

## THE PRESENT ORGANIZATIONAL TASKS OF THE PRIMACY OF THEORY FORCES

Submitted by the Chicago PoT Study Group to the Regional Conference of PoT Forces, New York City, June 12-13, 1982

### I. The Current Situation

"Theoretical Review" has been publishing for four years now, and under its influence the "primacy of theory" forces have begun to grow and consolidate themselves organizationally. We are, however, still a very thinly spread collection of collectives, study groups, and individual revolutionaries, understanding the importance of rescuing Marxism-Leninism from the abyss of Stalinism but not yet able to work systematically to transform the U.S. communist movement. Our numbers are very small, and our political unity has yet to be struggled through over even such basic questions as the class nature of the Soviet social formation. With the publication of "Communist Correspondence" we have started to exchange experiences and views on a national scale, but we are not yet interacting in a concerted way with other revolutionaries who might be won over to our standpoint regarding the crisis of Marxism and the Stalinian Deviation (except in a passive way, through publication of TR). Our mass practice is rudimentary and spontaneous, and we have no national organizational means to bring into our ranks advanced workers and other potential revolutionaries who would be attracted to our political positions - if we had any well-defined ones. On the whole, our contributions to Marxist-Leninist theory and to analysis of the current conjuncture are hardly systematic (although important advances have been made), and cadre training is not well developed.

### II. What We Need

What we need is a national revolutionary organization, organized under the principles of democratic centralism, to first carry out two main tasks:

- A. Rescue Marxism-Leninism from the degeneration which it has suffered at the hands of the Stalinists and other revisionists, developing it for application to qualitatively new situations.
- B. Analyze the current conjuncture in the U.S. and in the world, as well as sum up the history of the international communist movement, in order to develop an appropriate revolutionary strategy to guide our work; here, two levels of abstraction are required, concerning (1) contradictions of the world capitalist system, and (2) current social movements, especially in the U.S.

Having made substantial progress in accomplishing these two main tasks, through the national revolutionary organization we must increasingly do the following:

- C. Coordinate mass practice on a national scale, so that we are able to begin to intervene in mass struggles in a concerted way.
- D. Attract and integrate politically advanced workers and other potential revolutionaries into our ranks, on the basis of the positions which we espouse in the course of participating in mass struggles against various aspects of capitalist oppression.
- E. Propagate and debate our positions systematically, through study groups, educational forums, and our publications, also in order to draw potential revolutionaries into our organization.
- F. Systematically raise the theoretical level of our members, so that everyone is able to contribute to the decision-making and implementation processes of our organization, rather than blindly following the opinions and directives of the organization's leaders.
- G. Relate in a formal way to other political organizations, both revolutionary and reformist, in order to build tactical alliances as necessary to advance our own goals.

H. Ensure the security of our forces against attacks by the State and other counterrevolutionary forces.

### III. How To Get There

We cannot form immediately the national revolutionary organization which we need: our political unity, necessary to guide mass practice, will take a considerable amount of time to struggle through, and we should also try to involve other revolutionaries in the process of forming this national organization. What we propose, for consideration by the current regional conference of PoT forces, is the calling of a national conference of PoT forces in the fall. The purpose of the national conference will be:

- A. To achieve the basic political unity necessary to engage the PoT forces in subsequent systematic struggle to prepare for a second national conference, perhaps one year hence, this time to form the national revolutionary organization. We have appended to this paper a proposed basis of unity for the PoT forces during the interim period between the two national conferences.
- B. To set up a national Conference Committee as the organizational mechanism required to coordinate and sum up this struggle, in preparation for the second national conference. The Conference Committee would publish an internal bulletin for the PoT forces during the period between the two national conferences.
- C. To determine ways to draw new revolutionaries into our ranks on the basis of our interim basis of unity, and to engage them in the process of preparing for the second national conference. For example, the Conference Committee would represent the PoT forces formally during the interim period, and it might work with other revolutionary organizations to publish jointly a journal discussing the "crisis of Marxism". Local PoT groups should also hold study groups on particular topics (e.g., on the current conjuncture), open to non-PoT people, for the primary purpose of learning about the subject of study, and with the aim of introducing potential members to our standpoint.
- D. To set specific guidelines for the work of the Conference Committee and of the various local PoT forces, in preparing for the second national conference.

During the interim period between the two national conferences, we see the PoT forces being involved in three publications: "Theoretical Review", still published independently by the Tucson Marxist-Leninist Collective; an internal bulletin to prepare for the second national conference, published by the Conference Committee and circulated only among persons accepting our interim basis of unity; and some sort of journal debating political and theoretical questions of the "crisis of Marxism", open to both PoT and non-PoT forces. The last publication would hopefully be published jointly with non-PoT forces, and would achieve wide circulation within the anti-revisionist movement, for we must carry on debate and struggle within the movement as widely as possible. Thus we see "Communist Correspondence" as being greatly expanded and divided into two parts, one for internal organizational matters and the other for movement-wide debate and struggle over political and theoretical questions.

### IV. Implementation

We propose that the present regional conference of PoT forces do the following:

- A. Ask the Boston Political Collective (Marxist-Leninist), upon consultation with other PoT forces, to organize the first national conference in the fall, preferably on a long weekend such as Labor Day or Thanksgiving Weekend. We call upon the BPC(M-L) to carry out this task because of its political and organizational maturity and because it has already been playing an active role in organizing the PoT forces on a national scale, by publishing "Communist Correspondence".

- B. Further ask the BPC(M-L) to make sure that "Communist Correspondence" actively helps to prepare the PoT forces for the first national conference, by seeking out and publishing articles relevant to this preparation.
- C. Draw up a position paper on the present organizational tasks of the PoT forces, for use in calling for the first national conference. We offer the first three sections of our current paper as the draft for this position paper.
- D. Draw up another position paper on the interim basis of unity which the first national conference ought to adopt, in order to present to the PoT forces a concrete proposal to be struggled over in preparation for the national conference. We offer the appendix of our current paper as the draft for this second position paper.

#### APPENDIX: Interim Basis of Unity

##### I. Leninism. As Marxist-Leninists, we uphold the basic tenets of Leninism:

- A. Communism can be attained only through the seizure of political power by the working class, led by its vanguard Communist Party. The vanguard Party, composed of the most politically advanced revolutionaries drawn from the working class, from the revolutionary intelligentsia, and from other progressive classes and class strata, must be organized under the principles of democratic centralism: democratic decision-making after full, open discussion; and unity of action to implement decisions taken collectively.
- B. Communism cannot be attained immediately upon the political overthrow of capitalism, but only after the lengthy transition period of socialism. Socialism is a period of intense class struggle during which the future direction of the social formation - on to communism or a reversion back to exploitative class society - is yet unresolved. This class struggle occurs throughout all levels of society: economic, political, ideological, in interpersonal relationships, in all the ways that people live their daily lives. Politically, the working class organizes the Dictatorship of the Proletariat to suppress, by whatever means necessary, the inevitable struggle of the defeated bourgeoisie to regain its control over society.
- C. During the socialist transition period, the key task of the working class, led by its vanguard Party, is to systematically transform the relations of production from those of the capitalist mode of production to those of the communist mode. This will mean that, increasingly, the working class will have direct control over the process of production. Indeed, while the vanguard Party will continue to play the crucial role in leading the struggles of the working class to transform society, increasingly as the working class attains political maturity and hegemony over society it will take over direct control of all aspects of society.
- D. Both in the course of carrying out a socialist revolution and throughout the socialist transition period, the strategy of the working class must be one of alliance with other progressive classes and class strata. Such an alliance must be real, based on the satisfaction of those interests of members of the other classes which are not in conflict with the current needs of the socialist period. Under socialism, the working class dominates the alliance through its vast economic power and through its political control of society, and it follows the course of stepwise absorbing all other progressive classes and class strata into itself. But this transformation of the allies of the working class must be carried out in a non-coercive way, with the working class leading members of other classes, through example and persuasion, to voluntarily take up collective working conditions.

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II. Stalinism. Stalinism - the practice and theory of much of the international communist movement since the rise of the Stalin group in the Soviet Union - constitutes a fundamental departure from Marxism-Leninism. The Stalinists have replaced democratic centralism with bureaucratic centralism; the leading role of the working class in socialist society, with the dictatorship of the Party over the working class; the key necessity of class struggle to transform the relations of production and the whole superstructure of society, with reliance on the development of the productive forces to advance toward communism ("the theory of the productive forces"); the alliance between the working class and other progressive classes, with the imposition of brutal coercive measures upon other progressive classes. In the realm of theory, the Stalinists have replaced critical scientific investigation of social phenomena with the dogmatic application of general formulas, in order to justify whatever seems to be the thing to do at the time. Thus the Stalinists of various shades have not only made a mockery of the Leninist vanguard party, but their revisionism in the realm of theory has often led them to oppose the interests of the working class (such as by supporting the recent suppression of the Polish workers' movement, in order to support "socialism as it actually exists"). The communist movement, long dominated by the revisionism of the Stalinian Deviation, will never be able to lead the working class in successful socialist revolution and attainment of communism, until this degeneration of Marxism-Leninism is expunged from our midst.

III. Party-Building. Currently, the primary task of communists in the United States is to build a national revolutionary organization to systematically reconstruct Marxism-Leninism from the degeneration it has suffered at the hands of the Stalinists and other revisionists, to analyze the current conjuncture in the U.S. and in the world, and to begin to carry out mass practice in a nationally coordinated way. This national organization will necessarily operate under the principles of democratic centralism, and it will place major emphasis on the theoretical development of its members. Its members will involve themselves in and seek to give leadership to the struggles of the masses (especially the working class) against various aspects of capitalist oppression. Through its involvement in mass struggles, and also through educational activities such as publications, study groups, and topical forums, the national revolutionary organization will bring into its ranks politically advanced workers and other potential revolutionaries. The ultimate goal of the national revolutionary organization is to bring about the formation of a vanguard Communist Party to lead the working class and its allies in the destruction of capitalism and in the socialist transformation of society to communism.