

"WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, UNITE!!"

WORKERS' PRESS

THE POLITICAL ORGAN OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST COLLECTIVE

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WHAT IS MARXISM

Marxism is the science of the working class revolution. It is a science because it explains the general laws of development of human society; it is the science of the working class revolution because it uncovers the laws of capitalist society and shows why and how the proletariat (working class) is the social class destined to overthrow capitalism and abolish exploitation of man by man. Marxism declares relentless war on wage-slavery; it takes a stand with the proletariat for revolution! In short, it gives answers to the main questions that workers are asking: why is there exploitation and oppression and what can be done to end it? Leninism is a further continuation and development of Marxism under the conditions of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism.

Marxism takes its name from Karl Marx (1818-1883) who, together with Frederick Engels (1820-1895), set about investigating the development of human society from ancient times to the present. They concluded that changes in society, like changes in nature, don't happen accidentally, but follow certain laws. This in turn meant that history, like nature, could be studied scientifically -- that is, studied according to general laws based on actual experience.

Marx and Engels went on to apply these laws to the society they lived in. They laid bare the general laws governing capitalism, the economic system under which the bourgeois class owns and controls the factories, mills, mines, and land, while the proletariat owns nothing but its labour-power, or capacity to work, which it is forced to sell in order to survive. Marx showed the working class the source of its exploitation -- that the industrial worker, in labouring for the capitalist, spends part of the day covering the cost of maintaining himself and his family (wages) and the rest of the day working for nothing, creating surplus value, the source of wealth of the capitalist class. And Marx concluded that modern society was inevitably moving towards communist, classless society, free from exploitation, and that the modern proletariat, concentrated in large-scale production -- the "nerve center" of capitalist society -- was the instrument for the overthrow of the bourgeois state.

No theory is complete without constantly testing its truth in actual practice. Marx and Engels did not develop the principles of scientific socialism in isolation from the class struggles that were taking place in their lifetimes. Both were right in the thick of events, fighting alongside the working class in the European revolutions of 1848 and giving guidance to the establishment of the Paris Commune of 1871 where workers, for the first time, seized state power from the bourgeoisie. In 1917 the Russian proletariat, under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin and the Bolshevik Party, seized state power from the ruling bourgeois class and set up the dictatorship of the proletariat, the state organized in the interests of working and oppressed people.

It is this unity of theory and practice that makes Marxism-Leninism such a powerful weapon in the hands of the proletariat in its class struggle against the bourgeoisie. Marxism-Leninism stands for action based on the experience of the working class movement, action with the aim of seizing state power from the bourgeoisie and leading the working class and all oppressed peoples in establishing their dictatorship over the exploiters!

MINERS WALK OUT!

Since the beginning of August, a wildcat strike has spread throughout the coal fields of West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia and Pennsylvania. The strike has shut down over half the coal-producing mines in the United States of North America (USNA) as 70,000 miners refuse to cross picket lines defying court injunctions and

pleas of the United Mine Workers Association (UMWA) leadership. The wildcat was ignited by the firing of the President of a UMWA local in Logan County, West Virginia. He had been leading a militant struggle for the resolution of thousands of grievances filed by the union, principally over unsafe and hazardous conditions in the mines. The slaughter of miners due to unsafe conditions is a well known fact. Since 1969 there have been 800 mine fatalities and tens of thousands of injuries; further, because of the refusal by the coal companies to control the level of deadly dust within the mines, two-thirds of all miners develop the crippling and often fatal black lung disease.

Recently the government dropped charges against the Finlay Coal Co. for criminal violations of the Federal mine safety laws. Thirty-eight miners died in the 1970 collapse of a Finlay mine in Eastern Kentucky. This, along with the injunctions now issued daily by the courts against the miners, signals an all-out attack by the state as a key instrument of class rule in the arsenal of the bourgeoisie.

As the economic crisis deepens throughout the capitalist world, the bourgeoisie seeks to maximize their profits through a ruthless attack on the living standards and working conditions of the proletariat. The halting of production to correct hazardous conditions and the large amount of capital required would cut deeply into the profits of the companies. Their profit levels are now at record highs for this decade -- some companies up 300-400% from last year. In fact in many mines speed-up has begun. As everyone knows, under such conditions speed-ups can only intensify the massacre of miners.

So it's clear why the companies are doing nothing about the grievances. The rank and file correctly sees the wildcats as the only way to force the companies to comply with minimum standards established by the government.

This brings us to the treachery of the so-called reform leadership of the UMWA. Arnold Miller, during contract negotiations in 1974, buckled under to the demands of the companies to drop right to strike and restriction of court injunction clauses. And no wonder, for despite his reform image, Miller is, as Lenin stated, an "agent of the bourgeoisie". He represents a "privileged minority of workers" bribed by the bourgeoisie and sent amongst the working class to be "watch-dogs of capitalism and corrupters of the labor movement". During the current struggle the Miller leadership has been completely exposed. From the beginning Miller has urged miners to return to work. The union leadership has even set up a commission within the union to monitor the wildcats.

The significance of the strike is the revolt by the rank and file miners including leaders of various locals against Miller and his lackeys who, in their election campaign, declared "coal will be mined safely, or not at all!" What reforms Miller did struggle for were really only concessions to the upsurge from below. Now, as the carrot has failed, out comes the stick. The rank and file of the UMWA, in their defiance of the national leadership, has pointed out a valuable lesson for all workers: these hired hands of the bourgeoisie must be isolated and driven from our ranks as we struggle to build unions which genuinely serve the interests of our class.

labor traitors!

There exists in the USNA today a section of the working class that collaborates with the capitalists and betrays the working class movement, national and international. The basis behind this betrayal is the USNA's leading role in oppressing and exploiting whole nations around the world. Lenin states in "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism" that "... monopoly yields superprofits, i.e. a surplus of profits over and above the capitalist profits that are normal and customary all over the world. The capitalists can devote a part (and not a small one, at that!) of these superprofits to bribe their own workers, to create something like an alliance between the workers of the given nation and their capitalists against the other countries."

The USNA bourgeois class has been able, as we can all see, to bribe the whole working class with the incredible superprofits it gains from around the world. The labor "leaders", Meany, Fitzsimmons, Bridges, Hardy, are the most bribed and privileged strata in the whole USNA. George Meany alone makes around \$100,000 per year, comparable to the salary of the largest corporation president. Many of the lower officials of the various unions make between \$20,000 and \$40,000 a year. With whom do they have more in common? The worker who makes between \$6-10,000 or the managers who make \$20-60,000? This similarity extends to their private lives also. They join the same country clubs, live in the same neighborhoods, go to the same parties,

as the ruling class. They may talk like the enemy of the bosses, but in practice they ally themselves with them in every way. Recently in NYC the unions went so far as to lend out to the city government \$5 million out of pension funds! That \$5m that union members will never see again, is like having workers pay themselves with their own money

The trade union leaders have gotten large amounts of the spoils of imperialism for their own members. Plumbers, electricians, craft workers in general, make large wages compared to the unorganized mass of workers. However, the bourgeois labor leaders have colluded with the bourgeoisie in giving a few scraps off the table of imperialism in the form of food stamps, welfare and unemployment insurance to the lower strata of the working class.

But this bribe cannot be maintained forever. USNA imperialism has lost heavily in Southeast Asia, and is steadily losing ground around the rest of the world as the revolutionary movements develop a real force of resistance against their oppression and exploitation. We are beginning to see the cracks in the wall at home, where traditionally secure and privileged sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, such as teachers and government employees, striking around the country. The coal miners wildcat strike is another sign of the growing militancy of the working class. We need a strong, working class organization, a movement where the proletariat wages class war against the bourgeoisie and its followers in the interests of the international working class.



INDEPENDENCE FOR THE BLACK NATION

The most recent clashes in Boston and Louisville raise most sharply the special oppression of the Black people in the USNA. As is well known, Black people number over 22 million, and comprise between 10-12% of the population of the USNA. Nearly half of them still live in the South, and the rest are crammed into big city ghettos. Both within and outside of the South, Blacks are subjected to systematic discrimination, legal lynchings and police terror. As regards schools, Blacks have the poorest facilities; in terms of housing, they are segregated and forced to pay high rents for substandard and slum dwellings. Politically, in many areas, particularly the South, they are still denied the right to vote and hold office. Economically, the Black workers, who make up over 90% of the Black population; suffer super-exploitation: on the average, they are paid two-thirds of the wages of their Anglo counterparts, they are given the hardest and dirtiest jobs, and they are the "last hired and first fired" as the economy goes down.

We are now confronted with the question, what is the basis of the cruel exploitation and oppression of the Black people? We Communists say that the terrible plight of the Black people finds its source in the subjugation of the Black Nation in the Southern USNA. It is our view that there is a Black Nation within the multi-national USNA. You may ask, "what is a nation?" Joseph Stalin, a great revolutionary leader and teacher of the working class, stated that a nation is "an historically developed community of people with a common language, territory, economic life and an historical tradition reflecting itself in a common culture." Any class conscious worker will admit that Black people and other minorities (poor whites, Indians, Mexicans) of the deep south constitute a nation. Because of the harsh repression within the South and better job opportunities in the Eastern, Northern and Western USNA, many Blacks have, since World War I, left their homeland in the Black Belt and emigrated to the big cities where they form a national minority, as in Watts, Chicago, Roxbury, etc.

The monopoly capitalists of the Anglo-American nation in the North super-exploit the peoples of the Black Nation by enforcing lower wages on the workers and a lower standard of living on all the toiling classes -- the small farmers, tenant farmers, small handicraftsmen. The USNA state, with all its military forces and bases in the South, serves to hold the Black Nation in check, preventing it from liberating itself.

As Communists, we declare that it is not in the interests of the Anglo-American section of the working class to maintain the oppression of the Black Nation. Our revolutionary movement will be weakened so long as the Black Nation is held in chains. Therefore, we demand independence for the Black Nation! In the Black Belt area the Black majority must have full governmental control, which means the right

to set up a government and organize armed forces to protect this right. As for the Anglo and other minority peoples of the Black Nation, they will have equal rights as toilers with the Blacks, and in fact more freedom than they enjoyed under the rule of the Anglo capitalist class. For Blacks living outside the Black Nation, we demand full equality.

The demand for independence for the Black Nation may be new to many workers, but it is the only just demand. If the USNA working class wishes to emancipate itself from the exploitation of the capitalist system, it must have a united class free of the divisions between workers. The cruel exploitation and oppression of the Black Nation by the Anglo capitalist class is the basis of that division. Therefore, in the interest of the unity of the working class, this oppressive relation must be done away with. The Black Nation must be freed!

UNEMPLOYMENT :

A FACT OF CAPITALISM

According to government statistics, unemployment in the USNA is up to 8.3%. But as most statistical reports by the government, it is misleading and false. Unemployment is actually much higher because the government figure only counts people collecting unemployment insurance. It excludes:

1. Those whose unemployment benefits ran out
2. Housewives who are looking for work for the first time
3. Those who have given up looking for work
4. Youth who are trying to find work
5. Those seasonally or part-time employed

There will always be unemployment under capitalism -- it is a fact of the capitalist system. The capitalist class always keeps 3-4% of the work force as a reserve army of unemployed. This serves to disunite the working class because it increases competition between workers for jobs, and it has a tendency to keep wages down due to the surplus labour-power available.

What are the causes of high unemployment? The main causes are relative overproduction and runaway shops. Relative overproduction occurs when the amount of commodities (products) produced exceeds the market demand, the purchasing power of the workers. This results from higher productivity of the laborers, most often caused by technical advances in production or by a speed-up of the workers. The capitalist responds to this surplus of commodities by cutting back production (lay offs) and even destroying commodities to keep prices up. And who suffers most? The unemployed workers are deprived of their means of subsistence and those still employed face increased exploitation. The working class is always made to assume the burden of the crises.

Runaway shops is a continual problem facing workers today. The capitalist is constantly trying to increase profits. To do this they must cut the cost of production. This is accomplished most easily by cutting the cost of labour-power, of wages. Moving their factories to areas of the USNA where workers are unorganized or to less developed countries where raw materials and natural resources are plentiful and wages are unbelievably low, is a common occurrence.

The entire working class -- organized and unorganized, employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled, etc. -- must unite against these moves by the capitalist class. If the bourgeoisie is unable to intensify the divisions it has created, if the working class fights to break down the distinctions between themselves, we will be able to organize against the capitalist class, resist the continual attacks on us, and eventually overthrow them. Then we will build a socialist society where the masses of people exercise leadership and where, for example, unemployment is nonexistent.

GRASP REVOLUTION, PROMOTE PRODUCTION

(This is the first in a series of articles we will publish on life in the People's Republic of China. The writer spent five weeks touring China on a trade union delegation, which was the first to visit the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. This article will discuss factory life in China)

China is a socialist country. Since liberation in 1949, the workers and peasants have held state power under the leadership of the proletariat and their political organization, the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese people are working hard and with much success to bring about the socialist industrialization of their country, and great stress is put on the leading political role of the proletariat

A worker's day begins with a half-hour of political education, where small groups collect at the workplace to study the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung. These writings help the workers to understand more thoroughly the principles of revolution and socialism, to put the theory into practice in order to promote production and build socialism. Workers in China are eager to improve production techniques because in a socialist society it is the masses of people who benefit. How different this is from our society, where a few capitalists accumulate all the profit while the masses of people receive only the bare minimum to survive!

In industry, the working people exercise leadership. In a factory, policy is formulated on the basis of discussions by elected factory leaders and members of the party committees. Revolutionary committees, composed of workers, technicians and cadre (administrators) and elected by the workers, then discuss how to implement the policy so that production will be carried on most efficiently and productively. Every worker is encouraged to participate by making suggestions and criticisms which will improve production. The fullest democracy exists, where decisions are made and carried out collectively.

We will get a better idea of some of the benefits of a socialist society by looking at some of the conditions of work in China. The Chinese people do not pay any taxes. They pay only 3-5% of their wages for housing. Here we pay at least 20% of our wages for taxes and at least 25% for housing. In China medical care is free for the worker and his family. Every factory provides nurseries, kindergartens and schools, as well as canteens for workers who don't want to prepare meals after a hard days work. Upon retirement, Chinese workers receive 70% of their wages until death and if a worker becomes ill and unable to work, 100% of their wage will be provided for the first six months of illness. Trade unions in China genuinely work in the interest of the workers. They see to it that workers are cared for, they organize cultural events, and they serve as schools of communism for workers to study, improve and raise their level of political, educational, cultural and technical knowledge. Trade union leaders are elected in each factory from among the workers, and while membership is voluntary, in practice all workers join. They know that the trade union works for and with them. In China there isn't the distinction between those who think and those who work; leaders and administrators of a factory engage in productive labor. Just imagine your employer working along side of you on an assembly line!

During pregnancy, women workers are given a lighter workload. Fifty-six days off with full pay are granted to women after childbirth, and once they return to work, they can go to the factory nursery twice a day to feed their baby. Women receive equal pay for equal work and are considered as important for the development of society as men.

The proletarian socialist revolution has made all this possible. The lesson for us is to recognize our historical task, organize ourselves into a single fighting force and overthrow our ruling class so that we can realize these same accomplishments by building a society where true democracy for the people becomes a reality

SLIDE SHOW

A slide talk on the writer's trip to China will be presented on September 30 at 7:00 pm at Waden Branch Library, SF, 5075 Third Street. Join us - no charge.

Who We Are

Workers' Press is written and published by the Marxist-Leninist Collective. We are a communist organization based on Marxism-Leninism, the science of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, which is an international struggle of the working class to end exploitation and oppression by overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism. We aim to bring communist ideas and analyses to the working class. We strive to broaden the outlook of fellow workers and to arm workers with proletarian class consciousness so that together we can lead the struggle against all forms of oppression and exploitation by imperialism. To do this we must organize ourselves into an independent political party to concentrate the resistance of the working class into a single fighting force. This newsletter will provide a link whereby advanced workers can attach themselves to revolutionary ideas and a revolutionary organization.

GREAT OCTOBER REVOLUTIONS

October, 1975, marks the 26th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the 31st anniversary of the liberation of Albania, and the 58th year since the Great October Revolution in Russia.

When the Chinese workers and peasants, led by Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Communist Party, seized state power in 1949, their country was greatly impoverished as a result of hundreds of years of colonial exploitation, oppression and war. In the 26 years since liberation, the Chinese people have built a mighty socialist nation; its millions are well-fed, well-clothed and well-housed and are, perhaps, the most productive people in the world. China transformed itself from a backward, colonial country into a strong, free, socialist one; a country which serves as a bulwark of socialism for the peoples of the world who are not yet free from imperialism.

Albania is another example of a heroic nation which has freed itself from the bonds of imperialism and fascism. The several million Albanian people, guided by Enver Hoxha and the Albanian Party, are a revolutionary model to the toiling masses of Europe and the world as they continue to build their country into a socialist society where genuine freedom prevails.

The Great October Revolution of 1917 in Russia brought with it a new era in the development of history. Under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin and the Bolshevik Party, the Soviet workers and peasants overthrew capitalism and established the dictatorship of the proletariat. This revolutionary event represented one of the greatest defeats to the capitalist world; it marked the era of proletarian socialist revolutions and the downfall of imperialism.

We join the peoples of the world in celebrating these victorious struggles and support the efforts of all progressive and revolutionary peoples in carrying out their task of liberating themselves from the yoke of imperialism, colonialism and all reactionary forces.

In the USNA we must follow the examples of these heroic peoples; we must overthrow USNA imperialism and establish a proletarian dictatorship. This is a difficult task. Basing ourselves on Marxism-Leninism, we will not fail!

