

MARXIST-LENINIST EDUCATION PROJECT:

AN INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this circular is two-fold. Its general purpose is to introduce the Marxist-Leninist Education Project, to state the rationale behind this project, and to summarize its proposed activities. Its particular purpose is to outline in some detail the study group on the basics of Marxism-Leninism that we of MLEP plan to initiate in late January.

INTRODUCTION TO MLEP

The Marxist-Leninist Education Project is a new, locally-based effort, formed to promote the study of Marxist-Leninist theory among political activists, and to encourage the use of this theory to understand both the particular problems that we encounter in our political activities and the general world-wide political situation.

MLEP is a united front, or coalition, composed of a local group of independent Marxist-Leninists and the New Jersey Branch of the American Workers Party. Despite the fact that those of us in MLEP have some disagreements over certain political points, we share unity on what we feel are the most pressing questions at this time. Most crucial is our agreement that Marxist theory is a changing and developing science; it is a science that must be constantly renewed, reformulated, and extended through study and practice. While all who consider themselves Marxist-Leninists would state their commitment to this latter point, a sharp division exists in the communist movement in the US between those who systematically struggle to implement this commitment, and those who simply pay lip-service to it.

The tragedy is that far too many groups in this country (and in New Brunswick) treat Marxist theory, in their actual practice, as an unchanging set of rigid laws to be invoked rhetorically (and noisily), and applied mechanically. In a word, too many of these "Marxist-Leninist" groups are infected by dogmatism, and these caricatures of Marxism have served to make theoretical study seem irrelevant to many serious political activists. MLEP is resolved to struggling for a complete and systematic break with dogmatism, and to encouraging activists to take up Marxism-Leninism as a science of society.

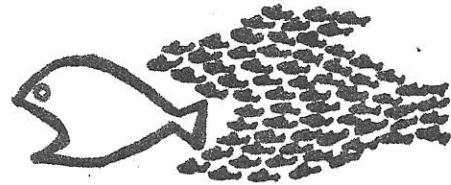
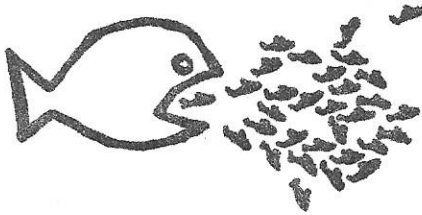
ACTIVITIES TO BE SPONSORED BY MLEP

1. Study Groups. Initially, the central activity of MLEP will be the initiation of groups to study Marxist theoretical works (outline of study group is attached). These study groups will aim at a critical understanding of the essence and the method of various theoretical writings, not at simple memorization of their most obvious conclusions.

The writings to be studied will be chosen from some of the "classics" of Marxism, such as those of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao Tse-tung and Gramsci. But the inquiry into Marxism will not stop with these authors. Because the world is constantly changing, and because the classical writers, by their own admission, often left their works in uncompleted form, we will also consider more contemporary enrichments and applications of basic Marxist theory. For example we will propose the study of Cabral, Rowbotham, Magdoff, Sweezy, Braverman, Bettelheim and the like. Also we will examine some recent attempts by Marxist-Leninist groups in this country to apply basic theory to our current situation.

2. Application of the Theory. In addition to sponsoring study groups, we in MLEP feel that there is a need in the New Brunswick area for a more public application of Marxist-Leninist theory to particular problems that exist in the contemporary world. MLEP plans to offer analysis of, and initiate study around, specific topics that concern political activists, such as the liberation struggles in Africa, the tasks of the left in relation to growing reactionary movements based on racist and sexist ideologies (e.g., the increasing prominence of the KKK in central Jersey, the anti-abortion movement, attacks on gay rights, etc.) and the character of political activity in the New York-New Jersey-Philadelphia region.

We plan to raise such topics in two ways: (1) by organizing occasional discussion sessions, public forums, or movie showings; (2) by putting out occasional written analyses. The frequency of these statements and forums will depend on the demands of the current political situation, and on the energies that we have available.



3. Building the Marxist-Leninist Movement. As we indicated in the introduction above, MLEP is part of a particular trend in the US communist movement. This trend, which has only emerged on a nationwide level in the last couple of years, is often identified by the unwieldy name, "the anti dogmatist, anti-revisionist communist movement". Currently, the "trend" is made up of something over one hundred collectives, organizations, and study circles around the U.S., plus uncounted individuals without organizational ties. The origin and nature of the "trend" is of some importance, and we would like to quickly review these here.

In the wake of the mass national minority, anti-war, women's and student movements of the late 60's and early 70's, many of the leading activists of these struggles drew two basic lessons from their experiences: that a sustained movement for fundamental change in the U.S. would only appear under the banner of Marxist socialism with the working class as its leading force; that such a movement would only be truly socialist and revolutionary if it broke with the sterile, vacillating and reformist politics ("revisionism") of the Communist Party, USA. Thus a number of independent socialist collectives and groups were established, with more groups of a similar nature appearing out of the more locally-based struggles of the last half dozen years.

A division of fundamental importance separated some of these "new communist" groups from others from the first days of their development, and this division deepened in the years that followed. One wing of the movement, over-reacting to the pragmatic revisionism of the CPUSA and impatient with slow progress in the mass popular movements in a period of receding struggle, fell into the opposite errors of dogmatism and ultra-leftism. They embraced what they saw as "Marxism-Leninism" with religious fervor, failed to understand that a "concrete analysis of concrete conditions" and patient, strategic "protracted struggle" are the soul of Marxist practice, and attempted to re-enact some thing like the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, or the Chinese Revolution of 1949, in the US of the 1970's!

The organizations of this dogmatist wing, through their sectarian hair-splitting, their inability to struggle for unity, their tendency to form a series of "vanguard parties" (at least three now exist with more promised to follow), have shown us a dead-end, a road to isolation from the masses rather than a road to becoming leaders and organizers of popular struggles.

It was in the context of disillusionment with the dogmatists, and continuing opposition to the reformism of groups such as the CPUSA, that the "anti-dogmatist, anti-revisionist movement" emerged nationally. In the last two years, forces in the trend have become increasingly convinced that it is time to start developing national links between organizations and national debates over politics and theory. The process of developing a national movement is now taking its first steps. (It is interesting to note that a major event that got this process rolling was the solidarity movement for the MPLA government in Angola against the combined forces of U.S. imperialism and South African racism in 1975-6--a movement that the dogmatists opposed!)

As part of its projected activity, MLEP plans to introduce the "trend" as a whole to political activists in the New Brunswick area. We plan to make literature from the various groups in the "trend" available to people, and to set up forums and discussions which include representatives from Marxist-Leninist organizations outside of New Brunswick.

SUM-UP

In summation, we want to state clearly that, though MLEP is an education project, its purpose is political. We want to offer political activists who are interested in Marxism as a guide to their activity a chance to study this theory collectively. We want to stimulate activists to test Marxist-Leninist theory practically--as a means to developing concrete political strategy and organization. And we want to encourage activists to familiarize themselves with the "anti-dogmatist, anti-revisionist" communist organizations.

M.L.E.P.

