

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES. UNITE!

# The Workers' Advocate

## Supplement



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## Following this path, the working class will construct a new world

The Dec. 1 issue of the **Workers' Advocate** announced the holding of the Third Congress of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA and carried its resolutions. Here we begin further coverage. Below is the opening speech, edited for publication.

### Opening Speech at the Third Congress Fall 1988

Welcome to the Third Congress of the Marxist-Leninist Party. The Congress reviews the work of the Party and sets the course for the coming period.

In the five years since the last Congress, there have been a number of developments in our work.

\*We have carried out the line of steadfast revolutionary work, persisting in party-building under difficult conditions. We have shown in practice that it is possible to maintain contact with the masses even under the conditions of stagnation in the general movement.

\*We have regularized the **Workers' Advocate** and continued to improve our revolutionary agitation.

\*We have further developed our theoretical understanding on various issues, such as the black national question, and the origins of revisionism in the world communist movement.

\*We are taking part in the gradual development of a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist left-wing in the world movement.

\*And we have begun a major program of studying the principles of socialism, strengthening socialist agitation, and analyzing the degeneration of socialism as revisionism took over the Soviet Union

The Third Congress does not fall on some natural division in our work, as some of our recent conferences have. For example, the Second National Conference dealt with the black national question and provided materials allowing

the Party to finish its analysis of the question of self-determination with respect to the black people in the U.S. The Third National Conference elaborated our established line on the working class movement and also recorded the success of the regularization of the **Workers' Advocate**. Since then, we have begun to emphasize the study of socialism, but we are still in the early stages of the work at this time.

Nevertheless, the speeches at this Congress will give an overview of the state of our Party and its work among the masses.

### What Follows Reagan?

One of the speeches will be on "what follows Reagan". It deals with the actual forces that determine American politics. It deals with the monopoly capitalist groupings in the U.S. that determine the bourgeois consensus within which the allegedly democratic elections are held.

The reformists put their hopes, as always, in the Democrats. Meanwhile the Democrats were seen once again as the servile lapdogs of the Reaganite bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie which decided on a Republican president and a solidly Democratic Congress as the appropriate way to carry out the Reaganite program. The reformists were caught up in the superficial rhetoric of the capitalist parties,

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## IT FALLS TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY TO DEEPEN AND EXTEND SOCIALIST CONSCIOUSNESS

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### From a Speech at the Third Congress of the Marxist-Leninist Party Fall 1988

In this speech, I want to talk about the Party's current work on socialism and the stage of this work today. There will also be two additional speeches on socialism: one on our national [i.e. party-wide] study of the Marxist-Leninist conception of socialism and one on some issues in the study of Soviet history.

#### What Is the Party's Work on Socialism Today?

Sometimes it's thought that by our work on socialism we simply mean the theoretical work on Soviet history. But there's more to it than that. Our work on socialism involves work on several fronts. Although all these fronts are essential, the pace at which we've been able to work on them differs considerably. And while more certainly needs to be done, the Party has been able to make significant advances in our socialism work during the past period.

The fronts we are working on are:

- 1) Developing our socialist propaganda and agitation;
- 2) Developing the criticism of revisionist "socialism", especially of Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union;
- 3) The study of the Marxist-Leninist ideas of socialism; and
- 4) The study of the history of the Soviet Union.

#### Developing Our Socialist Propaganda and Agitation

This is a vital issue for any workers' party fighting for class emancipation. For communists it is not enough to fight for the immediate demands of the masses. As the **Communist Manifesto** put it, no matter what stage of development the working class movement is passing through, the communists must always represent the general interests, the future goal, of the movement.

Capitalist oppression does indeed bring to the workers the thought of a new world without exploitation, but it falls on the communist party to deepen and extend this socialist consciousness.

This involves showing the workers how capitalist profit comes from the wage slavery of the workers. It involves developing the workers' hos-

tility towards the whole capitalist system. And it also involves showing in outline form the essential features and advantages of the socialist society we want to build. This is not a question of building up elaborated utopias of the future society but of showing the basic principles of socialism in a living manner and of showing how such a social order springs from modern day development.

Being able to promote a socialist alternative is important for the advance of the class struggle. The class struggle does not develop strongly when the workers think that all they have to look forward to is an unending cycle of struggle against capitalism. The workers will fight ever more strongly when they are fighting with the conviction that we are building towards a new world. And when they feel confident that they can indeed build a better alternative on their own shoulders.

In our work today, besides the value of socialist agitation among the masses generally, it is particularly important for building up the pro-party trend. After all, the pro-party trend essentially is that section of workers who aren't content to just be militant fighters but who want to support the program of the Party as a whole. In other words, those who are inclined towards building the revolutionary movement for socialism. But we cannot leave the socialist education and training of the pro-party workers to chance; we have to use our work on socialism to reinforce the convictions of the pro-party workers in the fight for socialism.

Our Party has always done socialist propaganda. In the past however it's been posed mostly in general terms or based on popularizing what we considered the advances of socialism elsewhere--historically in the Soviet Union, and in China and Albania. This kept up a certain socialist edge in our work, but it also had its limits. With manifestations of degeneration showing up in Albania, the question of developing our own socialist agitation became posed sharper than ever. All comrades began to feel a definite "hole" in our work.

But this has given a positive impulse to rethinking the question of our socialist agitation. This experience poses sharply that our socialist agitation cannot simply be based on promoting socialism elsewhere. Of course, if there were contemporary socialist models to promote it would help--and help immensely--but even then it would not be enough. We have to be able to show the masses something of what socialism means right here in the present-day conditions of U.S. society.

In the last few years, we've made some attempts to deal with this. We wrote on socialism and the fight for jobs. We agitated for socialism in the midst of this year's election campaign. But frankly, we have only made a few steps on this front. Since this work involves breaking new ground, it is something which requires a great deal of thinking and will develop only through a series of efforts. Not just by the **Workers' Advocate** staff but by the whole Party.

Day-to-day life presents considerable raw material for agitation in favor of socialism. For example:

\*\*The economic crisis of capitalism is of course one obvious field. At a time when anxiety about a major economic collapse is spreading, there is an excellent opportunity for discussion about an alternative to the rule by the rich.

\*\*The fiasco of capitalism on the environmental front, on the question of housing and homelessness, on health issues and decaying urban services--all provide good raw material.

Such issues can be used not just to talk about socialism in general, as we have always done, but also to bring to life, for example, how socialist planning can actually deal with such huge problems in face of which the competitive profit system is frankly bankrupt.

The capitalists constantly demand "belt tightening", but socialist agitation can show that not only could a planned economy unleash new mobilizations of human and material resources but how it would also do away with the tremendous waste that takes place under the dog-eat-dog capitalist order.

Socialist agitation can show the gulf between the growing technological achievements under present-day capitalism and the needs of the masses, and it can show how many of these very same technological achievements can be harnessed for making a planned socialist economy easier than it's ever been in history.

Our socialist agitation should of course be closely linked to the mass ferment and struggles. In this regard, I want to add a final note that it is also useful to keep in mind that the objective situation puts limits on how much can be accomplished with our socialist agitation in these times. Like any other front of agitation, the impact is greater during times of upsurge. Because, just as a period of mass upsurge brings with it widespread discussion of policy, orientation and tactics, a social upheaval also brings up a broad discussion of alternative ways of organizing society.

Comrades are familiar with such discussion from the 60's. Similar discussions also took place in the

30's. And at the turn of the century. Of course these discussions embraced all sort of ideological views, from mere reformist tinkering to "back-to-the-soil" schemes and other types of utopianism.

My point here is not to evaluate any of these particular schemes but just to note that there is a striking difference of atmosphere during such times as today and those periods of social upheaval when many people feel the need and are willing to raise issues of radically altering the society. It is in that kind of atmosphere that socialist discussion flourishes. And it falls on the communists to represent the scientific socialist viewpoint in that mass discussion.

What this then means is that every effort we make to develop our socialist agitation today will put us in a better situation when it comes to the next upsurge.

### **The Criticism of Revisionist "Socialism"**

In fighting for proletarian socialism, we have to distinguish it from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois concepts of socialism. The communists have faced this task from the outset. In the time of Marx and Engels, it involved refuting such theories as those of Proudhon, Dühring and Lassalle. Lenin exposed the socialist pretensions of the "Socialist-Revolutionary" peasant party in Russia. In our day, we not only face all sorts of non-proletarian "socialist" theories, but we also face various societies which falsely bear the socialist label. Indeed the revisionist varieties of socialism are the biggest thing debasing socialism before the world today.

The fight against revisionist socialism has become an especially sharp issue at this time. The capitalists are using Gorbachev and the crisis in Russia, China and Eastern Europe for an intense campaign against the socialist idea. Many opportunists have jumped on this bandwagon. This entire campaign is aimed at demoralizing the working class. It seeks to destroy among the workers any idea that they might be able to build a socialist alternative to capitalism. Thus the fight to defend proletarian socialism has become a key front of battle for the revolutionary working class movement.

And indeed, the impact of the anti-socialist crusade is something we today confront all the time in our work among the workers. This is one of the major ways that the question of socialism comes up these days among the workers.

It is a definite success for our Party that we've been able to respond to this issue during the last period. It took us a bit of time to get the analysis of Gorbachev off the ground, but we have been able to come up with a vigorous and

hard-hitting line of agitation towards Gorbachev. This cuts against both the capitalist campaign here and the revisionism of Gorbachev.

I don't want to go into any of this in detail. The subject has been elaborated in our journalism. And the main issues are raised in the draft resolution on Gorbachev. [For the Third Congress resolution **Against the anti-socialist crusade of Gorbachev**, see the Dec. 1 issue of the **Workers' Advocate**.]

Before I conclude this point, I want to note that the criticism of Gorbachev and "market socialism" in general brings up a whole slew of theoretical questions.

One issue in this is the need to develop the critique of Soviet state capitalism. The Chinese and Albanian analysis of revisionist state capitalism was both inadequate and flawed. To develop this analysis further is important because this is the system Gorbachev wants to reform, and also this other model is still being upheld by such regimes as East Germany and Cuba. Some opportunists are trying to hold up these models as they seek to distance themselves somewhat from Gorbachev's market socialism.

### **The Study of the Marxist-Leninist Ideas of Socialism**

I only want to touch on this because discussion of our party-wide study of the Marxist-Leninist principles of socialism will be covered by a separate speech.

Here I just wanted to note that this is obviously connected to other sides of our work on socialism. It is useful in guiding the improvement in our socialist agitation and the critique of revisionism.

As well, this study is essential for the Party as a whole to make and judge the analysis of revisionist degeneration in the Soviet Union. And also to be able to judge other critiques of revisionist degeneration. For example, this study was useful in developing our comradely criticism of the Communist Party of Iran's mistaken views on socialism and industrialization. [See **A comment on some views of the Communist Party of Iran on socialism** in the April 15, 1988 issue of the **Supplement**.]

Besides the national study program which covered key items from the Marxist-Leninist classics, the Central Committee also initiated a gathering of quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin on socialism. Those from Marx and Engels have been mainly done and need to be drawn together for publication. The material from Lenin still remains to be done.

### **The Study of the Degeneration of Socialism in the Soviet Union**

Here we have only begun to scratch the surface. In the Central Committee, there has been some work on developing an idea of available research sources and limited discussion of some of the issues to study. But in the main this is a topic that will have to be gone into in the post-Third Congress period.

In a separate speech I will present some issues on Soviet history, but from this comrades should not get the idea that we have already made a lot of progress or that further work will be easy sailing.

As we have noted before, this research is quite different from other historical work we've done. The study of issues that came up in the post-World War II and Seventh Congress periods concerned things that our Party has experience in. But the work of setting up working class power and of building socialism are different. And also, for example, the study of the Soviet Union involves the study of a peasant and agrarian situation quite different than the agricultural situation we are familiar with in this country. Everyone has received a small taste of the complexity of all these issues from the national study of Lenin's writings that we've done from the immediate period after the October revolution.

Clearly this work will take a good deal of basic research, spadework, thinking and discussion. But our Party will be able to make the needed progress on this question too, of that I'm confident.

### **Conclusion**

I want to wrap up here by going back to summing up our work on socialism. What then is it that we hope to accomplish through all this work?

••We will strengthen our socialist agitation. This is in the long run one of the crucial tasks in developing the revolutionary workers' movement for socialism.

••We will be able to push ahead the criticism of bourgeois and petty bourgeois conceptions of socialism. In particular, we will not allow the bourgeois anti-socialist campaign around Gorbachev to go unchallenged.

••We will strengthen the theoretical foundations of the Party on what type of new society we are fighting for.

••And our work will contribute to the international discussion on socialism, thus helping to rally the world forces for Marxism-Leninism.

## OPENING SPEECH

Continued from the front page

and failed to see what was most essential--that both these parties are promoting the offensive of the bourgeoisie. And both these parties carry out the bourgeois election to decide issues among themselves and to mobilize the masses behind their capitalist program.

The capitalist parties also made use of the election campaign to promote their various themes. The bourgeoisie today likes to boast of its sophistication and modernity. But it used the election campaign to promote the most backward sludge of history.

There was Bush mobilizing his racist forces through dangling in front of the country the picture of a black murderer, Willie Horton.

There was the religious fanaticism of the anti-abortion movement.

And there is one subject which the bourgeoisie does not need an election campaign to do work on. One subject on which, elections or no, they have a constant campaign of mud-throwing on.

### The Ideological Struggle on Socialism

The ideological struggle on the issue of socialism is quite intense these days. A major issue for the bourgeoisie is the constant denigration of the ability of the masses to run society. They are constantly harping on the alleged failures of socialism. They are attempting to demoralize the working class from undertaking any independent action.

And this has intensified with the crisis of revisionism, reflected in Gorbachevism. For the time being, Russian revisionism no longer seeks to hide its degeneration under pseudo-revolutionary banners, as it did under Leonid Brezhnev. Today Gorbachev and company are trampling on the class struggle and drooling over the methods of the Western bourgeoisie -- just in time as this bourgeoisie skirts on the edge of deep crisis. This is a replay, in its way, of the ideological offensive for revisionism carried out in a big way by Khrushchev.

In this situation, we are stepping up our work on socialism. There will be several speeches in the Congress on this work. There will be material on our socialist agitation, and on our study program on the principles of socialism. And there will be particular attention to outlining the general issues involved in the analysis of degeneration of the Soviet Union.

### The State of the Party

There is a report on the situation of the Party. It includes the organizational state of the Party, and the pressures on organizational work during the period of stagnation in the mass movement. It includes a review of the overall state of the fronts of the Party's work, including building ties with the masses, theoretical work, and certain organizational questions.

Connected to these topics, there may be a separate speech, if there is time, concerning the fight against liquidationism in Party circles. Liquidationist influences are reflected around the Party, and it is necessary for our Party to maintain its vigilance. The literary debate that was brought into the pages of the **Workers' Advocate Supplement** last year was one of the major incidents of this struggle. The speech will not deal with the literary issues, which have been covered extensively in the **Supplement**, but with the general features of the grouping which promoted these liquidationist ideas and that has sometimes been called the "Mid-west gossip corridor".

### Build up ties with the masses

There will also be speeches on some examples of our development of mass ties in this period. There will be a speech on the development of the work among the postal workers, and on the work among the activists in the Campaign Against Apartheid at the University of California at Berkeley.

These examples illustrate that it is possible to build ties among the masses in this period, and to continually replace those ties which are unavoidably broken. But they also underline the stand of our Party to oppose reformism and trade unionism. And not just the most blatant reformists, but various left-posturing reformists must be opposed as well in order to build up a trend independent of bourgeois politics.

### The Unemployed Movement of the 1930's

There also will be a speech on the CPUSA's work in the unemployed movement of the 1930's. As the economy worsens, we can expect the question of the unemployed to become more and more of an issue. Here we deal not with exact prescriptions for future work, but with the overall orientation of the work at that time. It shows how the struggle of political trends came up in this work, the difficulties the CPUSA had in dealing with this, and how the change in line of the CPUSA in the mid-1930's corrupted their work on this front.

There will also be a speech on the international Marxist-Leninist movement.

One of the exciting developments in the last period is the slow but definite progress in the grouping together of revolutionary Marxist-Leninists around the world. A process we have been in the thick of. This last period has seen the trip to Kurdistan, more trips to Nicaragua, and the development of contacts with additional groups in other countries. Once again, the character of the communist movement as a world movement, an international movement, is being manifested. It shows that the painstaking work of the anti-revisionist activists around the world in upholding class solidarity with the revolutionary struggles in other lands and in criticizing rightist errors and revisionist crimes has not gone in vain.

### **Election of the Central Committee**

As well, as this is a Congress, there will be elections to the Central Committee. And there will be discussion and adoption of the Congress resolutions.

At this time there is certain business to take care of. [At this point the speech went into the credentials report. There was also the election of a committee to preside over the Congress, and the approval of the agenda. After this the speech resumed.]

### **Twentieth Anniversary of ACWM(ML)**

Next year marks the twentieth anniversary of the founding of our predecessor, the American Communist Workers Movement (Marxist-Leninist). The direct roots of our Party go back to the stormy movements of the upsurge of the 1960's. It goes back to the GI newspaper FTA, the Cleveland Draft Resistance Union, the Cleveland Workers Action Committee, and various groupings and individuals in different cities and in different movements. From their experience, these activists saw the need for Marxism-Leninism in the struggle. And they were dissatisfied with the revisionist party and with the right opportunist or neo-revisionist groupings in the anti-revisionist movement.

On May 12, 1969 a definite change took place when these activists decided that it was necessary for them not only to be skeptical of the various opportunist groupings, but to themselves take up the heavy responsibility of organizing a nation-wide Marxist-Leninist center.

These activists founded the ACWM(ML) and took upon themselves the task of propagating the need for a single Marxist-Leninist Party to unite the revolutionary forces. Thus began a long fight,

which we are still waging today, for the Party principle.

The ACWM(ML) did not have the knowledge we now have of Marxist-Leninist theory. But the decisive point was that it stood for developing the revolution, for developing the class independence of the proletariat, for developing the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary trend among the workers, and had contempt for bourgeois politics in all its forms.

The ACWM(ML)'s features included:

### **A Tradition of Action**

It was an organization of action. It sprung from activists from the mass struggles who wished to use Marxism-Leninism to advance their struggle. It didn't just have left-sounding phrases, but had the spirit to fight in the real world for the interests of the revolution. Although it was a small organization, it took one hundred or so arrests in the first few years. And it engaged in direct confrontation against various reactionaries including such once-vaunted forces as the so-called "hard hat" movement, which was a bunch of racist reactionaries, masquerading as construction workers by putting on hard hats.

In those days, as today, there were groupings that occasionally spouted left words, but had no spirit to fight the class enemy at all. Take some examples from today. When the Arias plan came out, there were certain Trotskyist groups and others who actually didn't like the Arias plan and who might write the odd phrase against it. But, in the face of the fervent pressure of the reformists and the bourgeoisie for this plan, most of them had no spirit at all to campaign against it. They were prostrate on this issue. If you said something against the plan, they might nod that "that's good." But they didn't have the spirit themselves to fight the Arias plan and agitate against it inside the mass demonstrations or at reformist-dominated events.

There are even Trotskyite groups like "Bolshevik Tendency" who, not just on the Arias plan but in general, go so far as to mock the sacrifice and struggle of the activists, saying that you wouldn't have to suffer all these unpleasant things if you had the mass labor movement behind you.

Our Party however has the standpoint of struggle. It stands up against the repression and the intimidation and the ideological campaigns of the bourgeoisie. This dates back to the tradition established in the days of ACWM(ML).

### **Revolutionary Capacity of the Masses**

The ACWM(ML) had faith in the revolutionary

capacity of the working class. It did not just keep its communist views to itself, but spread them widely among the workers. At that time, and not just at that time, it was typical in certain circles to proclaim that they were communists, but to produce for mass distribution the most economist agitation and the most vulgar newspapers and leaflets. It was advocated that the masses won't accept communism, that they will be scared if they see a communist paper or a hammer and sickle. The ACWM(ML) went against this and carried out revolutionary agitation among the masses.

### **Proletarian Internationalism**

The ACWM(ML) was a proletarian internationalist organization. The original activists were inspired by a number of struggles around the world, including the Vietnamese people's liberation war, the mass struggles in China, and the Naxalbari struggle in India. The ACWM(ML) was founded as part of the world anti-revisionist wave of that time.

### **In the Face of Setbacks and Difficulties**

ACWM(ML) did not have much Marxist-Leninist experience yet, and it came up in a time of great confusion theoretically. And we made many errors at that time. There was the glorification of Mao Zedong Thought. There was the inability to separate out the correct from the incorrect in the things we heard from the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist). And we had many problems and difficulties in learning how to carry out our revolutionary tactics in the trade union struggle. And so on. But it is precisely ACWM(ML)'s path of struggle that allowed us to work through and correct mistakes and overcome difficulties.

Take the question of theory. The ACWM(ML) did not wait to have perfect theoretical understanding, but started out with what it knew and sought to connect theory with revolutionary practice. Marxist-Leninist theory is somewhat different from certain types of theory, or rather from what the bourgeoisie regards as theory. It is not something out-and-dried. Not something you can develop by just reading a lot. It requires being connected to practice. It is necessary to stand on the side of the revolutionary struggle in order to understand the real meaning of the phrases and formulations that appear in the Marxist-Leninist writings. It is necessary to have a revolutionary spirit in order to be able to penetrate through the fashionable right opportunist distortions that have gained a hold on the movement.

All this took time and effort.

Those who were around at that time can probably remember the difficulty even in analyzing various revisionist and opportunist statements and seeing what the error was, what the bourgeois standpoint was, in these statements. One knew that these groups lacked spirit, that they were capitulating to the bourgeoisie. But which of the formulations given was the expression of this? Even seeing this took time and effort.

### **Following This Path...**

To solve this question required more than just passing a resolution that we are going to do more theoretical work, or that we are going to do so much study. By taking revolutionary theory seriously, and by persisting in work to advance the concrete tasks of the revolution, we have gradually corrected our errors and deepened our grasp of Marxist-Leninist strategy and tactics.

These basic stands of the ACWM(ML) were not invented by it, but are features of the path of revolutionary Leninism generally.

Following this path we will succeed.

Following this path, the Marxist-Leninists communists around world, who also have various questions and face difficulties, will advance and unite.

Following this path the American working class will eventually separate itself off from the bourgeois parties and enter upon the path of revolutionary class struggle in full force. Following this path, it will take part in constructing the new socialist world.

Today the bourgeoisie is gloating about the victory of Reaganism in the elections. Meanwhile it is worrying in the economic sphere and trying to balance one thing against another, in order to stave off crisis. Will a weaker dollar help the foreign trade deficit or increase inflation? Should interest rates go up or down? Is the stock market too high or not high enough? Is the burgeoning budget deficit too big or is it spurring on the economy? Should the hundreds of bankrupt savings and loans companies be allowed to collapse or saved through the infusion of dozens of billions of dollars?

But a time will come when they will wake up and find that there is no stock market, no profit margins, no rate of return on hoarded dollars. Factories and farms will remain, but not stock certificates and positions as overprivileged overseers. It will all be swept away by the working class, which will rise, tortured by deprivation, sick of incessant capitalist wars, and confident that it can run society itself. It is our job to prepare the working class for this day. <>