

The Cardinal Task of Marxist-Leninists Today

Forge a Genuine Marxist-Leninist Party and Turn the Spontaneous Movement of the Workers into a Conscious Struggle of the Whole Working Class

Marx's theory has shown that the workers' movement has two sides: the spontaneous and the conscious. The spontaneous movement of the workers is manifested in their resistance to the oppression of the capitalists. It is expressed in strikes, demonstrations, revolts etc., which more often break out without a plan of coordinated struggle of the entire working class. These actions are confined to trade union consciousness and, because of this, they cannot help but remain under the political and ideological leadership of bourgeois liberalism.

The conscious movement is the reflection in the minds of the workers of the spontaneous movement. It is the conscious and systematic movement of the workers toward a definite goal. Here we are confronted with planned, systematic struggle of the proletariat as a class for its ultimate objective - the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the construction of genuine socialism and communism.

The Spontaneous Struggle

The current strike wave, which began a few years back with the militant resistance of the copper miners, is still within the realm of the spontaneous movement. This struggle along with many other sharp conflicts today (the strikes at Hormel, USX, Chicago Tribune, the California canneries, etc.) are clear evidence that the workers spontaneous resistance is evolving toward higher levels. These workers are being radicalized. They are breaking with the worst forms of class peace and class collaboration imposed upon them by the bought-off trade union officials, the labor lieutenants of the capitalists. This radicalization is also expressed in the use of militant proletarian mass forms of struggle (roving pickets, mass picketing, illegal actions and barricade fighting) adopted by some strikers. Yet, despite these gains, the current spontaneous movement of the U.S. workers to date has not (and could not have) developed into a class struggle against the U.S. capitalist class. We should

recall the teachings of comrade Lenin:

"We are all agreed that our task is that of the organization of the proletarian class struggle. But what is this class struggle? When the workers of a single factory or of a single branch of industry engage in struggle against their employer or employers, is this class struggle? No, this is only a weak embryo of it. The struggle of the workers becomes a class struggle only when all the foremost representatives of the entire working class or the whole country are conscious of themselves as a single working class and launch a struggle that is directed, not against individual employers, but against the entire class of capitalists and against the government that supports that class. Only when the individual worker realizes that he is a member of the entire working class, only when he recognizes the fact that his petty day-to-day struggle against individual employers and individual government officials is a struggle against the entire bourgeoisie and the entire government, does his struggle become a class struggle. 'Every class struggle is a political struggle' - these famous words of Marx are not to be understood to mean that any struggle of workers against employers must always be a political struggle. They must be understood to mean that the struggle of the workers against the capitalists inevitably becomes a political struggle insofar as it becomes a class struggle. It is the task of the Social-Democrats [as the Russian Marxists were then known - ed.], by organizing the workers, by conducting propaganda and agitation among them, to turn their spontaneous struggle against their oppressors into the

struggle of the whole class, into the struggle of a definite political party for definite political and socialist ideals."

(LCW, V.4, p.216-217.)

Prepare the Conscious Struggle

Thus, despite the heroic and militant actions of strikers in various parts of the country today, their activities represent not the struggle of a class but the struggle of isolated groups of workers against individual employers. And it goes with saying that the strike wave can only be successful even in its immediate aims (in rolling back the capitalist offensive) if it becomes a class struggle.

The current spontaneous struggle can be changed into a struggle of the working class only when the class conscious

struggle in such a way that they become convinced of the correctness of our theory by their own political experience.

But then the reformists and revisionists among us confuse the whole issue. They advise us to hide our socialist ideals and drop the call for the creation of a genuine Marxist-Leninist party of the U.S. workers. This, they falsely claim, will frighten the workers and is not needed anyway. They ignore the theory of Marxism (and the experience of the U.S. workers movement) which proves that socialist consciousness cannot be created by the spontaneous actions of the workers. Rather it is the opposite. Scientific socialism is based on profound scientific knowledge, which arose out of an analysis of capitalist relations of production. This knowledge, embodied in the general teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, is acquired by the advanced workers and introduced into the spontaneous workers' movement by a Marxist-Leninist Party. This ideology gives real strength to the workers' movement by illuminating the path through which the class struggle must proceed to its final aim; by clarifying

"Class interest'...impels the proletarians to unite, to fight against the capitalists, to think about the prerequisites of their emancipation... But socialism... is founded on the sum-total of human knowledge, presupposes a high level of scientific development, demands scientific works, etc. etc. Socialism is introduced by the ideologists into the proletarian class struggle, which develops spontaneously on the basis of capitalist relationships." - V.L. Lenin



leaders direct the struggle against the entire capitalist class and the government that serves it and when the individual worker realizes that his fight for improvements against his immediate employer and local government officials (police, judges, etc.) is actually a struggle against the entire capitalist class and the U.S. government. In order for this to come about, it must become a struggle led by a workers' political party with definite political and socialist ideals. This party can only be a Marxist-Leninist party, a "party of a new type" as developed by Lenin. This party is the highest form and the concrete embodiment of the workers' conscious movement.

But no such party exists yet in the United States. Building this party is the main task on the agenda of all Marxist-Leninists in the U.S. How is this to be brought about? The Marxist-Leninists must go among the workers and build up the party. They must build up the mass organizations under the leadership of the Marxist-Leninists and they must energetically spread the ideals of socialism. Will this be enough? No. In addition, the masses must be drawn into the

for the workers the conditions and methods for their emancipation.

If the Marxist-Leninists do not introduce socialist ideas into the workers' movement then that movement will inevitably remain under the domination of the bourgeoisie and never go beyond trade union consciousness. This is the consciousness of the mass of workers that they must engage in collective action to resist the capitalist exploiters, but this understanding does not go any further; it does not raise the basic problem of the overthrow of capitalism.

Our most important assistance to the radicalized workers today is to step up our agitation and propaganda for the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism; To everywhere fuse our activities with theirs: form study groups, organize conferences of advanced workers, deliver revolutionary speeches at their mass gatherings. Through the distribution of our political paper, *Labor's Champion*, pamphlets, books, and other Marxist-Leninist literature, we will be taking an important step in the direction of transforming the spontaneous movement into a conscious movement.

Letters

Dear *Labor's Champion*,

In the process of distributing and reading *Labor's Champion*, I've come to the conclusion that people in general and working people in particular are interested in this type of information, because it addresses not only the economic question, but the political one as well. It clears a lot of confusion the bourgeois press prints. Therefore, I would encourage more people to help distribute and read *Labor's Champion*.

R.N., New Orleans

Labor's Champion

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