

IS THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE "TROTSKYITE":

THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE VIEW

In the many-sided debate now raging between Maoist groups in this country the charge of "Trotskyite" is often heard. The Spartacist League, the genuine Trotskyists, wish to make our view known on some of the major questions in this debate.

While the October League calls the Revolutionary Union "sectarian," the RU denounced the OL's "childish antics" and says that the OL are the real sectarians for their distortions; while a thoroughly confused debate on the question of nationalism goes on between the Black Workers Congress (BWC) and everyone else, the real venom of all other groups is reserved for the Communist League.

The Communist League, Carl Davidson asserts in the Guardian of July 10, is taking a "Trotskyite" course. The OL says the same thing in the July Call, and the Revolutionary Union develops this theme in the most depth, in a 12 page supplement to the July Revolution.

The RU charges that the CL has a "Trotskyite streak that runs a mile wide through its whole outlook" (July Revolution, pg. CL-9). There are two points on which says the RU, this particularly shows: The CL denies that a "two-stage revolution" is the road to liberation in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and the CL does not believe that capitalism has yet been restored in the Soviet Union.

Is the RU right? Are these Trotskyist ideas? Yes they are!

In the CL's "defense" as a Stalinist group we wish to point out, however, that they waver on these concepts, and other class struggle points. The reason for this is that the CL has not examined the causes for the class collaborationist ideas they reject, but has only broken here and there with Stalinist reformism, while continuing in the basic Stalinist framework. While the CL has picked up a few Trotskyist ideas, that is, real Marxist-Leninist concepts, the CL remains a completely Stalinist group whose class struggle impulses are at variance with its whole history and method.

But let us look at a few of the CL's "Trotskyite" ideas to see what this means. Take, for a good example, the question of "What is the Soviet Union today?" The CL says "Soviet opportunists are locked in a life and death struggle with the Soviet working class. While they control the state apparatus, they have not been able to fully destroy the socialist relations of production." (Jan. 1974 Peoples Tribune). The RU theorist notes that this is the traditional "Trot" view. And he/she is 100% correct. The CL should know that Trotskyists and Trotskyists alone have maintained this view. In fact, this may be why they change and vacillate.

To someone who thinks about the question, this view is the only Marxist one. The CL was undoubtedly not comfortable with the idea that the Soviet Union made a peaceful transition from socialism to capitalism almost without anyone noticing until much later. The view that the Soviet Union has been capitalist all along, and there are no gains left from the October Revolution is not a very appealing one to anyone who thinks about it, either. Nor is the view that Cuba, for example, is capitalist. Only the Trotskyist view makes sense. Although, of course, the CL does slide around a great deal.

Perhaps the CL is also uneasy at some of the "proof" that the Chinese leaders advance to show how bad the Soviet Union is, how "social imperialist." (In turn, the Soviet leaders are equally disgusting in their diplomatic dispatches on China). For example, the Hsinhua article (an official Chinese dispatch) of February 3, 1974 says:

"Militarily, after obtaining a naval and air base in the Caribbean which provides it with a foothold in Latin American (that's Cuba) Soviet revisionism has been stepping up its military expansion in the Western hemisphere, constituting a serious threat to the security of the Latin American countries."

And, perhaps, the CL can even see that if Russia is capitalist, how is China different. To the people attending this forum Maoism means left Stalinism, a fighting philosophy. But this is an illusion. China is, today, every bit as much for peaceful co-existence as the Soviet Union.

"Since its founding the People's Republic of China too has consistently pursued the policy of peaceful coexistence with countries having different social systems, and it is China which

initiated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.....

"It is absolutely impermissible and impossible for countries practising peaceful coexistence to touch even a hair of each other's social system." (A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement, 1963)

Where can the CL have gotten its ideas, though? Are they secretly reading Trotsky's Revolution Betrayed? If not, they should be.

This is a pretty hard idea for the comrades of the CL to swallow, of course, even if it brings joy to the hearts of the RU and OL. The CL more than any other Maoist group repeats the obvious crap (they know it is crap) that Trotskyists are cops, fascists, and so on. As the Communist Working Collective (CWC), a Los Angeles collective which came from Maoism to Trotskyism and the Spartacist League wrote: "We realized that Trotsky's analysis on the history of the Communist International paralleled our own. But it was Trotsky! Suddenly we felt the full weight of the emotional spectre of the splitter/wrecker agent Trotsky looming before us."

DOES THE CL UPHOLD THE THEORY OF 2-STAGE REVOLUTION?

Just as you should view the word "Trotskyist" as a precise political description, we use the word Stalinist very precisely. The most important thing about Stalinism is that it represents the effort to achieve "socialism in one country" by attempting to ally with the "peaceful" wing of the world bourgeoisie, rather than relying on the international working class. Stalinism is nationalism, which means "me first." Just as the Soviet leadership showed in its betrayals in China in 1925-27 socialism in one country means socialism nowhere else. The Chinese have repeated the same story, in Indonesia, for example. What happens is this: The Stalinists, not wanting to "alienate" the capitalists, tell the workers to ally with the capitalists not just militarily, but politically. The workers do this, and the capitalists, when the time is right, turn and slaughter the workers. Why do the Stalinists do this? They do not trust the working class, but want instead to make friends with the capitalists at any cost. This is why Stalin made Chiang-Kai Shek an honorary member of the post-Leninist Communist International. This is why the CCP urged the PKI of Indonesia to ally with the "progressive" Sukarno. The cost was the decimation of the working class, the massacre of Communists.

The CL's second evidence of a "Trotskyite streak" is related to this. The CL does not, insists the RU author and Davidson, believe in the 2-stage revolution.

"Opposing the earth shaking, revolutionary upsurge of the national colonial movements - ignited by the imperialist defeat in Korea - has been an increasingly reactionary, revisionist current that separates the national liberation movements from the proletarian revolution and hence supports the reactionary bloc of compromising bourgeoisie in the colonies and semi-colonies." (International Report, May 1974 Peoples Tribune)

Is the RU right when it says that this has nothing to do with Maoism and Stalinism? Yes, Mao has been very clear on this: "The new democracy that China wishes to practise is nothing else than the joint democratic dictatorship of all the anti-imperialist and all the anti-feudal classes; of course, it is neither American bourgeois dictatorship nor the proletarian dictatorship of the Soviet Union." (The Political Thought of Mao Tse Tung, Stuart R. Schram)

The whole point of the 2-stage theory is that it justifies coalitions with all sorts of bourgeois types. It is based on the idea that the main task in the colonial countries is overthrowing imperialism and that there is an independent "national bourgeoisie" who will ally with the working class against the imperialists.

History teaches to those who will learn, only proofs of the Trotskyist view: the theory of Permanent Revolution. And they are tragic proofs for the most part. The point is that in the age of imperialism there is no such thing as a progressive section of the bourgeoisie who will ally with the working class against the imperialists. The capitalists in the "under-developed" countries are all tied to imperialism. While they might want to be nationally independent, they want their own class rule much more. And they can see clearly that without the capitalists of the United States and other imperialist countries behind them, they will not

have their own class rule. If they enter into alliances with the working class, it is only to (literally) stab the working class in the back.

This for example, is the lesson of the bloodbath in Indonesia, where the Communist Party "allied with" the "progressive" Sukarno. (Interestingly the Communist League understands that someone is to blame for this terrible defeat, besides the imperialists. But they blame it on the "revisionists" implying that the PKI was under Moscow's, as opposed to Peking's, tutelage. This is simply not true. Any "revisionism" was made in the People's Republic of China in this case.)

Mao's theory of the necessary stage has nothing to do with Leninism however. Lenin, learning from the experience of the October Revolution, rejected the idea of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" saying instead:

"The essence of Marx's theory of the state has been mastered only by those who realize that the dictatorship of a single class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the proletariat which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire historical period which separates capitalism from "classless society", from communism. (State and Revolution)

The CL is not in a particularly enviable position. Defending Maoist policies is difficult even when you believe in Maoist/Stalinist theories. (See for example our Questions Maoists Have Trouble Answering on the next page).

And of course the desire to have a strong powerful country behind you even if its policies are not revolutionary works on the CL. Its background pulls hard on its impulses. The result is a retreat to the same old stuff.

For example, in the "Open Letter to the Denver Left" the CL has an analysis of the Chilean Popular Unity government that is, in its criticism of the class collaboration of the Allende government, surprisingly un-Maoist. The CL of Denver points out that they warned that the working class of Chile was being led to counter-revolutionary slaughter by these policies. (It should be noted that the Spartacist League's warning on this question was 2½ years earlier). But this intemperate near-Leninist analysis is a bit too much for the national CL leadership, which prints a garbled appendix to Proletariat, pointing out the "errors" in the Open Letter and apologizing for Allende by explaining that he was a "petty bourgeois democrat who represented a certain stage in the struggle against imperialism." The CL explains that it gives "unqualified support" to a bloc such as the Popular Unity, and that it has "tactical differences." As if alliances with the bourgeoisie is a tactical difference.

So the criticisms of the CL as "Trotskyite" are unfortunately not true. The CL's class struggle impulses are effectively checked by a remaining hard Stalinist orientation.

The future of the CL is questionable. The CL may retreat to hard orthodox Stalinism and see its influence wane. It may end up going down the already traveled road of the Progressive Labor Party, and end up "Stalinists without a country" too. The PLP is traveling this road has restored to mindless zig-zags, degenerating into outright reformism and breaking with many Leninist fundamentals. Other odd possibilities are open. But the only road forward, out of the blind alley, is the road of Trotskyism. This has nothing to do with the Socialist Workers Party, but with the politics of the Spartacist League.

The CL, for example is without a compass when it comes to projecting what revolutionary work in the trade unions in this country would be like. Stalinism and Maoism provide no guide for this. They weren't intended to provide a guide for revolutionaries. The CL is not alone in this -- the RU too has no trade union program. The CL in its totally unbridled opportunism has a strategy of tailing after every fake left-talking bureaucrat who may come along.

The lack of program and principles to guide the CL showed itself rather glaringly in the caucus in Laborer's 261 in San Francisco, some of the CL's model work. While Proletariat describes this work in an article, it does not explain how the CL could have supported taking the union to the bosses court, which this caucus did. It is not a question of whether you rely on the courts, or not. Would the CL (or the RU or OL, for that matter)

think of taking a union dispute to the company, or company security guards, to settle? As Leninists the CL should believe, as we do, that the courts are capitalist courts, and therefore it is just like taking it to the company.

The present debate is an indication of the difficulties which Maoists find themselves in these days. Some dangerous questions are being raised, questions to which only Trotskyism, the Marxism and Leninism of our time, has the answers. Not only the CL, but all Maoists who seriously want to find answers should read what Trotsky and contemporary Trotskyism have to say. But while we want to analyze Stalinist publications and Stalin's writings, Stalinists shrink from this, because being a Stalinist means dulling your thinking capacity, deliberately avoiding the many betrayals which, as Stalinists, you must defend. Consider the questions below. No such list of questions can be drawn up to challenge the Spartacist League.

We urge you, comrades, to consider the issues we have raised. If you are sure you are correct you should be able to defend your political viewpoint, not run away holding your ears and yelling "cop". (Or trying to pretend to be little Stalins and attempt to chase us away). If you do feel that we raise questions you can't answer, it is necessary to investigate.

QUESTIONS MAOISTS CAN'T ANSWER

- 1) Why did the Chinese Embassy in Santiago refuse to accept refugees from the Chilean junta's repression?
- 2) Why didn't anyone realize what was wrong with Lin Piao, if it is so obvious?
- 3) Why does China support NATO?
- 4) Why do Maoists attack the Soviet Union for "peaceful co-existence" theories, when the Chinese themselves propose the "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence"?
- 5) Why did the Chinese leadership support the Soviet invasion of Hungary, but not the invasion of Czechoslovakia?
- 6) How did the Soviet Union become capitalist? When? Why didn't we notice at the time?
- 7) Where has there been an instance of a "progressive" bourgeoisie who has aided the workers struggle?
- 8) Why haven't the Chinese Communist Party made any move to found an international revolutionary organization, the way the Bolsheviks did?
- 9) Why does the Chinese leadership entertain the Shah of Iran so cordially?
- 10) How do you reconcile the belief in the bloc of 4 classes, so called theory of New Democracy, with Lenin's statement in State and Revolution that only one class can rule?
- 11) How do you justify the Chinese leaderships support for Madame Bandaranaike's suppression of the Ceylonese youth insurrection?

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