barrel by the capitalists. They have always gotten the least and the worst. The worst housing, the worst clothing, the least wages, the least chances for education and the worst education, and no chances for advancement for the majority. It is the national minority workers who represent the unskilled and unorganized sections of the class. Throughout the history of the U.S. labor movement the class has been divided between skilled and unskilled, organized and unorganized, and black and white.

However, it's not by accident or by chance that the Negro, Puerto Rican, Chicanos and other national minorities in the U.S. get the worst of everything. There is a reason, a concrete, material reason. That reason is U.S. imperialism. Joseph Stalin, one of the great Marxist-Leninists stated in Foundations of Leninism: "The world is divided into two camps: the camp of a handful of civilized nations, which possess finance capital and exploit the vast majority of the population of the globe: and the camp of the oppressed and exploited peoples in the colonies and dependent countries, who comprise that majority."

The U.S. imperialist government dominates and exploits the majority of the worlds oppressed people and completely controls the Negro Nation (in the south) and Puerto Rico. The Negro Nation and Puerto Rico are direct colonies of U.S. imperialism while Mexico is semi-dependent or a semi-colony. What this means is that the present governments and economies of these countries are either entirely or

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partially dependent on U.S. capital for their existence. By this we don't mean, as the white chauvinists say, that these nations couldn't make it on their own but we do mean that without the capital and military aid of U.S. imperialism there would be successful revolutions in these colonies.

As a result of the colonial oppression of the Negro Nation and Puerto Rico, national minorities from these countries suffer. The national minorities have the highest unemployment and are basically a reserve labor army, kept alive on a welfare check. The Monthly Labor Review of Oct. 1970 gives us some statistics on the unemployment rate:

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

White	Non-white
4.4 total	8.4 total
3.1 men	5.8 men
4.2 women	7.4 women
13.1 both sexes (ages 16-19)	28.2 both sexes (ages 16-19)

It is obvious that these figures have grown considerably in the last year. This division between the white and non-white sections of the class puts the national minorities in the position of a reserve labor army.

Unemployment has always been with capitalism. As R. Palme Dutt stated in his work, Fascism and Social Revolution, p. 36, "Unemployment at a certain level has always been present in capitalism. The development of production in capitalist conditions has always displaced workers and independent producers, and thus created the industrial reserve army which was indispensable to meet the fluctuations of capitalist production and to maintain the proletariat in subjection. But this industrial reserve army was a part of the machinery of expanding capitalist production; the absolute number of productive workers employed successively grew. It is only since the war that the new phenomenon appeared of a permanent unemployed army, grudgingly kept just alive at the lowest level of subsistence by the bourgeoisie, while the absolute number of productive workers employed has directly decreased." This is clearly the situation today. What we see today is a growing army of permanently unemployed, or a superfluous labor force. Although we haven't the space needed here to go into the question in depth, we feel it important to at least mention the line of the CL on this permanently unemployed labor force and that is that this section of the working class is definitely not what Marx, Lenin and Mao Tsetung speak of as the lumpenproletariat. They are a part of the working class.

ORGANIZED LABOR

Even in the organized sections of the labor movement the national minorities get the back end of the paddle. We can see that in the major skilled and highly bribed jobs there are few blacks or other national minorities. In the trades unions, from the carpenters to the printers, national minorities are a small, nearly invisible force. This total system of white chauvinism has turned the national minority workers into a revolutionary vanguard, just as imperialism has brought about the conditions in the colonies for national liberation struggles. "But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians." K. Marx and Frederick Engels, The Communist Manifesto.

The national minorities have forced the Anglo-American working class to face the issue of the liberation of the colonial peoples. Within the U.S. the revolutionary spirit has been brought to the working class through the struggles for liberation of the Negro Nation (civil rights movement, Watts, etc.) and the determined struggles of the Vietnamese people for their liberation (the War in Vietnam). These issues have awakened the U.S. working class and unmasked the morbid face of U.S. imperialism. "The Afro-American struggle is not only a struggle waged by the exploited and oppressed black people for freedom and emancipation, it is also a new clarion call to all the exploited and oppressed people of the United States to fight against the barbarous rule of the monopoly capitalist class." Mao Tsetung.

All revolutionary people within the U.S. must see that we have to defend the interests of the national liberation struggles and we have to understand that "the evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and thrived with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the black people." Mao Tsetung. And also, "The contradiction between the black masses in the U.S. and U.S. ruling circles is a class contradiction. Only by overthrowing the reactionary rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class and destroying the colonialist and imperialist system can the black people in the U.S. win complete emancipation. The black masses and the masses of white working people in the United States share common interests and have common objectives to struggle for. Therefore, the Afro-American struggle is winning sympathy and support from increasing numbers of white working people and progressives in the U.S.. The struggle of the black people in the U.S. is bound to merge with

the American workers' movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class." Mao Tsetung.

Inside the labor union and the labor movement in general the capitalists are using their labor misleaders Meany, Woodcock, Bridges, etc. to attempt to rally the workers around a narrow fascist program. Unions are losing not only on contracts, but also on the size of their unions, each year the union memberships shrink. Today the labor unions are pro-capitalist and controlled by the capitalists. The capitalists are trying to narrow the unions in two ways; number wise and program wise (restricting to a narrow economist outlook). Our job is to broaden the struggles and broaden the unions to deal with the political issues facing the class as a whole. We must develop a revolutionary approach, and that begins with the defense of the national minorities, in the U.S. and the colonial peoples throughout the world. We must move from this position in the unions, and clearly base ourselves with the most exploited and oppressed. Our strength lies in the unity of the class.

THE FIGHT FOR THE UNITY OF THE CLASS

We are Marxists, therefore we are dialectical materialists. Dialectics teaches us that we cannot look at any thing one-sidedly. We have so far only viewed the growing revolutionary section and a backward reactionary section of the class. We see a sharp division inside the working class. The split in the working class movement is represented on the one hand by the growing revolutionary national minorities, and on the other hand by the highly bribed reactionary section of skilled workers, and working bosses. This highly bribed section of the class is the imperialists' training ground for the labor traitors, and scabs. In the report Split in the Working Class Movement it states, "The ruling class of the imperialist countries uses the colonies to make themselves richer and to bribe the lower classes." Lenin says, "Modern (20th century) imperialism created a monopolist privileged position for certain advanced countries and on this basis throughout the whole of the second international a type of labor traitor, opportunist and social chauvinist who champions the interests of his craft, of his stratum of the aristocracy of labor." Lenin showed clearly that because the imperialists were making super profits off the colonies they could bribe certain sections of their own working class. From this section of the class they get their fascist agents, spies, and labor traitors.

These labor misleaders push a strong line of chauvinism, male supremacy, and Gomp-
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erism (unions as business partners with big business), etc.. The unions have been turned from a reserve of the working class to a reserve of the capitalist class. From unions that were anti-capitalist to unions today that are pro-capitalist, and opposed to the unity of the working class. This was accomplished through this bribe and a trained section of misleaders. The imperialists have temporarily disoriented the labor movement, but this has been done on their ability to extend their bribe and keep the workers divided and competing.

Large sections of the working class are losing the bribe and as a result are becoming more revolutionary. Witness the ever increasing number of strikes, the Longshoremen, the telephone workers, railroad workers, etc.. The working class is in motion. They can see that the future isn't bright under capitalism.

UNITY COMES FROM STRUGGLE; BUILDING A COMMUNIST PARTY IS OUR TASK

Unity in such a divided class can only come from the uniting of the advanced workers, winning over the middle and isolating the reactionary sections. In order to fulfill this task we must build a strong party, a Leninist Party. The report Split in the Working Class explains that to defeat the capitalists inside or outside of the labor movement we must destroy the bourgeois influence. "To destroy the hold of the bourgeoisie's agents, the labor lieutenants whose base is the labor aristocracy, on the working class movement, we need to attack from a strong organized base, led by a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party, both within the trade union movement and among the oppressed, unorganized and unemployed. The question now is how to use our work in the labor movement to build a Communist Party. The answer is basically the path of Lenin in forming the Bolshevik party in Russia. In 1895, Lenin united study circles or revolutionary study-action collectives into the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation

of the Working Class. Lenin's proposal to these groups for tying Marxism-Leninism to the working class movement was to "pass from the propaganda of Marxism among a few politically advanced workers who gathered in the propaganda circles to political agitation among the broad masses of the working class on issues of the day." (History of the CPSU, p.16-17) This is our task. This is the basis from which to begin uniting the working class struggle. The fight for unity, the fight for liberation cannot be won without a Communist party. Stalin talked about the lack of a party, "There have been no decisive battles as yet, if only for the reason that there have not seen any mass, genuinely Bolshevik parties, capable of leading the proletariat to dictatorship. Without such parties, decisive battle for dictatorship are impossible under the conditions of imperialism..The decisive battles in the West still lie ahead." (Stalin, Vol. 6, p. 295)

We must build a party and we must unite the class. However, there is one major enemy standing in our path. Standing between us and victory is the arch agent of the bourgeoisie, the Communist Party, U.S.A.. The CPUSA continues to call itself a Communist party and in this way fools a lot of people. But, if you look at the policies of this party you see that they aren't revolutionary in the least. In the labor movement they are purely economists and side with the reactionary union leadership, not with the workers. They don't fight for the unity of the class, as a matter of fact they refuse to work with the unorganized and the unemployed. They are out and out white chauvinists. What kind of a revolutionary communist would refuse to work among the most revolutionary sections of the working class?! Only the traitorous, lazy, CPUSA would have the unmitigated gall to call itself communist while collaborating with the imperialists. Once the revisionists are cleared away the road will be opened for unity within the class and the possibility of revolution.

