



Win Masses to Marxism-Leninism

REVOLUTIONARIES MUST FIGHT NATIONALISM

An Editorial, June 1969

"Sometimes the bourgeoisie succeeds in drawing the proletariat into the national movement, and then the national struggle externally assumes a 'nation-wide' character. But this is so only externally. In its essence it is always a bourgeois struggle, one that is to the advantage and profit mainly of the bourgeoisie." — Joseph Stalin, Marxism and the National Question

PEOPLE all over the world are lashing out against U.S. imperialism. The war in Vietnam is the sharpest expression of this. The Vietnamese people have exposed U.S. imperialism as never before, and prior to the ill conceived Paris negotiations were exposing the inherent weakness of U.S. rulers. U.S. bosses were forced to go to extreme lengths in Vietnam to maintain strategic military, political and economic investments in Asia. But they could not hold on in the face of People's War.

The heroic actions of the Vietnamese people have considerably weakened the U.S. military machines, isolated the U.S. around the world, encouraged the revolutionary process everywhere and, significantly, intensified the internal contradictions in the U.S.

Summing up of the Vietnamese situation, until the negotiations, is not merely idle talk. What we are saying is that U.S. rulers can be taken. They are, really, strategically weak. Revolution is the mortal enemy of imperialism, and the flames of the Vietnamese revolution, if spread correctly, would lead to defeat of U.S. imperialism.

Facing a great weakening of the imperialist system the U.S. was forced to rely heavily on revisionism and nationalism. This brief paper is designed to stress the fact that the fight against revisionism is intertwined with the question of nationalism. And we think it is our duty to point out that socialism can't be won without a perspective of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The

stakes in this battle are enormous. It is a question of whether or not imperialism can be defeated or whether the imperialists can hold on for several more centuries.

It is worthwhile noting what happened in Vietnam. This issue is crucial to the world revolutionary movement. The lessons of the great Vietnamese battle affects revolutionary developments in our country. Vietnam has been at the heart of all U.S. politics for several years. New radicals have cut their teeth on building an anti-imperialist movement in the U.S. Lessons from this battle are significant in our country as well. Revisionist politics of Soviet "aid" and negotiations with the U.S. are opposed to revolutionary politics of rejecting Soviet "aid" and U.S. Get Out of Vietnam Now.

The Vietnamese people could have driven out the U.S. and established socialism. But because many of their leaders have stopped halfway, the U.S. will be able to thwart both possibilities. Most important, the U.S. will still be able to remain in Asia to protect its rapidly growing investments.

In addition, the coming conference of so-called socialist states in Eastern Europe, and various communist parties, is actually a nationalist potpourri. Virtually every state and party is at odds with one another. Some want to be tied to the U.S., others to the Soviet bosses. The Soviets don't really want cooperation but want complete domination. The other states are in sharp competition with Soviet bosses. Na-

nationalism in the once communist movement has not only led to capitalist relations in the country but to capitalist relations between the once socialist countries. Russia's aggression against the Czechs; Rumania's alliance with the U.S., etc., are expressions of these contradictions. The contradictions inherent in all capitalist relations must erupt and lead to the undermining of the coming conference. Past conferences of this bunch were a farce, because you can't cover up nationalism-capitalism behind a wall of quotations from Lenin or anyone else.

National struggle instead of class struggle must lead to imperialism. National struggle denies class struggle. And national struggle does not automatically lead to class struggle. Communists must intervene and put forward a Marxist-Leninist line. This gives the workers and oppressed people the correct and only alternative to capitalism.

Revisionists Use Nationalist Tricks

Looking around the world we see the disastrous results of nationalism and revisionism. In Indonesia this tragic blend resulted in the slaughter of over 500,000 of the best fighters. The Indonesian masses continue to live in poverty and under the heel of brutal fascism. The Indonesian masses will eventually reverse this. But we can't call fascism and the slaughter of militants a victory.

In countries like Egypt, Guinea and India the national bourgeoisie holds power under the guise of establishing socialism. These countries are imperialist and revisionist pawns. The rulers of these countries are able to organize the masses and hold power based on a nationalistic appeal. The essence of their battles against the U.S. is over the share of the national profit for the national bourgeoisie.

Algeria was an example of protracted war, involving millions. The Algerians forced the French to capitulate militarily. But all this did not lead to socialism. Certainly, socialism was the alleged perspective of the leadership. Socialism was surely the hope and goal of many of the people. At present, the Algerian people are still extremely poor and have little or no hope for improvement under the system. The economy staggers under the burden of a large army, an army not involved in building the country, and in no way a people's army. Though the French army was driven out, France still controls the dominant section of the economy. The Algerian bosses are busy haggling with the French over their cut from Saharan resources. The Russians control the army through their "aid," and are

busy worming their way into the Algerian economy, trying to supplant the French. This is not the Dictatorship of the Proletariat! This is not socialism! This is capitalism, where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

In the Congo the people forced Belgium to grant "independence" and established the Lumumba government. The small national bourgeoisie in the Congo fell out with the Belgians over their share of the economy. Lumumba represented the more militant section of these forces under Soviet tutelage he pressed his case at the UN—and was murdered by the Belgians and U.S. imperialists. Today the Congo remains "independent." It is run by other nationalists for the Belgians. The only real change in the picture is that the U.S. bosses, especially Rockefeller, grabbed a good piece of the action from the Belgians for their assistance in putting down the incipient national revolt. Because there were no forces with a real Marxist-Leninist outlook the people were not organized to fight and win. The Soviets and even Che Guevara tried to stir up a little fight for their interests. But their efforts only led to the murder of more Congo militants. Che's Congo adventure was transported to Bolivia, where he and his group ended up the same way. Dead and Defeated!

Russian vs. Soviet Culture

In the Soviet Union workers' political power has been overthrown. It is true that revisionism has momentarily triumphed in the Soviet Union. It is true that a new national bourgeoisie has arisen. It is true that the Soviets are a new imperial power, who collude with the U.S. to prevent revolution. Simply to ascribe this development to past bureaucratic practices in the Soviet Union begs the question. Any serious study of the development of the Soviet Union will show that a fervent nationalist bent was involved in Soviet culture and thought. The development of a new culture after the revolution did not incorporate a real working class and international outlook. Soviet culture could be best characterized by the Moiseyev dance troupe that was eagerly imported to this country by Sol Hurok. This fine dancing brought forward bourgeois national culture. No doubt, aspects of this culture were suppressed by some czars. But suppression does not licence bourgeois culture under socialism. For all who have forgotten the program of this troupe it merely was a demonstration of glorious Russian culture under various czars.

The Soviet movie "Alexander Nevsky" was a fine technical achievement. Bourgeois film makers still try to imitate this classic. How-

ever the content of the film was pure nationalism. To rouse the Soviet masses to the danger of Hitler's attack was fine. But showing Prince Alexander flushing the peasants out of their holes to fight the Knights of the Teutonic Order was bad. Prince Alexander was the great hero. The masses were a dull bunch of sheep that needed rousing. In other words, the old rulers weren't so bad. The people? They weren't so hot. This type of thought leads one to the inescapable conclusion that bourgeois society can't be so bad after all. Obviously we should all be like Prince Alexander.

Nationalism was the preeminent factor in Soviet art. Working-class culture was never developed. Certainly the Soviets were masters at maintaining and improving the ballet. But it was not developed from a class point of view. The czars' ballet was perfected. Unfortunately, this was another "communist" contribution to the development of nationalism—hence capitalism.

It is no accident the Cultural Revolution in China is called just that. Centuries of bourgeois thought and culture continued to be widely propagated by the new communist regime. After almost twenty years of state power the Chinese Communist Party decided that bourgeois nationalist culture was a big factor in undermining Chinese workers' power. It is significant that the Chinese began attacking some of the Soviet sacred cows. Suddenly, Sholokov, Shostakovich, Katchaturian, etc., were attacked by the Chinese as nationalists or pacifists or both. Obviously the Chinese felt state power could be reversed by not fighting these bad ideas and trying to develop a working-class approach to culture. The party then attempted to show how these wrong ideas directly entered into the political field. The attack on the Peking Opera was not a simple critique of opera.

All culture has a class content. The main problem has been that once socialism has triumphed in a particular country a new working-class culture has not automatically taken the place of bourgeois culture. And while Marxists-Leninists have tried to wipe out imperialist culture, which has often been imposed on another country, they have not always succeeded. Local bourgeois culture is not an answer to imperialist culture.

To sum up some developments of nationalism in this period:

1. There are the open right-wing nationalists, like Nasser, Kenyatta, Ghandi, etc., who use nationalist and socialist elements in their country to fight the outside imperialists for a bigger share of the profits. Some of these profits may

trickle down to the masses, but the overall condition of the people is poverty and powerless.

2. There are the Lumumba, Toure, and Nkrumah types, who have a more militant veneer. They espouse socialism but are really out to strengthen the national bourgeoisie of their countries. In these countries the masses are still destitute and still lacking political power.

3. There are the Boumedienne and Ben Bella types, who have been involved, at least peripherally, with a significant war against an outside imperialist. After the war they open up the country to neocolonialism from Europe, the U.S. or the new Soviet imperialists. The masses are still hungry, out of work and powerless.

4. There is nationalism that has flowered in a socialist state and helps turn socialism into its opposite or tries to. (U.S. rulers are quite fond of referring to this development as "national communism.") The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia demonstrate this. And the Liu's of China show the rest.

Various national forces in Yugoslavia are at one another's throats today. The Serbs are fighting the Croats, etc. This type of bitter national fighting can only occur in a situation when socialism is not being built. The idea of maintaining national states received a big boost in the early days of the Soviet Union. Having independent or autonomous republics in the Soviet Union was a concession to nationalism. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is an expression of nationalism. Though it wasn't incorrect to make it, this nationalist concession didn't wither away under a full-scale ideological fight after the revolution was won. It is now clear why Soviet bourgeois culture has been so persistent.

Nationalism flowers in a situation where self-determination means something other than socialism. We say that self-determination can only be accomplished under socialism. Socialism is the only road away from imperialism and toward workers' power. The slogan "all-class unity" is a cover-up for perpetuating capitalism. Obviously, if workers or oppressed people were leading the revolutionary battle it would have to be for socialism. Workers can't be liberated under capitalism. Unfortunately some of these ideas are at play in Vietnam and in the Black Liberation Movement in the U.S. The only way to incorporate the petty-bourgeoisie and even some small section of the national bourgeoisie in the movement, and prevent them from subverting it, is to make sure workers are in the leadership of the movement and that the movement is clearly for socialism. The petty-bourgeoisie in the U.S. and some sections of

the national bourgeoisie in Vietnam can only end their oppression from imperialists by changing their class outlook.

Two Types of Nationalism?

We say if the Vietnamese people follow any of these examples the people will be robbed of their only hope for self-determination, socialism. For many years we in the Progressive Labor Party held to the idea of two types of nationalism: revolutionary and reactionary. But a look at world reality shows there is no such thing. Nationalism is either the path to oppression by an outside imperialist or the road back to capitalism from socialism. Any form of nationalism is bad! Events speak more clearly than words!

Nationalism, whether it develops overtly as in Egypt or covertly as in the Soviet Union, means capitalism. Defeats in the past ten years in the international arena are serious. It is hard to turn defeats into victories if we don't try to see why defeats occur. Nationalism has helped wipe out a good portion of the international communist movement and threatens growing revolutionary action all over. If Asia, Africa and Latin America are the main areas of contradiction today, a Vietnamese leadership surrender is a big setback to revolutionary forces. Unless the forces of revolution understand it is a defeat (and Soviet revisionism is not the only danger) they may fall into the same revisionist-nationalist trap.

If one wants to "serve the people"—to prevent starvation, exploitation, unemployment, the reversal of socialism and to promote revolution, etc.—one must oppose nationalism. If we want to be on the side of the people it is important to oppose revisionism and nationalism.

There is the tendency among revolutionaries and radicals to believe that any struggle which seems to be against imperialism is good and must be uncritically supported. The "Communist" Party still tries to have us march behind the banners of the so-called liberal bourgeoisie and their stooges in the mass movement. After all, they have reasoned, Adlai was against Ike; JFK was against Nixon; LBJ was against Goldwater; and Humphrey was against Nixon. This was the negative choice put to the people by the C.P. It was called the "lesser of two evils." Nonetheless the "choice" was posed as a "struggle" between two forces: the good and bad capitalists. In the mass movement the C.P. is more positive: Support Rev. King; support Walter Reuther, etc. After all, they are fighting the system. We can now easily

see that if we followed this line we would still be fighting to seat Blacks at lunch counters in the South and supporting Reuther's sellouts in the North. Despite good intentions we would be on the side of reaction. Of course a good portion of the developing Left rejected these sellout ideas.

Today the C.P. and the U.S. Government support negotiations in Vietnam and Black studies at the universities. Unfortunately, it is not clear to all that these positions are as false as the old ones. We must judge the merits of any struggle by seeing if it is in the interests of the workers and oppressed people. The more sophisticated sections of the ruling class don't have this trouble. The lead article in the New York Times News of the Week section (May 4) analyzes the battles on the campuses from a class point of view:

But while the left-radicals seem to pick their issues with a view to maximum damage to the "Establishment"—often with the bluntly stated goal of destroying the university as the brain of the power structure and as the prelude to bringing down the power structure itself—the black students generally fight for limited objectives which they consider of importance to their own cause and education: open admission of the minorities to college, protection of black tenants against "university expansion" into their neighborhoods, student-run black studies programs. Far from wanting to destroy the university, the blacks aim at making it more responsive to their own needs as they see them.

There are two main trends within a ruling class. Though both are fundamentally united in the aim of holding state power at all costs, there are often sharp divisions and battles over tactics between them. The essence of the difference between the liberal and conservative wings of the ruling class is the amount of terror and coercion to be applied at given points. One group would retreat to full fascism sooner than later. The other group is more anxious to preserve the mantle of bourgeois democracy as long as possible. But when workers are in sharp class fight against bosses, both sections unite to smash workers' movements. Around the country many thousands have been killed and wounded in ghetto battles during the past six years. Thousands more are in jail or face imprisonment.

The main aspect of ghetto battles is that they are primarily working-class efforts. Jobs, wages, housing, equal opportunity in employment, sanitation, schooling, police terror, rent gouging, are the main issues. These demands and actions are intensified by racism. Black workers are a victim of special exploitation and their economic grievances are far more intense than most white workers. Racism acts to aid the bosses amass maximum profits and split the working class.

It is in working-class battles that capitalist

LENIN ON SELF-DETERMINATION

The bourgeoisie always places its national demands in the forefront. It advances them categorically. For the proletariat, however, these demands are subordinate to the interests of the class struggle. Theoretically, it is impossible to vouch beforehand whether the secession of a given nation from, or its equality with, another nation, will complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution; in either case, the important thing for the proletariat is to ensure the development of its class. For the bourgeoisie it is important to hamper this by pushing the aims of "its" nation before the aims of this development. That is why the proletariat confines itself, so to say, to the negative demand for the recognition of the right to self-determination, without giving guarantees to any nation, without undertaking to give anything at the expense of another nation.

The proletariat needs only these guarantees, whereas the bourgeoisie of every nation requires guarantees for its own interests, irrespective of the position of (or the possible disadvantages to) other nations.

For the proletariat, however, the important thing is to strengthen its class against the bourgeoisie and to educate the masses in the spirit of consistent democracy and Socialism.

This may not be "practical" for the opportunists, but it is the only real guarantee, the guarantee of a maximum of national equality and peace, in spite of the feudal landlords and the nationalist bourgeoisie.

The whole task of the proletarians in the national question is "impractical" from the standpoint of the

nationalist bourgeoisie of every nation, because, being opposed to all nationalism, the proletarians demand "abstract" equality, they demand that on principle there shall be no privileges, however slight.

It is necessary to wage a determined struggle against painting the bourgeois-democratic liberation trend in backward countries in communist colours; the Communist International must support the bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward countries only on the condition that the elements of future proletarian parties existing in all backward countries, which are not merely Communist in name, shall be grouped together and trained to appreciate their special tasks, viz., the tasks of fighting the bourgeois-democratic movements within their own nations. (From "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions. Published in June 1920.")

Marx did not make an absolute of the national movement, knowing, as he did, that the victory of the working class alone can bring about the complete liberation of all nationalities. It is impossible to estimate beforehand all the possible correlations between the bourgeois liberation movements of the oppressed nations and the proletarian emancipation movement of the oppressing nation.

terror is brought forward most ruthlessly. Battles that are fundamentally aimed against the capitalist profit structure invoke the ruling class's greatest wrath. National struggle—for Black foremen, bosses, administrators, open school admission, Black study groups, etc.—can be dealt with and eventually co-opted.

This point is beginning to be seen on the campuses today. Demands that have a working class and anti-imperialist focus cannot be tolerated. The bourgeoisie certainly does not even want national struggle and tries to head it off. But when struggle becomes the fact of life there are the kinds they can live with and those that threaten their existence. We believe bosses view struggle from this point of view. Class struggle followed to its logical conclusion means the end of imperialism. Hence socialism. National struggle means imperialism survives, and is forced to use a token of its take to buy off national leaders. In countries where a national bourgeoisie exists, imperialism uses some of its loot to increase local bosses' profits.

In the past we have made the serious error (that is being made today by others) of supporting struggle—any struggle. We were confused by

the concept of the two-stage struggle, which claimed that first there is the battle for national liberation, and then communists transform it to the battle for socialism. This theory received a big boost from the Cuban experience. The masses were aroused against the Batista Government and U.S. imperialism. The July 26th movement and leadership was a mixed bag. It was alleged that Raoul Castro and Che were communists. Castro's political philosophy was supposed to be an unknown quantity. The July 26th movement seized power. Castro and his closest allies consolidated their power within the July 26th movement. Castro expropriated the property of outside imperialists. Castro proclaimed socialism. The masses seemed to go along with this because of Castro's enormous prestige and power. The new government made popular and sweeping reforms. Subsequently, Castro proclaimed himself to be a Marxist-Leninist and a disciple of Khrushchev.

It all seemed good to us and to other radicals. Here was an example of winning socialism without telling the masses anything about it. All you had to do was succeed in organizing an anti-imperialist movement and at the zero hour con-

vert it to a socialist movement. Without going into the whole story now (we will in the next issue of PL) Cuba became a tool of the Soviets. Because there is not a real Marxist-Leninist party and leaders in Cuba, Castro & Co. are busy screwing up revolutions in Cuba and all over Latin America. (Che Guevara's experiences in Bolivia are one example.) And what is worse, the Cuban masses are not being won to Marxist ideology. Cubans are beginning to sour on the Castro leadership. They are becoming increasingly cynical about socialism and are part of the pressure pushing Cuba into the arms of the U.S. Economic conditions in Cuba are lagging badly and add fuel for this move. Eventually there will be two outside "benefactors": the Soviet bosses and the U.S. bosses. (At the moment the Cuban economy is reliant on the Soviets as the Cubans abandoned the concept of a diversified self-sustaining economy.)

Nationalism Bails Out U.S.

This seems to us to be one type of national-anti-imperialist revolution that ends up in the arms of one imperialist or the other—or both. A variation on this theme is at work in Vietnam. The Vietnamese people won enormous battles. They had succeeded in beating U.S. armies to their knees. Victory became a distinct probability. But underlying weaknesses became apparent as the U.S. began to shift its emphasis from the battlefield to the political arena. The U.S. cleverly began to exploit the Vietnamese leaders' political weaknesses. It was the Kennedy's, McCarthy's and others who realized that Vietnamese nationalism in North and South could help bail the U.S. out. This was in addition to relying more heavily on the Soviets.

The Vietnamese leadership, at least in large measure, became enmeshed in Soviet "aid." They were passively on the side of the Soviets in the China-Soviet struggle. The Vietnamese enthusiastically supported Soviet and other revisionist parties' policies that didn't directly involve China. As you recall, the Vietnamese were the first to hail Soviet aggression against the Czechs. We have always been puzzled by never reading about or seeing any statement from the south Vietnamese communists. What was the communist role in the NLF? We did see the ten-point program of the NLF, which was hailed by the Soviets. This program didn't speak of socialism. It proclaimed "neutrality" as the aim of the NLF. The program was typical nationalist propaganda: vaguely anti-imperialist, neutralist, and advocating a vague

coalition government when the U.S. was out of Vietnam. What is wrong with this? The U.S. quickly coming to terms with a variation of this program because it has learned from experience that it can live very nicely with such a formula.

The ten-point program is a variant of the Dimitrov "popular front" theme of the 7th World Congress of the Communist International. It envisions the peaceful transition to socialism. The theory is first to win the victory of the popular front and then move somehow to socialism. The line of peaceful step-by-step reunification of South and North Vietnam through means of negotiations is also a variant of the peaceful transition to socialism theme. Is it any wonder that the ten-point NLF program is everywhere hailed and supported by the revisionists? How is it possible for revisionists and Marxist-Leninists to unite behind the same program? Only by sacrificing the Dictatorship of the Proletariat which is the very heart of Marxism-Leninism. The U.S. rulers are learning to distinguish between so-called national liberation movements and socialist movements. Nationalism doesn't have to be taken head on. And taking a revolutionary movement head on is used to force it into a revisionist and nationalist path.

The only thing the U.S. can't stand in Vietnam is a Vietnamese alliance with the world revolutionaries and the outlook of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. A socialist outlook would prevent negotiations or impose on the U.S. negotiations that would actually reflect U.S. military and political defeat in Vietnam. The NLF's program is a nationalistic program that ignores the international situation and looks only to Vietnam. The day has long passed, if there ever was such a day, when this type of program could be of real value to the oppressed people of any country. Any development that leaves the oppressed people or workers of a country far short of liberation or denies that socialism, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, is the only way to achieve liberation, opens the door to the maintenance or return of capitalism. The fight for liberation is the fight for socialism. It is wrong for communists to advocate two-stage struggle. Communists have no business advocating national liberation movements that do not openly proclaim socialism as a goal. There is overwhelming evidence from Soviet to Algerian experience to prove that nationalism is the road to capitalism.

Communists must try various ways to win a position of leadership among the workers and guide them to socialism. Nationalism won't

lead to socialism any more than any other fight for bourgeois reforms. When communists work in a nationalistic movement, or national liberation movement as they are sometimes called, they must put forward the goal of socialism. If national forces are fighting to drive out

At this difficult time Social-Democracy had a high mission—to resist nationalism and to protect the masses from the general "epidemic." For Social-Democracy, and Social-Democracy alone, could do this, by countering nationalism with the tried weapon of internationalism, with the unity and indivisibility of the class struggle. And the more powerfully the wave of nationalism advanced, the louder had to be the call of Social-Democracy for fraternity and unity among the proletarians of all the nationalities of Russia. And in this connection particular firmness was demanded of the Social-Democrats of the border regions, who came into direct contact with the nationalist movement.

(Foundations of Leninism, J.V. Stalin)

imperialist forces there is a basis for limited unity.

But Marxist-Leninists must preserve their independent role within the united front. The united front has two important aspects: unity against and struggle with. The notion that everything must be subordinated to preserving the united front is wrong. How can you be a communist and actually fight for capitalism in your country as opposed to the rule of outside imperialists. Naturally, imperialism is bad and must be defeated. And of course outside imperialism imposes its will on native capitalists. We expose this type of contradiction. However, not to fight against or preserve local capitalists is wrong. Communists should win workers and oppressed people to the party's leadership. The way to defeat imperialism is not to build your own brand of capitalism. The way to eventually defeat imperialism is to build the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Nationalism Won't Bring Socialism

Therefore there are two main errors to avoid. One is to remain isolated from the nationalist movement; there can be a tendency not to work in it for fear of a battle over ideas. And of course there is the danger of not advancing working-class ideas, not fighting for working-class leadership, and forgetting that Marxist-Leninist ideas cannot, in the long run, coexist with nationalist ideas. This will lead to a host of tactical problems within the mass movement. And while we don't intend to try to anticipate them all now, we must say that this battle of ideas (or class struggle) within

the movement must lead to splits. Unity for the sake of building local capitalism is a bad unity. Communists can never accept this. Unity that obscures the perspective of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat from the masses is equally bad. As we have said, the workers can win state power, but without a mass struggle for ideology they can lose it.

It is no accident that the Trotskyist movement (the SWP) and the C.P. are united in hailing one or another or all stripes of Black nationalism and nationalists. The SWP is still playing Malcolm X records to garner a few dollars and curry favor with various Black forces. The SWP still hails Robert Williams, one of the most divisive forces. Williams' hate-whitey line would perpetuate and widen the split in the working class. The main aspect of Williams' line is to build a Black bourgeoisie. Williams is the nominal head of a new Black state. The group in Detroit that advocates Williams' line is made up of various Black professionals who advocate a separate state and capitalism.

It is a hollow joke when some forces refer to the PLP as Trotskyist for rejecting SWP-CP idols and ideas. Unfortunately, we were saddled with many of these bad faults for some time. To be against the CP-SWP axis, which exists in some movements, is to fight their wrong ideas. If we were to follow their line in the mass movement we would be supporting or keeping our mouths shut on the consequences of the Vietnam negotiations. And we would be hailing Malcolm X, Robert Williams, LeRoi Jones, and uncritically supporting the Black Panther leaders. In other words, Marxism would not exist in the U.S., and reference to class struggle would remain a ceremonial exercise as it is among all pseudo-Marxists.

We are not in a popularity contest. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat cannot be won by tailing after right-wing forces in the mass movement. If we hailed and supported any struggle we might be more widely "liked." But we are not in the numbers game. We feel that by acting this way we would be creating illusions about events. The fight for socialism in the U.S. will probably take a long time. In the course of this struggle the workers will recognize socialism as the only course to their salvation. Workers and oppressed people have always rallied to Marxism-Leninism. Marxism-Leninism doesn't need a veneer of nationalism or dilution to suck workers in. In our limited experience, going to workers with our line is proving to be the best work we can do.

We want to make it clear that we can win to

a socialist perspective 99 per cent of the forces who hold nationalist ideas. In the U.S., it is fair to say, overwhelmingly large numbers of Black people hold nationalist ideas. Not only Blacks are influenced by Black nationalism; many white radicals are. Despite the old American adage, "if you can't like 'em—join 'em," we feel nationalist ideology can be defeated. But you can't defeat it by advocating it, or by saying nationalism is a "good thing." We believe two significant strategies must be advanced to win: class struggle ideas—the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—and the idea that communists must be in the forefront of the fight against racism.

Too often we have been one-sided and sectarian. Some people tend to equate the rank and file with the leadership. All too often we see every leader of national movements as an enemy. Some leaders can be won to our ideas. There are enough enemies; but we don't have to manufacture new ones. We must be very careful at sorting out enemies from friends. We must avoid glib and hasty evaluations. If some people don't agree with us now they are not our enemies. Even after a struggle in which feelings run high we should try to win people to our point of view. Why let the ruling class consolidate themselves through the people's victories or defeats. We should try and maintain relations with people over a long period even if we disagree. It is all too simple to break things off.

One of the reasons Black nationalism holds sway on some campuses is because PLP has not energetically and creatively seized the ideological and tactical leadership of the fight against racism. Many people find it is easier to conduct an attack against people who have nationalist ideas. After all, they reason, the fight against nationalism is the fight for socialism. Many times a fight against nationalism without a serious antiracist battle is a cover up for racism. White students must be in the forefront, first, in the fight against racism. When white communists or Black communists fight nationalism it will be exceedingly hard for the opposition to brand their effort racist if it is clear to one and all that communists are leading fighters of racism.

One of the reasons many Black and white workers and students get involved in the nationalist scene is they think the nationalist outlook is the way to solve racism. Of course, many students become involved in Black student unions for very selfish reasons. Many want to improve their lot in society, and they don't care how they do it. They don't give a damn for Black workers

except how to use them as leverage to middle-class demands. But almost all people are against racism and could fight racism from a working-class point of view. They are sucked into a selfish attitude in the absence

The period of counter revolution in Russia brought not only "thunder and lightning" in its train, also disillusionment in the movement and lack of faith in common forces. As long as people believed in "a bright future," they fought side by side irrespective of nationality—common questions first and foremost! But when doubt crept into peoples' hearts they began to depart, each to his own national territory. Let every man count only upon himself. The "national question" first and foremost!

(Foundations of Leninism, J.V. Stalin)

something else. All of us are selfish too! We are trying to correct our selfishness. Why don't you let someone else try to correct theirs? A few people from a very few clear, articulate national spokesmen, most people are open. Obviously, the broad sections of the population can and must be won if socialism is to triumph.

National consciousness can be the spark that stimulates struggle. And this struggle enables communists to reach and transform this struggle to class consciousness. If we don't, the bourgeoisie will quickly transform this national feeling to full-blown nationalist ideas. Because people know they are being screwed in addition because they are Black. And because their oppression is sharpest they are often the first ones to fight back and fight hardest. Why should we allow the ruling class to misdirect our militancy? Militancy is exactly what all workers need on their side. The ruling class has tactics which they use to mislead and oppress people: It isn't only killing and coercion. Their arsenal of tactics includes the bribe. The real life is that Black workers and students are in the process of rebellion. The ruling class doesn't like it. But not liking it won't stop them. The bosses use the carrot and stick to force the movement into their framework. This does not mean we have to work. And it won't, if we recognize that "all that glistens isn't gold."

'Revolutionary' Nationalism

Sometimes we hear the statement that to be a revolutionary one must be a revolutionary nationalist. Or to be a revolutionary nationalist one must be a socialist. Let us digress for a moment and take a capsule view of a leader from another country—Indonesia. Former President Sukarno was the most advanced spokesman for revolutionary nationalism. He was for socialism. He was against U.S. and Dutch imperialism. He

LENIN ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The interests of the working class and of its struggle against capitalism demand complete solidarity and the closest unity of the workers of all nations; they demand that the nationalistic policy of the bourgeoisie of every nationality be repelled. Hence, Social-Democrats would be equally deviating from proletarian policy and subordinating the workers to the policy of the bourgeoisie if they were to repudiate the right of nations to self-determination, i.e., the right of an oppressed nation to secede, or if they were to support all the national demands of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations. It makes no difference to the wageworker whether he is exploited chiefly by the Great-Russian bourgeoisie rather than by the non-Russian bourgeoisie, or by the Polish bourgeoisie rather than the Jewish bourgeoisie, etc. The wageworker who has come to understand his class interests is equally indifferent to the state privileges of the Great-Russian capitalists and to the promises of the Polish or Ukrainian capitalists to set up an earthly paradise when they obtain state privileges. Capitalism is developing and will continue to develop, in one way or another, both in united heterogeneous states and in separate national states.

In any case the wageworker will be an object of exploitation. And successful struggle against exploitation requires that the proletariat be free of nationalism, be absolutely neutral, so to speak, in the fight for supremacy that is going on among the bourgeoisie of the various nations. If the proletariat of any one nation gives the slightest support to the privileges of "its" national bourgeoisie, this will inevitably rouse distrust among the proletariat of the other nations, it will weaken the international class solidarity of the workers and divide them, to the delight of the bourgeoisie.

The recognition of internationalism in words, and substituting for it in deeds, in all propaganda, agitation and practical work, petty-bourgeois nationalism and pacifism, is a common occurrence, not only among the parties affiliated to the Second International, but also among those which have withdrawn from that International, and not infrequently, even among those which now call themselves Communist Parties. The struggle against this evil, against these most deep-rooted petty-bourgeois national prejudices, comes more and more to the forefront.

Petty-bourgeois nationalism declares the recognition of the equality of nations, and nothing else, to be internationalism, while preserving intact national egoism, whereas proletarian internationalism demands, firstly, the subordination of the interests of the proletarian struggle in one country to the interests of the struggle on a world scale; (From "Preliminary Draft of These on the National and Colonial Questions." Published in June 1920.)

For the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations always converts the slogan of national liberation into a means for deceiving the workers; in internal politics it utilizes these slogans as a means for concluding reactionary agreements with the bourgeoisie of the ruling nation. (From "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination. Theses." January-February 1916.)

There is not the slightest doubt that every nationalist movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement. (from "The Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions at the Second Congress of the Communist International," July 26, 1920)

even made war on the Dutch bosses. He included communists in his government. He spoke of people's power. He spoke of armed struggle. Indonesia was the only communist or non-communist country that pulled out of the U.N. He preached undying hatred toward U.S. imperialism. He even attacked the Soviets as revisionists. When the more overtly right-wing nationalists felt the masses were going too far leftward, they moved in. Sukarno went over to their side. He tried to, and did, save his ass. He didn't care how many people or colleagues he fingered to save himself. As long as he had his palace and his nine wives he spoke of a communist plot to take over Indonesia.

It's hard to imagine any nationalist leader going further than he did. But as Stalin once mentioned, in regard to other national leaders, they run to the imperialist camp when they are threatened by their own people. In other words, when the Indonesian people were getting too close for bourgeois comfort, Sukarno, like other nationalists, betrayed the workers to the imperialists. At the moment, Indonesia is tied to the U.S. and Russia. The people are in dire straits. Millions are dead or dying. The masses are learning the hard way the results of "revo-

lutionary" nationalism. When the Indonesian people fight their way back to political power it won't be by relying on the nationalists, no matter how big they talk or even seem to act sometimes. And no fake national program will lead to their rise to political preeminence. NLF-type liberation programs will take radicals right to the graveyard. They will be next to the heroes of Indonesia who have paid a stiff price so others won't make the same mistake.

The point is that nationalism is the political rationale presented to workers by one group of capitalists to fight outside capitalists for profits. And this fight is never in the basic interests of workers. That is why these capitalists call on the imperialists for help when they feel their own workers see through the nationalist mist. If you had asked Sukarno if he was a capitalist he in all sincerity would have denied it. He would have claimed he was a religious, revolutionary nationalist. The essence of the question is not what you say. It is what you think and do. There are only two sets of political ideas in the world: Marxist-Leninist ideas and capitalist ideas. Nationalism lies in the second category. We conclude from our experience that it is a mistake to believe that

being a revolutionary nationalist means you are for socialism. We are sure many people sincerely believe this, and we impugn no one's integrity here, but show us one revolutionary nationalist that built socialism...

It is interesting that many forces who espouse the idea of the good and bad nationalists and that nationalism is progressive, do so under a barrage of quotations from Lenin and Stalin. If you hunt through Lenin and Stalin you can always dredge something out of context to support almost any point. We suppose it is widely known how the Soviet bosses do everything behind the protection of Lenin. As a matter of fact, these bosses are busy seeing how they can use Stalin's image and words to put over capitalism. The Soviet bigwigs palm themselves off as the best Marxist-Leninists in the world.

We have read Lenin and Stalin on the national question. And we would like everyone to consider all ideas that they expressed on this question, because we feel that the essence of their position was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. We readily admit that it has been difficult for us to grasp this idea because we ourselves have been weakened by revisionist ideas. We thought of the national question as a gimmick. And we found it hard to grasp the complexities of Lenin and Stalin on this question. We don't pretend that what we do or say is necessarily what they meant or did themselves. And we don't feel that the quotations we present are the final authoritative answer on the national question. We simply ask you to consider these ideas and see how they apply to the American and the world scene.

C.P.'s 1930 Line Wrong

The important thing for us to see is how liberation can be accomplished. We should not consider Marxism-Leninism as a collection of ossified rules, but rather apply it creatively to present political circumstances. During the Chinese Revolution there were those who said that you couldn't skip stages and go from feudalism to socialism. They said China had to have capitalism first. It was claimed there were very few workers, and China, of course, had very little industry. One of the great contributions of the Chinese communists was to smash this idea. By leaping from feudalism to socialism they speeded up the revolutionary process and greatly intensified imperialist contradictions. Actually, a similar argument is being advanced today. There are those who claim local nationalists must first defeat the imperialists. Then

this nationalist revolution can be transformed to the socialist revolution.

Naturally a movement can go through many stages. But it doesn't have to. And communists cannot advocate anything else but socialism. It does so confuses the issue. Lack of advocacy doesn't serve the masses, as socialist thought and education is hidden from the people. Communists can eventually lead the workers' state power because of the great confidence the masses have for them; and the objective situation cries out for socialism. However, without a long and sharp ideological struggle among the masses for working-class thought (Marxism-Leninism) conditions are created for counter-revolution.

The world has undergone 50 years more experience since the Russian Revolution. One must consider these years. People are putting forward the C.P. line of the nineteen-thirties on the national question. They are carrying this caricature even further.

In those days the C.P. called for two things: Complete the bourgeois democratic revolution and fight for a separate Black state in the Southern Black Belt. In the light of world experiences, oppressed people cannot achieve their aspirations under any form of capitalism. Even if the bourgeoisie were really to grant the Black people many of the rights that they are granted on paper, they would still be very oppressed. The Black people have the right to vote. What if they all got the full opportunity to register and vote in the South? The Kennedy's and other assorted liberals are for that. They feel this would strengthen the system by expanding bourgeois democracy. The essence of racism is economic exploitation. The U.S. needs maximum profits from racism to impose its will on all countries. No extension of the bourgeois revolution is going to change that fact of life. Many groups in the bourgeoisie will have granted the right to vote. The people in Harlem have been voting for a century. What has it gotten them?

Black separatism in the South would only split workers further. Black capitalism in the South would not solve the problem of Black workers. You see, there are two things at work at the moment: the drive for maximum profits by U.S. imperialism, and the evaluation of how the U.S. has absorbed nationalism over the past 50 years into its framework.

Demands have to be evaluated from a class point of view. Years ago we would have been big boosters for the right to vote. Now we realize it was a bunch of baloney. This demand was referred to as a revolutionary democratic

demand. Similarly, the current demand for open enrollment is not the kind of reform demand that will actually sharpen the class struggle. It will only divert Black kids from a working-class outlook into the capitalist mold. Graduates from the big universities are trained to keep bourgeois enterprises going. Of course, we will

It is evident that a serious and comprehensive discussion of the national question is required. Consistent Social-Democrats must work solidly and indefatigably against the fog of nationalism, no matter from what quarter it proceeds.

(Foundations of Leninism, J.V. Stalin)

try to exploit the contradictions in these situations. But worker-boss relations provide for sharper contradictions, leading to socialism.

At the moment the C.P. has dropped one of its stratagems. It still retains the goal of completing the bourgeois democratic revolution, however. It is no wonder that the C.P. can easily make alliances with seemingly militant nationalist groups. In reality these groups reduce themselves to reformers because they don't want to achieve the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Without a Marxist-Leninist perspective it can't be done. This perspective must be how to win all workers to socialism. Otherwise you are left with the outlook of getting a little more for yourself. And the ruling class is busy seeing how to use and is using nationalism to split the movement. In a recent speech Prof. Hawyakawa of San Francisco State College spoke of how radicals use Black nationalists for their own ends. The main thrust of his point is to stir up more hatred between Black and white kids. In an atmosphere charged with a lot of racism and oodles of nationalism this is pretty good strategy.

In summary: Nationalism has been a big factor in the reversals suffered by those countries that were once socialist. The U.S. rulers never stop crowing about the beauties of national communism. As you recall they coerced and pleaded with the Soviets to be national communists like the Yugoslavs. The U.S. likes the Rumanians because they're nationalists and don't support the present Soviet position hook,

line and sinker. In short, the socialist process in Eastern Europe has been reversed to capitalism. The U.S. imperialists tried to and succeeded in making each Eastern European country think of its own salvation.

Nationalism has been a big factor in wiping out movements in Algeria, Egypt, Guinea, Ghana, Venezuela, Guatemala, Cuba, Korea, Japan, Indonesia, etc. Even in China the Cultural Revolution was aimed at bourgeois national ideas and leaders. These ideas and leaders almost succeeded in reversing state power. One aim of the Cultural Revolution was to prevent the color of China from changing from Red to White. In other words, nationalism has played a big role in helping to almost wipe out the communist movement. Why should we continue to encourage nationalism? Our conclusion from 50 years of experience is that nationalism and revisionism are intertwined. Both must be combatted.

It seems to us that nationalism is the antithesis of internationalism. We don't think you can have your cake and eat it. Primary concern with "our country," "our people," "our community," "our block," "our family," etc., is selfishness. Selfishness is a capitalist idea. And, after all, you can get more goodies for yourself under capitalism. These ideas cannot today be incorporated into love for and loyalty to the international proletariat and oppressed people.

The victory of socialism in Russia was an enormous breakthrough for the international proletariat. This colossal event proved that socialism could triumph and work. Socialist leadership in the war against Hitler showed that socialism was not only powerful but was the most progressive force in the world. The Chinese Revolution proved you could skip stages, that socialism could triumph in a country without a significant industrial base. To go further, much further, we have to try to learn from all negative developments as well to speed up the socialist advance.

Right now it seems the masses are more than ready to grasp and develop socialist ideas. Why keep pushing the dead-defeatist ideas of nationalism!