

CALL FOR JOINT WORK O

What most stands between the liberation of the millions of working and exploited people in this country and the continued rule of the old bourgeois dictatorship is the absence of a vanguard communist party of a new type to lead the working class and its allies in proletarian revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The focus of our central task of party building must be directed toward the development of a draft party program. A draft party program will be decisive in our ability to unite Marxist-Leninists into a single core, and win the most advanced workers to the side of communism. The party program, as a declaration of war against the bourgeoisie, will call forward the best sons and daughters of the working class and other progressive strata to the cause of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the party program which represents the highest expression of the ideological and political line of the party. The party program states the basic views of the party, the aim of the party, sets forward its practical demands, and dispels illusions generated by the bourgeoisie regarding the communist party.

For these reasons, the party program is a matter of urgent necessity. What follows is a series of first notes toward the development of a draft party program. In future issues of UNITE we will be discussing various aspects of the work in progress of drafting a party program. We issue this call for joint theoretical and political work on the party program, recognizing that the program must reflect the soundest Marxist-Leninist theory and the deepest possible ties with the masses, and, therefore, must be a collective effort of all genuine Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers.

I. THE PROLETARIAN PARTY AND THE PARTY PROGRAM

Since the liquidation of the communist party of the U.S. as a party of the working class and its degeneration as a party of monopoly capitalism in 1944, there have been many attempts to reconstitute a genuine communist party, and all have failed to meet the objective requirements of the class struggle. The Progressive Labor Party, the Communist Labor Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party have each failed to learn the lessons from the revisionist course of the CPUSA, and have wound up following the same path.

In the last several years there has been a great development of Marxism-Leninism and of the spontaneous workers' movement. Yet the fusion between them remains at a low level. Their separation breeds shortcomings for both. As Joseph Stalin stated in BRIEFLY ABOUT THE DISAGREEMENTS IN THE PARTY,

"Scientific socialism without the working class movement is an empty phrase that can always be easily thrown to the winds.

On the other hand, the working class movement without socialism is aimless trade unionist wandering, which some time or other will, of course, lead to the social revolution, but at the cost of long pain and suffering." (Stalin, WORKS, vol 1, p 117)

The forging of a vanguard communist party is the biggest step in the fusing of the communist and workers' movements. To carry out this

task, communists must actively offer the masses a program for proletarian revolution. This program will serve to unite the foremost representatives of the working class and organize them into a disciplined core, transforming the spontaneous struggle of the masses aimed against only particular manifestations of bourgeois rule, into a struggle aimed directly at the entire capitalist class and the state apparatus which supports the capitalist class.

Just as an army needs its general staff, so does the working class need its vanguard party. In the same sense that the army needs its battle plan of action, so does the vanguard party need its party program.

Marxist-Leninist agitation and propaganda has brought forward an increasing number of advanced class conscious workers, advanced elements from the national liberation struggle, and revolutionary intellectuals. Significant progress has been made in the communist movement in breaking with ideological tendencies alien to the working class, such as modern revisionism, trotskyism and anarchism. We have long ago passed by the period when work can professionally be carried on by small circles, or even organizations which work in just a few large cities.

Genuine ideological unity of the advanced representatives of the working class will not be consolidated through pure "ideological struggle." Ideological unity will be consolidated through a party program. At the same time, it is the party program which is the highest expression of political line of the proletariat.

That is why the demand for a party program grows directly out of the needs of the movement itself, and why a draft party program is absolutely required as the basis to call a party congress and reconstitute a party of a new type.

While the MLOC pointed out in our early documents the necessity for a party program as the basis to significantly advance the tasks of uniting Marxist-Leninists and winning the advanced to communism, it has not been until recently that we have been in a position to take up this work actively. The development of partial program statements on questions such as party building, the Black national question, the international situation, the woman question and others are no substitute for a party program, but are the first steps in that direction. The extent to which these partial statements can be transformed into a comprehensive statement on the views, aims and demands of the working class in its struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, will determine the pace of our work in uniting Marxist-Leninists and winning the advanced. Joint theoretical and political work on the party program means that the theoretical work is taken up in order to carry forward our political tasks in the trade unions, in the national movements, against the two superpowers, etc. Those that have suggested that a party congress, let alone a party can be called without a draft party program, undermine any genuine basis of unity of will or unity of action of the proletariat.

II. THE NATURE OF THE PARTY PROGRAM

The aim of the party program is to define the real aims of the working class movement in its struggle for the dictatorship of the pro-

letariat. It seeks to apply the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to the concrete conditions of this country. It provides an independent elaboration of the basic theory of Marxism applied to this country.

There are numerous components of a party program. But, in general they must include

(1) A formulation of the basic views of the party, the basic tenets or principles which explain the role and position of the working class in society and the significance of the struggle between labor and capital.

(2) The aim of the party in relation to other political trends must be established, pointing out that this is the only genuine party of the working class, and explaining the attitude of the party toward other classes in society.

(3) The party program must indicate the practical demands of the working class, linking all partial and fragmentary demands to the general level of the demand for socialist revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. These demands must include nation wide reforms, the demands and program of the working class and the just demands of other progressive strata which the working class would defend. Isolated demands must be raised to the status of agitation for the program of proletarian revolution.

(4) The program must as well dispel all misunderstandings and misconceptions which are the result of bourgeois ideological penetration of the working class.

These are the major components of the party program. The most important part of the party program is an explanation of the activity of the Party in defending the interests of the working class, the activity of all class conscious workers.

The drafting of such a party program which really applies to the concrete conditions of this country must state directly that the party will in every way possible directly assist the working masses in their struggle for emancipation through the development of the workers class consciousness, the development of the party organization itself, and through indicating the real aims of the movement.

Put in its most concise fashion, the History of the CPSU(B) summed up that

"The program of a workers' party is a brief scientifically formulated statement of the aims and objectives of the struggle of the working class. The program defines both the ultimate goal of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the demands for which the party fights while on the way to the achievement of the ultimate goal." (HISTORY OF THE CPSU(B), p 38)

III. WHAT THE PARTY PROGRAM MUST NOT DO

While Lenin is careful to stipulate exactly what will be contained in the party program, he also takes care to guide us in what a party program must not be. In particular, Engels (in On the Erfurt Program) and Lenin on numerous occasions, indicate that the party program

IN THE PARTY PROGRAM

ist guard against repetition and guard against becoming a commentary on the program. This is particularly important. To confuse the party program with a commentary on the program will be to produce a document of very limited value amongst the masses, a document which will not be able to engage the party in the practical struggle of the masses. At the same time, Lenin also indicates clearly the importance of dealing with the specific form of capitalist development in each country, such that the program is really a compendium and guide for struggle against the bourgeoisie of the country it is written for.

This means that the Party must issue both a program and, no doubt, a series of commentaries on the program.

V. THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND THE PARTY PROGRAM

One of the very most important aspects of the ability of the party to lead the working class and its allies in struggle against the bourgeoisie, will be the stand of the party on the national question, and the Black national question in particular. The party program must unmistakably stand for the unity of the multinational proletariat - and this means a firm, resolute and uncompromising stand for the right of self-determination up to and including secession for the Black Nation, other oppressed nations, and the demands for full democratic rights for all oppressed minorities. The question of self-determination and democratic rights must be an integral part of the party program.

The significance of the national question in our party program was vividly spelled out by Lenin.

"As the party of the proletariat, the Social-Democratic Party considers it to be its positive and principal task to further the self-determination of the proletariat in each nationality rather than that of peoples or nations. We must always and unreservedly work for the very closest unity of the proletariat of all nationalities, and it is only in isolated and exceptional cases that we can advance and actively support demands conducive to the establishment of a new class state or to the substitution of a looser federal unity, etc., for the complete political unity of a state" (Lenin, "The National Question in our Programme, CW, vol. 6, p. 454)

"The accursed history of autocracy has left us a legacy of tremendous estrangement between the working classes of the various nationalities oppressed by that autocracy. This estrangement is a very great evil, a very great obstacle in the struggle against the autocracy, and we must not legitimise this evil or sanctify this outrageous state of affairs by establishing any such 'principles' as separate parties or a 'federation' of parties. It is, of course, simpler and easier to follow the line of least resistance, and for everyone to make himself comfortable in his own corner following the rule, 'it's none of my business,' as the Bund now wants to do. The more we realise the need for unity and the more firmly we are convinced that a concerted offensive against the autocracy is impossible without complete unity, the more obvious becomes the necessity for a centralised organisation

of the struggle in the conditions of our political system - the less inclined are we to be satisfied with a 'simple,' but specious and, at bottom, profoundly false solution of the problem. So long as there is no desire to put an end radically and at all costs to this estrangement in the camp of the proletarian party, there is no need for the fig-leaf of 'federation,' and no use in undertaking to solve a problem which one of the 'sides' concerned has no real desire to solve. That being the case, it is better to let the lessons of experience and of the actual movement prove that centralism is essential for success in the struggle waged by the proletarians of all nationalities oppressed by autocracy against that autocracy and against the international bourgeoisie, which is becoming more and more united" (Ibid., pp. 462-3).

V. AN URGENT TASK OF OUR MOVEMENT

Nothing more demonstrates the vital need for a draft party program today than the infantile polemics being carried on by the "revolutionary wing" and Workers Viewpoint Organization. Lenin clearly points out the importance of principled polemics being carried out in full view of the masses, in order to draw definite lines of demarcation. Yet, Lenin, in A DRAFT PROGRAMME OF OUR PARTY, stated clearly that

"On the other hand, if the polemic is not to be fruitless if it is not to degenerate into personal rivalry, if it is not to lead to a confusion of views, to a confounding of enemies and friends, it is absolutely essential that the question of the programme be introduced into the polemic. The polemic will be of benefit only if it makes clear in what the differences actually consist, how profound they are, whether they are differences of substance or differences on partial questions, whether or not these differences interfere with common work in the ranks of one and the same party. Only the introduction of the programme question into the polemic, only a definite statement by the two polemicising parties on their programmatic views, can provide an answer to all these questions, questions that insistently demand an answer" (Lenin, "A Draft Programme of our Party," CW, vol. 4, p. 231)

It is through the application of the general principles to the concrete conditions of the class struggle in this country, through the key development of political line and the decisiveness of theory expressed in a party program, that definite lines of demarcation will be drawn. Polemics serve to differentiate definite programmatic statements, but themselves can never develop program or substitute for political and theoretical work.

VI. A PLAN FOR DRAFTING THE PARTY PROGRAM

Party building is a question of fusing the communist and workers' movements in the course

of breaking ideologically, politically and organizationally with opportunism, particularly modern revisionism. In order to unite Marxist-Leninists and win the advanced to communism, joint theoretical and political work must be carried out in order to carefully and patiently establish sound unity and tested leadership. On the questions of the nature of the party, the Black national question, the international situation and the trade union question a clear and definite political statement must be developed, tested in practice and developed to a higher level. Other questions, such as the woman question, the nature of the general crisis and the Chicano national question require immediate theoretical attention.

Joint theoretical and political work on these questions is the basis for the drafting of a party program. With the development of genuine unity and genuine leadership in our movement on a national basis that has been tested in the crucible of class struggle, a center will emerge, united around a draft party program and issue a call for a party congress.

While considerable work remains to be achieved in the elaboration and testing of a correct political line, work on a draft party program must be taken up as the focus of all other work of party building. For example, our work in the trade unions is taken up with the focus of developing a party program, in the course of leading the spontaneous struggle of the masses and providing it with a conscious character.

In the following issues of UNITE' the MLOC will issue a definite plan and agenda of work required to draft a party program. The MLOC calls upon all genuine Marxist-Leninists and militant workers to take up the joint theoretical and political work to draft a party program. This program must be the result of the labor of the best sons and daughters of the working class, must reflect the most advanced theory and the deepest possible ties with the masses. It is not something to be glued together in a back room, or worked out after the party congress. The unity of will and unity of action of the proletariat, the formation of the party of a new type depends upon the clarity of vision and basic foundation established in the party program.

In addition to developing an agenda for joint theoretical and political work, the center pages of UNITE' will in the following issues regularly carry on a discussion of the various aspects of work in drafting a party program. We will reprint important programs of numerous Marxist-Leninist parties around the world, will discuss various aspects of the draft program itself, will attempt to sum up the negative lessons to be learned from the programs of the PLP, CLP and RCP, and develop study guide material to assist other comrades in carrying out the vital task of party building and drafting the party program.

In turn, the MLOC calls upon all friends and comrades, as well as other Marxist-Leninist organizations, to help generate a party program, to raise discussion of the issues involved, to offer criticism of material we present. The task of drafting a party program, as forging the party itself, requires honest, solid work. As has the Communist Party of China, we call upon comrades to

"dedicate their lives to the struggle for communism, must be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory" (CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA, 10th PARTY CONGRESS, p. 64)