

“Maoists” to our right: FRSO’s “Principles of Unity, 1985”

By MC6

A. Page 2, the crisis of Marxism

The text states “we recognize a crisis in Marxist ideology and practice of historical dimensions...”

And, there have been three approaches to this crisis, the second of which is: “simply to ask ‘What crisis?’ to see the whole problem as just something in the minds of a few thousand petty-bourgeois crybabies, and to point to their own organizations as evidence of all that’s right with the world of revolutionary Marxism.”

Comment:

We do think they are a bunch of petty bourgeois crybabies.

Point number 16 of the text states: “As at other times in the history of Marxist movements, the crisis of Marxism today raises serious challenges to the work of Lenin and the traditions that claim his work.” And, “our task is to develop that science (i.e. M-L) or to rediscover its foundation stones if need be.”

Comment:

Nowhere is there any evidence presented as to precisely what is meant by challenges to Lenin’s work, etc. That there has been a crisis in the application of Marxism there is no doubt. But that is not what the FRSO is saying.

The only reference to the theory of Marxism is the following: “We must build and support a wide variety of cultural resistance, recognizing what Marx called a ‘reform of consciousness,’” and, there is no footnote to this ‘famous’ quote by Marx. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx called for a “radical rupture with traditional ideas.” If Marxism is to be reduced to reforming people’s consciousness, then there is no need to worry too much about what is to be done.

Lenin said:

“Further, the authors of Credo also have an entirely wrong conception of the present state of the West-European working-class movement and of the theory of Marxism, under the banner of which that movement is marching. To talk about a ‘crisis of Marxism’ is merely to repeat the nonsense of the bourgeois hacks who are doing all they can to exacerbate every disagreement among the socialists and turn it into a split in the socialist parties. The notorious Bernsteinism—in the sense in which it is commonly understood by the general public—is an attempt to narrow the theory of Marxism, to convert the revolutionary workers’ party into a reformist party.” (A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats, 1899).

We agree with Lenin.

B. In general, the document does not have a program that is specific. For example, the document reiterates again and again the need to struggle against “white-supremacist national oppression.” But how? There are no appropriate demands. Because national minorities earn an average of 60% of what white people earn, which is what women earn compared with men, you would think that a program to raise wages for women and national minorities would be mentioned. And, because the FRSO is intent on working within the Rainbow Coalition, you would think that such a program would be presented to the RC.

C. Finally rules for membership and the conduct of the organization’s business are confusing and smack of bureaucracy. If you wish to join and do some meaningful work, you are liable to become very frustrated. For example, FRSO calls upon people to study Marxism, but there does not appear to be any regular study classes. If there were, there should be a syllabus which FRSO would be eager to share.

Comments on Forward Motion, published by FRSO, January-February 1987 edition:

A. In the editorial it is stated:

It is time to cheer up. Through the Beirut bombing, the elimination of the family farm, the continuing destruction of heavy Northern industry, the multiplication of the hungry and the homeless, the ballooning deficit, the

exploding deficit, the exploding space shuttle, the shambles and failures of the South African drama, and the invasion of Grenada and bombing of Libya—through all this, under the deadening blanket of right-wing consolidation, those famous objective forces and contradictions which make history so much fun for Marxists were accumulating. What looked static was breaking up...it is finally fun to read the newspapers again."

Comment:

This is a bizarre attitude and sounds like "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." The starvation of tens of millions of people in the world, and the slaughter of millions in addition to what is mentioned in the editorial, should make us alarmed. The content of the editorial is disgusting.

B. "Old Visions, New Visions" is an article on the tasks of the left in the trade-unions, etc. In a section on the history of the trade union movement in the fifties, not one word is mentioned about the McCarthy period, which was an attack on the working-class. More should be said, but that in itself is bizarre enough.

C. In an article on rock music, the author maintains that the stars and lyrics are "by and large not overtly reactionary," and then shows how the main theme in this music, sex, is "uh, a little sexist." Is sexism not reactionary? Most of the music the author would have us praise glorifies the brutal subjugation of women and should be attacked.

D. Finally, a little on what the magazine does not say. According to its editorial policy, this magazine wants to challenge "the historical pattern of white supremacy and national oppression in the capitalist domination of this country." Yet, there is nothing in the magazine concerning the recent passage of the "English only" law, the Simpson-Rodino bill, and the over-all increase in the attacks on national minorities. A bit hypocritical, wouldn't you think?

[Editor's note:

I agree on the crisis "crybabies" and the need for specifics in the battle against "white supremacism." As for "hypocrisy," although MIM comrades in the Southwest and Ann Arbor are engaged in struggles regarding immigration, MIM publications themselves are noticeably weak. The literature list has no specific item on Puerto Rico. Excluding our mass movement work, are we much better in our publications than the FRSO?

It's also too easy to get carried away by the liberal breast-beating in the Iran-Contra stuff. For a while, the whole "scandal" gave communists breathing room, but then North himself turned public opinion around and Reagan's desperation may be showing in the Gulf right now.

I too would like to see more stuff done criticizing rock lyrics. Many people are surprised when I tell them what the actual lyrics of Rolling Stones or Who songs are.]



....."Learning from the West"