

INTRODUCTION

Lenin pointed out long ago in his famous work, What is to Be Done? that without a revolutionary theory there could be no revolutionary movement. The history of the struggle of the USNA working class has certainly been ample proof of this statement. Socialism, Engels pointed out almost a century ago, has become a science and therefore it must be studied as a science. Furthermore, it must be studied in such a way not just by a few "party leaders," but by every member of the party. The old Communist Party USA held that it was sufficient that just a few people study Marxism while the bulk of the membership do "practical work." We must renounce this practice by insisting that every member of the party study the science of Marxism-Leninism. Unless we do that, we will ensure that the party will be divided between "leaders" and "followers." But Marxism teaches us that every member of the party is a leader, each with a different responsibility perhaps, but a leader nonetheless. In order to be a true leader of the working class movement, in order to guide the working class through the socialist revolution, every communist must strive toward the mastery of Marxism-Leninism.

How are we to go about mastering this theory? The "Conclusion" of the History of the CPSU(Bolshevik) provides us with a good answer to this question: "Mastering Marxist-Leninist theory does not at all mean learning all its formulas by heart and clinging to their every letter. To master the Marxist-Leninist theory we must first of all learn to distinguish between its letter and its substance."

"Mastering the Marxist-Leninist theory means assimilating the substance of this theory and learning to use it in the solution of the practical problems of the revolutionary movement under the varying conditions of the class struggle of the proletariat."

Communists must learn to find their own bearings. They will be unable to do this unless they are rooted in Marxism-Leninism. In order to ensure that every comrade can find their own bearings, the conditions must be created for the fullest possible participation of each cadre in their own education. This is accomplished first of all by making education a collective process. We communists are not interested in creating intellectual big-heads. We are interested in building a communist party in which every comrade can defend Marxism and explain it to the proletariat. Secondly, this is accomplished through the seminar method of education. The seminar method means that the comrades all collectively contribute what they can to the particular study in order that the whole collective's understanding may grow. In this way every comrade both teaches and learns at the same time, thus preventing a situation where we have some who are always the "teachers" and other who are always the "learners."

We cannot afford to take it for granted that we study Marxism not merely to interpret the world, but in fact to change it. This formulation of Karl Marx is just as important today as when Marx put it forward decades ago. Marx also showed that theory becomes a material force once it is gripped by the masses. That is our task as communists, to unite socialism with the working class movement. If we do not study Marxism-Leninism with this in mind, we will never master this science, we will only become clever phrase-mongers.

It is in this spirit that this outline has been put forward. It does not claim to encompass the whole scope of the science of Marxism-Leninism. It is no more and no less than an outline, meant to be amended and expanded as the party grows and develops.