

Opportunists Liquidate Chicano National Question

How is the position of the MLOC different?

Chicano people suffer immense oppression in the U.S. and especially in the Southwest. The source of this oppression is the domination of the Chicano Nation in the Southwest by U.S. imperialism.

In the five earlier parts of this series, UNITE! explained the rise and development of this Nation, a Nation distinct from both the U.S. and Mexico. Now, in this, the concluding part of this series, we will expose revisionist and opportunist errors on the Chicano National Question.

No other organization which claims to be Marxist-Leninist currently recognizes the existence of a Chicano Nation. Why is the position of the MLOC so different? We have relied on the science of Marxism-Leninism, on historical materialism. And it is from this viewpoint, the stand of the proletariat, that we studied, analyzed and applied the teachings of comrade Stalin to the specific conditions of the Chicano and Mexicano people of the Southwest.

We found many errors in studying the positions of other organizations. These errors stem from two deviations. The primary deviation is great nation chauvinism, and the secondary deviation is narrow or cultural nationalism.

Great Nation Chauvinism

Great nation chauvinism manifests itself in the view that the state boundaries of the U.S. are inviolate or sacred. Other organizations divorce the national question from the question of the general international situation. They seek to uphold the territorial borders of U.S. imperialism at all costs.

Stalin, quoting the Russian communist Manuilsky, harshly condemns this error: "The fundamental premise of Semich's (a Yugoslav communist -ed.) whole presentation is the idea that the proletariat must accept the bourgeois state **within those frontiers which have been set up by a series of wars and acts of violence.**" (Collected Works, Vol 7, p. 230 Emphasis is Stalin's).

White supremacy has always been the handmaiden of great nation chauvinism in the U.S. Most organizations are unable to see the Southwest as anything but a bloc of "Spanish-speaking people". They are unable to differentiate between the Chicano Nation and areas of concentration of Chicano and Mexicano national minorities. They take a chauvinist stand towards all the peoples of the Southwest.

The Revolutionary Communist Party USA (RCP) recognizes the special and unusual struggle for land in New Mexico and Colorado. They say that "Mexican-Americans of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado have different historical roots than those who came from Mexico." (Programme of the RCP, p. 128) They say there are particular

"I ask you who are present if you haven't begun to think that this land belongs to us and not to those who have more"



U.S. occupation forces in New Mexico defend U.S. imperialist interests in the Chicano Nation after the "courthouse raid" of the Alianza. (All photos in this series of articles from 450 Years of Chicano History in Pictures.)

demands in this area because of the land question. They put forward the right of Chicanos to the land stolen from them under the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Yet, even though recognizing differences, they refuse to remove their chauvinist spectacles to analyze what these differences represent: an oppressed nation.

The Communist Labor Party even talks of "Mexican National Minority peasantry." For both these organizations, however, there is no Chicano Nation, only a Mexican national minority.

If there is no nation in New Mexico, how do these organizations explain the continuous struggle over land, or the masses' support of the Alianza's call for self-determination and the struggle to regain the lands?

One result of chauvinism is to approach the national question from an ahistorical or non-materialist viewpoint.

The Communist Party/Marxist-Leninist (CP/ML) is an adept pupil of this viewpoint. In formulating its views on the Chicano Nation, the CP/ML doesn't even examine the history of the Southwest. They present a distorted, inaccurate history of Mexico, hardly mentioning the Southwest, and then claim there is no Chicano Nation. This is a farce and an insult to the Chicano people.

The Source of Opportunism

What is the material basis for these opportunist errors, for great nation chauvinism and white supremacy, on the Chicano Nation?

Imperialism means the subjugation of nations and peoples. The bourgeoisie has always used part of the superprofits reaped from the colonies to bribe a small sector of the working class.

Lenin also points out that not only does this bribe create a labor aristocracy but that the influence of the aristocracy infects the

workers' movement. It is manifested in a chauvinist stand toward oppressed nations. The influence of this bribe combined with the fact that the U.S. has a large petty bourgeoisie is the material basis for the opportunism of these organizations.

Regional Autonomy: Whose Choice?

In spite of or because of their unbridled opportunism on the Chicano National Question, the CLP, the RCP and the CP/ML all call for regional autonomy for the Southwest, or wherever there are sizeable, historic concentrations of Mexican-Americans.

In an attempt to blind the Chicano people to their opportunism, and maintain their influence as a "party of the proletariat" these organizations put forward the sop of regional autonomy as the way to alleviate centuries of national oppression. But in doing this, they distort Stalin once again.

Regional autonomy is the free choice of an oppressed nation in exercising its right of self-determination.

"Thus", argues Stalin, "our views on the national question can be reduced to the following propositions:

- recognition of the rights of nations to secession;
- regional autonomy for nations remaining within the given state;
- special legislation guaranteeing freedom for development for national minorities."

(Stalin, Marxism and the National and Colonial Question, p. 106-7).

Stalin is very clear on this and never confuses nations with national minorities. Regarding national minorities, Stalin proposes that "their rights must be specifically protected. The Party therefore demands complete equality of rights in educational, religious and other matters and

the removal of all restrictions on national minorities."

National Autonomy In Disguise

The CP/ML, RCP and CLP all insist that they oppose narrow nationalism. But even though these organizations insist they demand regional, and not national autonomy, they objectively bow to Chicano nationalism by upholding regional autonomy for what they call a national minority, but what is in fact a nation.

Stalin states that "national autonomy proceeds from the conception as a union of individuals without regard to definite territory." (Marxism and the National Question, p. 33)

The CP/ML, RCP and CLP include not only areas where Chicanos are a "large and stable stratum connected with land, which would naturally rivet the nation together", but willy-nilly include areas where Chicanos and Mexicanos are a numerical majority with no particular relationship to the land. What is this except national autonomy?

This is especially true of the CP/ML which argues that even in cities like Chicago, Milwaukee, and Los Angeles where there are large numbers of Mexican-Americans (their term), regional autonomy is a just demand.

Just like the bourgeoisie they want to maintain and encourage segregated cities. Thus, they pander to and embrace the views of the most reactionary cultural nationalists and white supremacists.

Narrow Nationalism

Narrow nationalism is everywhere the reaction to great nation chauvinism or white supremacy. It is the response of the petty bourgeoisie in an oppressed nation to opportunism in the communist and workers' movement.

The August Twenty-Ninth Movement/ML had put forward a

position on the Chicano Nation but has since repudiated it. While it has some correct aspects the main conclusions are perverted by narrow nationalism.

In an effort to create a Chicano Nation out of the whole Southwest, ATM/ML fell into idealism. It recognized that the three territories of the Southwest developed separately, but was unable to concretely state how they merged to form a single nation. ATM/ML's whole position around common economic life evolves around the railroads. Thus, it presents a nation which developed in the hearts and minds of certain nationalist forces. ATM/ML did this to appeal to the nationalist forces in California where it had most of its work and, also, to validate this work.

ATM/ML also put forward that the peasantry was the leading force in the struggle for self-determination. It is true that the essence of the national question is the peasant question. But Lenin and Stalin have always maintained that in the era of imperialism, when the national and colonial question is part of the general world proletarian revolution, the proletariat and its ideology, Marxism-Leninism, must always be the leading force in the struggle for self-determination.

CASA is the mirror image of the Communist Party USA, with whom they have a working relationship. CASA upholds that all Chicanos and Mexicanos, whether here in the U.S. or in Mexico, are Mexicanos.

This line objectively separates "Mexican" workers from the multi-national proletariat in the U.S. CASA calls for unity of the "Mexican" people, across class lines, and belittles the unity of the multi-national proletariat.

Narrow nationalism is, of course, a secondary deviation. As opportunism toward the Chicano Nation is exposed and broken by a correct Marxist-Leninist stand and practice toward the Chicano Nation, the influence of cultural nationalism is likewise broken.

The position of the MLOC is a Marxist-Leninist position. We uphold the existence of a Chicano Nation and put forward the demand for self-determination for this Nation. This includes:

- confiscation of land and resources by the Chicano people;
- state unity for the Chicano Nation;
- the right of self-determination up to and including secession;
- guarantee of equality and complete democratic rights for the Chicano and Mexicano national minorities living outside the boundaries of the Chicano Nation.

Self-Determination for the Chicano Nation!