

# THE O.L. ON PARTY BUILDING :

The most recent attempt in party building was initiated last November by the October League (M-L), when they published "Marxist-Leninists Unite" in THE CALL.

Since that date the MLOC has sought to struggle with the comrades of the OL, not compromising on principle, while at the same time, carrying on work with them in the struggle of the masses against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. This work in the past months included work on the demonstrations against the oppression of the Azanian people, the Angola Coalition, and the campaign to free Gary Tyler, to name a few instances.

In response to protracted work and struggle with comrades in the OL, the MLOC advanced a criticism of the line of the OL in UNITE!, Vol. 2, No.1, last February.

In February, we stated that:

"We invite the OL and all comrades to correct what is incorrect, and to deepen what is correct. We invite the October League (M-L) to reply to this criticism in a Marxist-Leninist manner, in the spirit of criticism and self-criticism. While the criticism presented here of the OL is very serious, it is raised in order to advance the struggle for the party, to repudiate errors, and unite around a correct ideological and political line. While Marxist-Leninists take the stand that against opportunism, struggle is absolute, toward the OL as an organization, the MLOC takes the stand of unity, struggle, unity. We hope that the OL will take such a stand as well." (UNITE!, Vol 2, #1, p. 22)

The MLOC has systematically presented its views on the correct norms that should govern the relations between Marxist-Leninist organizations, in an effort to advance the struggle of uniting Marxist Leninists while laying out the correct revolutionary course for the masses of the U.S. in their struggle for state power. *On numerous occasions we have called upon the OL to publicly respond to the criticism presented in our February polemic, but we have received no response from the OL, either publicly or privately.*

In May, the OL brought together a number of groups which it had been working with to form an Organizing Committee for party building. At this time we are taking the opportunity to briefly comment on the course of development of the OL's party building effort since our polemic was issued, and on the divergence from Marxist-Leninist principle that the declaration of the OC, and OL's participation in it, represents. In the declaration of the OC it is stated that,

"In this period, we must be all judged by our stand on the struggle for unity and the party." (p. 4)

*The MLOC calls on the OC to respond to this criticism in the spirit of honest and principled criticism and self-criticism, to live up in practice to the above declaration.*

## FURTHER DIFFERENCES WITH THE OCTOBER LEAGUE (M-L)

(1) With the publication of our differences with the OL in February, the OL was approached in a comradely manner and asked to respond, privately or publicly, to the criticism presented. This approach was made on several occasions. The OL indicated that they would respond. To this time, there has been not a sentence in response. When the OL through the OC states in their declara-

tion on p.4 that they have "shown itself to stand for communist unity on the principles of Marxism-Leninism", the facts fly in the face of this claim, as we will further demonstrate.

In UNITE!, Vol. 2, #3, the MLOC presented criticism of a number of organizations' views on the Woman Question, including the OL. This criticism was advanced to the OL before publication for struggle and discussion. Again, there has been no response *in substance* to this criticism.

(2) In the Declaration, it is stated often, that "A hallmark of the party must be a bold and open attitude towards criticism and self-criticism." (p. 3)

Has this characterized the line of the October League? As Engels stated, "facts are stubborn things".

On several very important question, including the correct course to forming a party, the trade union question, the international situation, the winning of the advanced and the primary role of propaganda, the OL has changed its line in recent months, in some cases without the slightest indication that a change has taken place, or in others, with the shallowest possible self-criticism.

## PARTY BUILDING

In regard to their party building plan, the March CALL, in a report from their Central Committee, stated that there has been a "partial modification" of their party building plan. The "Central Committee decided to omit this 'temporary leading body' and instead to call for the founding of the congress of the party to be held later this year." They pointed out three "weaknesses of the 'temporary leading body idea'", which were (1) that the body would not have the authority that an elected body by a congress would have, opening the door to federationist weaknesses and undermining the centralist unity; (2) it would be without a party program to guide the struggle; (3) unification would be solely from above, rather than from both above and below.

And then the OL is so bold as to state that "the basic features of the plan remain the same".

*Nowhere in the historical experience of the proletariat can we find such a 'temporary leading body' plan of building a Leninist party as the one which the OL has advanced.* The OL had virtually proposed, until corrected, that the party be built without a program and without a congress, an unprecedented path to a Leninist party under legal conditions. Instead of taking up a genuine self-criticism, educating the masses as to the true significance of these errors and promoting a deep going and thorough grasp of the correct path to building the party, the OL describes this as merely "weaknesses of the 'temporary leading body idea'".

Is this the kind of bold criticism and self criticism that is the hallmark of a genuine party?

## TRADE UNION LINE

On the trade union question, the OL has recently begun a series of articles which fundamentally change their line on trade unions, in accord with the criticism raised of the OL line in the MLOC polemic, and by other organizations. No longer do they promote the line of "pushing the unions to the left", but correctly uphold the line that the unions must be taken over and transformed into revolutionary organizations of the

workers. To this date, the OL has not offered any meaningful self-criticism as to the basis of this change.

## INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

On the international situation, the OL has in the past upheld the position that in the era of imperialism revolution represents the main direction of history, while presently the factors for both war and revolution are on the rise. However, in the May 31, 1976 issue of THE CALL, Michael Klonsky, chairman of the OL, states that "A few years ago it was correct to say that 'revolution is the main trend in the world today'. Now this statement is no longer fully complete or applicable to the present conditions. Today, both the factors for war and revolution are developing together. By saying that both factors are developing together, we are clearly emphasizing the growing danger of war."

In fact, OL has opened the door to the conclusion that war could be the main trend in the world, thus denying the basic Leninist stand on imperialism. Again OL fails to explain the basis for their change in line or offer a self-criticism, simply suggesting that the overall objective conditions have changed and OL is simply responding. This point is extremely important, as without a correct understanding of the international situation, it will be impossible to develop a correct party program from which Marxist-Leninist strategy will follow. Only by knowing the nature of the world situation, the motion of forces on a world scale, can the revolutionary struggle in the U.S. be based on the interest of the proletariat of the entire world, as Comrade Stalin pointed out that it must.

## WINNING THE ADVANCED

In regard to winning the advanced and propaganda, in the Declaration of the OC, it is stated that,

"In this period of the formation of the party, the primary focus of communist work must be to win the advanced workers to communism and the party. The tasks of the period require that propaganda be the chief form of activity..."

*These are clearly new positions for the OL, yet nowhere does the OL explain its new positions on these questions- questions which have been extremely heated over the last couple of years.*

While the OL speaks frequently of the importance of self-criticism, their practice reveals that they resemble those who Stalin described as,

"...people in the ranks of the Party who have no fondness for criticism in general, and for self-criticism in particular. Those people, whom I might call 'skin deep' communists, every now and then grumble and shrug their shoulders at self-criticism, as much as to say, 'Again this accused self-criticism, again the raking out of our shortcomings- can't we be allowed to live in peace?'"

(3) One further indication of the actual stand of the OL toward unity was their role in the formation of the OC, both in regard to the MLOC, and in regard to various independent Marxist-Leninists who related these experiences to the MLOC.

Regarding the MLOC, our organization made it clear to the OL that we would like to sit down and talk with them about the May Unity Meeting, which form-

## A "PARTIAL MODIFICATION" OF UNPRINCIPLED UNITY

ed the OC. This understanding was conveyed to a person on the Central Committee of the OL who is a national spokesperson of the organization, and involved in directly building the May Unity Meeting. The MLOC was not contacted about any of the details of the meeting, nor were we informed why.

Also, numerous independent Marxist-Leninists were told by the OL that only organizations would be attending, and that "individuals would not be attending the unity conference; even Harry Haywood would not be there". While we do not know the actual attendance, we know from reading THE CALL that Harry Haywood did attend, and therefore we are led to assume that Haywood is somehow, from the OL's viewpoint, a more important Marxist-Leninist than the other Marxist-Leninists who were not allowed to attend, but who wished to struggle for Marxist-Leninist principle.

In the recent Marxist-Leninist Unite supplement from the OC it was put forward that,

"...among those forces who are committed to unite, principled struggle over important questions of party program, organization, etc., must take place." (p. 4)

In practice, however, the stand of the OL, as a major force in building the OC, was not one of seeking to struggle out differences, but of subjective selection based upon the degree of unity with the line of the OL.

### OUR DIFFERENCES WITH THE DECLARATION OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Before going into an analysis of the Organizing Committee, we would like to lay out what our understanding of the purpose of an organizing committee is, as by Lenin:

"Such unification (of the OC) cannot be decreed; neither can it be established immediately, by mere resolutions adopted by assembled delegates. It must be prepared and developed systematically and gradually... And that is why we particularly welcome the wise, cautious and modest way in which the Organizing Committee has entered upon its duties. Without insisting on any kind of obligatory relations with the mass of Russian Social-Democrats, the Organizing Committee confines itself to offering its services to all of them..."

Further, while regarding the preparation and convocation of a general Party congress as its primary task, the O.C. also assumes certain general functions. We are confident that no Social-Democrat will fail to recognize the pressing need for this extension of functions on the part of the OC for this is merely an extended offer of its services— an offer that goes to meet demands expressed thousands and thousands of times— an offer that does not entail the forfeiture of any 'rights' but rather the practical abandonment of isolation as speedily as possible, and the tackling in common of a number of joint undertakings." Lenin, CW, Vol. 6, p. 310

At the heart of the OC, according to Lenin, is that it "offers its services" to the entire movement, and does not reflect a special interest or mere section of the movement.

The Declaration of the new OC states that the principles of unity advanced "represent the fundamental points that distinguish our Marxist-Leninist trends from revisionism and all forms of opportunism". (p. 3)

On the preceding page, it is claimed that "We can now clearly distinguish between Marxism and revisionism on each of the main questions facing the communist and workers movement".

This is a very bold claim, that on every main question facing our movement, clear lines of demarcation have been drawn.

Furthermore, what are these principles which the recent OC claims are adequate to draw lines of demarcation between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism on "each of the many questions facing our movement"? While we will not discuss the principles of unity, a few examples will vividly make the point.

### (1) Lack of Marxist-Leninist Presentation

On the presentation of the international situation, there is not even a mention of the general crisis of capitalism or the present nature of the second stage of the general crisis— without which it is not possible to correctly formulate strategy and tactics for the proletariat. Such a fundamental question as the main trend in the world is ignored. On the Woman Question, there is no mention at all of the material basis of women's oppression, nor the special oppression of women of oppressed nations and national minorities. In fact, this paragraph could unite social democrats, trotskyites, the CPUSA and many other diverse strata, and can hardly be the basis for demarcating genuine from sham Marxist-Leninists.

On other questions, such as the Chicano National Question, there is not even as much as the barest thread for the position that the Chicano people represent a national minority. Chinese, Japanese, Filipino and other peoples with their own distinct, national heritage are lumped together as an Asian American national minority, virtually liquidating a scientific understanding of the nature of their oppression. No effort is even made to clarify the nature of the oppression of the Native American peoples. Do they consist of several oppressed nations? Are they national minorities? Or what?

The formulation that the Black National Question is a question simply of the right to political secession, liquidates the right of self-determination for that nation. Even though the preceding sentence upholds self-determination in general, it denies it in particular, in regard to the Black National Question.

We urge comrades to study the Comintern Resolutions of 1928 and 1930 on the Black National Question in order to gain further clarity on the right to self-determination and democratic rights in regard to the Black Nation. A brief comparison of the CI's formulation of democratic rights for Blacks in the U.S. will show sharply the difference between Marxism-Leninism and the OL's formulations.

### (2) Significant changes go unexplained—

In the first statement of Marxist-Leninists Unite, there was an entire section devoted to a discussion of the Fight Back, yet none in the most recent draft. Do the comrades in the OL believe that no one would even be curious as to why in one draft it is included as one of four sections, yet omitted in the next draft without any explanation?

In the second draft, under principles of unity there is now a section on the Theoretical Basis, which was not included in the first draft. May we ask the comrades of the OL why this is now important and not considered important enough last November?

While factory nuclei were not mentioned in the previous draft, they are included in the new draft, but only in the section on the labor movement, and not in relation to party building. May we ask the OL what lessons they have learned which led them to change their characterization of factory nuclei?

Again, why in this draft the new line on winning the advanced and propaganda and no explanation as to why?

### (3) Belittlement of party program—

We ask the comrades why it is that they formulate such vague, general and shallow principles of unity, which for the most part are completely incapable of drawing lines of demarcation between Marxism and revisionism, and devote virtually no discussion to the party program. In point 3 of Tasks of the Organizing Committee, it is stated that,

"The OC will offer suggestions to the organizations in the party building efforts in regard to the most important polemical struggles needed to further demarcate our trend from the opportunist lines in the communist movement."

However, Lenin held that polemics must be based primarily on the struggle around party program, not as a substitute for that program. (Lenin, CW, Vol. 4, p. 231)

Throughout the entire development of the OL, now OC, party building plan, since last November, the question of the party program has been either ignored or relegated to a very secondary place.

Are we to assume that the omission of such a fundamental link in the party building chain was simple "weakness", or that by now talking about a party program they have made a "partial modification" of the party building plan?

This is a question which must have a deep going self-criticism as an integral part of its answer.

### CONCLUSION

The OL's development represents a deepening of the right opportunism which is in the motion towards consolidation. All genuine forces in the communist movement, especially in the Organizing Committee, and all advanced workers must be vigilant, must not let themselves be blinded by the sparks and heat generated by the infantile and "leftism" of the "wing" which is in the process of degeneration. This is clearly an example of left-opportunism serving right opportunism well. Yes, the actions, outlook, and methods of the "wing" provoke widespread indignation from wide quarters, throughout the country. But it is all the more important at such times to grasp firmly the fact that right opportunism is the main danger, and that this may be acknowledged only in words. This must not be allowed to happen.

Party building must be placed on a principled basis, with work on the party program carried out from the stand, viewpoint, and method of Marxism-Leninism; a Leninist Organizing Committee based on Leninist principles which will serve the entire movement must be formed in which the decisions of the Organizing Committee will be based on Marxism-Leninism, not "majority rule" as the OL/OC have planned.

The MLOC has raised principled criticism of the line of the OL and of the developments of the OC. Such criticism is advanced in the interest of proletarian revolution, and is put forward to aid the consolidation of the unity of Marxist-Leninists and to draw lines of demarcation with opportunism. In this way it is a motive force in the struggle to forge a party which will be based solidly on the granite foundation of Marxist-Leninist principle, and not on the soft sand of good intentions and right opportunism.