

## BASIS OF UNITY

Chicago Leninist Collective  
(draft, SM, 12/27/81)

1. Party-Building. At present, the primary task facing communists in the United States is building a proletarian vanguard party, theoretically, politically, and organizationally. We must restore Leninism to all aspects of our theoretical system, expunging the Stalinist errors which for so long have dominated the U.S. communist movement; we must analyze the current conjuncture in order to determine correct political lines to follow in intervening in the mass movements; and we must organize ourselves, both nationally and locally, to carry out our internal and external work. It is in order to carry out party-building that the Chicago Leninist Collective (CLC) exists.
2. Leninism. We uphold the fundamental tenets of Leninism: the necessity for a proletarian revolution led by a communist vanguard party, in order to replace capitalism with socialism; the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat throughout the socialist period, suppressing by whatever means necessary the inevitable struggle of the defeated bourgeoisie to restore an exploitative society; during the socialist transition period, reliance on the class struggles of the masses to step-by-step replace capitalist social relations with communist ones, in order to achieve communism; and democratic centralism - centralized unity of action based on democratic, collective decision-making - as the guiding organizational principle both with the vanguard party and governing its leadership of the masses.
3. Stalinism. We recognize Stalinism to constitute the consolidation of certain aspects of bourgeois ideology within the communist movement, particularly economism (the reliance on the development of the productive forces, rather than on the class struggles of the masses, to transform the relations of production, in advancing socialist society to communism) and bureaucratic centralism (as a parody of democratic centralism). As concretized in the practice of the revisionist parties throughout the world, both those holding state power (U.S.S.R., etc.) and those in the capitalist countries (e.g., the CPUSA), Stalinism constitutes the key obstacle which must be smashed ideologically before the communist movement can properly lead the working class in the overthrow of capitalism and the building of socialism.
4. "Primacy of Theory" Forces. Within the U.S. Communist movement, we place ourselves within what is known as the "primacy of theory" (PoT) forces in the anti-dogmatism, anti-revisionism" trend. It is primarily from these forces, which have undertaken to rescue communist theory from its degeneration under the domination of the Stalinian deviation, that we expect the vanguard party to emerge, and we therefore undertake both to build the PoT forces in the Chicago area and to struggle with and help to unify the PoT forces on a national scale. In particular, we support the PoT journal "Theoretical Review" (TR), and shall both submit articles for publication in TR and promote circulation of TR in the Chicago area.
5. Study Groups. The CLC organizes study groups in order to formulate positions to advance in the nationwide process of party-building, and in particular to use in guiding its own practical work. These study groups, while following a "primacy of theory" perspective, are open to both members and nonmembers of the CLC. Three such study groups are envisioned:



(a.) The Stalinian Deviation: a study of the degeneration, in both theory and practice, of the international communist movement which occurred with the political ascendancy of the Stalin group in the Soviet Union. Of especial importance in this study will be the history of class struggle in the U.S.S.R., as presented in Bettelheim's work on that subject, and the history of the CPUSA. The political positions of various purportedly Marxist-Leninist organizations currently active in the U.S. party-building movement will be analyzed in terms of their relationship to the Stalinian deviation.

(b.) The Current Conjuncture: an analysis of the present major contradictions in U.S. society, particularly those directly affecting the development of the workers' movement. Of particular interest will be the role of trade unions and struggles against oppression based on "race" or sex (or sexual preference), and Gramsci and Poulantzas' contributions to the Marxist theory of the state should be examined in this concrete context.

(c.) Philosophy and Organization: a study of Marxist philosophy and democratic centralism. The two subjects are closely related, for how we organize ourselves to carry out our political work depends critically upon our general understanding of how society develops and the possible influence of communists in this development. With regard to Marxist philosophy, the key task is to root out the economic determinism which has become prevalent with the rise of Stalinism, while building up a scientific formalism which takes account in a meaningful way of the fundamental role of the economy in the development of society; especially, the philosophical contributions of Althusser should be studied and developed. Democratic centralism, comprising Marxist-Leninist methods of organization, has been confused with the bureaucratic centralism of Stalinism for five decades now, and a sharp break must be made with the latter in order to build a vanguard party capable of leading the working class to socialist revolution and on to communism.

6. Functioning. In order to carry out its party-building tasks, the CLC functions as an organized collective, with formal delegation of responsibilities, including leadership. Locally, we organize PoT study groups as outlined above, promote circulation of TR, and generally propagate Leninist principles within the local activities of the party-building movement (e.g., in forums sponsored by ourselves and by other party-building forces, and by publishing our positions for local distribution). On a national scale, we carry out struggle with other PoT forces over theoretical positions and political and organizational lines in order to progressively achieve national organizational unity, attending regional and national conferences of PoT forces as appropriate; we also publish articles in such national forums as TR and the "Guardian", in order to promote the consolidation of Leninism within the party-building movement. Members of the CLC are expected to join (at least) one of the PoT study groups, to attend the meetings of the CLC itself, and to pay the dues necessary for the CLC to carry out its work. Formal leadership of the CLC will include a "Chairperson" immediately responsible for the overall functioning of the collective (i.e., internal work) and a "Secretary" immediately responsible for relations with other organizations (i.e., external work). Each PoT study group will also have a coordinator who is a member of the CLC.