

# CHALLENGE-DESAFIO

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**THE PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY FIGHTS FOR SOCIALISM.** Socialism means liberation for the entire working class—the destruction of the bosses—a society of abundance and full employment—an end to exploitation—a secure and creative future for all workers—and an end to the racism, fascism and wars that are all products of capitalism.

In order to achieve socialism, the capitalist system, the bosses and their dictatorial government must be crushed. This cannot be accomplished peacefully through elections.

It can only happen when the majority of the exploited unite behind communist leadership, violently overthrow the bosses, and install a new government of revolutionary workers—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Members of the PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY are devoted to this goal. They dedicate their lives to actively building, promoting and organizing for the cause of revolutionary communism.

The Progressive Labor party and its newspaper, Challenge, are dedicated to the U.S. working class and the working class of the entire world—black, Latin, white, Asian and Native American.

Our newspaper, Challenge, strives to present the unconditional truth of class struggle so our class can learn from experience how to win.



(Unfinished mural in Progressive Labor Party headquarters)

## Preparing for The Seizure of Power

(From a report to the National Committee of Progressive Labor Party)

The goal of every communist should be the seizure of power, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat (d & p). The goal of revolution must be burnt into the fibre of each one of us. This can only be done through long training. This training must be carried on through study and carry out the party's line. At every step of the way we must constantly re-study, evaluate our practice, and draw new political conclusions and directions thus insuring the revolutionary process and enriching Marxism-Leninism.

All over the world in each so-called communist party the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat is under attack. This attack draws to its logical conclusion recently by the French, Italian, and Japanese CPs when they formally rejected the d & p. They said that power could be shared in a multi party system, even if they were the main party and that they don't believe in dictatorship. They further stated that the term proletariat was foreign to their own particular situation, etc. etc. Of course these type of statements are basically drawn from Khrushchev. It was he who proclaimed then that in the Soviet Union they were out to build the "state of the whole people."

In our own party many of our comrades have slipped on this question. Naturally there is no single answer to this problem, but some are:

a) At the moment there is a general disappointment in the working class. This is because there is not a great deal of fight back in the face of lay-offs, cut backs, etc.

The comrades pick up the papers and read about the great strikes around the world. They muse, "if it

were only happening here." In other words, there is a certain amount of bowing to "spontaneity." Our particular contribution to this deviation is that we are still too isolated from workers and others whom we have on the job or school ties with. This disappointment with the workers is very subjective. Remember it was only a few years ago that this country was rocked by a strike wave. This was typified by the great postal strike in which Nixon had to call out the troops to move the mail. And much of the character of these strikes were rank and file. The high point of the postal struggle in New York City was when the workers chased their leadership from the stage at the union meetings. These, and other so-called leaders in union had to run for their lives.

**One of the reasons that there isn't a great strike wave now is that we were not able at that time to significantly build our party in the labor movement. Thus, the working class did not develop a communist leadership who they could organize behind and follow in place of the sell-outs. So, another strike wave could spontaneously develop now, and if we did not build the party and lead the workers into more advanced battles the strike wave would peter out. Strikes in and of themselves will NEVER lead to revolutionary action. This can only happen if a strong communist party grows in the center of the working class.**

b) Still, too many comrades do not see the fundamental importance of building a base for communist ideas among the workers. Many still don't see the fundamental contradiction in this process.

**THIS IS BECAUSE MANY PEOPLE DO NOT fully understand the task of being a communist.**

Naturally there are many ingredients in this development, but we want to stress one. In order to seize power you must win most of the working class, and **many other sections** of the population.

If you work in a shop, our job is to become the leader of the shop. This doesn't necessarily imply or mean arrogance. What it means is being able to beat the boss. Now if our strategy is to win most of the workers to participate and transform the reform struggle into revolutionary struggle, our tactics must follow. Becoming a leader of the working class, and developing other leaders is not a part time job. Virtually all our time should be spent on winning these workers. Of course this requires meetings, study, help, etc., but above all it means that our entire lives must be spent with these workers so they can trust us and we in turn have confidence in them. The basis for political leadership will be created through this process. If we don't do it political growth of the workers will not happen. As Lenin pointed out in "What Is To Be Done" communist ideas have always been brought into the working class. Communist ideas don't fall from the sky, or do workers and others simply draw the proper political conclusions from their experiences.

### COMMUNIST MUST LEAD

So our tactics must flow from our strategy. We are not out to win a worker here or there, although we want to win the occasional worker until workers flood the party. But this quantity into quality won't happen unless becoming a communist organizer to win all the working class permeates our thought and actions.

Many people always agree with this type of thinking but they ask why isn't it done? They realize  
*(continued on page 3)*



## La Paila, Colombia: Sugar Mill Strikers

# Build City on Workers' Power

LA PAILA, Colombia—3,000 workers of the Riopaila sugar mill are carrying out one of the most important strikes here in the last few years. Cops and army troops surround the struck sugar mill searching everyone coming in and out of the area (see CHALLENGE, February 14). The cops are looking for 68 strikers, including Hector Useche, head of the union, who is wanted by the cops, "dead or alive."

The reasons behind this massive attack against the strikers can be traced to the importance of the 4th largest sugar mill of the country. Also, and most important, is that the strikers have organized themselves so well that their example might spread to the rest of the country. Something which the bosses don't want to happen. The bosses' press has kept total silence about the struggle.

In spite of the armed occupation of the sugar mill and the region around it, the strikers have looked for solidarity all over the country and organized solidarity demonstrations in the surrounding towns of Zarzal, Bugalagrande, La Uribe and in the City of Cali.

The striking workers have formed a new neighborhood at the entrance of this city of 10,000 people. The neighborhood is made up of 300 huts built with cane and mats and has been named "Ciudad Proletaria" or "Proletarian City." Life is hard in this strikers' town, money is scarce, and the police don't allow food, medicine, or any other supplies into the town. The Red Cross has not been here to help. Three babies have been born, a mother of 12, has taken care of the births.

A militant and comradely spirit rules there. There is a loudspeaker which constantly announces the activities of the strikers, calls assembly meetings, carries songs by workers or lectures of revolutionary works.

The city wakes up at 6 AM and coffee and toasts are given out to two lines: one for workers who have families and the other for single workers. In the morning, the different committees carry out their work. At noon, a soup lunch is given out (meat has not been seen at all). In the afternoon there are demonstrations which usually start with the singing of The Internationale, the anthem of the international working class; then they march to the tomb of a young boy killed by the cops during a demonstration a few weeks ago. Then traffic is stopped to ask for donations from the drivers. At night, there are meetings or artistic celebrations. Many workers are learning new trades at night. "We have never had any discipline problems and alcoholic beverages are forbidden in this combat zone," said a worker. He also mentioned that the "biggest demonstrations took place during the New Year's celebrations, a period when everyone was afraid that we would have not mobilized ourselves. Discipline is spontaneous and so far no one has been punished."

The strike has been going on for 90 days. The workers struck when the company fired 800 workers and violated the provisions of the contract



signed by the union with the company. After a first strike last March, Activists Rank-and-File Committees were formed inside the union to maintain union democracy and to avoid the forming of a bureaucracy. These committees also play a role uniting the workers with the neighborhoods they live in. From those Committees came the Strike Coordinating Committee composed of 21 workers, but later reduced to 12 workers to guarantee more agility in the debates. But the final decision rests upon the general assembly of the workers, which delegates the executions of the Committee's decisions.

while we are here starving to death."

Workers have learned quite a bit with this experience. One worker pointed out that "a strike requires organization, conditions for it, a will to fight and class consciousness." Another worker said: "Above all this strike has shown to us workers the role of the State and of the labor authorities as protectors of the bosses' interests. It has also shown us how the government reacts when workers refuse to work protesting the violations of a contract that defend the workers from the desires for more profits of the owners of the sugar mill."

"Another thing that is becoming clear is the role

*'A strike is a fight for some demands that aid workers in developing of class consciousness, above all as a school for a revolutionary war that is the only way of building new society'*

Women workers have played a decisive role in the strike. There is a Women Committee that is in charge of administration, cleaning and feeding of the "Proletarian City" and have taken part in all aspects of the struggle there. For that reason, three women are in jail at the Buen Pastor Prison in Cali. At the beginning, they went on a hunger strike, but they ended it, saying that "it isn't fair that the bosses get fatter with our labor

of the people and its allies, for example, the students. Also the betrayals of the union hacks of the UTC (one of the 3 labor federations of Colombia). A strike is a fight for demands that aid workers in the developing of their organizational forms, to acquire class consciousness, and above all as a school for revolutionary war that is the only way of building a new society," pointed out another striker. Another worker said that "we are showing that the masses learn much more in practice than from speeches."

CHALLENGE-DESAFIO salutes the valiant struggle of the Riopaila sugar mill and their establishment of Proletarian City. The formation of such a city and like that of the Ruben Jaramillo set up in Cuernavaca, Mexico are indication of what life under socialism would be like. However, socialism does not exist in either Mexico or Colombia and we must draw the lessons of Ruben Jaramillo. They were not able to hold on to their village run by the people, because they were not equipped politically or materially when the army moved in, armed to the teeth, to reposses the land. Their struggle however did win certain concessions from the government which they would not have gotten otherwise.

Although the "Proletarian City" has many more participants than the Ruben Jaramillo, they too can look for the state apparatus to move in, in an attempt to smash them. Only a movement led by a revolutionary Communist Party can advance the struggles of the Proletarian City and the Ruben Jaramillo's toward socialist revolution to get rid of the bosses, their armies and establish proletarian cities all over the world.

## Power Seizure

(continued from page 2)

that objectively many of our goals are possible, given the objective situation. They know we could have a much larger circulation of CHALLENGE, a much larger membership, and that we could be leading more struggles. Again the answer to this problem isn't simple but some reasons are:

— a) Alienation is a fundamental aspect of bourgeois life in the U.S., and probably in most highly industrialized countries. Not only is the human being alienated from machine, but to some extent from one another. The ruling class has consciously broken down the collective spirit, and in its place set up the individual. This runs the gamut from the hero to the anti-hero. Or from Bogart to Woody Allen. Our job is to restore the collective action of the working class, and dispel the concepts of bourgeois individualism.

— b) People who are unsure of themselves

politically and who do not have the greatest confidence in the working class tend to huddle together for comfort. This isolation leads to the inability to win people to the line. The main aspect of this type of isolation is fear. Very often it is fear of your fellow worker, even more than the boss and his agents. There is a great reluctance to get close to others, because it means that sooner or later political struggle will ensue. Thus some people avoid this political struggle through isolation, and mechanical leftism.

The form this leftism usually takes is the mechanical stating of I am in PLP and I am a communist. If you isolate this process from close ties to many workers it tends to turn people off, thus reinforcing our fears and hence our isolation.

— c) Within the party there isn't enough struggle to win people to become a communist in a full way. And as we stated previously it is still unclear of what is wanted from the comrades. This process must be strengthened otherwise whatever plans we make will be nullified. A COMMUNIST MUST BE ABLE TO LEAD, A COMMUNIST MUST BE, AS LENIN STATED, "A TRIBUNE OF THE PEOPLE."