Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity

A Journal of Discussion and Debate

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Why “Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity”

Dear comrades and friends,

This is a time of great challenges and opportunities for the working class and oppressed peoples, in the United States and throughout the world. Under Trump, US imperialism is becoming more vicious both at home and abroad. This has led to many forms of resistance, from teachers’ strikes, to Black Live Matter, to the fights against imperialist war, to the fight of women against misogyny, to struggles for immigrant rights, for the rights of LGBT+ people, etc.

At the same time, there is a great ideological weakness in the mass movement. In some of these movements, especially ones made up largely of the petty-bourgeoisie, the Democratic Party has great influence, including through Soros’s Open Society Foundation. Others are more independent, but still without ideological orientation.

While there are several parties and organizations that consider themselves Marxist-Leninist, most are quite small and with weak ties with the masses, particularly with the working class. Even when there are united front actions, such as against the wars, they at best represent a unity of the left, and not of the working class.

Some of the best work is being done by various workers’ groups, often consisting mainly of Afro-Americans and other oppressed nationalities. But they are mostly local groups, and though they have certain ties with the masses, they are not linked up with each other and have varying ideological tendencies within them. There are also a number of trade union groups, mainly locals, led by progressive forces that are taking up the fight against the offensive of capital. But they generally do not yet have a perspective of socialism.

In these circumstances, we are working to make “Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity” a journal of discussion and debate. It could help bring about unity between the different Marxist-Leninist forces around the country, by clarifying positions on what Lenin called “burning issues of the day.” We don’t believe that such a journal could lead to unity of all these forces, but could help to clarify lines of demarcation between different views, and in the long run could contribute to the formation of a genuine party that is a real vanguard of the working class in the U.S.

A genuine Marxist-Leninist organization should not replace the work of the local workers’ groups. One major mistake of the various Marxist-Leninist formations of the late 1960s and early 1970s was the attempt to “transform” the different mass groups, at that time mainly among the oppressed nationalities, into ML groups. Many of the cadres of the original groups were left out by this transformation. It would have been much better if the ML members of these groups had been able to unite into a party (even if this would later split into revolutionary and opportunist wings, as the Bolsheviks split with the Mensheviks in Russia), but keep the groups out of which they emerged as mass organizations.

This journal has a web site, but also a print version. The revolution will not be made on the internet. This first issue has come out before May 1. We thank those who contributed to this issue, and also those whose material we used without asking. We plan to have a second issue by the end of June, in time for the Left Forum in Brooklyn, NY.

We should have articles on the need to fight both opportunism and sectarianism in the mass movement against the capitalist offensive and imperialist war, on progressive forces in the working class movement and on the movements of oppressed nationalities and women. We also would like to include cultural articles, book or film reviews, pictures and cartoons.

We are requesting submission of articles from anyone who is interested in the work of this journal. To get them into the next issue, please send them in by June 10. Also, please feel free to circulate this to others who might be interested.

At this point we are publishing this journal under the name of Committee for Scientific Socialism. We will be forming an editorial board from those who make contributions, which will then work out guidelines of what should and should not be included.

Comradely,
George Gruenthal,
Initiator
Lessons of Trump’s Government Shutdown So Far

**Trump’s USA: No Country for Workers**

by Ray Light

President Trump chose Christmas week to launch an unprovoked attack on 800,000 innocent U.S. Federal workers and their families. Without due process, the billionaire bully suddenly cut off their paychecks. Indeed, President Trump himself did not try to cover up the fact that this cruel and unusual punishment, this federal government shutdown, had nothing to do with any actions of these almost one million workers.

Moreover, about half these workers were compelled by Trump to keep working without pay. On the face of it, this latter act seems clearly a violation of the minimum wage provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Even more draconian, this is an apparent violation of the Thirteenth Amendment rights provided by the U.S. Constitution. This amendment prohibits “involuntary servitude” (slavery) except when one has been convicted of a crime.

What is going on in the USA today?! How has Trump gotten away with this frontal attack on the U.S. working class? And how has Trump been forced to back off at least for a three week period? Finally, where do we go from here?

**Trump Demonizes Latino Immigrants Trying to Deepen Division in the U.S. Working Class**

The Trump Regime has made a sustained effort to create an hysteria among the largely ignorant white and Afro-American citizens of the USA, with its three hundred million people. This hysteria is concerning a few thousand men, women and children seeking economic relief and asylum, fleeing from hard-pressed Central American countries dominated by U.S. imperialism and paramilitary gangs. Leading up to the 2018 midterm elections, Trump employed inflammatory rhetoric and the connivance of the monopoly capitalist media and deployed several thousand federal troops to the Mexican border, creating a crisis in a situation where the flow of immigrants has already been sharply diminished for a number of years.

Trump’s moderate success with this ploy in stemming a major electoral disaster for himself and the Republican Party encouraged his renewed emphasis on this anti-immigrant hysteria as he seeks to fulfill his 2016 anti-immigrant campaign promise to build a wall to keep Mexicans and all Latin Americans out. While Republicans have traditionally been for small and cheap government, neither Republican nor Democratic politicians have focused on Trump’s wasteful expenditure of hundreds of millions of tax dollars to deploy and maintain U.S. combat troops at the southern border against an imaginary invading army composed of a small number of desperately poor Latin American families. Here the U.S. military presence is the main source of the crisis.

It is vital for Trump’s continued kleptocratic rule that he retain the loyalty of his mobilized right wing, white supremacist and great nation chauvinist base “against Wall Street’s federal government” and its ongoing and intensifying congressional and FBI (“police”) investigations. The key to retaining this base is the anti-immigrant hysteria connected to “the Wall.”

So Trump called on the Republicrat Congress, still dominated by the U.S. Empire’s Wall Street ruling class, including his Democratic Party enablers led by Schumer and Pelosi, to agree to fund with U.S. tax dollars the Wall that he had originally promised would be paid for by Mexico. But Wall Street sensed an opportunity to push back against the Trump Empire’s drive to autocratic, one man dictatorship. Thus, Pelosi and Schumer, on behalf of the U.S. Empire, refused to go along with Trump.

What had been fabricated already was clearly not sufficient. The Trump regime needed to foment a greater crisis, to stir especially the white working class to greater enmity against the Latino immigrant working people, to try to get Pelosi and the Democrats to cave in on the Wall funding.
Trump’s Federal Government Shutdown

On December 22, 2018 the federal government shut down. The shutdown didn’t end for thirty-five days until Friday, January 25, 2019. It was the longest U.S. government shutdown in history. It was clearly an act of desperation for the Trump Regime as there was no direct connection between the 800,000 government workers and the Democratic Party. There is much chauvinism among the working class as well as all other classes in this imperialist society, after more than five decades of U.S. global hegemony. Nevertheless, the Trump forces need to have the suffering federal workers and families and other impacted people blame the immigrants or at least the Democratic Party that Trump claims is “soft” on immigration—even though President Obama was tougher on immigrants than any modern U.S. president before him.

It is remarkable how thoroughly lacking in empathy were the billionaire Trump and his top aides for the suffering his shutdown inflicted on the federal workers. (Trump’s Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, a long time Wall Street financier, callously advised the federal workers that they should “apply for loans.” This is reminiscent of Marie Antoinette’s advice to the rebellious French poor, “Let them eat cake,” shortly before meeting her violent end.) This is in stark contrast with the corporate democrats who are past masters of phony “sympathy and support” for the working class. And it is clear that rather than blaming the immigrants or the Democratic Party, most federal workers blame Trump and the Republicans for the suffering they and their families have experienced. Trump’s reactionary base still seems in place. But there has been no expansion of the U.S. population that blames the immigrants for their hardships. And federal worker resistance has been rising. So Trump had to back off the shutdown for three weeks at least.

How has Trump gotten away with his frontal attack on the U.S. working class?

Trump has bullied his way through his first two years as President. He has deliberately appeared to be all-powerful. Unlike the Democratic Party leadership that is now looking to the 2020 presidential election, Trump is still looking at winning or intimidating hearts and minds. Even in relation to the government shutdown, Trump has needed for Congress to not appropriate the funds so that the government would grind to a halt. Thus, Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell’s unwillingness to bring appropriations bills up for votes in the Senate made Trump seem like he was shutting down the U.S. government by himself.

Trump had already threatened that he would cause a government shutdown if he didn’t get his wall funding. Moreover, he claimed he wouldn’t blame the Democrats but be proud about his responsibility for it. All the while, Trump planned to sign a clean continuing resolution until he listened to the criticism from Ann Coulter and Rush Limbaugh, influential leaders of his right wing base and then provoked a shutdown anyway. After trying to bully his way through, it was then difficult for him to blame the Democrats for the shutdown.

The treacherous misleadership of the AFL-CIO and the other major unions largely tails the conservative (not left or even liberal) corporatist Democrats who are too corrupt themselves to seriously challenge Trump in his drive for a Trump Dynasty dictatorship. All this has combined to give the workers and oppressed peoples within the USA the idea that they have no rights to defend and fight for and with.

Trump can only exercise one man dictatorial rule in a government shutdown if he declares a National Emergency, invoking the National Emergencies Act or some other emergency executive decree. But in that instance he would be subject to a challenge protocol. And in this situation, his fabricated series of crises might be more likely to be exposed than upheld. Indeed, it is significant that thus far in this current crisis Trump has threatened to declare a national emergency on several occasions trying to bully his way through, but has failed to carry out his threats.
What power compelled Trump to stop the Government Shutdown?

Despite Trump’s insistence that he would carry on the Government Shutdown until Congress passed an appropriation funding his Great Wall on the Mexican border, he folded after thirty-five days. Mass media pundits representing the Wall Street ruling class promoted the fiction that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had beaten the formerly “all-powerful” Trump in a duel. In fact, Pelosi did not cave in this time to Trump’s bullying. But, while Pelosi merely held her position, it was the actions of the workers themselves, sometimes in spite of their bankrupt leadership at the national level that defeated Trump in this battle.

The key force was the unpaid Air Traffic Controllers union workers at their local airports and the TPS workers who individually and increasingly collectively staged sick-outs. This culminated at New York’s LaGuardia Airport with the temporary suspension of flights because of staffing issues. It was clearly heading in short order to a general collapse of the airline industry. Other federal workers, including 14 thousand IRS workers did not show up for work; again, with every indication that a disruption of tax revenue was on the horizon. Reportedly, there had already been several deaths at closed National Parks across the country. Every day that the shutdown continued was weakening Trump’s position further.

U.S. working class militancy has been on the upswing for the past year or more, beginning with the victorious West Virginia school workers strike that spread to many so-called red states and then to Chicago where the teachers, hotel workers and others fought Obama’s right hand man, Mayor Rahm Emmanuel. During the thirty-five day government shutdown, the Los Angeles teachers victoriously struck in defense of students and against privatization and charter school draining of public education in the second largest school system in the USA. Working class courage is contagious.

It is the working class that shut down Trump’s government shutdown.

Trump’s Secretary of Labor and Trump’s Hatred of the Working Class

Alexander Acosta has been Trump’s one and only Secretary of Labor during these first two years of his Presidency. The Labor Secretary presides over the entire Labor Department. It is the only federal agency that monitors child labor and enforces child labor laws. The office of Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking is part of the Labor Department.

In late November 2018, the Miami Herald carried an explosive expose involving Florida millionaire financier Jeffrey Epstein who a decade earlier had abused underage girls “on a near industrial scale” in a “child molestation pyramid scheme.” Epstein’s federal indictment could have put him away for the rest of his life. According to Herald journalist Julie K. Brown, Epstein, not his several hundred young victims, was rescued by then Miami chief federal prosecutor, Alexander Acosta. Brown described the Acosta-Epstein “non-prosecution agreement” as “one of the most lenient deals for a serial child sex offender in history.” Incredibly, Trump appointed Alexander Acosta, the savior of the worst exploiter of “child labor” and promoter of “forced labor and human trafficking” to this very Cabinet post!

Of course, Acosta’s appointment and his continued retention as Labor Secretary, in spite of his scandalous handling of the Epstein case, is an indication of Trump’s contempt for girls and women. It underscores, in the aftermath of Judge Kavanaugh’s elevation to the U.S. Supreme Court, the assertion in our previous issue that “Trump’s USA [is] No Country For Women.” (See Ray O’ Light Newsletter #111, November-December 2018) It is important to note that, having selected the monstrous Acosta to be his main functionary dealing with the U.S. working class and labor movement, Trump has made it crystal clear that he is hostile to all working people in the USA and supportive of human enslavement.

Trump’s utter disregard for the well being of almost a million federal workers and their families in his shutdown power play along with his continued demonization of Latino and other immigrant workers is just the latest and most blatant example of this.

Where do we go from here?!

Trump’s USA is No Country for Workers! So, will the lawless, out of control Trump Dynasty drive the fed-
eral workers, including many unionized workers, into a slave condition as already patterned in the thirty-five day government shutdown? Will Trump’s propaganda about the Wall and his demonization of immigrant workers and their families, especially from Mexico and Central America, continue to drive immigrant and especially undocumented workers down to a status of peonage and slavery? Or will we the workers of the USA, in solidarity with each other and with the workers of the rest of the world continue to grow in unity and struggle against finance capital and U.S. imperialism? And will we drive the Trump tyranny out of the USA!? 

The Trump Regime defends Trump’s Empire. The “Republican” Democrats and mainstream Republicans defend Wall Street’s Empire. The top AFL-CIO, Teamsters and Change to Win union leadership defend the Democratic Party wing of the “Republicrats” and therefore Wall Street’s Empire. These labor misleaders and traitors to the U.S. and international working class have failed to demand the ouster of Labor Secretary Acosta and many have remained silent during Trump’s shutdown attack on both the Latino immigrants and the almost one million federal workers furloughed and otherwise abused in this period.

At a time of rising worker militancy in the USA in the midst of an out of control presidency—what an opportunity for militant working class fighters, militant unionists, revolutionary socialists to fight for the hearts and minds of all the working people—white, Afro-American, Latino, Asian, African, Native American and to fight for their unity in the struggle against monopoly capitalism and imperialism—in the USA today.

As the three week moratorium on the federal shutdown comes to an end let us remain clear that it was the activity of the TSA and Air Traffic Controllers, the school teachers, the IRS workers and other federal workers that took the power into their own hands and stopped the tyrannical Trump Regime in its tracks. The power in the workers hands needs to remain there and grow through the class struggle.

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Finally, I remain convinced that in the struggle to defeat the fascistic Trump Regime, the valuable guidance of George Dimitrov and the Communist International (now at the hundredth anniversary of its founding), and the heroic example of the Soviet Union’s people, Red Army and Communist Party led by comrade Stalin that led the global victory over world fascism in World War II, will help us on our path to a brighter future.

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In Praise of Communism

*By Bertolt Brecht*

It is reasonable. You can grasp it. It’s simple. You’re no exploiter, so you’ll understand. It is good for you. Look into it. Stupid men call it stupid, and the dirty call it dirty. It is against dirt and against stupidity. The exploiters call it a crime. But we know: It is the end of all crime. It is not madness but The end of madness. It is not chaos. But order. It is the simple thing That’s hard to do.
What is the Difference between a Communist Labor Organizer and a Communist Labor Activist?

By Mike Gimbel

Mike Gimbel is a "Red Diaper Baby", who can trace his communist heritage all the way back to Peekskill, NY, when, as a very young child he attended the famous 1948 Paul Robeson concert that was attacked by the fascists. He has been a part of the communist movement ever since. He has campaigned, for the last several years, for communist unity, as the best response to the 'New World Order' that was created by the tragic overthrow of the Eastern European worker states and the USSR, that took place from 1989-1991. Mike Gimbel has called for all those who refer to themselves as "Stalinists", "Trotskyists" and "Maoists", etc. to reach out a hand to each other and find a way to unify our struggle against the most vicious and aggressive ruling class the world has ever seen: US Imperialism!

In my four decades as a Communist labor organizer, I was always struck by the lack of understanding of what a Communist should be doing as a member of a labor union.

I came into contact with numerous would-be communist union members, both in my union and in other unions over the decades. None of them seemed to have a concept of what they were supposed to be doing.

Many of these communist individuals did not even bother to get involved in the day-to-day issues within the union, let alone the bigger political issues that the union might and ought to be involved in. Few even bothered to attend union meetings, yet some were actual activists in the community over local, national and international issues!

Those who did pay attention to the union, attended union meetings and even ran for union office, rarely took that interest any further than that!

I saw individual’s run for top union office, yet they had never initiated a single progressive motion, as a union delegate, even though they had been a delegate for many years!

I saw all these communists’ actions, as delegates and union officers, act as if they were isolated individuals pushing individual issues. Aren’t communists supposed to work as a coordinated unit on all the issues that affect workers and oppressed people?

Part of the problem, of course, is the sectarian history of the world’s communist movement.

We are tragically divided!

We are tragically divided in the face of the most vicious and aggressive enemy in the history of the world: US Imperialism.

Decades of sectarianism have resulted in a fractured communist movement, where individual communists, be they “Stalinist”, “Trotskyist”, “Maoist”, etc. are mostly left on their own – or – tied to a sectarian group that arrogantly believes that every other communist group is either an enemy, a rival or a sell-out.

Tragic!

The results, within the labor movement, have been disastrous.

The very concept of what a communist is supposed to do, within the labor movement, was beyond their comprehension!

All communists, inside a union, or outside the union, must be guided by internationalism.

As an internationalist, the relative importance of all issues, for a union leader, start from the international situation, then the national, then the local, then the union issues.

Sadly, almost, if not all, the communist union activists that I came into contact with viewed their union work in exactly the opposite direction: from the individual union matters upwards.

The problem, today, for any communist union activist and organizer, is that there is no non-sectarian coordinating body through which to focus their work.

How to coordinate, even if you are an experienced communist organizer, is a serious problem? With whom?

A coordinating body, such as my proposal for a “Labor Organizing Committee for Unity and Struggle” (LOCUS), is an absolute necessity for any successful effort to influence the direction of the labor movement.

Without a central body that can discuss, propose and initiate political campaigns, and carry out that campaign through the efforts of individual communists, in unions around the country, our individual efforts and hard work will be mostly for naught!

No central body means a huge waste of effort.

Therefore, using my experience, under the excellent tutelage of Milt Neidenberg (recently deceased), in Workers World Party, over several decades, I will give advice as to how individual communists in the union movement need to proceed:

1. Attend EVERY union meeting and stay to the end of the meeting! Treat these meetings as your REAL JOB! Act as if the job that you are paid for, by the boss, is just your secondary job – utilize your paid job as your way to becoming a communist union organizer!
2. Read and Study your union contract(s). Know it back and forward!

3. Read and Study your union constitution, both the local and the international constitution. Know them back and forward.

4. Learn Roberts Rules of Order. It will help you understand how and when to speak and when and how to make motions at any union meeting.

5. Do not attend the union meetings as a 'potted plant' or use it as a 'social engagement'. The work that you do at these meetings is serious work for a serious communist!

6. Use the union meeting for serious work! That means that if you are only using it ‘to get your point across’, by speaking up at the union meeting, you are wasting your valuable time.

7. Serious work involves actionable initiatives. Actionable initiatives are initiated by motions put forward at union meetings, which require the union to take action on them.

8. As a communist organizer, you must view yourself as a LEADER, not a follower. YOU are the initiator of those actionable motions.

9. As a communist, you MUST EXPECT to have supporters and enemies, on the basis of those motions. Motions that are uncontroversial are mostly useless. Anyone can make such a motion! Leave those motions to the opportunist! Every union meeting is like a congress with opposing political groupings. You must not wish to be liked by everyone! A political LEADER must not fear making political enemies! If you believe that you are a communist organizer, and you have no political enemies, you are doing something wrong!

10. As a leader, you will be working with others that DO NOT POLITICALLY AGREE WITH YOU. If you are looking for ideological agreement, go join a church.

11. Do not be sectarian! Welcome all communists and progressives, regardless of your criticisms, to be your allies. Always find ways to be constructive!

12. Do not allow any form of racism or chauvinism to go unchallenged at any meeting you attend!

13. View yourself as an extension of the central directing body. Hopefully that body is L.O.C.U.S. or something similar, with a person on the committee that you report to and discuss with on how to proceed.

14. View yourself as an extension of the international communist movement! You are the representative of every worker and oppressed person on the planet. As such, issues of the greatest importance, locally, nationally and internationally, are critical issues for your union members.

15. You must not be afraid to stand all alone, and take the floor, when vitally important issues are debated and discussed. Politics are more important than personal friendships! You will be respected for your courage, even by your enemies!

16. That isn’t to say that tactical maneuvering isn’t important. It is a vital part of leadership! You need to know when to speak up! Sometimes, when you are right, YOU ARE WRONG! I had to actually say those words, from the delegate body floor, to a prior speaker, who was WRONG in getting up and making a challenge to the chair, on an issue that he was CORRECT ON! There is a time and place for everything.

17. If you have laid the basis by your actions, and people respect your opinion, RUN FOR UNION OFFICE! If you want to be a leader of workers, then why would you not want to be a communist union officer?

Some examples, from my personal history, of what can be accomplished:

1. In 1974, racism was at the forefront of the Boston School integration conflict. Black children were being driven to previously all-white schools. The school buses, with children on board, were being stoned by the racist anti-bussing forces. The issue galvanized the entire nation’s attention. The racists ruled the streets. What was needed was a national effort to politically defeat the racists. WWP pulled together a coalition for a national march on Boston. Labor support was critical. I was a new chapter president, in the second largest chapter within my local union. Our local union was one of the largest in District Council 37 in New York City, representing, over time, between 5,000 and 8,000 professional and technical workers. The chapter that I represented, as president, had between 500 and over 1,100 members over the four decades of my service. District Council 37 represents approx. 125,000 workers in New your City government agencies. DC 37 is a council composed of 58 local unions. The median sized local union, within DC 37 was, on average, about half the size of the chapter that I represented. However, whereas DC 37 had a majority of people of color, my local union was overwhelmingly white and higher paid (it is, however, majority people of color and immigrants today). My own chapter officers, for the most part, sympathized with the Boston racists. I even had one of my officers, in response to my support for the anti-racist Boston demonstration, stand up, to the loud cheers of his supporters, and proclaim that “If a Black person moved into my neighborhood, I’ll beat them up and burn them out!” My own chapter, which I was elected to represent, opposed my political position. What did I do? I recognized that DC 37 would overwhelmingly support the Boston march, if I proposed endorsement to them. I bypassed my chapter and my local union, and went over their heads directly to the DC 37 leadership and got the DC 37 official support for the march. As a result of my effort, DC 37 provided an en-
dorsement and provided the many buses necessary to take their members to Boston, for that historic march of 25,000. After that mass march, the political ‘wind’ was taken out of the racist ‘sails’, and put into our anti-racist ‘sails’. The racists were unable to mobilize a response after the mass march, and lost the battle. My action was critical for the success of the march. DC 37 is a major force in the union movement, representing 125,000 active NYC workers and 50,000 retirees, and their endorsement brought other unions on board. Sometimes, when the issue is so critical, one must simply “DO THE RIGHT THING!” As a union officer, you must not approach your elected union post in a bureaucratic manner. I was prepared to resign as an officer, if my members passed a motion in opposition to the march. None of them had the courage to put their names to such a motion! I won, you won, the anti-racist movement won. They lost!

This is an example of how YOU can be a successful COMMUNIST ORGANIZER in a MASS WORKERS ORGANIZATION.

2. In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon. The AFL-CIO, without consulting or getting the approval of the local unions, published an advertisement in the New York Times, in support of the Israeli invasion, saying that U.S. workers supported the invasion. WWP organized a nationwide response, getting 300 labor signatures, including my signature, for a half-page advertisement in the New York Times, opposing the Israeli invasion. The Zionists on the very team that I had helped put in office the previous year, were furious. I was the union’s Public Relations chairperson and the union’s Political Action chairperson, in addition to being the president of the second largest chapter in the union. I was kicked off of the very team that I had put together, that had ousted the conservative leadership, just 18 months prior. In the coming union election, I was opposed by the former photographer for the Jewish Defense League. My former team-mates assumed that there was no way that I had any chance of winning. They were completely stunned when I was re-elected, although narrowly!

3. I was part of eight union contract negotiating teams. As such, I had an important impact on what was demanded, and won. I even was able to get the Citywide contract, involving all 125,000 workers, amended to include two separate provisions that I initiated, in regard to overtime pay. In both cases, I was told that it could not be done. That is the typical response by the union bureaucracy to anything ‘new’: “It can’t be done”. I persisted and it was done, not because I am any sort of ‘genius’, but because the logic involved in the change to the contract was all too obvious and clear and, most importantly, I refused to back down.

4. My biggest victory, in terms of pay for union members, came as a result of refusing to take NO from the union president and the lawyers at DC 37. The lawyers told the union president that ‘out-of-title’ grievances cannot be won. In response, I took the two grievants to an outside labor lawyer, with the union’s VP in tow. When the VP reported back to the union president that I was serious about going to an outside lawyer, the union president decided that it would look bad if the union did not at least appear to be trying to handle the grievance, even though he assured me that it had no chance of winning. When we won the grievance, the DC37 leadership sent out an immediate, high-alert bulletin, to all 58 represented union locals that ‘out-of-title’ grievances can now be won. My union president, of course, took all the credit and never, even once, publicly acknowledged my role. In just my NYC agency (Department of Environmental Protection), over the following years, hundreds of union members won back pay and promotions worth tens of millions of dollars via this ‘out-of-title’ breakthrough. It would not have happened if I had accepted the judgment of the union lawyers and the union bureaucrats. You need to stand your ground when you know you are right! Do not take NO for an answer!

5. In the mid-1980’s, a political movement developed around freeing Nelson Mandela from the Apartheid prison he was being held at. The AFL-CIO had a national anti-communist policy that no representative of the ANC was allowed on union property. As far as I am aware, I held the first meeting that broke that ‘blockade’. With great difficulty and the help of the chair of the DC 37 Women’s Committee (Louise DeBow), I was able to secure a meeting room on the main floor of DC37’s building, for the ANC United Nations observer, David Ndaba, to speak to a union audience. Such was the fear of AFL-CIO reprisal, that Louise DeBow, the very person who was indispensable in getting me the room, was so afraid to be seen anywhere near the room that, when I waived to her to come in, she moved swiftly the other way! I owed her many thanks, regardless. Thank you Louise! Your action, getting me that room, was heroic! Any repercussions that came down could have had serious consequences for her union future.

6. I may have also held the first meeting on union property, in support of the Palestinian liberation struggle. I do not remember the year (perhaps 1984 or 85?), when I held a chapter meeting, with a representative of the PFLP as a speaker. One of my delegates wanted to make it a debate and, with our permission, went to find a Zionist representative to state the Zionist point-of-view in that debate. He got no takers and even went to the Israeli mission in NYC to try to get them to send a representative, to no avail. He said to our members at the meeting, that he was shocked when he told the Israeli mission
who was speaking, that they all left the room and closed the door, and came back a few minutes later and demanded that he must not allow the meeting to happen! You can only imagine how broadly I was smiling inside when I heard that!

I could go on and on, illustrating actions from strike support to local, national and international issues that I was involved in, but you get the idea.

Be measured but be BOLD.

Be knowledgeable and, above all, be a good worker! No member will trust a fellow worker who is shiftless or a poor worker. You lead by example. How you carry yourself means a lot to your fellow workers. They will trust you with their futures. Do not take that responsibility lightly!

Finally, your work is not complete if you are not part of a larger well-organized group.

When the Federal workers were locked out during the shutdown, where was the union movement? It was AWOL! It was AWOL because there was no organized left, inside the unions, to push the bureaucrats to action.

WE NEED L.O.C.U.S.! If we are serious about making the labor movement move to the left, then we need to get on to the business of creating an organizing center to coordinate our efforts. Nothing less will do!

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The October Revolution and Some Lessons for the Struggle for Socialism in the U.S.

By Freedom Road Socialist Organization,

Introduction

As communists and revolutionaries, we welcome this opportunity to mark the 100th anniversary of Russia’s 1917 October Revolution, and to discuss its ongoing relevancy to the struggle today.

The October Revolution was a world-changing event. At one stroke, it settled the question of whether another world was possible. Releasing one-sixth of the world from the chains of wage slavery, it smashed the myth that rule by the few was a sort of permanent condition, and, by successfully establishing proletarian political power, the October Revolution succeeded in opening the road to socialist construction. For the years that followed, the great achievements of the Soviet Union created a new and better way of life and would exercise a powerful effect on working and oppressed people around the globe.

Not only did the October Revolution change the lives of the millions who lived in what would become the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), it changed the world revolutionary movement in a big way. Mao was later to say that the October Revolution sent the “salvos of Marxism to China” where it was to become a powerful force in the movement for national liberation and socialism. In the U.S., the October Revolution came to exercise a magnetic pull on the revolutionaries in the socialist, labor and other people’s movements, contributing to the creation of a single, revolutionary Communist Party in the early 1920s, which became an important factor in the country’s political life.

How we can learn from the October Revolution

The Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Lenin, Stalin and others, creatively applied Marxism to the concrete conditions of Russia. In doing so they waged a consistent struggle against opportunism in the socialist and labor movements – internationally and in Russia itself. It was this struggle against opportunism that prepared the Bolsheviks to lead the working class in the seizure of power.

The October Revolution was a qualitative leap from one historical epoch to another – a period in which moribund capitalism is heading for extinction and where socialism is on the agenda. This process in turn gave rise to Leninism; Leninism being Marxism in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

Marxism-Leninism is a science, the science of revolution. It allows us to understand the laws that govern the processes at work in the world, and by understanding those laws, including those of how history develops, we can grasp the necessity and understand our freedom to change the world.

Because Marxism-Leninism is a science, a science that is by necessity and fact universal in character, we can take the lessons of the October Revolution and learn from the experience in a materialist way that helps us to advance our work in the U.S. Lenin made the point that the soul of Marxism was a concrete analysis of concrete conditions, so we cannot say that it something that is fixed, static, or immutable. Rather, Marxism-Leninism is and will be constantly enriched through cycles of practice, and the summation of that practice.

We learn from the past, to guide our work in the present and to serve the future, which includes our revolutionary goals. We have no desire to be a historical reenactment society, and it should be obvious to all serious people that we cannot rely on analogies from Russian history to understand current conditions.

Conditions in the U.S. today

The U.S. today is an empire in decline, beset by contradictions internal and external. Lenin stated that imperialism was capitalism in its moribund stage, and it is arguable that the irrational bigot Donald Trump is a fitting political representative of a sick and dying system.

Internationally, the U.S. faces a growing challenge for the national liberation movements and the national democratic governments, the socialist countries, and other imperialist rivals. Thus, the U.S. is increasing military spending, taking hostile actions against socialist Korea and Cuba, and is stepping up the U.S. wars in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Iraq and other places.

Within the U.S., the monopoly capitalists are pursuing an agenda of austerity and reaction, which means an intensification of racist discrimination and national oppression, directed at African Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, Arab and Asian Americans, and indigenous peoples including Pacific Islanders. There is an attack on the standard of living of working people (including wages, health care, pensions, and perhaps most importantly – the right to have trade unions), attacks on the rights of women, and organized bigotry against Muslims.

The point here is not to draw up a comprehensive list of the crimes being committed by the monopoly capitalist class, nor is it to chart the restructuring of the economy and political polarization that has unfolded
since the great economic crisis of 2007; rather it is to provide a general picture of a wide-ranging war that the bourgeoisie is waging on the people of the U.S. and, by extension, the peoples of the world.

Fortunately, the war that the rulers of the U.S. are waging on working and oppressed people is not a one-sided one, and we are now in the midst of one of the greatest upsurges of struggle since the 1960s. In cities across the country, massive and militant protests have taken place against police crimes and there is a growing movement for community control of the police. There is a growing tide of anger over the anti-immigrant polices of the Trump administration. Trump’s attempted ‘Muslim ban’ drew hundreds of thousands of people into the streets and airports. It is estimated that about 20% of the people of the U.S. have taken part in protests and demonstrations since Trump took office.

Finally, there is another point concerning objective conditions that bears mentioning: the communist movement in the U.S. is small. This does not negate the fact that the existing Marxist-Leninist organizations have made big contributions to the people’s struggle. We have. Rather it is recognition of the reality that the U.S. is a large country with big working class, and for those of us who are revolutionaries, the task of building a new communist party remains on our agenda.

At any given time, communists have three general tasks: to win all that can be won in the struggle while landing the strongest possible blows on the enemy; to raise the general level of consciousness and organization among the people; and to build communist organization to win the advanced to Marxism-Leninism. As we carry out these tasks there is an incredible amount that we can learn from the October Revolution and the work by Russian communists to make it a reality.

The October Revolution and the need for a communist party

Given that no ruling class, be it the capitalists and landlords who ruled Russia in 1917, or the monopoly capitalists who rule the U.S. today, has ever left the stage of history voluntarily, working and oppressed people need to be organized to take political power by whatever means necessary. This is basic lesson of the October Revolution that is universally valid.

Lenin made the following points about what is needed for revolution:

“It is only when the "lower classes" do not want to live in the old way and the "upper classes" cannot carry on in the old way that the revolution can triumph. This truth can be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters). It follows that, for a revolution to take place, it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking, and politically active workers) should fully realize that revolution is necessary, and that they should be prepared to die for it; second, that the ruling classes should be going through a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward masses into politics… weakens the government, and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to rapidly overthrow it.” (“Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder,” in Lenin Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 85)

To this we can add another precondition – the need for a Communist Party. The outstanding revolutionary leader, Mao Zedong put it like this:

“If there is to be a revolution, there must be a revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist-Leninist style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses of people in defeating imperialism and its running dogs.” (Revolutionary Forces of the World Unite, Fight against Imperialist Aggression!, in Mao Selected Works, Vol. 4, p. 284).

Our organization, Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO), does not claim to be the party of the working class. We are a communist organization that is working to build a new communist party. The reason we do not claim to be the party is that we do not in any real way, to use Stalin’s formulation, encompass the advanced detachment of the working class. The problem is this: most advanced workers – the activists, organizers and leaders – are not revolutionaries or communists. The active of our class are in one place politically and the communists are in another. There is a gap. A separation. So, we need to fuse Marxism and the workers’ movement.

One of the great strengths of the communist movement in Russia is that it dealt with the problem of fusing Marxism and the workers’ movement in a practical and meaningful way. In 1899 Lenin posed the issue like this:

“The separation of the working-class movement and socialism gave rise to weakness and underdevelopment in each: the theories of the socialists, unfused with the workers’ struggle, remained nothing more than utopias, good wishes that had no effect on real life; the working-class movement remained petty, fragmented, and did not acquire political significance, was not enlightened by the advanced science of its time. For this reason we see in all European countries a constantly growing urge to fuse socialism with the working-class movement in a single Social-Democratic movement. When this fusion takes place the class struggle of the workers becomes the conscious struggle of the proletariat to emancipate itself from exploitation by the propriety classes, it is evolved into a higher form of the socialist workers’ movement—the independent working-class Social-Democratic party.”
In addition, Lenin and the Bolsheviks also developed measures to consolidate the party – organizationally, politically and ideologically – all of which we can learn from today.

Taken as a whole, conditions in the U.S. today are favorable for building communist organization. The large number people who self-identify as “socialists” in the wake of the Sanders presidential campaign is an indicator of this, as is the upsurge of struggle against police crimes, the large-scale protests against Trump, and the openness in the labor movement to class-struggle unionism. Also, coming off the economic crisis of 2007, and the restructuring of the economy that has taken place since then, there is a sense among many, especially among young people, that capitalism is a failed system.

In all of the people’s struggles, the issue of “Who will lead?” is a basic one. Communist leadership is not preordained. It is earned, though our clarity of political line, organizational capacity and hard work. Communists need to be good at learning at the same time as we teach others. We cannot afford to criticize from the sidelines. We need to step up, and if we do not do so, opportunists of various stripes will be glad to do it for us.

For example, objectively speaking, there is a movement against Trump. It began while he was on the campaign trail, and many of us marched against him and his agenda in the streets of Cleveland during the Republican National Convention. There was a huge outpouring of struggle, which was largely spontaneous, following his election, and we are now in a period where large-scale fightbacks can be organized against his more egregious attacks – such as the Muslim ban.

In building the movement against Trump, we need to contend with reformists and other class forces, including those tied with the leadership of the Democratic Party, over the issue of who should lead. The fact is that the only way we can lead this movement is by being the ranks of those who are the practical organizers of it – which means that we are among those calling the demonstrations, organizing the big protests, and are among the speakers putting out a clear line on the issues of day. To the extent that we can, we want the movement to target not only Trump, but also the monopoly capitalists who stand behind him.

In this struggle, as in every other popular movement, it is critical for communists do more than work to raise the general level of consciousness among the masses of people, and we can’t be content with being among the best of the activists either. In every battle that we engage in it is critical that we are summing things up with the activists and leaders, helping them understand the laws the govern monopoly capitalism, and explaining the need for socialism. By doing this we grow the communist movement in this country, and lay the basis for creating a new communist party.

It should also be noted that this work of building communist organization in the crucible of the day-to-day struggle helps to create the material basis for Marxist-Leninist organizations, to engage in joint practice, to engage in summation, and, where possible, to the achievement of principled organizational unity.

**Strategy for revolution in the U.S. and the national question**

All revolutionary strategy is based on answering the question, “Who are our friends and who are our enemies?” This is impossible without understanding the specific features of U.S. society.

Our strategy for socialist revolution is constructing a united front against the monopoly capitalist class, under the leadership of the working class and its political party, with a strategic alliance between the multinational working class and the oppressed nationalities at the core of this united front.

It is vital to understand the special needs and demands of entire nationalities within the borders of the U.S. – African Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, Asian Americans, Native peoples including native Hawaiians, Arab Americans and others are bound by the chains of national oppression.

Racism in the U.S. carries the stench of the slave market. It maintains that Black people are inferior and that racial antagonisms are ahistorical and independent of the development of class societies. We totally reject this notion.

Lenin referred to pre-1917 Russia as a “prison house of nations,” and that is exactly what the U.S. is today, where racist discrimination and systematic inequality in all spheres of life – economic, political, and cultural – is the order of the day. One of the main reasons that the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) was successful in October 1917 was that it championed the fight against national oppression, and it consistently stood for national liberation and self-determination. There is a lot we can learn from this experience.

Likewise, by waging a struggle against the opportunism and social chauvinism that characterized the Second International, Marxism-Leninism became the revolutionary theory, where the national question takes it rightful place, where it is understood where it is in reality – as vital to the revolutionary process internationally and vital to understanding the core dynamics of change in a multi-national state like the U.S.

We make the following point in our Statement on National Oppression, National Liberation and Socialist
Revolution, which crystalizes our understanding of the importance of the fight against national oppression:

“The struggle against imperialism and national oppression is a revolutionary struggle, for just as the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America require revolutionary struggles to overthrow colonialism and liberate their countries, so will it take a revolutionary struggle in the United States to gain full equality for oppressed nationalities. Since it is the system of imperialism that profits from and causes national oppression, only the overthrow of this system can end national oppression.”

Two things are needed to develop the strategic alliance. First, we need to build the African American, Chicano, and other oppressed nationality movements, and to promote working class leadership within those movements. Workers from oppressed nations in the trade union movement bring with them the special demands of their national liberation movements. We fight for the trade union movement to stand in unconditional solidarity with the oppressed.

Second, as we build the multinational working class movement, we need to ensure that the fight against racist discrimination, for consistent democracy, and full equality for the oppressed is at the core of our agenda. For example, in recent years the struggle against police crimes has exploded in the Black community. In a number of places this struggle has expanded to encompass the fight for community control of police. In addition to building these fights, everything possible should be done to get the labor movement to support them.

Or to take another example, we have worked hard to build the immigrant rights movement, to resist deportations and to build the fight for legalization for all. In the cities where we do this, we have worked hard to draw in the labor movement.

The work to build this strategic alliance also requires carrying out a set of interrelated and at times difficult tasks. White workers, especially those who are active and forward-looking, have the responsibility to fight white chauvinism or racism among whites and play an active role in building the fight against all manifestations of national oppression. Racial prejudice is not the primary cause of national oppression. It is the consequence, the rationalization and justification of national oppression. Revolutionary-minded oppressed nationality workers have the responsibility to oppose narrow nationalism among workers of their own nationality.

Building a united front against monopoly capitalism, building communist organization with the aim of constructing a Leninist party of a new type, or building a strategic alliance are all tasks that can be carried out now. All the basic contradictions of imperialism are sharpening and there is a real urgency to do what must be done.

Proletarian Internationalism

The monopoly capitalists who rule the U.S. also rule an empire that extends around the world. They are parasites and exploiters who rob vast swaths of the globe – hundreds of millions of people – of their labor, land and natural resources. They have built a military machine of an unprecedented scale in world history and the U.S. is waging continuous wars, from the Philippines to Iraq. They have placed Puerto Rico under colonial rule and block its path to independence. And they make the Zionist occupation of Palestine possible.

The people of the U.S. and peoples of the world have something in common, a common enemy. Every blow that the people of the U.S. land on our rulers is good for people everywhere, and vice versa, and this is the material basis for proletarian internationalism, for the unity of the working class and for oppressed nations on a world scale.

Living in the center of an imperialist empire, revolutionaries have a special responsibility to oppose the wars of our ‘own’ rulers and extend support to the oppressed. As we do so there is a great deal that we can learn from the determined fight that the Russian communists waged against the social chauvinists, i.e. those who were socialists in words, but “great nation chauvinists” in deed. As we build the anti-war movement we constantly encounter those who want to join in the demonization of the national liberation movements. We cannot let these forces set the terms of the movement.

Along a similar vein, we can never accept the imperialists’ attempts to criminalize the national liberation movements with their slanders of terrorism or narcoterrorism, and we oppose their laws that seek to outlaw international solidarity.

The future is bright

The October Revolution opened the road to a new stage in human history that shows what our class can do – that we can “lose our chains.” Revolutionaries in the U.S. have a big job and we are well served by using the science of Marxism-Leninism and learning from advanced experience.

Monopoly capitalism is a failed, criminal system that had a beginning and that will surely have an end. Its gravediggers are already on the scene. And while we do not know the year or month – we are certain the U.S. will have its October.
Two Lines on Oppressed Peoples

The question of oppressed peoples in the U.S., particularly of African-Americans, is crucial for the revolutionary movement. We present below two views on this question.

The first is now apparently the official position of the PCUSA, as stated in its party program (https://partyofcommunistsusa.org/about/program/). We present this, not because of any particular importance of the PCUSA, but because this position states in a basically clear way the view that there is no longer an African-American nation in the Black Belt South, and how the “fight against racism, and for full equality of all nationally oppressed,” is necessary for the unity of the working class.

The second view, while certainly recognizing the importance of the fight against racism, defends the position that there is still an African-American nation in the Black Belt, and that in certain circumstances the question of self-determination could change from a theoretical to a practical question. It should be noted that both positions were included in the program of the PCUSA when this writer was a member of that group, but has since been dropped without explanation from that program after this writer left that group.

George Gruenthal

First view:

Racism and Capitalism

Racism in its many forms continues to play a negative but central role in every aspect of U.S. capitalism, including keeping the bourgeoisie in power; producing increasing profits, and developing, justifying, and maintaining institutional discrimination.

The working class must fight against racism, for full equality of all nationally oppressed, and for affirmative action, if it is to unite internally and enter lasting alliances with the organizations and movements of racially oppressed peoples. By the same token, the nationally and racially oppressed groups must support labor’s demands in order to unite internally and to ally with labor.

The U.S. is perhaps the most multicultural and multinational country in the world, with about 300 million people including almost every race, nationality, and ethnic group on the planet. Racially and nationally oppressed peoples live and work in every region, in every state, and in every major city. They are primarily working-class and generally occupy the lowest-paying, most exploitative jobs. Among the nationally and racially oppressed are African Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Arab and Middle Eastern peoples.

From its inception, the United States was built on racism, from the displacement and near genocide of Native Americans, to the enslavement of African Americans, to the theft of huge sections of Mexico, to the racist workers. The ability of employers to pay workers differently based on skin color, country of origin, immigration, exclusion of Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants, to the current xenophobic hysteria against Arabs and South Asians, racism has been a convenient tool for the maintenance of power and profits by the ruling class at the expense of oppressed people and all workers.

Racism affects the unity of the working class at all levels. Racism is a tool that not only exploits racially oppressed people; it aids in the exploitation of white workers as well. Racial dis-crimination in hiring, racist wage and salary policies, and racial stratification of various industries and trades undermine the interests of all status; the hire date in two-tier wage systems exerts downward pressure on the wages of all workers. It allows bosses to extract even higher profits from racially oppressed workers. Racism is good for capitalism, but is bad for working people of every race. White workers have a powerful self-interest in fighting racism; white workers will gain greater victories to the degree that they unite with nationally and racially oppressed workers. Multiracial unity in the workplace and on the shop-floor is the key to winning victories for all, to lifting wages, conditions and dignity for every worker.

White people must take an initiating role in combating all in-stances of racism and national oppression wherever and whenever they occur and provide support to people of color who are in leadership of movements and organizations. These acts are the building blocks of grassroots unity and trust. They prove the struggle against racism is not for racially oppressed people to combat alone. It is in the self-interest of all workers, leading to greater unity, respect, and strength for the labor movement and all other movements.

National Minorities and the National Question

Attention to national minorities in Austro-Hungary and Russia even before the revolution in 1917 led Lenin and other Bolsheviks to judge that the national inde-
dependence was essential for multi-ethnic participation in the democratic transition after the success of the Revolution. However, these leaders recognized that such revolutionary-socialist national would be conditioned by economic and other factors which would determine whether specific people would best be served by national determination. Stalin, using a definition eagerly embraced by Lenin, defined a nation as an “historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.” Whether a case had reached such conditions would involve extensive discussion of relative theoretical issue applicable to each national minority. Additionally, general efforts to deploy Korenizatsiya, a kind of Soviet administrative action, to depute advantage to members of national minorities into Soviet government and industry.

**African-Americans and national Self-Determination**

While the Communist Party abhorred racism, it was not until the 1920s that a unified Communist strategy was adequately adopted, particularly toward African-Americans in the Deep South. Bolstered by the emergence of the Third Period adopted by Comintern in 1928, the American party enthusiastically endorsed the national self-determination of African-Americans:

“While continuing and intensifying the struggle under the slogan of full political and social equality for the Negroes, which must remain the central slogan of our party work among the masses, the Party must come out openly for the right of Negroes to national self-determination in the southern states where Negroes form the majority of the population” (ECCI 1928).

By 1930 the Communist Party and the Comintern had made black belt self-determination in the American south an integral part of its political work:

“Owing to the peculiar situation in the Black Belt (the fact that the majority of the resident Negro population are farmers, and agricultural laborers and that the capitalist economic system as well as political class rule there is not only of a special kind, but to a great extent still has pre-capitalist and semi-colonial features), the right of self-determination as the main slogan of the of the Communist Party in the Black Belt is appropriate.” (ECCI 1930)

A number of Communist cadres, particularly Harry Haywood, made this struggle for black belt self-

determination for African-American the central core of their lives. This was very much an effect of economic and political events of the 1920s and 1930s. At the time a large minority of several states had a largely rural African-American population in what amounted to peasant subjugation, tied to the land by sharecropping, debt peonage, and Jim Crow legalization of a corrupt racist culture. Under these conditions national self-determination made sense. There remain Communists today who conclude that black belt self-determination is the appropriate strategy. However, other Communists believed that the black belt area, and African-Americans, had completed under capitalism an evolution which made an actual black belt state irrelevant. Certainly, war plants in WWI and WWII forged a massive relocation to cities throughout the U.S., and the integration of African-Americans as trade unionists and enthusiastic defenders of labor rights. The question of national self-determination for African-Americans led to the question of whether African-Americans in any sense were still a peasantry. Furthermore, the Communist Party had been making self-determination less a part of Party doctrine with the emergence of the 1935 Popular Front. This resulted in a controversy until the Communist Party made abandonment of black belt self-determination in the 1950s as a matter of a judgment that in the struggle for African-American rights that political and economic events had advanced by making Africa-American and white American laborers ever more unified. A great deal of the motivating of the policy announced by the Communist Party was done by such African-Americans as Benjamin Davis, W.E.B. DuBois and Henry Winston, which occurred as the Civil Rights Movement began its multicultural activist mission.

It is thus the case that the Program of the Party of Communists must now decide whether the struggle of African-American should revert to self-determination or continue to another theoretical-revolutionary plan.

**Self-Determination for Other National Minorities**

There remain national minorities about which there has never been any dissension among Communists. The Party of Communists U.S.A. enthusiastically endorsed self-determination for Native Americans and for Pacific Islanders, and for the immediate liberation of Puerto Rico as a free and independent state.

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**Second view:**

The U.S. today is a prison-house of nations, as was tsarist Russia a century ago. This is the result of the historical development of the country.

It began with the expulsion of the native peoples from their lands, and their subsequent genocide through forced marches, purposeful introduction of diseases and outright wars of extermination. This even continues to-
day whenever the capitalists find natural resources that they want to exploit on the reservations to which they have confined the native peoples.

U.S. history (and that of the earlier colonies) continued with the kidnapping and enslavement of Africans, the mass rape of kidnapped African women, and their transportation particularly to the plantation areas of the South (the Black Belt). The production of cotton and other cash crops (sugar, tobacco, indigo) provided the basis for U.S. industry and its export to Europe. (U.S. cotton was the basis of the British textile industry.) Slavery did not only benefit the Southern plantation oligarchy, but also the Eastern shipping magnates who produced the slave ships, and the Northern bankers who financed the cotton trade. Marx pointed out that: “The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production.” (Capital, Vol. I, Chap. 31.)

It took the Civil War (also considered the Second American Revolution), some 250 years after the introduction of slavery into the colonies, to put an end to chattel slavery. But after the defeat of the Confederacy, the U.S. government did not generally break up the plantations or distribute the land to the tillers, the Afro-American freed people. The defeat of the Reconstruction governments marked the end of the possibility of a democratic solution to the Afro-American national question under the rule of the U.S. capitalist class. Instead, Afro-Americans in the plantation South became an oppressed nation under U.S. rule. Despite the later dispersal of many Blacks to the major U.S. cities both North and South, and the decline of sharecropping, this situation continues today.

The U.S. ruling class, in its drive for Manifest Destiny to expand its rule “from sea to shining sea,” conquered the northern half of Mexico, first seizing Tejas (Texas) in 1836 and then California, Arizona, Nuevo Mexico, Colorado and more in the war of 1846-48. These wars, particularly for Texas, were largely to extend slavery into new territories. The ruling class quickly abrogated the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which promised to respect the rights of the inhabitants to their land and language. Thus the Southwest (called by some Aztlan) became an oppressed Chicano nation within the U.S. borders. As family members and others crossed the “falsa frontera” (the phony border) from Mexico, this area became a Chicano/Mexicano nation.

With the transformation of U.S. capitalism from “free competition” to monopoly capitalism, the ruling class continued its expansion. It occupied Alaska, which it purchased from tsarist Russia in 1867, and then occupied Hawai’i and overthrew its monarchy in 1893, adding two more territories to its list of oppressed nations. Hawaii, first treated as a Del Monte pineapple plantation, has now largely become a tourist destination, with many native Hawaiians forced into the low-paid “hospitality” industry.

In one of the first inter-imperialist wars, the Spanish-American War of 1898, the U.S. monopoly capitalist ruling class took over the former Spanish colonies. Cuba became a Protectorate and only gained genuine independence with the victory of the revolution of 1959. The Philippines gained formal independence in 1946 but remains a neo-colony of the U.S. Puerto Rico, Guam and Samoa remain open colonies of the U.S., as do the U.S. Virgin Islands, which the U.S. purchased from Denmark in 1917.

All these territories remain oppressed nations under the rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class. We must also recognize the national oppression of immigrant workers, mostly from Latin America, Asia and Africa but also from some areas of Europe (particularly Eastern Europe), who form a source of cheap labor for the capitalists.

Thus the U.S. has developed into a multinational state with a long history of national oppression. Unfortunately, this has led some whites (Anglo-Americans), including white workers, to develop attitudes of white chauvinism towards their class brothers and sisters. This has at times led to “race riots” and acts of individual terror of whites against blacks, not just in the far-off past, but in the Civil Rights movement in the South, in the struggle against racist attacks such as in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn in 1991 and the murder of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida in 2012.

Let us be clear. These attitudes of white chauvinism, besides deepening the oppression of our brothers and sisters from the oppressed nationalities, are against the class interests of the white workers. To take one simple example, the South and particularly the Black Belt has historically been and still is today the region with the lowest wages and least rates of unionization (“right to work” for less) for both blacks and whites. There is of course some reactionary nationalism among blacks and people of other oppressed nationalities, but this is overwhelmingly a response to the racist attitudes of some whites, and it is fanned by both the black and white bourgeoisie.

It is the special responsibility of white workers to take up the fight against white supremacy, and to join with their black brothers and sisters against the special oppression of black people (such as against police violence, discrimination in all forms, etc.). We also recognize the historic leading role that black workers have
played in the class struggle. Moreover, all workers must take up the call to organize (unionize) the South.

The CPUSA in its revolutionary days and under the influence of the international communist movement in the Comintern, took up the fight for the right to self-determination of the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt South. They connected this with the day-to-day struggles, whether it was for the defense of the Scottsboro youths, the demonstrations of black and white workers for unemployment insurance (for which black communist leader Angelo Herndon was sentenced to several years in prison), and for organizing industrial workers into integrated unions.

In the January 1944 issue of *The Communist*, the revisionist Browder stated that “the Negro people in the United States have found it possible to make their decision once and for all. Their decision is for their complete integration into the American nation as a whole, and not for separation.” Although the position on self-determination was officially revived, together with the CPUSA itself, at the end of the war, it was merely given lip-service (though some revolutionary members of the party, including Claudia Jones and Harry Haywood, fought for the demand to be taken seriously); it was finally dropped at the 1957 CP conference (after Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin).

There is no doubt that conditions today are quite different from those of the 1930s. For one, there is practically no sharecropping in the South, and farming as a whole has shrunk there as well as in the rest of the country. However, this is not different from the situation in many of the dependent countries, particularly in Latin America, including the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico, where the majority of peasants have moved into the big cities and many have migrated to the U.S. Maybe most importantly, many blacks and members of other oppressed nationalities have become workers in the major cities of the country. But even here, they generally have the lowest pay and the hardest jobs. Thus blacks and members of other oppressed nationalities now form a large section of the working class, and an even larger share of the trade union movement. It is quite possible that the criminal rule of U.S. imperialism will be brought to an end by the united struggle of the multinational ruling class, and we must do everything possible to bring this about. But we cannot exclude the possibility that the struggle may break out first in the Black Belt South, or in the Chicano/Mexicano region of the Southwest, among the native peoples on the reservations, or among native Hawaiians or Alaskans. (Here we are not discussing the open colonies of Puerto Rico and others, whose struggle is for independence and socialism, which we must support.) Thus, it would be totally incorrect to ignore the right to self-determination for the oppressed nations within the U.S. borders. We must also connect this to the day-to-day struggles, such as against police brutality, against mass incarceration, for higher wages, etc.

There are some who want to deny any special demands for people of oppressed nationalities, by saying “we are all oppressed.” All workers are exploited under capitalism, but they do not all suffer from national oppression. As a simple example, white workers have been shot and killed by police, but because they were workers, not because they were white. Moreover, these special demands are in the interest of the whole working class, black as well as white, since they will help lead to the unity of the whole multinational working class.

**Advertisement**

**This Land is Their Land:**
A Revolutionary Working People's History of the United States


John Dennie, Presente!

On February 8 of this year, Comrade John Dennie died of pulmonary fibrosis at age 77.

John Dennie was a fighter for the working class, but only came to Marxism-Leninism in the last years of his life. He was both a revolutionary activist and a consistent practical worker. Although he only joined a party briefly (PCUSA), he was what would have been called in the Soviet Union a “non-Party Bolshevik.”

John was a postal worker for much of his working life, spending many years in the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) Local 300. He pointed out many times that Lenin stated that the post office would become an example of the socialist economic system once the capitalists were overthrown (see The State and Revolution, Chapter III, Section 3). When the government made an attempt to privatize the post office by allowing Staples and other companies to take over postal duties, he joined with members and retirees of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) in organizing a successful boycott of Staples stores throughout New York City. He also attempted a citizen’s arrest of Patrick Donahue, the Postmaster General, for delay of mail through the privatization scheme, which got him banned from Donahue’s office for life.

John was also active in the fight for justice for Eric Garner, the Staten Island man who was choked to death in 2014 by NYPD cop Daniel Pantaleo (with many other cops looking on) while Garner called out “I can’t breathe!” One of the speakers at John’s memorial was Garner’s five-year old daughter Legacy.

One of John’s last activities was to run as Green Party candidate for the State Assembly in his district in Staten Island. His campaign had two major themes. One was calling for repeal of Section 210 of the New York Taylor Law, which makes it illegal for public employees to strike. The other was calling for making public the minutes of the grand jury proceedings that refused to indict Pantaleo. Although he had to stop campaigning because of his health, he got over 4% of the vote.

John will be sorely missed by his family, friends and comrades.

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1 There is no doubt that this is a contradiction, as one cannot be a real communist without being a member of a party, but life is full of such contradictions.
Venezuelan Workers Mobilize to Defend Their Country
U.S. Supports Wealthy Few Who Want to Destroy Gains
By Joseph Rosen

Venezuelan workers, peasants, women, Afro-Venezuelans and Indigenous people are demonstrating and arming themselves to stop an attempted U.S./CIA coup. Over the past few weeks, hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have poured into the streets to rally against U.S. imperialist aggression, in defense of their homeland and in support of their government. On February 27, thousands commemorated the 30th anniversary of the mass uprising called El Caracazo. Diosdado Cabello, president of the National Constituent Assembly, addressed the assembled masses: “Thirty years ago, the Venezuelan people made their voices heard by taking to the streets. They demanded freedom. They called for imperialism and neoliberalism to stop running over them. To the imperialist powers, I say: I don't know who you'll have to rule over Venezuela in the event that your coup succeeds because you will face Venezuelans protesting and fighting back every day in the streets.”

150 Cities Demonstrate Against U.S. Attacks on Venezuela

People across the world are taking to the streets to call for an end to the U.S. economic war on Venezuela and to defend its people's right to determine their own national destiny. On February 23, people rallied in at least 150 cities to reject the lies and slanders of the capitalist-owned media and to oppose another disastrous war for oil profits. The cries of the millions of Iraqis and Libyans have not gone unheard; around the world, people recognize that these countries were condemned to U.S. war because their governments, like Venezuela's, committed no crime worse than to try to use their oil wealth for their own national development.

And the world will never forget the crimes of Trump's henchmen: National Security Advisor John Bolton's lies have cost hundreds of thousands of lives in Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Palestine, while U.S. special envoy to Venezuela Elliot Abrams helped to arm and train the right-wing death squads responsible for the murder of thousands of Guatemalan, Nicaraguan, and Salvadoran men, women, and children.


Members of the National Bolivarian Militia, a reserve defense force of 1.6 million civilian volunteers.

Venezuelan workers have stepped up to the challenge posed by the anti-humanitarian U.S. sanctions by increasing their participation in the Local Production and Supply Committees which distribute government-subsidized food to about six million families every 15 days. Through this program, the Venezuelan government facilitates distribution of about 50,000 tons of food per month. By contrast the phony U.S. 'humanitarian aid' package that was the focus of the dangerous media stunt at the border amounts to only 60 tons of "food."

As it happens, that's nearly the size of the aid package that Bush turned away when the Venezuelan government attempted to deliver aid to New Orleanians after Katrina. The Venezuelan people understand perfectly well that the same U.S. government that is attempting to strangle them by economic blockade has no interest in relieving their suffering with supposed shipments of food. The "aid" ploy was only designed to break the territorial sovereignty of Venezuela so that U.S. and Colombian arms and military personnel could be brought in.

Venezuela Will Not Bend to U.S.

The attempted U.S./CIA coup has failed, and yet the right-wing Venezuelan opposition continue to clamor for war. More than 80% of Venezuelans oppose a U.S. military intervention regardless of their stance on the government. The fact that the would-be puppet Juan Guaidó would risk the lives of thousands of his fellow Venezuelans dearly demonstrates that he's merely a pawn of the Pentagon with no concern for his people.

The government of Maduro has the loyalty of the
armed forces, which include 1.6 million Venezuelans who are trained by the government to head up citizen militias. These armed workers and peasants have an enormous stake in the defense of their country and the gains on power they’ve made in the twenty years since the beginning of the Bolivarian Revolution. Describing the Venezuelan people’s will to win, Maduro has invoked the heroic example of the Vietnamese people who fought to defeat the U.S.

A U.S. war would be extremely costly. The Venezuelan people are willing to accept the ultimate cost to defend their freedom from imperialist domination. Workers in the U.S. will also pay if Trump and his gang make war. We can’t afford another rich man’s war. For all the misery that another war would bring, we certainly have nothing to gain. But we have the world to win when we realize that like our sisters and brothers in Venezuela, we have the power to stand up to the gangsters who think that their tanks and their bombs entitle them to the wealth that we create.

**Hands Off Venezuela!**

**End the U.S. Sanctions Now!**

**WHAT HAVE WORKERS WON THROUGH THE BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION?**

- As of 2016, the Venezuelan government allocated 73 percent of its budget to social programs. In contrast, the U.S. spends 27 times more on its war budget than on housing subsidies.
- More than 44,000 communal councils throughout the country decide for themselves—democratically—how to spend their tax revenue.
- Education is now free from daycare to university. Venezuela is fifth in the world in the percentage of the population attending university. Illiteracy has been nearly eradicated while as late as the 1990’s, it measured at about 80%.
- The Gran Misión de la Vivienda (Great Housing Mission) has built over 26 million homes for low income Venezuelans since 2011. In the United States, this would be equivalent to increasing low income housing by 37 million units, given the size of the population and average household.
- According to a report by the United Nations in 2018—even as Venezuela was enduring harsh economic sanctions imposed by the United States—the country had a higher ranking for human development than the majority of the member states of the right-wing Lima Group such as Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, etc. Women are guaranteed maternity leave and breastfeeding rights by law.
- Article 88 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela recognizes that housework generates value and wealth, and that social security should be granted to homemakers.

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What Does the Situation in Venezuela Demand from Revolutionaries?

The people of Venezuela have been subjected to an attack that is expressed in different ways and with different tactics in order to undermine their ability to fight. The imperialist hawks know that this is a people that resists and fights from different political, organizational and economic trenches. It has largely identified its main enemy, which is the US and the EU against whom it must direct the central blows, avoiding the distractions that the vacillating petty bourgeoisie and sectors of the bourgeoisie try to impose. They try to focus the central attention on other phenomena, to diminish the willingness to fight necessary at this moment.

The consequences of the imperialist aggression led by the US, with the support of its EU allies as well as some lackey governments in Latin America, particularly Brazil and Colombia, have been progressively accentuated. This is shown in the increase in hardships that the exploited and oppressed must suffer day by day. They are the center of the attack of the speculators, the mercenaries of the paramilitary bands financed by the right. Added to this is the ineffectiveness of government institutions that are responsible for price control, guaranteeing public services and food supply, which have been deteriorating in an accelerated manner to the detriment of a significant part of the population.

It is clear that one cannot overcome the current situation through the pro-imperialist puppets of the opposition; to overcome the current situation requires among other things increasing production, which can be guaranteed precisely by those who produce, that is, the workers and peasants. It is also necessary to combat acts of corruption in the chains of marketing, distribution and consumption. But this also requires the organizational strengthening of the revolutionary popular movement, which must continue to work intensively to consolidate the agreements and alliance between men and women who express their firm will to face the imperialist aggression to the end. For this it is necessary in turn that the meeting spaces for debate, analysis of the situation and concrete proposals be put forward in a coordinated manner, consistent and in unison can be multiplied and accelerated.

We are in a race against time in complex circumstances. This in turn requires a militant discipline, conscious that it is an instrument for our skills as anti-imperialist and anti-fascist men and women. The enemy will multiply its actions, through psychological warfare, sabotage, sharpening the economic siege and its attempt to materialize a military intervention supported by mercenary armies of the region.

All this shows the hypocrisy of the sectors of the national and international right wing that try to use the difficult situations that the Venezuelan people are experiencing in their favor and that they have helped to create to an important degree.

Let us not be confused by the message that the imperialist propaganda machinery spreads by its media; the solution to the current situation will take place when the exploited and oppressed majority takes in their hands the development of the historical task that corresponds to production, the anti-imperialist struggle, that is, the economic and political leadership of the country. History shows that only the willingness to fight, strength in organization and clarity in political objectives in the development of the class struggle can mean the difference between catastrophe or the possibility of victory against capitalist misery.

In addition to our willingness to fight, it is important to consolidate international revolutionary support as an expression of proletarian internationalism. The peoples of the world must be mobilized, so that there can be no respite from the imperialist enemy anywhere, that there be a willingness to fight to the end, that the victory over the imperialist armies is possible with the correct revolutionary political leadership.
El pueblo de Venezuela ha sido sometido a un ataque que se expresa en diferentes formas y con diferentes tácticas con el fin de doblegar su capacidad de combate. Sabe los halcones imperialistas que este es un pueblo que resiste y lucha desde diferentes trincheras políticas, organizativas y económicas, que en gran medida ha identificado a su enemigo principal que no es otro que los EE.UU y la UE en contra de quienes debe dirigir los golpes centrales evitando las distracciones que intentan imponer la pequeña burguesía vacilante, sectores de la burguesía quienes intentan ubicar la atención central en otros fenómenos, tratando de disminuir la disposición de lucha y combate necesaria para estos momentos.

Las consecuencias de la agresión imperialista encauzada por los EE.UU y con apoyo de sus aliados de la UE además de algunos gobiernos lacayos de América Latina entre los que destacan Brasil, Colombia se han venido acentuando progresivamente, manifestándose esto en el aumento de las penurias que día a día debe sufrir los explotados y oprimidos que son el centro del ataque de los especuladores, de los mercenarios de las bandas paramilitares financiadas por la derecha. A esto se suma la ineficacia de las instituciones gubernamentales que le corresponde el control de precios, garantizar los servicios públicos, abastecimiento de alimentos elementos que se han venido deteriorando de manera acelerada en detrimento de importante parte de la población.

Es claro que para superar la actual situación no se hará a través de las marionetas pro imperialista de la oposición, para superar la actual situación se requiere entre otras cosas elevar la producción, lo que puede ser garantizado precisamente por quienes producen, es decir los obreros y campesinos. Así mismo es necesario el combate a los actos de corrupción en las cadenas de comercialización, distribución y consumo. Pero para esto también se hace necesario el fortalecimiento organizativo del movimiento popular revolucionario, el cual debe seguir trabajando de manera intensa por consolidar los acuerdos y alianza entre los hombres y mujeres que expresan su firme voluntad de enfrentar hasta las últimas consecuencias la agresión imperialista. Para esto es necesario a su vez que los espacios de encuentro para el debate, análisis de la situación y concreción de propuestas que sean impulsadas de manera coordinada, consecuente y al unísono puedan ser multiplicados y acelerados.

Estamos en una carrera contra el tiempo lo cual nos imponen una circunstancias complejas, que a su vez requiere de una disciplina militante, consciente que sea instrumento para la cualificación nuestra como hombres y mujeres anti imperialistas y anti fascistas. El enemigo multiplicara sus acciones, expresadas en guerra psicológica, en sabotajes, agudización del cerco económico y en su intento de concretar una intervención militar apoyados en ejércitos mercenarios de la región.

Todo esto revela la hipocresía de los sectores de la derecha nacional e internacional que tratan de utilizar en su favor las difíciles situaciones que vive el pueblo venezolano y que ellos han contribuido a crear en importante medida.

No nos dejemos confundir por el mensaje que la maquinaria de propaganda imperialista difunde por sus medios, la solución a la actual situación pasa porque las mayorías explotadas y oprimidas tomen en sus manos el desarrollo de la tarea histórica que corresponde en la producción, en la lucha anti imperialista, es decir en la dirección económica y política del país. La historia demuestra que solo la disposición de combate, fortaleza en la organización y la claridad en los objetivos políticos en el desarrollo de la lucha de clases pueden significar la diferencia entre la catástrofe o la posibilidad de triunfo contra la miseria capitalista.

Además de nuestra disposición para el combate es importante consolidar el apoyo internacional revolucionario como expresión del internacionalismo proletario; que los pueblos del mundo se movilicen, que no deje respiro al enemigo imperialista en ningún lugar, que haya disposición de lucha hasta las últimas consecuencias, consistentes que la victoria sobre los ejércitos imperialistas es posible con la acertada dirección política revolucionaria.
La sangre que sigue derramándose

¿Qué haremos con un Gobierno que está más preocupado por un país vecino que por sus propios problemas?

Desde la posesión de Duque la cifra asciende a más de 200 líderes asesinados.

De la revista Trabajadores, órgano del Partido Comunista de Miami, a publicarse próximamente. Está en Facebook en: https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Politician/Partido-Comunista-de-Miami-PCM-112237788920879/

Han transcurrido pocos días del nuevo año y, el común denominador, sigue siendo el asesinato de líderes sociales, nuestros héroes de la patria siguen pagando las consecuencias de un pecado muy humano, luchar por la justicia social de las comunidades, de los animales, del medio ambiente y de todo sector desfavorecido por los conflictos internos, conflictos que nos otorgan el deshonroso primer lugar en cuanto a desplazamiento interno a nivel global.

Los líderes sociales siguen muriendo por nosotros, por nuestros derechos, por las luchas que muchos no están dispuestos a dar por indiferencia o miedo, los héroes no empuñan armas, los héroes empuñan sueños.

La indiferencia de los medios y el Gobierno acrecientan un problema que, literalmente, es de vida o muerte para quienes están justamente convencidos de que este país se cambia con acciones. Al momento de escribir esta columna, en el inicio de año, ya van cuatro líderes sociales asesinados, un promedio devastador que nos llena de impotencia al saber que murieron por soñar una Colombia mejor para nosotros, lo peor, en las mismas zonas en las cuales se han registrado los más altos índices de muertes, claramente estas últimas se podían evitar si el Estado hiciera presencia social y no armada, entiéndase por
presencia social a programas agrícolas, culturales y de educación que permitan subsanar la pobreza e inestabilidad económica, que en últimas, es factor determinante para que algunos ciudadanos tomen la decisión de integrar grupos armados ilegales empuñando las armas contra sus comunidades en zonas como Cauca, Antioquia, Valle del Cauca, Meta, Córdoba, etc.

Pero, ¿Quiénes los están matando?, Las denuncias recibidas por parte de las organizaciones de derechos humanos señalan no solo a grupos como Clan del golfo, ELN y disidencias, sino, a la fuerza pública y terrorista, estas prácticas, según denuncias, van desde sospechosamente hacer poco y nada luego de los asesinatos, ya sea la huida de sicarios y las negligentes investigaciones en las cuales las capturas de los autores materiales o intelectuales son casi nulas, otra denuncia es la utilización de panfletos amenazantes bajo nombres alternos como “Águilas Negras” o “Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia”, esta última organización aclaró en un comunicado oficial, no estar tras el asesinato de líderes sociales, entonces, ¿Quién las hizo?, un gran manto de duda se teje cuando ya conocemos la capacidad asesina del Estado evidenciada en criminales hechos históricos, por ejemplo, masacres conjuntas con las AUC, las bananeras y, últimamente, los falsos positivos.

¿Qué haremos con un Gobierno que está más preocupado por un país vecino que por sus propios problemas?

Este Gobierno no pinta nada bien para líderes y lideresas, desde la posesión de Iván Duque la cifra asciende a más de 200 personas desde el 7 de Agosto, día en el que oficialmente tomó las “riendas” del país, tal y como en la época comprendida entre 2002 y 2010, comandada por Álvaro Uribe, los criminales dentro del Estado y fuera de él se sienten tranquilos, manejan este país como su establo personal en el cual aplica la frase “quien no esté conmigo está en contra mía” y bajo ese proverbio criollo y parquito se amparan para retirar de su camino a quienes luchan por usted, por ellos, por mí.

Francisco Romero Escobar
Ingeniero agrónomo de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, miembro del PROES (Proceso de Organización Estudiantil)
Un problema singular es la opinión del Che respecto a Stalin. Si bien no puede ser calificado como un estalinista militante, tiene un criterio libre, no alienado ni influido agresivamente como casi todos los "comunistas" oficiales y sus seguidores intelectuales modernos, en torno a la figura y la acción de José Stalin. En una de sus estancias en la URSS, puso un ramo de flores en la tumba de Stalin, ante el asombro y el rechazo del embajador cubano Faure Chamón que se escandalizó por la audacia del Che de rendir homenaje al líder bolchevique, anatemizado por las autoridades soviéticas de la época.

Pero este episodio que puede reputarse como anecdótico, se completa con el hecho de que Che cita frecuentemente a Stalin como autoridad en lo que se refiere a la economía de transición. Finalmente y para que no quepa la menor duda y cierren la boca todos los anti-estalinistas y admiradores interesados del Che, transcribimos íntegramente (Ver capítulo IV) una última carta escrita por el Che a Armando Hart Dávalos desde Tanzania en la que califica a Stalin como "un gran marxista" subrayado, por si acaso. De otro lado el Che califica a Trotski y Jruschov como revisionistas, con toda claridad para que no quepa tampoco duda alguna.

«Aquí sería necesario publicar las obras completas de Marx y Engels, Lenin, Stalin y otros grandes marxistas...»

Finalmente en este capítulo hemos conocido este singular párrafo del Che, en el cual se demuestra definitivamente y ya no cabe duda alguna sobre el criterio ampliamente positivo del héroe latinoamericano sobre Stalin.

«En los llamados errores de Stalin está la diferencia entre una actitud revolucionaria y una actitud revisionista. Se debe ver a Stalin en el contexto histórico en el que se desarrolló, no se debe ver como una especie de bruto, sino que se le debe apreciar en ese contexto histórico particular... Yo he llegado al comunismo por papá Stalin y nadie puede decirme que no lea su obra. Lo he leído aún cuando era considerado muy malo leerlo, pero ese era otro tiempo. Y como soy una persona no demasiado brillante y además testaruda continuaré leyéndolo...»

Tenemos, finalmente otra importante opinión del Che respecto a Stalin durante su estancia en la Guatemala de Arbenz:

"He jurado ante una estampa del viejo y llorado camarada Stalin no descansar hasta ver aniquilados estos pulpos capitalistas. En Guatemala me perfeccionaré para ser un revolucionario auténtico..."

Estas consideraciones tienen que ver mucho con la lealtad que debemos observar todos con el auténtico y verdadero pensamiento revolucionario de Che y no con las versiones de sujetos trotskistas como un Néstor Kohan de la Argentina que de todos modos intentan alterar la esencia del pensamiento revolucionario de Che. (Ver Rebelión.org.)

De modo que estas constataciones en torno a su auténtico pensamiento no pueden ser ocultadas y adulte-radas por algunos «guevaristas» de clara tendencia trotskista, revisionista y reaccionaria, que a fuerza de tergiversaciones pretenden apoderarse de su herencia para fines que no fueron los del Che, un marxista-leninista convencido y admirador ferviente de Stalin y Mao Tse-tung.
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