OL BRINGS PARTY BUILDING BANDWAGON TO TOWN

On December 13 at the 1199 Union Hall the October League in the persons of Chairman Michael Klonsky and Carl Comstock of the Communist Party, Karl Wells spoke to some 35 people on "Party Building and the Fight Back." The presenters answered two questions from the floor: further illustration that the OL is taking the self-translated need to unite the internationalist and isolation and will soon be comfortably seated in the swamp with the various "new Marxist-Leninist parties" like the Communist Labor Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party.

DOGMATIST PARTY BUILDING LINE

The central theme of Klonsky's and Wells's speech was the urgency of the formation of a new Communist party and the OL's intention of carrying out that task in the immediate future. Klonsky ignored any serious treatment of whether or not the subject conditions needed by any language party had sufficiently matured. He asserted the idea that the Marxist-Leninist forces had to demonstrate the viability of their political line through their practice in the working class struggle. Wells added to say that "forming the party doesn't have anything to do with how many workers are involved." The theme of the OL speakers was that the danger of World War and fascism made the immediate formation of the party a necessity.

Klonsky and Wells both believed in the reality that the Party building activity is international and domestic simultaneously. They also believed that fascism is now greater than ever, six months or a year ago when the OL regarded the immediate formation of the party as a mistake.

But this is not really the central point. The danger of war and fascism along with the other organic features of capitalist society unquestionably underline the urgency of forming the Party. But the question is, it is obvious to all Marxist-Leninists, in no way questions, that the ability to actually act on it.

If it only were that simple! Klonsky and Co. by ignoring the requisites for actually calling a party into being and by reducing the task of party building to simply uniting Marxist-Leninists, have fallen squarely in line with the other dogmatists. All that remains is for the OL to baptise its sect a "party.

OL SIDES WITH REACTION

The rest of Klonsky and Wells' remarks were given over to a polemic against "centrist" represented by the Guardian and the PWOC. The essence of this "centrism" is the refusal to unite with the OL's sectarian line. The Guardian was accused of being "one of the main defenders of revisionism in the world today" by Chairman Klonsky. Klonsky was outraged that the Guardian and PWOC with it have attacked the ultra-left in Portugal for itservalau from the Communist Party and the progressive elements in the Armed Forces Movement. The PWOC support the MPLA in Angola against CIA and South African backed pseudo-revolutionary forces. This has led to a conflict between the Guardian and the PWOC along with virtually the whole Puerto Rican Independence Movement backed the Havana Conference on Puerto Rican Independence.

The OL is very long on "proletarian internationalism" in words. But behind the smoke-screen of revolutionary sounding phrases against the "two imperialist superpowers," the OL is siding with reaction in Portugal.

In Portugal, OL backs the ultra-leftists who openly urge an alliance with the PCI which they regard purely as a tool of the Stalinist centrists and as a fifth column at aiming towards Portugal into a "Socialist colony."

In Angola, Klonsky made the outrageous analogy that Cuban troops and Soviet weapons are playing the same role that Hitler's planes and Mosquito's troops did for the fascist forces of the "Socialist" Portugal for the UN Catholic Portugal. Klonsky's distortion of the UN Catholic Portugal's struggle for a new war just as Stalin was Hitler's. And in regard to Puerto Rico, no amount of stirring slogans about support for Puerto Rican independence can conceal the fact that OL has by its opposition to the Havana conference and its stand on the independence movement pitted itself against the real struggle for independence.

DEBATE ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Another area of contention was the national question. Klonsky and Wells congratulate themselves for having a "revolutionary approach" to the Afro-American national question. This approach consists of introducing the OL to the National Question of the Communist International, developed in 1928 and 1930, that there is a Black nation in the Black Belt and the struggle of that nation for self-determination is the heart of the struggle for Black Liberation.

Because of the profound social, economic, and demographic changes that have occurred in the Black Belt since the late 1920's, many Marxist-Leninists (including the PWOC) have on the basis of a concrete investigation that these changes have come the conclusion that the Black nation in the Black Belt has been assimilated.

Klonsky and his ilk refuse to seriously address these changes because for them the idea of a Black nation is a holy dogma. Klonsky's reply is to respond to questions from the floor that we have to study concrete conditions with the saying that Black was called "our desire to uphold the right of the Afro-American people to self-determination."

Since even the OL acknowledges, the right of self-determination has no meaning except in relation to nations, he is saying in effect that we must study the Afro-American people's concrete conditions with the basis that they are a nation.

This is not Marxist-Leninist science but bourgeois metaphysics. It is a raw capitulation to nationalism in that it puts forward the idea of nationalism as something Marxist-Leninists strive to build or preserve. It puts itself squarely against progressive features of assimilation which have furthered the basis for class unity and laid the firmest foundation for Black Liberation.

Klonsky ended the evening by declaring that "some good struggle had gone on." This was perhaps the most serious misstatement in a night which had more than its share.

THE OL'S METHOD OF STRUGGLE

Klonsky's idea of good struggle is answering questions with invective, distortions, slanders and lies. While Klonsky was short on principle and almost empty of an understanding of Marxism, he was long on gull.

The discussion of the national question illustrates Klonsky's approach to struggle. He accused the PWOC of misquoting Stalin's definition of nationhood by leaving out the phrase "formed on the basis of," in a position paper -- a bald-faced lie.

When a PWOC cadre asserted that Klonsky was wrong in his assertion that the CPUSA opposes the right of self-determination for the Afro-American people, Klonsky replied with perfect self-assurance that the PWOC was lying through its hat.

Anyone interested can read page 61 of the New Program of the CPUSA to see who is lying.

These relatively minor points are indicative of the gross misrepresentation of the PWOC's position at the hands of Klonsky and Co. The audience was told that we hold that the national question is peaceably solved by capitalist development, and that we refuse to make any special demands for oppressed national minorities.

The most superficial reading of our materials on the national question and any acquaintance with our practice in the working class movement shows otherwise.

After the meeting adjourned an OL member, replying to criticisms that Klonsky had dealt with disagreements in an unprincipled way, shrugged his shoulders and said "Why should we worry about being principled in dealing with a bourgeoise line?"

In reply we would quote from the January 11 edition of Claridad, the organ of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, which in the closing sentences of an article on OL's sectarianism said, "...in a revolutionary movement, truth is important -- it supplies orientation, allows for evaluation, is essential for growth. The October League list."