

COLORADO TEACH-IN

Anti-draft, anti-war movement grows

By CORES (M-L M)

Over 400 students participated in a 3-day teach in entitled "The Mid East Crisis and the Danger of WW III" in Boulder, Colorado beginning Feb 28th. It was a good example of the mass activities that are taking place in the US as part of the spontaneous struggle against the growing danger of imperialist war. CORES was involved in the preparation of the event and participated in it. We are sharing this experience with the rest of the communist movement to help in clarifying what should be a communist approach to the task of opposing the two superpowers in the US and the danger of war.

Registration and the draft was the immediate concern for many of the people who attended the conference but the teach in was broadened to include many aspects of the danger of war and the current political situation world wide. Panel topics included Iran, Afghanistan, the draft and the lessons of the Vietnam war, US and Soviet foreign policy, oil and imperialism in the Middle East and the sources of a WW III. In this respect, through the course of the event, many people benefited from the struggle and discussions that deepened their awareness of the different stands on these questions.

Another positive factor of the event was that many different groups that had never worked together before came together based on their unity against a new draft and the danger of imperialist war. Thus, the foundation of the conference, its starting point was that war preparations and not that of the people of the US. This orientation was generally adhered to throughout the conference and by the end of the teach-in, it was clear that high-level of consciousness existed.

The resolutions passed by the conference included generally

***Opposition to registration and the draft of either men or women and active promotion of resistance to the draft and within the armed forces**

***Opposition to war preparations of the superpowers, especially those of the US including the MX missile system, neutron bomb, the rapid deployment force, new military bases, especially in the Middle East, military intervention, increases in the Pentagon budget, etc**

***Opposition to the use of the Middle East situation by Carter to step up war preparations, create war hysteria, cover over the economic crisis, etc**

***Investigation and organization against institutions and companies involved in war-related work and support for workers of the same facilities**

***Opposition to nuclear power plants as a way to build US energy self sufficiency**

***Support for self-determination of Iran and Afghanistan and opposition to any interference or intervention by US. A call for the removal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. Support for the investigation of the Shah's crimes and a speedy, peaceful solution to the hostage situation.**

***Opposition to Senate Bill 1722 (modified S I bill) and any strengthening of the FBI or CIA including covert activities aimed at overthrowing other governments**

***Support for the struggles of the Third World especially those aimed against US Imperialism.**

This is not a complete list but does generally reflect the issues that were agreed upon by the overwhelming majority of the participants.

In practice, it turned out that with this largely white audience, it was more difficult than we thought to get across the need to support the Third World struggle in general as a concrete step to postponing war preparations. We learned that to carry this general question out we needed to do a

special division of labor among our forces (who were mostly oppressed nationalities) to better build that consciousness and support.

OUR APPROACH

CORES saw it as important to work with the forces sponsoring the teach in and worked to clarify and build from the basic unities against US war preparations. We saw that our primary task was to deepen the question of US imperialism, how it was one of the two superpowers and main enemies of the world's peoples, and how here in the US it sought to put the economic burden and war preparations on the people, and how it had to be struggled against. We think the conference achieved basic unity on these questions.

Secondarily, we saw the need to expose the role of Soviet social imperialism. We needed to go beyond the exposures done by the US capitalists. The important thing was to show that the Soviet Union was no longer a socialist country, to expose how the US was using Soviet aggression to improve its own position strategically and get the people to support its war preparations. We tried to emphasize that the way to struggle against Soviet Imperialism was not by relying on the US, but rather by the revolutionaries taking a stand independent from either of the two superpowers or any sector of the US bourgeoisie.

There has been discussion in the communist movement about the anti-imperialist slogan of "Down with the two superpowers" as a tactical line in this anti war work. This line could be interpreted in different ways. Based on our experience, this tactical line means exposing both superpowers in a relevant way, while concentrating on our own US bourgeoisie. As such, the line would be correct and would serve to broaden and consolidate the anti-war movement. At the same time, if the line is interpreted to mean in practice "equal blows" at the two superpowers, not only would it be incorrect theoretically, but would not move the masses forward and instead could confuse them as to the direction of the main blow in the US.

We also saw as important to struggle and give guidance for more organization in the event, develop better avenues of democratic discussion and avert the anarchistic tendencies that characterized the anti-Vietnam war era. This proved crucial to setting up conditions to better consolidate forces and strengthen them against disruption and diversion.

THE CPUSA AND COUSML DEFENSE LAWYERS FOR THE TWO SUPERPOWERS

The need to support national liberation struggles, especially those aimed at US imperialism, was put forward in a number of different workshops. Some marsh forces attempted to deviate the discussion in order to cover for US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism. In the workshop on Iran, for example, the COUSML shows its neo-Trotskyite line, tailored in Albania, by focusing on criticizing the Iranian revolution and its leaders, and not on US imperialism and its attacks on the Iranian people. The COUSML joined hands with other reactionaries in attacking Khomeini and the militants' take-over of the US embassy and hostages in an attempt to undermine the support of the great majority of the conference participants for the Iranian revolution. They failed badly in their attempt and in reality their action showed the people the opportunist force the COUSML is.

The CPUSA was another defender of imperialism. They attempted to divert the attention of the people from the real problems in the Middle East with their peddling of "detente" and the need for ratification of SALT II. This serves to hide the predatory, war-mongering nature of both



the US and the USSR. For the CPUSA, the superpowers, and not the masses, are the makers of history. These revisionists justified the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan and despite all their claims of opposing the US bourgeoisie, their program calls not for the violent overthrow of the imperialist bourgeoisie, but for the outright revisionist "peaceful transition to socialism".

The CPUSA and the COUSML show with their participation in this conference that they are better defenders of the superpowers than the superpowers themselves.

ON SOVIET SOCIAL IMPERIALISM

Dealing with the Soviet Union within the US movement is becoming an important line question within the communist movement. These are the lessons we have drawn regarding that question.

As we have stated, in our view our main task is to expose the US bourgeoisie and develop the concrete struggle against its war preparations. The Soviet Union's aggression and its agents must also be combated. What did this mean specifically at the teach in?

Only around two of the more than ten workshops was an exposure of Russia our main concern. In relation to Afghanistan and Soviet foreign policy, we conducted some educational work to help people better understand the danger and nature of Soviet Imperialism. (Strangely enough, the CPUSA chose not to speak on either of these two panels, but simply "defended" the Soviet Union from the audience.)

And this is the way we approached the issue of Afghanistan. Given the conference's unclarity about Soviet Imperialism and beginning from the unities of the conference, our flyer proposed a resolution of

"We support the right of self-determination for the Afghanistan people, free from any foreign intervention and call for all foreign troops out of Afghanistan. We oppose the moves by Carter to use the situation to step up war preparations here in the US."

This resolution (not unlike the UN resolution) did not mention the Soviet Union by name but put forward the principle of self-determination and non-intervention. Tactically, it was a way to build on the unity of the conference and still aim a blow at the social-imperialists.

The CPUSA (and the Workers' World Party) opposed this resolution by trying to get self-determination and foreign troops stricken from the resolution. They were unsuccessful in convincing the body of the conference to strike out these points which was a good indication of the consciousness of the people.

Nor was the CPUSA able to obscure the Afghanistan question. Rather than defend

the Soviet Union military intervention, they tried to convince people that the bourgeois press had lied about international events in the past (eg the Vietnam war in the 60's) and that by implication they were lying too about Afghanistan. This went over no one. By the end of the conference, it was more than clear that to a certain extent these American people understood the danger of the Soviet Union as well as that of their own bourgeoisie.

Based on that experience and proceeding from our line, exposures of the Soviet Union are relevant in the cases that

1 Only by deepening people's consciousness could the real danger of war be explained. The US will fight that war with the Russians and failing to get this across will make the character of the war vague or imply that the Carter Doctrine is simply sabre rattling with no specific enemy in mind. This only plays into the hands of both superpowers.

2 We need to combat the anti communism of US' anti Russian propaganda, a so-called socialist country. If we allowed this to go unchecked it could be used for red baiting in the US or against the People's Republic of China.

3 To develop support for the struggles such as in Kampuchea and Afghanistan, aimed against Soviet imperialism. Only by exposing the facts of the so called Soviet "assistance" can we win over people to render support to Afghanistan etc.

4 To counteract that war hysteria of the US bourgeoisie. Failing to clarify the question of the SU would isolate us from the people who accept Carter's version of the Soviet danger. We can effectively build on the American people's consciousness and win them away from their own bourgeoisie's national chauvinism.

5 To expose that sector of the bourgeoisie that is providing technology, etc, to the Soviet Union, the appeasers.

6 To combat the "peaceful road to socialism" idea since its implications for the struggle in the US are just as suicidal as they were for Chile.

ERROR

CORES made one significant error in the conference that deserves mention. A petition was presented to be endorsed by the conference—a letter to the Soviet people pointing out how the two superpowers' leaders (read government) were not able to solve international problems and that it was up to the peoples to do something to preserve world peace. We committed a leftist error of seizing on a secondary point (that the petition could imply all people want peace when the bourgeoisie of both superpowers do not) and belittled the general thrust, which was correct. This

Continues on page 8

TEACH - IN

Continued from page 3

error played into the hands of the CPUSA and the petition was withdrawn as a resolution.

SUMMATION

Overall, we feel that our work in the conference was productive because of the line and tactics, the consciousness and genuine anti-imperialist aspirations of the people, the blatant opportunism of the CPUSA and the blatant actions of the two superpowers in war preparations. We plan to continue to work with various forces and will strive to help build this movement, continuing to build on the positive results of the conference.

We also learned that many of the young elements in this movement do not have a direct or clear grasp of the anti-Vietnam war or anti-draft movements of the 60's. Erroneous ideas from that time have not yet been rejected by this movement, such as reformism (write your congressmen), pacifism (mystical approaches to opposing the draft), etc. The absence of significant

working class participation, the lack of a genuine party, etc., will also take their toll and unfortunately, could result in unnecessary repetition of previous errors. We summarized that that history will need to be explained and summed up to this movement especially by the communist forces and that consequently, the Marxist-Leninists must acquire a more detailed grasp of that history.

We see that the real qualitative step in advancing this work among the US people to postpone the outbreak of WW III would be the principled uniting of Marxist-Leninist forces. This should be clear to every one. In this vein, we and LPR will continue concrete efforts to break down whatever sectarianism and big organization chauvinism that remains in our movement. In this way, we can all struggle for unity on a correct line, approach and practice. Then our individual efforts can have a direct bearing in clarifying a correct direction to oppose superpower war preparations (especially those of the US) and aid in the establishing of a new communist party.