

## UNITY STATEMENT

September 8, 1990

We are former members and supporters of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist); writers, staff, and distributors of Unity newspaper, and revolutionary minded activists who have joined together to initiate the process of building a new organization that is dedicated to peace, justice, equality and socialism.

Through our individual and collective experiences in our lives, and as activists in the struggles of African Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, Asian Americans, women, in labor and the peace movement we have come to believe that there is a need for an organization of the working class for socialism.

We support all struggle against oppression and for democracy. We believe that there is a need for fundamental change in our society, a need to change economic and social relations and a need for social ownership of the working class. We want to unite all people, of various classes, into the movement for socialism.

We believe in the strategic alliance of the working class and oppressed nationalities. We also uphold the rights of the African American nation, Chicano nation, and Hawai'ian nation to self-determination.

The process of building a socialist organization can begin by first uniting those who agree with the concept of scientific socialism as developed by Marx, Lenin, Mao, the Sandinistas, and others around the world. We believe that the critique of capitalism and imperialism by Marx and Lenin to be valid. We believe in the method of Dialectical and Historical materialism, and we see class struggle as the motive force of society.

Our process will be patient and based on unity which will be built through a period of political line development and organizational unity. As a preliminary guide we will utilize the P.J.E.S. and Moving Forward Our Tradition.

Throughout this process, we will strive to achieve higher unity, maintain activism in political mass movements, and study ML and other relevant [...] to further develop our understanding. We will attempt to theoretically develop positions on what ML is, organizational structure, and the major political issues facing the masses at this time.

MOVING FORWARD OUR TRADITION  
(revised September 7, 1990)

I. INTRODUCTION

Our movement is at an important crossroads in its history. We are in the midst of a most important political discussion. This discussion will not only decide the basic political line, character and direction of our organization but will influence the development of socialism as a viable force in the American progressive movement. Discussion will of necessity be sharp and passionate, in part because we are asked to abandon the fundamental beliefs upon which we committed our political lives and upon which the League has based its entire history. Debate is not limited to this organization but is reflective of current world reality. Our coming to terms with this debate as it related to our own reality in this country is a further development of our program, which has proven to be essentially correct and serves as an anchor for our mass work.

A. How Should We Look At Our History?

Because the nature of this discussion, there is some question as to how we should look at our history. To help understand this question it might be helpful to understand how we became a Marxist-Leninist organization. We did not become Marxists because of sitting down one day and reading some books. We became Marxists in our early history because we were involved in the struggles of the people. Because we were outraged by the way our families, our communities and our nationalities were being treated by society. We were fighting then because we wanted to do away with the poverty, racism and oppression we saw around us every day. We fought against police brutality, for the rights of farmworkers, against the imperialist war in Viet Nam, for housing rights, for our culture and languages -- against the million and one abuses and humiliations that the system heaps on the working people of this society.

We turned to Marxism-Leninism because we saw that many of the liberation struggles in the Third World were led by Marxist-Leninists. And we turned to it because it helped to answer the questions which our practice alone could not answer: what was the reason for the suffering and exploitation that we saw, what are the root causes of national oppression, racism, sexism, and the exploitation of working people, what kind of system could possibly replace the one we have now, how can a revolution happen in the United States and what social forces can bring it about, and to understand in deeper and more profound way that the people are the makers of history.

In other words Marxism provided us with a methodology and an

experience which we could apply to understand our situation here in a much deeper and clearer way, not just that the problem was capitalism, but how and why capitalism functions the way it does. In the final analysis it was our own experience which drew us to embrace Marxism-Leninism, and we did so consciously and with enthusiasm, and yes, at times, in an inexperienced and dogmatic way. Of course, like any other area of study or science, our understanding has proceeded from a lower to a higher level.

It was our understanding of Marxism which helped us to analyze and understand the Chicano and African-American struggles as the struggles of oppressed nations, which helped us to understand the important role the working class can play in society if they are organized and assisted to stand on their own feet, it helped us to articulate our line on the strategic alliance, that is, the main social forces which can effect a revolution in the U.S.

This is our history, this is what the League has stood for in large part since it was formed and which has helped us to develop a strong and viable socialist trend in many movements and areas of the country.

### B. Our Views

In summary the basic points that we feel we must uphold are:

\* There must be an explicit analysis of the capitalist system as the root cause of the major social, political, and economic problems of the United States. It is important to clearly identify in our analysis that we view capitalism is bankrupt as a system and must be eliminated in order to create the conditions for national and sexual equality, a democratic foreign policy, an end to exploitation, and a more humane and ethical society, and so on.

\* World events show that capitalism is a crashing failure. We believe that the Third World will largely determine the future of humankind, and the suffering of Asia, Africa and Latin America is best understood using Lenin's analysis of imperialism. The Third World is the single most volatile region in the entire world. Events in Eastern Europe deserve a thorough on-going discussion, but we believe it is still premature to draw too many conclusions from them (i.e., "socialism is dead, Marxism-Leninism is dead").

\* We need a clear class analysis. The U.S. is a class society, and there is a basic contradiction between the working class and the capitalist class. The social forces which can bring about revolution must be clearly defined. The main social forces in the U.S. capable of creating fundamental social change are the working class and the national movements. For the work-

ing class to assume this crucial role in the 1990's it must be organized, it must have its own political party and all should struggle for its empowerment. We believe that the clear target of our revolution is the capitalist class (with some exceptions).

\* We believe that now more than ever that we must uphold the right of self-determination for the oppressed Black, Chicano and Hawaiian nations. We uphold the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination, not as mere formulations, but as reflective of a living social reality in the U.S. which must be acknowledged and dealt with correctly. We believe that the strategic alliance of the working class and oppressed nations are the only social forces which can bring about a revolution.

\* We must state forthrightly that we are fighting for socialism. Revolution means changing property relations. We must be advocates of socialism defined by our experiences in this nation: Our socialism will be democratic, multiparty, mixed economic structure, and where the wealth of society will go primarily to those who produce it.

We must understand clearly that this discussion is not about whether we call ourselves Marxist-Leninist, or about formulations. It is a discussion about our analysis of the world, our country, of our history, and of the social forces which can affect revolution and what is necessary to enable revolutionaries to create the conditions for a fundamental social change into socialism, a more just political, social and economic system.

We do not feel the pressing issue is to call ourselves "Marxist-Leninist" anymore than we would argue that the hammer and sickle should be our symbol. The real issue is how we look at the U.S., our view of the role of the working class and the oppressed nations, and what type of system we are fighting for.

## II. THE WORLD SITUATION

The world is going through some important and momentous changes. Lenin's theory of imperialism is still valid as a guide to understanding the world. This theory is a framework for understanding the reasons for the massive Third World debt, invasions of Grenada and Panama, and the U.S. role in El Salvador, etc. This analysis enables us to understand that U.S. imperialism is based on the exploitation of oppressed nations at home and of much of the Third World which enables it to survive and be a superpower.

In Chapter 1 of our Program Peace, Justice, Equality, and Socialism, we explain how exploitation and economic crisis are part of the very fabric of U.S. capitalism. Utilizing Lenin's basic analysis of imperialism, we explain that:

"Monopoly capitalism is a system of international exploitation -- imperialism. The monopolies invest capital abroad, penetrate foreign markets, and plunder the natural resources of developing countries. They also attempt to dominate other countries politically and militarily. Colonialism and neo-colonialism bring enormous profits for the big banks and corporations, and wretched lives for the people of the developing world." (page 14 of PJES).

The survival of U.S. capitalism is dependent on the continued U.S. domination and plunder of much of the world. This compels the ruling class to spend trillions of dollars on a war machine whose basic purpose is to protect their empire, regardless of the suffering, death and tragedy that it causes.

As our Program states,

"The masses of people of the U.S. want peace and do not want military adventures. But as long as the system of U.S. imperialism exists, these threats will continue, since U.S. imperialism is based on world domination and exploitation which inevitably produce tension, intervention and war." (page 25, PJES)

We do not think that we should abandon Marxism-Leninism because of the changes in Eastern Europe or because some national liberation organizations no longer refer to themselves as Marxist-Leninists. Events in Eastern Europe deserve thorough ongoing discussion, but we believe that it is premature to draw sweeping and definitive conclusion from them.

Some Eastern European countries have rejected socialism completely and are restoring capitalism (Poland, Hungary, Germany). Other countries have elected new socialist governments or given the socialists strong support (Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia). We should not be so quick to succumb to the U.S. bourgeoisie's ideological offensive ("socialism is dead, capitalism ["democracy"] has triumphed") and write off Marxism-Leninism and socialism especially for our own country.

Despite events in Eastern Europe, it is capitalism which is the failure on a world scale. The Third World today is a suffering monument to the failures of capitalism, and in our view it will ultimately reassert itself as the dominant world force for change -- for liberation and revolution.

We agree with the League's initial analysis of Eastern Europe. We explained that socialism had been imposed on those countries by the U.S.S.R., and was not an outgrowth of popular revolutions. Ultimately the changes in Eastern Europe are a positive development which in the long-term will strengthen and invigorate socialism.

Many liberation movements still have strong Marxist-Leninist components including the ANC, the Palestinian struggle, and the struggle in the Philippines. The Sandinistas have prominent Marxist-Leninists in their leadership and many of their decisions and approaches to their revolution are based on Marxism-Leninism. The government of Zimbabwe is a Marxist-Leninist government and applies Marxism flexibly and creatively to their conditions which has enabled it [to be one] of the strongest of the Frontline states.

Clearly Marxism-Leninism remains a vital part of the life of many nations and liberation movements. For instance the African National Congress has been promoted as a model for organizing here in the U.S. All of our members should realize that the South African Communist Party, as a representative of the working class, has played a major part in the development of the anti-apartheid struggle -- helping to develop strong trade unions and a viable armed struggle. Nelson Mandela has repeatedly acknowledged the important role of the SACP in the struggle against apartheid.

### III. ANALYSIS OF THE U.S.

Despite the media's gloating about the difficulties and failures of socialism, the U.S. is a country in deep trouble. With the advent of Reaganism, all the evils of capitalism have been allowed to flourish openly. The gap between the rich and poor is the greatest since the 1930's. Nearly 40 million people are in poverty, tens of millions lack any health care, and social service programs crated to help the poor are all but eliminated. Recently, welfare mothers have been informed that unless they can provide proof of malnutrition, they are no longer eligible for the WIC program.

Education is failing millions of minority students each year. The increasing numbers of at-risk children, the decreasing number of minority teachers, the attacks on bilingual education and urban schools are real examples of an inequitable educational system. African-American and Chicano students are facing decreasing enrollment in colleges and universities throughout the nation, those lucky enough to enroll are finding less financial aid and educational assistance. Lauro Cavazos, Bush's token Latino appointee to head the department of Education blames Latino parents for the problems confronting our youth in school!

While the Bush administration promotes the "Right to Life" movement at every turn, the quality of life for countless numbers of African-American and Latina mothers is deplorable. Infant mortality and life expectancy rates are worse than some developing countries. The recent Supreme Court appointee is no friend of women's rights and the right to choice is "at-risk".

Racism and attacks on minority people in this nation is ever-increasing. Bensonhurst is only the "tip of the iceberg", hate crime is on the rise, inner-ethnic conflict in our minority communities is a direct result of the increased oppression and the frustration of the African-American, Asian and Latino peoples. The standard of living for the working class is declining and most fear the future.

We expect a serious increase in social upheaval and mass struggle. We expect these struggles to be broader and more militant than the movement of the mid-70's and 80's. We have a responsibility to help provide leadership and direction to these struggles, especially among lower strata workers and in the national movements.

We must focus on establishing our mass base, because lacking this we will become ineffective in every arena. It is our view that a base among the working class must be developed. This is the class which is best able and has more reason to provide leadership to the revolution: both because of its key role in the economy, and because workers constitute the majority of the national movements.

We must also develop our work "at the top", and with middle forces. We have been active in working on a cooperative basis as socialists. There are several areas where there have been common issues such as opposing "English Only" supporting the Jesse Jackson campaign. We have become more sophisticated in our ability to work in the electoral arena, in union positions, and as staff and administrators of programs in our communities, on campuses, in middle class professional organizations, etc. This work helps us to build a broad united front, gives us allies against attacks from the right, and facilitates the development of our mass base.

Our work must be guided by a clear and accurate analysis of U.S. society. Through our work in the struggle, we will better understand the strengths, weaknesses and interests of various classes. It is our responsibility to help those we work with to understand the systemic nature of oppression and to better understand the necessity for alliances, networks, and multinational unity.

The program we adopted at our 1984 Congress presents a fairly concise view of how we look at U.S. history, and socio-economic forces which shape contemporary U.S. society. Conditions which are responsible for the massive social problems of this country. While we may be critical of the style in which the program was written, and should make major changes in aspects of it, it is the basic framework and its analysis is still correct.

In analyzing the U.S. we say:

"The U.S. is a land of stark and bewildering contradictions.

The greatest industrial and agricultural power in history cannot feed, clothe and provide a decent livelihood for millions in this country. Countless others work away their lives to survive, while billionaires squander fortunes on mansions and fly around the world in private jets. Poverty and economic insecurity exist alongside extravagance.

Vicious racism and the repressive power of the police, FBI and CIA mock the promises of liberty, justice and equality. Washington politicians say they want international cooperation and peace, but they continue to build one of the mightiest military machines on earth. ...

We see churches in every neighborhood and endlessly hear about the sanctity of the family and morality. Yet the country suffers horrible moral and social decay. Violence against women and their sexual exploitation are unmatched on earth. Movies and television are very sophisticated technically, but offer not much more than romance and escapism. Their stories dwell on violence, despair and degradation, and advocate that life's aim should be narrow self-gratification. Real life, in contrast, cries out for work for the welfare of humanity.

What is the reason for these contradictions between the promises, the potential of this society, and its stark reality? Why is there such an agonizing gap between what is and what could be?

The answers to these questions cannot be found in cynical condemnations of "human nature" or apologies about "the way things are". No! Monopoly capitalism, the social system under which we live, is responsible for the contradictions in U.S. society.

A system of exploitation, violence, racism and war strangle our lives. Monopoly capitalism thrives on the private control of society's wealth and production [emphasis added] -- production involving the interconnected efforts of millions of working people.

The super-rich have one basic goal in life: to make more and more profits, and they accomplish this by dominating the economy, politics, and cultural life of the country. The monopolists will throw workers out into the streets to starve, promote violent racism, and build a military arsenal that can destroy the world several times over -- anything for profits!" (pages 1 and 3, PJES)



Further, our Program analyzes U.S. history, explaining the material basis for the present class and national inequality, and the U.S. role as an imperialist superpower. It is a specific analysis of the root causes for the poverty, oppression, homelessness, racist attacks, and all of the basic social ills which dominate our society. It is an analysis with which we can help the people better understand life around them, the essential correctness of their strivings for democracy and a just society, and to make positive change.

In the first chapter, our Program examines racism and national oppression, the suffocating and brutal reality which reaches from Bensonhurst and Boston to San Ysidro and Big Mountain, are part and parcel of the capitalist system. Specifically, we state that,

"The bourgeoisie's control of the territory, resources, and labor of these oppressed nations [the African American Nation, the Chicano Nation and the Hawai'ian Nation] has been one of the main pillars of U.S. society and is integral to the system of U.S. monopoly capitalism." (page 16, PJES)

In Chapter 1 we also explain how other forms of oppression, and imperialist wars are a product of the capitalist system in the U.S. The chapter concludes by saying:

"Exploitation, injustice, racism and national oppression, and the threat of war -- this is the face of the U.S. under monopoly capitalism today. The situation cries out for change, for a new, more rational social system -- socialism!" (page 25, PJES)

We believe that the basic thrust of this analysis is correct -- both as an explanation of U.S. history, and its present reality. This is the Marxist-Leninist line which we uphold. Not Marxism-Leninism in general (whatever that is), but Marxism-Leninism as we have applied it to the United States and its conditions. We think that we should all uphold this line unless we have a clear and more accurate analysis of U.S. society, and a better explanation for its tremendous social problems.

#### IV. ANALYSIS OF CLASSES

We continue to uphold the leading role of the working class. We must strive to empower the working class because it represents the principal revolutionary class in society. It is the majority in the real world because of its size, its relation to the various national movements, its position in society, its relation to the productive process and its growing impoverishment. The best example of this is Watsonville where the workers, under Communist leadership, were able to win a very difficult strike.

To be effective in the political and social struggle, the working class must be organized, unified, trained, and have support. The working class needs its own political party, just as other classes have theirs to enable them to wage political struggle. Our work has provided members of this organization with the opportunity to lead mass struggles within a broad united front. Our experiences in this work have reaffirmed the need for a party representing the interests of the working class. In the electoral arena, the Republican and Democratic parties promote and protect the interests of the petit bourgeoisie and bourgeois classes. Witness Gov. Deukmejian's demand that Willie Brown concede the construction of a prison in East Los Angeles for approval of the proposed State Budget. Where is the party for the working class?

The working class does not have wealth of military power, or extensive academic training or connections to help it in its struggle for socialism. It must have an organization which will help it to become more unified, to learn the most effective ways to struggle, to acquire resources, to help it develop and implement a political strategy. This has been our history, and is the real meaning of our successes in Local 2, Local 11, Watsonville, and in other areas. Make no mistake about it -- without socialist involvement there would be no Watsonville!

This does not mean an organization exclusively of workers (no M-L organization has ever believed this), but one for the workers. We have heard arguments that to empower the working class, other oppressed classes will of necessity be oppressed by the working class. We disagree. Throughout our history we have helped arm workers in opposing all forms of oppression and in supporting the oppressed of society. For example, in Watsonville the important role the working class played in electing a revolutionary to the City Council is in the interest of all the oppressed classes (including the Chicano bourgeoisie) of that city.

We also believe we should continue to try and develop the leadership of the working class in the short and longterm sense. While in many different issues other classes may be in leadership, we believe that the working class should still try and have an independent view and try, to the best of its ability, to provide good and responsible leadership. By leadership, we don't mean by declaration or through organizational manipulation. Working class leadership means recognizing the independence and autonomy of mass organizations, having a sound analysis of issues, and having the ability to help the people fight for a better life. This is how we want to develop the leadership of the working class.

We must fight for the empowerment of the working class. This does not simply mean fair elections, even under a socialist

system. Given its position in society, its lack of resources and other advantages, the working class would clearly have a difficult time participating equally in the electoral arena even under socialism. Certainly, without its own political organization, it would be impossible to do so. It would be disarmed and would ultimately be subject to the long-term leadership (good or bad) of other classes.

We should continue to consciously strive to build a political party for the working class (it may not be the only one, and do not have call it the vanguard), and to work for the empowerment of that class and through that empowerment provide for democracy and equality for all other oppressed classes and groups in society.

We cannot be vague about how we view the capitalist class. In our view, the capitalist class is the target of our revolution with some exceptions (the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations, and perhaps some individual capitalists who recognize the need to transform the system). In the immediate term we recognized the need for an alliance with the moderate and liberal bourgeoisie against the Right, but from a long-term point of view we do not view most sectors of the bourgeoisie as strategic allies. We have seen no evidence that they are ready to accede to changing the system in a way which would be democratic, equal, just and peaceful.

This is not an academic, abstract question, but goes to the heart of whether or not we view the capitalist system as the problem or not. If it is the problem, then we have to target those who control and primarily benefit from such a system.

#### V. THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

The last decade has not only validated our view on the national question, but has brought a renewed attack on the oppressed Black, Chicano, and Hawai'ian Nations. This should force us to be an even more forceful advocate for the right to self-determination than in the recent past.

We are witness to an assault that is threatening a whole generation of African-Americans, to an anti-Latino hysteria that has given rise to and emboldened the English-Only movement and the "Light Up the Border" reactionaries. Coupled with the internecine warfare in our communities, we are seeing some of the most severe repression in recent memory.

In large part, the League was born out of the National Movements and we saw first hand the limits of narrow nationalism. That we are predominately Black, Chicano-Latino and Asian-American makes us unique among the Left.

As the League we have made the most complete and accurate of the U.S. national question that is available. We emphasize that the oppressed nations exist, not because we wish them to, but because we wish them to, but because U.S. imperialism has created them. The national question is a key question which is critical to the revolution.

We believe that oppressed nationalities exist, not simply as cultural or ethnic groups (as the ruling class designates them) fighting to control cultural institutions and artifacts.

This is a key question of which social forces we view as critical to the revolution, what they are striving for, and who we can bring them into an alliance with the working class.

## VI. OUR ROAD TO SOCIALISM

### A. The State

We maintain that what we say about the state in our Program is essentially accurate:

"The government of the U.S. today serves the interests of the ruling monopoly capitalist class.

The state suppresses and controls opposition to capitalism. It maintains social order to provide a stable environment for big business. It does this through the massive state apparatus, including the courts, police, army, FBI, jails and bureaucracy. It also helps direct the capitalist economy and administer vital support services..." (pp. 49-50, PJES)

This correctly characterizes the U.S. state, and example after example verifies this, from Bush's so-called drug war, to the role of the state in the Watsonville strike, the P-9 strike, the Pittston coal strike and the Stanford sit-in and recent redbaiting campaign there. The state is mainly controlled by the capitalists: the police, the FBI, CIA, armed forces, are essentially at their beck and call, to maintain their profits and power.

The struggle for democracy fuels the struggle for socialism. Through struggle the masses have been able to win important democratic reforms (such as Social Security, Voting Rights, Civil Rights, etc.) and at times restrict the ability of the state to repress the movement. Fighting for democratic rights has always been a key element of our history and our line. Through the course of these struggles the people learn about their own power and the inherent limitations of capitalist "democracy". It is, as Malcolm X said "20th Century hypocrisy".

Our attitude toward the state is:

\* We must fight to eliminate the more repressive parts of the state apparatus -- the FBI, CIA, police and military intelligence agencies, etc. In the short term, we should expose them, and demand public oversight and control of these agencies;

\* We should fight to democratize all levels of government. This means struggling for a major change in the "rules of politics" in U.S. society -- expanding voting rights, ending at-large elections, gerrymandering, making it really possible for third parties to participate in the political arena (access to resources, media, proportional representation such as exist in many other countries, etc.);

\* We should strive to give the masses some measure of control over the state -- community control of the police, the military, etc.

### B. Constitutional Road to Socialism

In a bourgeois democracy like the U.S. today, electoral politics is an important arena of struggle. We have learned through bitter experience how damaging red baiting can be in an electoral campaign, much more so than in other areas of struggle. Comrades seeking public office have had to deny any connection with the League in the course of their campaigns or risk losing most of the gains that the campaigns made.

This problem has raised many questions in our ranks. In fact, the careers of people like Ron Dellums (a national leader of the DSA) or Ken Cockrel, the late city council man from Detroit; it and former leader of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, suggests that under the right conditions politicians can function as open socialists and still be popular and effective, particularly if they represent heavily minority and working class districts.

But we also need to recognize that running people for office is not the only means of electoral struggle. Ballot measures and struggles for progressive legislation are also ways for us to verify support for our views, and often demonstrate much more clearly both the potentialities and the limits of electoral politics. Under our present system of bourgeois democracy and the "two party system" (with both parties dominated by big business), it may never be possible to elect a socialist President or a socialist majority in Congress. It is questionable whether the Capitalists would ever allow a Jesse Jackson presidency, though we will certainly continue to fight for it.

Our aim is to build a broad political movement which can eventually fight for and win an electoral mandate for socialism.

This has been achieved only once in history -- in Chile, where the people voted in a socialist government, although it did not win an actual majority in the election. The defeat of Chilean socialism was not because it came to power through elections but because the new government failed to dismantle or radically weaken the old state apparatus, which eventually was used to overturn socialism and slaughter Chilean workers.

Constitutional transition does not mean an evolutionary transition. If anything the history of this country and our own experience shows that every struggle for social changes requires tremendous struggle and the ruling class is quick to use force to try and stop it. The struggle to effect an electoral mandate for socialism will of necessity be the product of tremendous social upheaval, mass struggle, and more than likely state violence against the people. We should not in any way have illusions about this, or promote such illusions among the people.

History shows and our own experience confirms that social change can come about through mass democratic struggle (Voting Rights, Civil Rights, etc.), and that the social forces exist in this country to enable a fundamental transformation of society to come about in the same way. It also means that the working class would have to win and hold power electorally, and that it could be voted out of power if the people so choose. No party in our new system would have an automatic and permanent mandate to rule. Leadership would have to be earned and verified electorally by the people.

This view necessarily implies a change in our views about the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat as it has been practiced in the world has been undemocratic and totalitarian in many respects. The emphasis in our program should be on fighting for a democratic socialism, although we believe that even under socialism we would continue to advocate the abolition and outlawing of the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis and other forms of racist organizations (that is, the people would exercise "dictatorship" over these groups). This view is a change from our previous views on the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marxism-Leninism must change as conditions change, that is its essential strength.

The essential question for our revolution is not the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. This is the dictatorship which runs this country and brings suffering to millions of people. In the real world, this is the dictatorship people have to deal with and which we have to eliminate to achieve "fundamental change".

We see the revolution as a multiparty-coalition endeavor. We fully intend to create a type of socialism which would be multiparty, and whereby those who the people elect run the gov-

ernment. The difference between this and our present system, is that the masses, especially the working class, would have a real (and not just formal) opportunity to form parties, to have access to resources and the media, to be trained in government administration, and which give genuine substance to democracy.

## VII. HOW WE VIEW SOCIALISM

As a swirl of international debate surrounds the question of socialism, we too must lay out a basic view of how we envision socialism in the U.S.

It is a mistake to chart our course based on the socialist experience of other countries. We never did before and we shouldn't now. The development of socialism abroad occurred on the remains of feudalism in very poor backward countries. In many ways, the cult of personality developed around Lenin, Stalin, and Mao had its roots in a feudal legacy.

Instead, we should articulate a clear view of socialism based on the analysis of the U.S. in this modern era. The U.S. is an advanced capitalist society with highly developed productive forces and technology and which has a history of bourgeois democracy unknown in any socialist country.

We waste no time in denouncing the perversions of socialism, "excessive centralization and commandism..." but we must uphold "the basic critique of capitalism that a society cannot be democratic which is ruled by profit and social inequality and in which power over the most vital areas of life is outside public control" ("Has Socialism Failed?", by Joe Slovo, general secretary, South African Communist Party and leading member of the African National Congress).

We should develop a view of socialism on four basic points:

- 1) The main areas of wealth will be placed into the hands of society as a whole.
- 2) Establish a mixed economy with some state control of certain industries such as health care.
- 3) Establish complete democracy with a multi-party parliamentary form of government with free and fair elections.
- 4) Institutionalize the RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION for oppressed nations including the right to independence.

In our experience people often make a distinction between socialism and communism. The majority of people are not so readily turned off by the notion of socialism. This is true even

among many middle forces. It is more difficult now to talk about it, but we don't think this situation will necessarily remain the same for long.

We have heard arguments that we cannot be for socialism: there is too much confusion about it, it turns people off and fuels redbaiting. We disagree. We propose a clear objective to the people. We present a clear view of socialism and advocate a social change which is in the best interest of all people. To fail to offer a real alternative to the masses only disarms our members and leaves each one with the task of trying to explain WHAT we are trying achieve, HOW we see building a new system, and WHERE we are going. We proudly advocate people before profits. We offer a viable alternative for achieving peace, justice and equality. WE advocate peace, justice, equality and socialism.

### VIII. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

These are some preliminary ideas based partly on the many discussion we have had in the League in the past several months and on our own practice in the various areas of work in this past period and our understanding of the developments in our work. They obviously need quite a bit of development and are offered for discussion.

We propose that in order to remain an effect revolutionary organization we uphold our Marxist-Leninist line and our basic program. To move forward we do need to make some major changes as well. We have previously discussed our views on our political line. In this section we will focus on organizational questions.

First, we reject clandestinity as inappropriate to our conditions. If we are to be effective politically we must be able to utilize bourgeois democracy to it fullest extent. As we have always maintained, the struggle for democracy is the fuel for socialist revolution. Secrecy make that task more difficult, and is ineffective in protecting us from the state. Our best protection from state attack is support from the people and our allies. We must become an open socialist organization. Ultimately, the question of individual openness or secrecy must be voluntary. We should collectively provide guidance where individual cadres make such a request but respect their final decision.

Being an open socialist organization will enable us to make more rapid strides in our work. The masses will not only recognize our line in practice, but identify the many mass leaders in our organization. As far as the method and timetable for opening up our membership, we agree with the need for a well thought out process. [We do not believe that the word "socialist" necessarily needs to be in the new name of the organization.]



We do not agree with the argument that if we uphold the present view of the state we must of necessity build a primarily clandestine organization.

The purpose of clandestinity is to escape state repression and to build the movement. Our understanding of U.S. history and our own experience tells us that this is not true. Clandestinity certainly did not protect the Weathermen, FALN, or other groups. It has not really protected us either. It should come to no ones surprise that the state knows who we are and what we are doing.

But being open won't protect us, in and of itself, either. The bourgeoisie goes after any group it considers a threat, including the NAACP, SCLC, Physicians for Social Responsibility, CISPEs and others. The state infiltrates, harasses, jails and even murders all kinds of groups and individuals, whether Marxist or not.

In many ways, clandestinity actually prevents us from organizing the masses. It leaves us open to red-baiting and suspicion, even from honest forces, who feel threatened by the idea of secret members being in their organizations or arenas.

We don't believe clandestinity is a question of principle, Marxist or otherwise. While we should have no illusions about the state, our best protection from it is not secrecy but our mass base, and support from our allies. We don't need to be clandestine, and it prevents us from broadly propagating our politics, showcasing our mass leaders, and winning the confidence of other classes and strata of society.

Obviously, under fascism we would need to be secret, as would unions and most types of progressive mass organizations. This is not the case now, and therefore we think we should become an open organization, continue to expose the repressive aspects of the state, and struggle to defend and expand democracy.

[Note: At the same time we should all be clear that there is no guarantee against attacks and baiting by our enemies. That is the price of any commitment to social change and involvement in the struggle. While we must be completely responsible to try and safeguard the well-being, jobs and careers of our members, these things will always be in jeopardy if we commit ourselves to fundamentally changing this society.]

Secondly, we have to modify our view on democratic-centralism to place more emphasis on local areas being able to take initiative and more responsibility going to the basic chapters of the organization. We think that minority views should be respected, but that we should strive for consensus and abide by democratically achieved decisions. In order to have any impact

as a national organization we will ultimately need to develop some type of national staff (almost every serious organization has some type of professional staff), and we should try to rebuild our Commissions and have them play a much more active role in summing up our work and developing our line.

We will still need some forms of democratically elected local and national leadership bodies. We should consider limiting the number of terms a person can serve in leadership to two consecutive terms. This would encourage the development of more leadership and help to keep our leadership fresh and in touch with the mass struggle.

Thirdly, much greater emphasis must be given to political education, including Marxist works, the histories of oppressed and the working people, and the writings of non-Marxists such as Rudolfo Acuna, Malcolm X, and others.

Finally, we have to change our policies. A fairly large number of supporters can unite with our line and our work, but they could not participate in the organization with its present policies. We will need to adopt a new dues policy -- probably a small set percentage per month -- and put a lot more emphasis on other more effective and creative ways to fundraise and support the organization.

Our time policy should be changed. We should strive to give as much time as we can to the political work, and struggle for discipline and accountability. But we should accept whatever time our members are able to put into the work but people should be held accountable and responsible for the time they commit.

Our basic units (we think chapters would be a better name) can not meet as frequently. We might want to consider perhaps having monthly meetings to discuss important political questions, with larger quarterly public meetings. We should consider some type of two-tier membership: one for those who desire more frequent meetings and day-to-day leadership for their work, and one for those who might only attend the monthly meetings, etc.

We agree with the idea that our members should be able to freely choose their careers. We want everyone to feel that they are doing what they want (within the limits of this system of course) with their lives, and that no matter what they do, there is a place for them in the struggle. We will need to develop new and more creative strategies to be able to implement this, and we believe that we should continue to encourage an atmosphere where our non-working class members assist the workers in their struggles (as happened in Watsonville).

People's career choices should not be made out of guilt. But we should have the perspective and create an atmosphere in

which people will want their work to assist the working class in whatever way possible. Ultimately, people's personal commitment, not organizational policy, should determine what types of career choices they make.

We encourage our members to do what they want with their lives, including going back to school, going into the professions, etc. But we should never forget that for millions of working people, they have no option but to slave in the fields and factories and workplaces, and to struggle for a better life.

We would argue that this is one of the principal reasons why we need a revolution in this country -- so that working people too can have more options in their life, and real opportunities to pursue other careers working and dying for some billionaires.

### CONCLUSION

The essence of our position is that the League has always been a Marxist-Leninist organization, and has creatively applied Marxism-Leninism to our reality in the U.S., and elaborated a correct strategy on this basis. We have made especially important theoretical contributions on the national question.

We need to make some important changes in our line but we should uphold our basic Marxist-Leninist line, i.e., historical materialism (that the struggle of classes is the basic motive force of social change throughout history), our analysis of U.S. history and contemporary U.S. capitalism, the strategic alliance and the right of the Chicano, Black, and Hawai'ian nations to self-determination, our basic vision of socialism and a majority revolution, and the necessity to help the workers build their own political party to help them lead the struggle for fundamental change in America.

Our greatest hope is that through principled struggle we can get through this difficult period, achieve a greater degree of unity and a much deeper understanding of the needs of our revolutions. We must of necessity strive for a positive and comradely tone to this process and for essential fairness in the process itself. We are confident that this is the common desire of all our membership, and that together we can uphold what is best in our tradition, further develop our perspectives, and continue to make contributions to the wonderful and creative struggle of the people.