

## Has Two Aspects

# OL's Draft 'Program': Trite- And Wrong

The October League, going under the alias of the Organizing Committee for the Marxist-Leninist Party or OC for short, has after, lo, these many months produced its draft "program." (*Call*, April 4, 1977) It must be quite a disappointment to members and sympathizers of the October League who've had to wait for it so long. Some of it is downright foolish, more of it is confusing and the whole thing is, for want of a better word, trite. And beneath it all is the erroneous ideological and political line of the O.L., no less rancid than it has ever been.

Considering the extensive study and reprinting of various historical and foreign contemporary programmes that has gone on in this country over the last few years, not to mention the RCP's *Programme* (from which a number of "borrowings" are evident in this new effort), the O.L.'s lengthy labor has produced a real molehill of a program.

To ease the reader into the document, the first three paragraphs of this travesty are devoted to dumping on the "Gus Hall clique" of the "revisionist social-fascist" CPUSA, the long-extinct P.O.C., C.L., P.L., the Revolutionary Communist Party, Trotskyites, unnamed "centrist groupings" and finally that "right-opportunist anti-party bloc," the Revolutionary Wing.

After this burst of invective, it settles down and the reader faces several pages of the most rhetorical and superficial examination of a number of the important points anyone billing himself as a communist must address—the party, crisis, the woman question, etc. To cite just one example, the present day-to-day struggle of the workers over the terms of the sale of their labor power to the capitalists, discrimination, the right to organize and so on is shuffled into a section on why, as the first paragraph puts it, "it is the task of our Party to win the trade unions to socialist revolution and communist leadership."

This typifies the O.L.'s static and narrow approach to the class struggle—not to mention their obvious appetite for union office. The development of the entire class struggle is pictured as depending on driving the labor lieutenants of capital out of the trade unions, when the real relation is the opposite—it is in the course of developing the overall struggle of the workers that the struggle to reconquer the trade unions from control by agents of the bourgeoisie must take place.

Nowhere in the program does one find any sense of the working class becoming conscious of itself as a class and transforming itself in the course of struggle. Not even in the section on the united front is there anything on how taking part in struggle alongside of other

classes and strata is necessary for the proletariat to "develop consciousness of its own historical role as capitalism's gravedigger" (*Programme of the RCP*, p. 103).

### Still Pandering

Another point which bears singling out is the program's continuation of the O.L.'s record of pandering to and promoting narrow nationalism. One such appeal is the obligatory advocacy of the "Black Belt nation" as central to Black people's struggle, although what it is and what it really means are left vague, to say the least. This is just more of O.L.'s old trick of playing up to emotionalism around the correct, though not central to the Black struggle, right of self-determination and giving this emotionalism a pseudo-Marxist cover. The veneer of heavy sounding phrases covers the real situation—no real scientific analysis of the condition and the struggle of Black people is given, no real explanation is offered.

Likewise, the document renews the O.L.'s call for a "Black united front"—without, of course, dealing with the objective contradiction between this and the United Front Against Imperialism strategy or, for that matter, the utterly wrong "main blow" approach the O.L. has been pushing lately, which includes a wrong approach toward middle forces in society.

To whom could such a programme possibly be of value? It's hard to say. The lack of analysis on the particulars and tasks of the U.S. revolution means it has little utility as a guide to revolutionary practice for communists—and what direction it provides is wrong.

On the other hand it can't be of much use to advanced workers interested in communism. Important scientific concepts crop up once or twice without a word of explanation: surplus value, productive forces, subjectivism. Worse still, some are used in a highly colloquial and misleading manner for such an important document as a programme—women "without a job are exploited as a cheap reserve army of labor." (Perhaps the O.L. would be so kind as to take one of the articles in their "commentaries on the Draft Program" series in *The Call* to explain how someone without a job can be exploited.) In short, the program assumes a knowledge of Marxist-Leninist terms but doesn't explain or apply, and often perverts, Marxist-Leninist principles.

### The Last Straw

For those in and around the O.L. who are serious

about making proletarian revolution in the U.S., this travesty of a programme may be the last straw. They have been whipped around outrageously by a totally careerist leadership. Who can forget the O.L. in the role of the little Dutch boy, plugging its finger in the dike to hold back the "fascist tide" of one section of the bourgeoisie, while calling for help from the "anti-fascist section" of the bourgeoisie to "stem" this tide—a tide which evaporated from the pages of *The Call* only a little while later? It is easy to imagine the embarrassment of O.L. cadre who spent two years trying to wade through—and push on others—Marty Nicolaus' "definitive work" on the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, only to be suddenly informed that it was totally revisionist and without merit.

All this typifies the O.L. leadership's methods—although changes of line have been more than frequent, acknowledgement that these vacillations have even taken place has been rare indeed and genuine and thoroughgoing self-criticism entirely absent.

The fact is, despite their leaders' reckless evasions of the truth, not all O.L. members can be counted on to forget such flip-flops (or to read only the desperately distorted and defensive anti-RCP "polemics" in *The Call* without checking out *Revolution* for themselves).

People who thought they were joining a revolutionary organization have been told by M. Klonsky and Co. that they must uphold reactionary butchers and imperialist lackeys like the Shah of Iran as fighters against "hegemonism" and then criticize Iranian revolutionaries who wish to overthrow him. The pages of their newspaper scarcely criticize the U.S. bourgeoisie for its crimes in Angola but rather focus on those in the ruling class who are out to "appease" the Soviet Union—like the Joint Chiefs of Staff!

The "draft program" is itself part of a sudden left swing after years of rightism as the O.L. leadership girds itself for its plunge into "partyhood." The same trade union officials the O.L. waddled after so slavishly a year ago have now become the targets of the proletariat's "main blow" in the revolution. (While this term is pretty much absent from the "draft program"—a surprising omission of what the O.L. endorsed as the "fundamental strategic rule of Leninism" not long ago—its content remains.) The revisionist CPUSA is described for instance as "the most dangerous and insidious of all bourgeois parties."

Many in the O.L. are doubtlessly sick of being told to "fight left errors" with right opportunism and then right errors with left opportunism, and never getting anywhere. We urge such people not to let their disillusionment and disgust with the October League embitter them against genuine Marxism-Leninism and the revolutionary struggle of the American working class and people.

There is a genuine Marxist-Leninist Party with the correct line in this country, the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. There is much work to be done, and in spite of the O.L. and others of its ilk, the struggle of the American working class will continue to advance inexorably toward revolution, socialism and communism. ■