

The Struggle Against Left Opportunism League For Proletarian Revolution

The following article is a revised version of a speech presented at a public forum in March of this year in Denver, Colorado.

This revised version is edited for purposes of clarity and the characterization of L.P.R. In the original draft we characterized L.P.R. as "willing to struggle against their leftism". A re-examination of the facts show that L.P.R. has consolidated around their left opportunist line on Party Building.

We reprint this speech in the interest of exposing the danger of ultra-leftism within our ranks. A *secondary* danger, but nonetheless a danger to our movement.

The Editors

Comrades, the August 29th Movement (Marxist-Leninist) welcomes this opportunity to present its views on the burning questions facing our movement, our tasks in this period and particularly our central task of party building.

In preparation for this forum and in order to begin our response to the open polemics initiated by LPR (M-L) we have traced back the unities we have held with them. In studying the positions of LPR and our former unities we find two glaring facts: (1) aside from our assessment of the international situation, (and we are not yet clear what type of analysis LPR made to reach their conclusions), we have no unity on any question facing the communist and workers' movements. (2) our "unities" with LPR were based on the "left" deviation from our line, against which we are waging a campaign within ATM.

LPR has not fundamentally changed their line, but they have certainly hardened their "left" deviation. In 1976 they expressed an openness to repudiating their "left" line on the ERA (Resistencia, vol. 7, #4); today they uphold their old "left" line. In August 1976, at a closed forum in NY, they upheld the principle of a mostly agitational newspaper and a mostly propaganda theoretical journal. Today they repudiate that correct line -- or more specifically -- they hold to their "left" position without explaining why they have rejected their positions stated in August. In that same forum they defended the position that "two-line struggle within a communist organization is the exception, not the rule." Again, without explanation, they have flip-flopped and repudiated that position. For our part, we admit that ATM has certainly changed -- specifically by getting serious about party building and by developing the struggle against the "left" deviation in ATM. In responding to LPR we want to lay out some of our areas of disunity. We will reveal, that while LPR's disunities with ATM are of fundamental nature, their disunities with WVO and PRRWO-RWL are only shades of difference. We intend to show that the line of LPR is sectarian. i.e., the ideology and the politics of a sect. How else *can* we explain the fact that after seven years LPR is still a small sect in one city in one corner of the country? LPR might respond that we are focusing on the size of their organization and not their line. Not so, comrades. After seven years of existence in the largest city in the United States -- to still be a small sect is precisely where their line leads to and where they wish to lead the communist movement. This is the result of an *incorrect political line*. Just as the correct political line will result in "soldiers when you have no soldiers to begin with", so an incorrect political line will lead to isolation -- as the experience of LPR confirms. For when we break

down their line -- after cutting through all the quotes out of context, the historical analogies used in place of historical analysis -- we find them everywhere and always putting forward why "in this period" it is correct to hold to sectarianism, i.e., to divorcing communists from the masses, from providing political leadership to the class struggle in all its aspects. And this is the case on every single practical question of revolution that they take up.

I. ON PARTY BUILDING:

LPR holds that "of the two tactical tasks, Marxist-Leninists unite is primary." This has become a very convenient excuse to continue their seven year practice of sectarian politics and "relieves" them of the task confronting communists in all periods -- that of organizing and leading the class struggle. It also shows that LPR has completely failed to grasp the historical experience of the international communist movement which shows us that communists have always and everywhere been united by a common line of action (in Russia through nationwide political agitation, in Albania through the struggle against fascism, in China the struggle against imperialism and the feudal landlords). In other words, there can be no separation between the task of providing leadership to the class struggle and the uniting of Marxist-Leninists. The Bolsheviks clearly pointed out that they united with those people who grasped the tasks confronting the movement, and that the task prior to their second Congress was to develop the organization of nationwide political agitation. This is the lesson of *What Is To Be Done*, and it is this lesson which LPR chooses to ignore with their line of "Marxist-Leninists unite is primary". The practice of ATM, WVO, PRRWO-RWL, and the practice of LPR has proven that line incorrect; because a close examination of the practice of all these organizations shows that whether one said that the "two tactical tasks were simultaneous" (PRRWO-ATM), or that one was primary (LPR, WVO, RWL) -- the essence was the same. It is any wonder that WVO is now screaming that it is the leading circle on the basis of unity with a few sects; while the "wing" is doing the same, on the exact same basis?

When we raise the importance of breaking with this sectarian line, and the method of work which flows from it, LPR criticises us for "retreating". But our "retreat" is to the task of political leadership -- the very task that demanded the development of the party of a new type in Russia. To us, political line is the strategy and tactics of proletarian revolution; the "common line of action" for the U.S. without which unity is unachievable. But this line is expressed, not only in one's formulation, but in the political and organizational tasks which we set for ourselves. This is very different from LPR, to whom line unity means unity on formulas or formulations straight out of the classics or based on the shallowest of sectarian analysis. As proof of this we ask comrades to closely examine LPR's "analysis" of the struggle in Puerto Rico, to see what they are asking the movement to unite with -- not an actual assessment of the situation in Puerto Rico, but with Chairman Mao's *New Democracy*. No comrades, this is not sufficient for a "common line of action" to develop concrete support for the Puerto Rican struggle. We will return to this question in a little while. This also explains why we disunite with LPR on the question of fusion. To us a Marxist party represents a union of the working class movement with socialism (Stalin - *History of CPSU-B*). To the LPR it means "fusion of the advanced workers with socialism." Two very different conceptions we would think. The entire long and bloody history of proletarian class struggle has shown time and time again that we win the confidence of the advanced workers only on the basis of our political leadership to the broad class struggle -- again, the Bolsheviks built their party on the basis of the task of nationwide political agitation -- the organization of this work. We will never win over the advanced workers on the basis of handing them the *Communist Manifesto* or providing

them with a long list of cute formulations and a promise to lead the class struggle sometime in the future. We need only look at the recent seven state walkout of 120,000 miners against the intervention of the federal courts -- we had better learn to lead such struggles now, and begin creating the organizational apparatus to lead such struggle now -- if we want to win over the advanced miners, if we really want to build a party "backed up by the working class movement". This task LPR answers only with their "theory of cadres" (their communist "cores" which take up no political struggle), or the "theory of stages" (we'll lead mass political struggle after we have the party.) Exactly how we miraculously acquire the necessary organizational apparatus, the necessary trained cadres, the experience, the stable core of leaders for this work (right after the 1st Party Congress) LPR never explains. Somehow all of these attributes must blossom spontaneously with the election of the Party Central Committee but do not have to be built up now through a process of hard and complicated work. We would like to see LPR explain to the 120,000 miners why they won't even try to lead their struggle (or even consider it necessary) because we are in the "first period".

LPR reveals the unity between economism and sectarianism. In *What Is To Be Done* Lenin criticizes the economists for the theory of stages: i.e., in the "first period" only economic agitation, and the development of a scattered and amateurish organization to carry on this work; in the "second period" political agitation, once the class had "matured". LPR: in the first period -- sectarianism and the development of an organization for this work (a propaganda newspaper, polemics as the focus of propaganda, forums, the incredibly restricted concept of communist cores); in the second period fusion with the class, after the party is built. In the first period unity on line (on key link, chief form, two tactical tasks, etc.), then at some future date we can discuss the task of political leadership. In other words, today (first period) -- talk and writing as the chief form of activity; in the second period (presumably) political leadership and the creation of the necessary organization (often called a communist party) to carry on this task. To carry on the first task -- the creation of the necessary organization -- calls for the creation of an intellectual sect, nothing more.

LPR recently provided us with a small, but excellent example, which proves our point: In the latest issue of their newspaper they refer to a film showing of the movie "Lenin In October". At this film showing LPR became engaged in a polemic with a trotskyite (carrying out the chief form of activity in practice -- very commendable). LPR says that this trotskyite was exposed and driven out of the film showing. And what do they conclude from this? "Trotskyism was shown in practice to be what it is -- a trend alien to the working class -- and the people present saw through the concrete example of this trotskyite, the treachery of this trend, and joined in the struggle against it. This activity in effect, aided in the process of uniting the Marxist-Leninists and winning the advanced elements to communism."

So this is how we expose trotskyism "in practice". This is how we aid in uniting Marxist-Leninists and win the advanced to communism, not on the basis of being able to lead the class struggle of the proletariat, to give direction to their mass struggles, but on the basis of a "discussion" at a film showing.

Let us compare this example of "party building" with a small example from the Major Safe strike in Los Angeles. This struggle began as a trade union struggle. In the course of this struggle we won the politically active workers to take up the struggle for the equality of languages and the equality of peoples, (an extremely important question in a country with millions of workers who do not speak English as their first language). We helped these workers to realize through our agitation, our propaganda and our organizational work that their class must become the vanguard fighter for democratic rights if it is to become the leading class in society, if it is to lead all oppressed nationalities, classes and strata in the struggle for socialism. During this strike we were able to show the workers, not just through our propaganda (which was important), but also through their own experience, the role of the capitalist state and the

role of the social-prop trade union bureaucrats. We did not explain to the workers Lenin's *State And Revolution*, or *Imperialism And The Split in Socialism* to do this, -- rather we applied the lessons of those works to U.S. conditions, and to the concrete conditions facing the workers. This is how socialism was brought to the workers from "without" in the course of the struggle. We were also able to develop the struggle beyond the boundaries of bourgeois legality (beginning to train the workers in revolutionary methods of struggle, methods they will need to master if they are to overthrow capitalism). This training cannot wait until the "second period", nor can the training of cadres to master these methods and to teach them to the workers wait until after the Party Congress either. In the ideological realm we were able (because we were in the forefront of the actual struggle), to begin to win the workers away from the pervasive bourgeois influence of reformism and chauvinism. And this ideological struggle was carried on in a mass way, it was not restricted to communists and the advanced otherwise our political leadership would have been doomed to failure. We could not just polemicise against reformism and chauvinism, but we had to organize and lead the struggle in a mass way so the workers (under the lead of the advanced workers), would begin to break with these ideological poisons being spread by PLP, the TUBS, etc. In the realm of organization we were able to develop and utilize different forms of organization which the class struggle could be waged and which communist influence could be exercised -- the trade union fraction, the secret cell, the open strike committee, a newsletter, etc. In the course of this struggle we were able to further the training of our cadres as agitators, propagandists, and organizers of the struggle -- as cadres capable of training the workers in socialist consciousness, as cadres capable of finding their bearings independently, (a most difficult task). Now this work, small and limited though it was, laid the basis for communists to turn, not only Major Safe into a communist fortress, but to win the entire trade union itself to communist leadership. This is what we mean by carrying out the tasks of communists, the task of political leadership. This work alone creates the basis for the development of a Party backed up by the working class movement -- without their backing our "party" will remain a sect. We ask comrades to compare the two approaches to party building. Which approach is more likely to "aid" in the process of winning the advanced to communism; the polemic at the movie, or the political leadership of the class struggle? By the way comrades, we wouldn't even think of giving such a silly example as that provided by LPR, to "prove" that "we exposed trotskyism in practice". We think that only the most bookish intellectuals could even conceive of using this as an example of revolutionary leadership. We challenge LPR to show us just where in the international communist movement this type of "work" is held up for emulation. We think that only the "wing" or WVO would make reference to such "work" as an example of correct communist leadership.

II. THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM.

According to LPR, the ERA is a sham reform. Obviously comrades, our positions are as different as night and day, they are not simply "minor differences". But as we will show we differ not only in our conclusions, but in our entire approach to the question of the struggle for democracy. We will show that once again LPR has only the most minor of differences with the "wing" and the WVO on this question.

Comrades, it is clear that the deepening economic and political crisis of imperialism has resulted in an increased attack on the democratic rights of the masses of the American people, particularly women and oppressed nationalities. When ATM calls on the working masses to implement the ERA in "their own" way, through a revolutionary struggle in a concrete political direction (implementation of the ERA from "below"

to knock down all laws and de facto barriers to the exercise of democratic rights by women), LPR accuses us of creating an "illusion", of strengthening the hand of the bourgeoisie. Rather than facing up to the long and difficult task of organizing the struggle of the mass of women for democratic rights, LPR chos to liquidate this struggle, by reducing it to the narrowest of reform struggles, (but more on this later).

Each and every reform can and will be used by the bourgeoisie to intensify the exploitation and oppression of the working masses if communists prove unable or unwilling to win the masses to revolutionary struggle for those reforms. There is no such thing as a "genuine" reform under capitalism -- this is an ABC of Marxism. All reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary struggle. If this struggle is weak, the reform will be weak, if this struggle becomes strong because of communist leadership then the reform can be maximized to the benefit of the working class. In both cases, the capitalists will try and use the reform to dissipate, weaken, and divide the mass struggle. Therefore, to even pose the question as one of "sham" vs. genuine reforms is to reveal the most incredible confusion.

"The advanced class must pursue independent revolutionary tactics. We shall never reduce our tasks to that of supporting the slogans of the reformist bourgeoisie that are most in vogue. We pursue an independent policy and put forward **only** such reforms as will undoubtedly enhance the independence, class-consciousness and fighting efficiency of the proletariat. Only by such tactics can reforms from above, which are always half-hearted, always hypocritical, and always conceal some bourgeois or police snare, be made *innocuous*.

More than that. Only by such tactics can real progress be achieved in the matter of important reforms. This may sound paradoxical, but its truth is confirmed by the whole history of the international Social-Democratic movement. Reformist tactics are the **least** likely to secure **real reforms**. The most effective way to secure **real reforms** is to pursue the tactics of the revolutionary class struggle. **Actually**, reforms are won as a result of the revolutionary class struggle, as a result of its independence, mass force and steadfastness. Reforms are **always** false, ambiguous and permeated with the spirit of Zubatovism, they are real only in proportion to the intensity of the class struggle. By merging our slogans with those of the reformist bourgeoisie, we **weaken** the cause of revolution **and, consequently the cause of reform as well . . .**" (Lenin, CW, vol. 11, pages 71-72)

According to their reasoning LPR would have to accuse Lenin of "militant reformism" because he talks about reforms being secured according to the degree of the "intensity of the class struggle". In a little while we will see who is using the approach of Leninism on the question of the ERA -- LPR or ATM, but for now we would just like to note the similarity in methodology on this question of LPR, WVO, and the "wing" -- all fail to give an actual analysis of the class forces involved in the struggle, the consequences of the ERA politically and economically (based on facts and not assertions), the history of the struggle for the ERA, etc. Instead we get arguments by analogy to other laws (the struggle for which lacked communist leadership -- a small "oversight" in LPR's analysis), quotes from the classics, out of context, etc. None of the groups makes a "concrete analysis of concrete conditions"

For some reason the LPR in their "comradely" polemics with us, have chosen to distort our position on the ERA. They say "we (LPR) believe that to continue to channel the energies of the working class in the direction of attaining equality and justice through the capitalist courts is outright reformism, against the interests of the working class and instilling in it even deeper faith in bourgeois democracy." LPR is implying that in our position on the ERA we call for the masses to struggle for equality

through capitalist courts. **This is an outright distortion of our position.** Nowhere have we even implied such a view. So much for "comradely" polemics. But more than this, the distortion is only LPR's cover for their actual negation of the struggle for democratic rights (which they reduce to "small change", paltry reforms combined with "calls" for socialism. LPR seems to have the old "wing"/WVO position that the struggle for democracy "diverts" the proletariat from the struggle for socialism. What did Lenin say about this question?

"The socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economics and politics, battles that can only end in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution, or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practice full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory without an all round consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy." (*The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*)

Stalin also laid out the communist view on the struggle for reforms in the era of imperialism in *Foundations of Leninism*:

"Obviously, therefore, it is not a matter of reforms or of compromises and agreements, but of the use people make of reforms and agreements ... To a revolutionary ... the main thing is revolutionary work and not reforms; to him reforms are a by-product of the revolution. That is why, with revolutionary tactics under the conditions of bourgeois rule, reforms are naturally transformed into an instrument for disintegrating that rule, into an instrument for strengthening the revolution, into a strong-point for the further development of the revolutionary movement.

The revolutionary will accept a reform in order to use it as an aid in combining legal work with illegal work and to intensify, under its cover, the illegal work for the revolutionary preparation of the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

That is the essence of making revolutionary use of reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism."

We can see that Stalin also failed to distinguish between "genuine" and "sham" reforms. This "vulgar empiricist" seemed to be more preoccupied with organizing the revolutionary struggle for reforms, with the "preparation of the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie". We are really sorry to see LPR adopting the same methodology as the "wing" and WVO on the question of the struggle for democracy. We had hoped that they were capable of breaking with that "leftism". In any case their line is revealed to be (like WVO/wing) in essence a **reformist** line.

Again, let us contrast the approach:

LPR: They put forward 8 demands around the woman's question; except for one, the right to bear arms and exercise the right to self-defense -- they could have all been put forward by the most ordinary liberal. To show that they are **not** liberals, but communists, LPR tells women that they must realize that only socialism will resolve the woman's question. So until we have a socialist revolution LPR will confine the masses of working women to the fight for petty reforms. And of course, LPR will "call" for socialist revolution while the women carry out this fight.

ATM: We must take up all of the correct spontaneous demands being put forward by the masses of women and link these, not only to the struggle for socialism, but also to

the struggle for full democratic rights for women. Women should wage a revolutionary struggle for the ERA, demanding that it knock down every law and "custom" used by the capitalist to deny them the exercise of their rights. We put forward that this should be implemented from below; through a mass struggle which puts the actual implementation of the ERA into the hands of the working class, through forms of organization determined by the rank and file and the representatives elected directly by them on an industry by industry basis. We say that **posing** the demand in this way will train the masses, not only in the revolutionary struggle necessary to win **such** a demand but also in the actual exercise of democracy -- a democracy which they will have to exercise under their dictatorship; and such training can neither **await** the socialist revolution, nor come from books, but can come only from the experience of the proletariat. We can show them, precisely on the basis of the experience of this struggle that socialism is not only necessary but inevitable. They will truly learn that it is not a "lack of rights" which lies at the bottom of their misery, but the private ownership of the means of production. The *Key* comrades is communist leadership and the correct posing of the question.

So here we have two approaches to the struggle for democracy: one - that of LPR - confines the masses to the narrowest of reformist struggles, combined with "calls" for socialism. The other - that of ATM - broadens the struggle into a political struggle, trains the class as the vanguard fighter for democratic rights; actually leads the masses in a broad and revolutionary way toward socialism, not just because we **tell** them about socialism -- but because we lead them onto the path of socialism through the struggle for democracy -- precisely in the way that the international experience of our movement, as summed up by Lenin enjoins us to do.

To get an even clearer grasp of the attitude of LPR to the struggle for democracy we have only to read their 1976 index of articles published by *Resistance*, vol. 8, #1. In 1976 LPR published a total of 53 articles in which they take up, among other things, the struggle against imperialism. But aside from raising the struggle of the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico, **not one article** out of 53 deals with the struggle of the oppressed nationalities in the U.S. Only four deal with the struggle of the working class, and only one of the 53 articles deals with the woman's question. And LPR claims to have fundamental differences with the "wing"! It is only in the papers of the "wing" that we find such a narrowness of scope; such a scornful attitude toward the struggle for democratic rights. So much for the chauvinism and sectarianism of LPR, their liquidation of the national question and the struggle for democratic rights. As readers can probably guess, the bulk of LPR's paper is devoted to the "central and only task."

III. ON AGITATION AND PROPAGANDA

LPR mechanically holds onto the line of "propaganda as the chief form of activity". Again, our differences are fundamental: The approach to the tasks which the working class and national movements place before us, and the practical implications and concrete results of LPR's line on this question. Their line reduces basically to: Our political newspaper must be mainly propaganda: we must do mostly propaganda work in this period. And just where does agitation come in? LPR restricts it to local leaflets, (they certainly carry very little in their paper). This is precisely what Lenin fought **against** in *What Is To Be Done* -- the limitation of the scope of political agitation -- which limitation can only result in a failure to train the working class in political consciousness. Yet this is the type of agitation LPR holds to. So although they do not explicitly **say** "only propaganda", (they get out of this by calling for local leaflets), in practice it is simply another "only" line. We ask LPR to consider the following:

Why was not the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party built on the basis of "propaganda as the chief form of activity", but rather on the basis of the work of the

ISKRA organization, which just happened, as Lenin said, to make political agitation "the cornerstone of their program, their tactics and their organization"? But of course LPR cannot understand why this was so because they have not yet grasped that an organization's political activity and organizational work are **determined** by the political tasks which it sets for itself. Propaganda to the advanced as the main political task can **only** mean a narrowing of the scope of political activity and **consequently** the development of a correspondingly narrow form of organization to carry on that activity. That is why, in Russia, the economists were satisfied with an organization developed for and restricted to the trade union struggle -- because they limited their activity to economic agitation. And that is also why in Russia, the party **organization** was developed because Lenin knew that revolutionaries could not carry on the task of nationwide political agitation -- which he set as the chief task of Russian communists (the whole of *What Is To Be Done* is devoted to this question), without developing an organization with a stable core of leadership, with a sound political line, with a strict division of labor, an organization of professional revolutionaries (trained cadres), with a sound party press -- an organization built along illegal revolutionary lines. Lenin knew that **such** an organization was entirely unnecessary for "propaganda as the chief form of activity mainly to the advanced" and that is why he **broke** with that conception of tasks. As laid out in the *History of the CPSU-B*:

"Lenin put before the League of Struggle the task of forming closer connections with the mass working-class movement, and of giving it political leadership. Lenin proposed to pass from the propaganda of Marxism among the few politically advanced workers who gathered in the propaganda circles to political agitation among the broad masses of the working class on the issues of the day. This turn towards mass agitation was of profound importance for the subsequent development of the working class movement in Russia."

And this turn was of **profound** importance, according to Stalin, because by setting themselves the task of mass agitation Lenin was able to develop the League of Struggle as "the first real rudiment of a revolutionary party which was backed by the working class movement." And Stalin further states that, "Lenin drew on the revolutionary experience of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle in his subsequent work of creating a Marxist Social-Democratic Party in Russia." (both quotes from *History of CPSU-B*, p. 18) So what does all this mean to us?

1. That when the masses are in upsurge, we must be prepared to meet that upsurge with leadership. We don't think that we need to illustrate to comrades that the masses are in growing upsurge.
2. That the masses are demanding political knowledge and we are duty bound to bring it to them -- for socialist consciousness can only come from without. The growth of even the opportunist and revisionist press is indication that the masses are trying to seek out political knowledge, which up to now Marxist-Leninists have only been providing to a small degree.
3. This means that we must be prepared to train them to view every important political and social question from the standpoint of communism -- what Lenin referred to as training workers in class consciousness.
4. For this, nationwide political agitation is necessary.
5. In order to do this nationwide political agitation we must create an organization of professional revolutionaries to carry out the all-sided work which such a task requires -- propagandists, agitators, organizers, printers, literature distributors, a security apparatus, a regularly appearing and frequently issued communist newspaper, etc., etc. And of course,

we need to create the apparatus which can deal with the work that will inevitably flow from correctly organized nationwide political agitation.

Such as political strikes, uprisings, national rebellions, etc.

Does propaganda to the advanced as the chief form of activity require such an apparatus? We say no. And we assert that the experience of the international communist movement confirms our conclusion.

It is not hard to see that, in essence, LPR gives no broader scope to our tasks than does the "wing" or the "leading circle". The only difference with the wing is that LPR is willing to admit of the necessity for local agitation -- exactly the type of restriction which we must oppose and which will leave the working class under the hegemony of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, just as the restriction to only economic agitation by the economists of Lenin's time left the workers under the ideological and political leadership of the capitalists. And of course, the capitalists are not afraid in the least to do their own type of nationwide "political" agitation. And because LPR does not fundamentally differ with the "wing" on the nature of our political and organizational tasks, they are bound to develop the same type of political activity and the same type of organization to carry on that activity. Certainly the predominance of the polemics in the papers of both organizations seems to testify to this. LPR, like the "wing", and like WVO (and the sects which unite with it), are totally unable to grasp the complexity and scope of the situation confronting communists, and so they cannot grasp the complex and necessary tasks which flow from such a situation. If they *do*, then we can only conclude that they are **afraid** to shoulder their responsibilities, and they use their formulas to justify that fear. If for no other reason than that (this fear or thickheadedness), party building will be a protracted process -- at least as long as groups like LPR can influence honest revolutionaries with their muddled thinking.

We ask: How are we to understand the idealist notion of a "fundamentally propaganda" newspaper? ATM at one time had to try and combine the functions of a newspaper with that of a journal, and therefore for a time the RC was mostly propaganda. As soon as we were able (and as soon as we started to grasp our political tasks), we changed the RC to a **newspaper**. But LPR does not seem to distinguish between form and content on this question. The fact that *Resistance* is printed on newsprint rather than in booklet form does not make it a newspaper. We have to look at its content and nature, and in this case what we have is a periodical which last year averaged **one propaganda article per week**. Yet LPR can call it a newspaper with a straight face.

LPR should be up front on this question, quit hiding behind the idealist notion of a mostly propaganda newspaper and tell us straight up that they oppose the publication of political newspapers when theoretical journals are called for by the conditions of the class struggle. But to do so, of course, would put them too dangerously close to the "wing" with whom they have only shades of difference on this question also. We are sure that the "wing" would applaud a newspaper which puts out 53 articles a year and sees this as sufficient to train the workers in class consciousness. But it is the height of idealism for LPR to think that the class can be trained in political consciousness on the basis of one article per week. Unless LPR would tell us that *What Is To Be Done* is inapplicable to U.S. conditions, and we should not set ourselves the task of training the class in class consciousness. LPR's response will probably be to publish a thicker *Resistance*, not to deal with the question of how the class is to be trained in class consciousness, nor on the task of a political newspaper. **We challenge** the LPR to show us where any genuine Marxist-Leninist Party anywhere in the world has been built on the basis of a mostly propaganda newspaper. We further challenge them to show us where any party in the world has ever printed a mostly propaganda **Newspaper**.

IV. GIVING THE MOVEMENT A PLANNED AND CONSCIOUS CHARACTER

To LPR this is limited to doing agitation and propaganda (mostly the latter). But to write and issue a leaflet which "calls" for socialism, the party, etc. is not giving the movement a planned conscious character -- it is only a part of that task. To do so we must **lead** these movements, win the confidence of the class and oppressed masses, which can be done only by giving correct leadership to the struggle. This presupposes an analysis of that movement, its history, its significance, its important characteristics -- and on that basis, in light of our communist tasks, the aims, objectives, and tasks of the movement are formulated, in accordance with the general tasks of the struggle for socialism. This lays the basis for operating according to plan. But LPR seems to define giving the movement a conscious and organized character as:

1. Proclaim a general principle (party building is our central task)
2. On that basis try and lay out our tasks
3. Substantiate the position with a quote (the method of historical analogy)
4. Presto -- our practical tasks are restricted to mostly propaganda to the advanced and local agitation. The problem of having to **think** is therefore resolved in favor of not thinking.

So in response to the volcanic mass movement which confronts us, LPR can only repeat, like a sinner hoping for redemption, "build the Party", "build the Party", "two tactical tasks", "two tactical tasks", "propaganda as the chief form", "propaganda as the chief form", etc., etc. They never address the question of **how** we are to build our party or even what the U.S. party will look like. Again, tangled in their formulas, they can only conclude that by *focusing* on the development of the political line of the party we will actually build a party. Let us refer once more to the historical experience of the Bolsheviks.

Lenin **never** counterposed political line, or its development, to questions of ideology and organization, as does the "wing", WVO, LPR, MLOC, and as ATM did at one time. What does Lenin do in *What Is To Be Done?* - the book which is said to lay out the basis for the party of a new type?

1. He wages an ideological struggle against economism and the Bersteinites. (Would we call this ideology is the key link?)
2. He defines the political activity of the communist movement - that is, nationwide political agitation (is this political line is the key link?)
3. He lays out the type of organization which such activity will require. That is, an organization of professional revolutionaries, built around a regularly appearing agitational newspaper.

What Lenin accomplished here was a complete definition of the ideological, political, and organization tasks of communists in Russia. He **never** defined one aspect as more important than another. He knew that the development of the ISKRA would facilitate the accomplishment of all three tasks: It would create the vehicle for centralizing the ideological struggle and for waging the ideological struggle against the economists. This vehicle would also facilitate the carrying out of the task of nationwide political agitation, while moving forward the struggle for unity of the party program (by publishing it and widely distributing it to all class conscious workers for discussion). The newspaper provided the common line of action (political action) for the class conscious workers. And lastly, it helped to develop the organization for their political activity -- the party of a new type. Lenin knew that a political line alone was totally insufficient for revolution -- he did not have the "wing" or LPR to point out his error of course. He thought like a revolutionary should think. He saw the broadness and complexity of tasks and he understood their interrelationship and was able to

lay this out for the entire movement. And this is precisely our task; to see the all-sided nature of our tasks, and to realize that they absolutely cannot be carried out separate from the broad working class movement (otherwise just what does advanced **detachment** of the proletariat mean?) It is exactly this key link which we must seek out, which we must determine -- that which will move forward the struggle on all fronts. While we have not yet determined this key link ourselves it is our belief that it is tied to putting agitation in the forefront of our work -- of a complete repudiation of the line of "propaganda as the chief form", and "propaganda to the forefront" (our "leftism showing itself as recently as RC #10). We believe that solving the question of developing nationwide political agitation which exposes the capitalist dictatorship in all its aspects, which points the class in the direction of its own dictatorship, and which shows the class, on the basis of the experience of daily life, the necessity for its alliance with the revolutionary national movements, and other fighters for democratic rights. Solving this question will determine our key link.

Comrades, in future ATM publications we will more thoroughly lay out and deepen our repudiation of some of our former political positions such as "political line is the key link", "propaganda is the chief form", "propaganda to the forefront". This will be critical to the struggle against our own "left" deviation, and to struggling against the "left" line of the "wing", LPR and certain other groups. For now, we would like to just briefly deal with the "analysis" which led to the condition that "political line is the key link": We upheld, as does the "wing", WVO and LPR, that the "first period" of party building was one in which the main danger was "eclecticism". Just who were these eclectics and who were they fighting against? The eclectics were actually the revolutionaries who were upholding armed struggle, the overthrow of imperialism and revolution in the face of the revisionism of the CPUSA; and who upheld the national question in the face of the complete chauvinism of the Progressive Labor Party. Now who was really the main danger? The revolutionaries who were seeking knowledge while carrying out revolutionary activity, (who were indeed eclectic), who were struggling to arrive at Marxism-Leninism or was it the revisionists and trotskyites who had completely betrayed the working class. We formerly answered that it was the eclectics -- as the "wing", WVO, and LPR currently do. It was on this upside down mishmash that we developed our views on the "periods" of party building and the key link. But what would have to be the implications of our position:

1. The direction of the main blow would be the young revolutionaries, not the revisionists or trots.
2. Our tasks would be to "disseminate the ideas" of Marxism-Leninism and not to lead those revolutionary struggles. We hope that not even LPR would actually call for such a thing. Remember comrades, the U.S. was on the verge of civil war. It was not exactly the time for a restriction of work to mostly propaganda. The dissemination of Marxism-Leninism cannot be seen detached from the obligation -- **even at that time** - to provide the struggle with political leadership. CLP in fact limited their task to the "dissemination of M-L" -- it was rightly called a theory of cadres.
3. This position lets the CPUSA and the Progressive Labor Party off the hook, (as if they did not exist during that period), when in fact both groups were actively sabotaging the struggle (or trying to) during that time.
4. And to claim that the "second period" began with the breakup of the National Liason Committee is ridiculous. Certainly PRRWO and BWC "raised" the national question and party building, but the roots of their opportunist lines on party building can be traced back to the NLC period. The breakup of the NLC was to actually crystallize the trot views that ultimately wrecked both organizations. Can this then be called a qualitative leap in the history of our movement? We don't think so.

As we can see, our whole analysis leading to political line is the key link was shallow, arrogant, sectarian, subjective and metaphysical. We hope that LPR will ponder this before they decide to "thank us" for helping them to adopt it.

SUMMARY

In summation we would like to point out that LPR actually unites with our "sober appraisal" in the editorial in RC #10. Where we differ is in our assessment of the causes of our weaknesses and what will be necessary to overcome these weaknesses. LPR's approach is to make excuses, and to a certain extent to try and justify and defend their excuses. We might ask the question, "Who was offended by our editorial in RC #10?" Wasn't it in fact those groups with the most sectarian of histories, with the least roots in the working class and national movements? We can only sound Lenin's warning:

"It is our duty always to intensify and broaden our work and influence among the masses. A Social-Democrat who does not do this is no Social-Democrat. No branch, group, or circle can be considered a Social-democratic organization if it does not work to this end steadily and regularly. To a great extent the purpose of our strict separation as a distinct and independent party of the proletariat consists in the fact that we always and undeviatingly conduct this Marxist work of raising the whole working class, as far as possible, to the level of Social-Democratic consciousness, allowing no political gales, still less political changes of scenery, to turn us away from this urgent task. Without this work, political activity would inevitably degenerate into a game, because this activity acquires real importance for the proletariat only when and insofar as it arouses the mass of a definite class, wins its interest, and mobilizes it to take an active, foremost part in events. This work, as we have said, is always necessary." (*On Confounding Politics With Pedagogics*)

Let's look at LPR's attitude toward our criticism of the movements shortcomings. We point out that our lack of ties to the class and or lack of influence is the result of a "left" restriction on the part of many of us, the scope of our political work and our political agitation. If we are to break with this sectarianism and carry out our tasks as communists building a truly Bolshevik party linked to the working class and oppressed masses by "a thousand threads", we must broaden the scope of our work and organize ourselves along professional, revolutionary lines. The time for excusing and justifying primitiveness is long past. But how does LPR respond?

It cannot deny the shortcomings of the movement that we point out; lack of influence within the class and national movements, amateurishness, etc. But rather than deal with the criticism, LPR makes excuses. This is the "rule" in capitalist countries, we must resign ourselves to this "for a long time, even after the party is built", after all we have to contend with the "dominant ideology". And they actually have the nerve to call ATM pessimists. Doesn't LPR's position represent the real retreat? A real failure to face up to the tasks confronting us, a real belittling of party building? We even have LPR blaming the **opportunists for its own backwardness**. Unable to shoulder its responsibilities as communists, how does LPR respond? Not by exposing the problem and laying out a solution as ATM does, but by pointing their finger and calling for more *polemics* with WVO, et. al. Somehow, with one article per week in *Resistance* they expect to defeat the opportunists, and win over the masses. Incredible! Would real revolutionaries think like LPR? We think not.

We stated before that LPR has fundamental disunity with ATM, but only shades of difference with the wing and WVO. Let's look at this again:

1. Propaganda and Agitation

PRRWO - RWL: Only propaganda - the newspaper is only propaganda.

WVO: Propaganda as the chief form, mainly to the advanced.

LPR: "Disunities" with only propaganda, but restricts scope of political agitation to local agitation. The newspaper is only propaganda.

Essential unity: belittling the role of political agitation as the basis for training the proletariat in class consciousness. No leadership to the mass struggles that will come in period three or four. All three sects confound pedagogics with politics.

2. The Struggle for Democracy

WVO: Their "genuine" and "sham" reforms. No democratic tasks in the U.S. The struggle for democracy diverts the proletariat from the struggle for socialism.

LPR and the "wing": also believe in "genuine" and "sham" reforms. On the only question of democracy which they have **tried** to address concretely, both groups hold that the struggle for democracy "creates illusions" about capitalism, etc.

Essential unity: the reduction of the question of the struggle for democracy to a reform struggle, combined with "calls" for socialism. A failure to understand the political tasks of the proletariat. All groups unite in both analysis and conclusion on the ERA.

3. Tasks of Communists

WVO: (the position of their "wing period") -- two tactical tasks -- M-L unite is primary.

LPR: the same

The "wing": two tactical tasks -- simultaneity of tasks.

Essential unity: restriction of the scope of political and organizational work to the two tactical tasks or even to only one of them. Elements of sectarianism and the theory of cadres is common to all groups. In every case, the "party" is (or will be) a unity of "sects."

4. Basis of Unity (On Burning Questions) of Line

The "wing": "party building is the central and only task, political line is the key link, periods of party building, fusion, chief form of activity, tactical and strategic principles, main danger," etc. *Palante*, Vol. 6, No. 7

LPR and WVO: party building is the central task, political line is the key link, theory as primary over practice in this period, two principal tactical tasks with M-L unite being primary, propaganda as the chief form of activity, right opportunism as the main danger, and the ideological and political struggle against opportunism (c.f. *Resistance*, Vol. 8, No. 1)

Essential unity: The idealist approach of proceeding from formulas, or a "scorecard" or "points" approach to unity. It doesn't concretely deal with the relationship of the conscious element to the spontaneous movement; but rather ignores that question, abstracts it, postpones it, or restricts the role of communists to that of pedagogues in the working class movement. No sect actually organizes and leads any struggles of the class -- except **perhaps** to the smallest and most restricted extent.

5. The Role of Theory

The "wing": "This is why the key link, the application of the universal principles applied to our concrete conditions, i.e., hammering out the Party's basic line and program of action . . ." (*Palante*, Vol. 6, No. 7)

LPR: "Marxist-Leninists Unite on the basis of political line - (which LPR and the "wing" either mystify or reduce to a shopping list of formulas) - and it is

this unity that allows them to carry out revolutionary work among the masses.”
“The very meaning of political line being the ‘key link’ is precisely that. You cannot carry out revolutionary practice if you are not guided by revolutionary theory,” and therefore, “that is why we also have to emphasize that theory is primary over practice in this period.”

Essential unity: No understanding of the relationship between ideology, politics, and organization. Neither sect knows how to study theory, nor how it is developed, therefore they have been unable to develop or apply any theory themselves. This leads them to confuse book worship or citing quotations, with actual application of theory. Neither apply theory to practice, but instead counterpose theory and practice. They do not see here a unity of opposites. Their own theoretical backwardness (as evidenced by their failure to have developed even a shred of revolutionary theory over the years) becomes an excuse for carrying out no revolutionary practice. Both will claim that their endless polemics are practice. This actually does about exhaust the scope of their work. There is not a grain of Marxism to be found in the approach of either group.

LPR AND THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

If LPR is ever to break with its “leftism” it will have to closely re-examine its relationship with the trotskyite CLP, to see just how they influenced their development and how LPR has not yet purged itself of certain aspects of that line.

For example, in *Resistencia*, Vol. 7, No. 3, they state: “The CL fought against the economist thesis of building a mass movement . . .”

This isn’t *exactly* what happened. First of all, building a mass movement is not economist but rather the worship of the spontaneity of the mass movement, and a failure to give it political direction, and to restrict its scope, is economist. It is not wrong to build a mass movement in a pre-party period if we are clear on what our tasks in that movement are. What is incorrect is to counterpose this to building a communist party, which is *exactly* what CL did. The basis for CL’s struggle against building the mass movement was its own sectarian and trotskyite theory of cadres and nothing else. Yet LPR lauds this practice of CL in their article! They continue: “(CL) emphasized the importance of the conscious element (!) . . .” (ibid). We ask comrades, **how** did CL “emphasize the importance of the conscious element?” By eliminating all mass work, by raising the trot theory of cadres. LPR wake up. CL’s line was rotten through and through -- they “raised” the party only to sabotage the party. This has been recognized by almost the entire movement. You had better try to catch up.

Many of you will remember that the old CL was not satisfied with winning the advanced workers to communism, but insisted that we win only the “advanced of the advanced.” LPR has now taken this line one step further with the profound observation that the party will be built only with Marxist-Leninists -- not even the advanced of the advanced.

“The party must be composed of workers, yes, but workers that are M-L’s, and not of advanced elements who are not yet communists. So it is our task to unite those that are M-L’s and not confuse proletarian class with proletarian party or advanced elements with M-L’s.” (*Resistance*, Vol. 7, No. 5)

We never thought that we would see the day when anyone would render even CL’s nonsense “more profound”, but LPR has done it with this nonsensical confusion, which is only one more cover for their failure to provide political leadership to the proletariat.

But why does LPR praise CL on these questions, and even go them one better? Either they unite with the Old CL’s line on these questions, or they don’t realize the extent to which CL still influences them. LPR has said:

“We have failed in publicly stating our ideological, political and organizational differences with the CL, which led to our resignation from the Continuations Committee and although it is very late, we are in the process of publishing a booklet which contains a study of CLP’s current line as well as a severe self-criticism for not having carried out open polemics with the CL at the time that the differences came about, as well as an open repudiation of a series of incorrect positions which we held and put forth at that time.”

We would encourage LPR (the champion of the timely polemic) to expedite this task, particularly since its three years overdue. We have seen what happened to PRRWO when it failed to sum-up and carry out the struggle against its main “left” danger, and how this too, had a history linked to unities with CL. We feel that the sooner LPR begins the “open repudiation of a series of incorrect positions which we held and put forth at that time,” the sooner they will root out the trotskyite influence which still haunts them. And it is not merely a “series of incorrect positions” that must be repudiated. A series of incorrect positions is called a political line, in this case a line heavily influenced by trotskyism. Comrades, this problem has plagued LPR at least since the days of unity and comradesly relations with CL. It continued with their position on “one-stage revolution” in Puerto Rico. LPR, in their self-criticism, admit that the “one-stage” line is a trotskyite line, and they criticize themselves for “a poor understanding of the national colonial question . . .” Never do they dig out the roots of the trotskyite, or try to determine whether it poisoned them in other areas. We must remember that their line on Puerto Rico was central to what work LPR did carry out in the past. They published an entire series of propaganda pamphlets putting forward the one-stage theory line. Not only was the position itself trotskyite, but their whole methodology as well. In the pamphlet “*The Puerto Rican National Question*” LPR simply states that because Puerto Rico is an industrialized country, Mao’s *New Democracy* does not apply. No analysis of different classes in motion, the history of Puerto Rico, etc. -- *New Democracy* simply doesn’t apply because of Puerto Rico’s industrializaion. LPR has now changed their position using the same miserable methodology. No new analysis of the history, objective conditions, class struggle, relationship of forces, etc. We are simply told that now *New Democracy* does apply. We are, we suppose, to take it on faith. Fortunately, the Puerto Rican masses don’t have to rely on LPR to guide their struggle. By the way, we would ask comrades to compare the approach and methodology of LPR on the Puerto Rican national question, and that used by ATM in its pamphlet *Fan the Flames*, or the Chicano national question. We think that you will find that LPR, not only does not hold “theory as primary,” but they don’t seem to hold it secondary either. They understand neither its essence or purpose.

The League for Proletarian Revolution has stubbornly refused to root out the influence of the Trotskyite Communist League of recent memory. The consequences are obvious to all communists and advanced workers (dogmatism, theory of cadres, repudiation of all reforms). If the LPR is to meet its responsibility to the working class movement and the cause of Socialist Revolution, it must seriously re-examine its history and the influential role of CL.

Opportunism, whether from the “Right” or the “Left” is alien to the working class. It is the duty of all communists and class conscious workers to forewarn, expose, the alien ideology and isolate its proponents from the ranks of the working class in the interest of Socialist Revolution.