

"WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, UNITE!!"

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TEXAS TOWN BATTLES MONOPOLY AND COURTS

Less than forty miles separate the Texas town of Crystal City from the Mexican border. The town's roots stretch across those miles and deep into Mexico. The area formed part of Mexico until 1836, when large numbers of Anglo settlers, many of them slave-owners, revolted against the government and formed the Republic of Texas (later 'annexed' by the US). Today, over 80% of Crystal City's population is Spanish-speaking; a large majority are farmworkers and their families. They farm cotton, onions and spinach. A statue of Popeye in front of the City Hall celebrates the town's reputation as the 'spinach capital' of the world. Because crops can be grown year-round, this is called the Winter Garden area of Texas.

Texas also happens to be the natural gas capital of the country. There are 357 gas-processing plants in Texas -- and 397 in the other 49 states combined. The Big Wells plant in neighboring Dimmit County is less than 20 miles from Crystal City.

In the midst of this wealth, however, Crystal City stands out as undeniable proof that the capitalist system serves only a handful of people: *in one of the leading natural gas centers in the world, 9,000 residents of Crystal City have no natural gas!* On September 23, the Lo-Vaca Gathering Company of Houston, a subsidiary of Coastal States Gas Corporation, shut off the town's natural gas. This followed a two-year battle in the courts over rate increases that jumped from \$.32 per thousand cubic feet in 1973 to \$1.94 last year. Crystal City's legal avenues ended when the Texas Supreme Court refused to prevent the shut-off.

This was not the first time the courts have upheld Lo-Vaca's robbery. Last year, a Texas Appeals Court overturned a \$27.5 million judgment against Coastal States and Lo-Vaca over the same rate increases, ruling that the Texas Railroad Commission, which sets the natural gas prices, acted 'in the public interest' in 'revising' the rates. Translated, the ruling means something like this: Coastal States' profits jumped from \$38 million in 1973 to a projected \$69 million this year, and the people of Crystal City have no natural gas.

LONG HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

Crystal City was born in 1907 when the owners of the huge Cross-S Ranch broke it up into ten-acre plots and sold them to cultivators. The change from ranching to farming and the introduction of cool-weather farming required abundant cheap labor. Although the Anglos once had driven Mexicans from the area, they later began to lure them in with the promise of jobs. This coincided with the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), when thousands of homeless refugees roamed the border looking for work. Crystal City soon hardened into a rigid class structure where the Anglos owned the fields, the canneries, and the other means of production, and the overwhelming number of the Mexicans and Chicanos own nothing but their labor-power, their ability to work.

For decades, the Chicanos fought against this oppression. They fought for the right to vote, and to desegregate their schools. In 1963, the town became probably the first in the Southwest where Chicanos took over a city government. In 1969, they led a successful school strike; from this was born *La Raza Unida Party*, which won control of the city government and school system.

FAILURE TO CHANGE MATERIAL CONDITIONS

Though the Chicano's ascent to local political power led to many progressive reforms, for example, teaching the proud history of the Mexicans and Chicanos in the schools, conducting school and government activities bilingually, the process did little to change the material conditions of the people as a whole. Crystal City remained one of the poorest communities in the state.

The people of Crystal City did not own and control the fields, the canneries, and the resources; they did not control the military, the police and the courts. Without these fundamental changes, without seizing state power on a national, not a local basis, the oppression of Chicano and working people in Crystal City was bound to continue. This has been the case. Not only did the courts and monopolies conspire to cut off the town's supply of gas, but the Texas Rangers, police and sheriff's deputies were called in to enforce the shut-off. These are the same forces who for decades have helped to maintain the oppression of Crystal City and neighboring towns.

As we said in Workers' Press, Volume 2, Number 9, we recognize the oppression of the Chicano people in the Southwest to be a national question. Although we have not yet developed a detailed analysis, we understand that the Chicano national movement is inseparably linked with the struggle for socialism in the US and with the struggle to end the oppression of Mexico and other nations. The people of Crystal City continue their fight; now it is the task of communists to take it up and give it a class-conscious character, linking it with thousands of other struggles against our common oppressor.

RCP ON THE SPLIT IN THE WORKING CLASS - PART 2

The first part of this article dealt with the Revolutionary Communist Party's (RCP) theoretical stand on the labor aristocracy in the US. We summarized their primary error as not seeing the connection between imperialism and the bribery of an entire section of the working class, and the significance of that bribery to the proletariat as a whole. What does this fundamental and critical error on this question lead to in practice?

Although the MLC has had limited experience with the RCP, it is important for us to analyze the experiences and the positions taken on this question. In the S.F. city strike of 1976, the MLC took a position that the demands and interests of the masses of city workers were sold down the drain by the union 'leaders' to maintain the privileges of the higher paid city workers. We saw that the strike reflected the split in the working class, and under the circumstances of the strike there could be 'no support for the strike until the militant demands of poorer city workers are placed on the table for renegotiation alongside the craft's demands (see MLC's Proletarian Revolution and the Split in the Working Class, Appendix A). The RCP, in giving unconditional support to the striking craft workers, failed to see the differences between the higher-paid crafts and the mass of city workers and did not expose the outright treachery of the labor bureaucrats. They talked about how the city government was trying to "promote divisions within the class" (Revolution, May, 1976), as if no divisions already existed. They called all city workers to "honor all picket lines" ignoring the total sell-out contract shoved down the throats of the mass of lower-paid city workers, and forgetting that many of the craft workers had crossed the picket lines of the lower-paid workers only a year before. Overall, the RCP gave no communist analysis of the situation and did no exposure of the labor

aristocracy as agents of bourgeois influence and ideology.

A recent experience with the RCP, the National Workers Organization in this case, during the shipyard contract struggle, revealed their "push the trade unions to the left" line. Instead of supporting a rank and file movement for a yardwide meeting of different crafts, the RCP opposed the plan, saying that "we have to push our union officials to do their job", and "nobody is interested in that meeting". They did nothing but spread illusions about the bribed trade union officials, and actually opposed genuine rank and file organizing. Lenin described the RCP perfectly: "Opportunism and social chauvinism have the same political content, namely class collaboration...confidence in the bourgeoisie, and lack of confidence in the proletariat." (Lenin, Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International, our emphasis).

The RCP's position and practice around the steel workers elections in February, 1977, is a classic example of militant trade unionism and a blatant ignorance of the split in the working class. RCP not only urged steel workers to vote for Sadlowski, but also to work for Sadlowski in his campaign against the Abel machine. In the last issue of the Workers' Press, we incorrectly criticized RCP's position on Sadlowski as one of uncritical support. While RCP's "criticism" of Sadlowski did exist, it was obscured by repeated praise of his campaign; objectively, coupled with the failure to inject socialist ideology into the struggle, this secured the grip of bourgeois ideology into the working class. Such "criticism" comes from advanced representatives of the petty bourgeoisie and is not communist criticism. To urge steel workers to vote is one thing, to urge them to organize for a reformer is another. RCP constantly talked about using the campaign to break the Abel machine and build the organization of the rank and file. Translated into the opportunism of the RCP, this meant channeling the activity of the advanced and active workers back into reformism, even after many had already seen through Sadlowski's 'militance'. (Even the RCP recognized that many advanced workers saw Sadlowski for what he was) This meant mobilizing forces to elect Sadlowski and to build up the RCP's "Steel worker" ties. In doing such they failed to analyze the program of McBride or Sadlowski, the class stand of both, and how neither reflected the revolutionary demands of the proletariat in steel. They failed to formulate their own independent program of the steel workers by which to judge McBride, Sadlowski or any one running for office. RCP's line on Sadlowski was not one of "support like a rope supports a hanged man" as Lenin taught us. Any temporary alliance which the masses of workers make with the labor aristocracy must be done from a position of strength. This means a strong rank and file movement with revolutionary leadership must exist. In such circumstances, the influence of the labor aristocracy can be successfully broken and their role as social props understood by the masses of workers. At each turn in the struggle, the lower stratum must maintain its independence and initiative; whenever labor bureaucrats like Sadlowski oppose the interests of the broad masses, the movement must respond with all-sided exposures of these labor traitors. These conditions did not exist during the Sadlowski campaign.

The RCP, in its failure to analyze the labor aristocracy and the role it plays in US society, inevitably tails the spontaneous movement in situations like the Sadlowski campaign, and the S.F. city strike, reenforcing illusions of bourgeois democracy and reformism. The RCP sacrifices the independence of the masses of workers whom they claim to serve and represent, in exchange for another opportunity to worship the tail-ends of the masses in motion. In failing to recognize the objective function of the labor aristocracy as the fifth column of the bourgeoisie in the labor movement, in refusing to admit that the maintenance of the split in the working class is a conscious and necessary tactic of the monopoly capitalists, in shouting "unity of the whole working class" without exposing that the base of the sell-out union "leadership" is precisely within the privileged upper stratum of the proletariat, the RCP evades the concrete tasks of communist agitation and propaganda to the advanced workers in order to train them to recognize and fight for the interests of the masses of proletarians, the lower stratum.

Further, concerning the question of the labor aristocracy, Lenin urged communists to study the teachings of Marx and Engels on the question, "for they are the pivot of the tactics in the labor movement that are dictated by the objective conditions of the imperialist era." (Lenin, Imperialism and the Split in Socialism, Collected Works, Vol. 23, pp 112-114). The influence of the labor aristocracy in our movement must be exposed and the labor aristocrats expelled. The entire communist movement must deepen its understanding of the role and effect of this upper stratum, and how to combat its influence. Without explaining the split in the working class, and developing correct tactics in regards to that split, communists cannot fulfill the task of "giving the spontaneous movement a planned and conscious character", but surrenders instead the proletariat to the leadership of reformists and bourgeois ideology. The labor aristocracy is not just the trade union bureaucrats, but is an entire stratum of bureaucrats, highly paid craft, office, and technical workers, whose direct interests lie in the preservation of capitalism.

The MLC is trying to deepen its understanding of this Leninist teaching through practical application and through struggle against opportunist lines on the question. We urge other communist organizations and individuals, and advanced workers, to do the same and to put forward criticisms and comments of our position on the question.

STATEMENT ON THE 'THIRD WORLD' PART 2

In our statement on the 'third world' (Workers' Press, Volume 3, Number 8), we concluded that (1) the concept of 'three worlds' is unscientific, (2) the Chinese reference to two intermediate zones between the 'two overlords and the socialist countries' was a necessary and correct compromise with vacillating national bourgeoisies to isolate imperialism and social-imperialism, (3) Teng Hsiao Ping's speech to the United Nations General Assembly in 1974 is a deviation from Marxism-Leninism, and consequently (4) we should not use the term 'third world', although we certainly do not reject the concept of the united front against imperialism and social-imperialism. In this article we will discuss some of the implications of the theory of 'three worlds'.

"The Theory and Practice of Revolution", an editorial from the Albanian newspaper, 'Zeri i Popullit', July 7, 1977, presents a generally correct analysis of the theory of 'three worlds' and we suggest that it be studied. As the Albanians point out, we live in the era of imperialism, which is on the one hand capitalism in decay and decline, and on the other the eve of socialist revolution. In this period of transition from capitalism to socialism, there are four major contradictions on which the proletariat's strategy for revolution is based: (1) between labor and capital, (2) between the oppressed nations and colonies and imperialism and social-imperialism, (3) among the various imperialist powers, and (4) between the socialist and capitalist systems.

CONTRADICTION BETWEEN LABOR AND CAPITAL

Proletarian revolution is based on the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. In the era of imperialism, this is the fundamental contradiction, at the center of which stands the international proletariat. Both the need to overthrow capital, and the leading role of the proletariat and its party are minimized by the theory of 'three worlds'. While it may be true that "the 'third world' countries... are the main force combatting imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism", they are not the leading force. During the revolution(s) in China, the numerically greater Chinese

peasants were the main force, the Chinese proletariat and its party were the leading force. Led by the Chinese working class and its communist party, China is a country that has taken the correct road of overthrowing foreign imperialism and native capitalism to build a socialist society. It is the outstanding and definitive model the workers and peasants of the 'third world' have to look up to. But the theory of 'three worlds' negates all of this by saying that the 'third world' countries are already the main force, never mentioning the leading force, belittling the role of the communist party and the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Take Chile as an example. Chile remains part of the 'third world' in spite of the fascist, militaristic junta of Pinochet. But even under the Unidad Popular government of Salvador Allende, an honest, liberal, bourgeois patriot, who opposed US interference in his country, the leading role of a genuine communist party, the leadership of the working class and the dictatorship of the proletariat, were liquidated. What were the results? Thousands of workers and students exterminated, and a neo-nazi government in power, because the correct road was not taken. The theory of 'three worlds' fails to point out these lessons.

CONTRADICTION BETWEEN OPPRESSED NATIONS AND COLONIES AND IMPERIALISM AND SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM

The theory of 'three worlds' obscures and belittles the specific relationship between the imperialist countries and their colonies and between oppressor and oppressed nations by using the terms 'first', 'second', and 'third worlds' instead of more scientific terms. In the contradiction between the 'second world' countries and 'their' colonies, the theory of 'three worlds' implies that the people of the 'third world' should not struggle against the 'second world' countries or oppose their policies, because the struggle against the superpowers is more important. This gives the impression that 'second world' countries are true allies of the 'third world'. The theory of 'three worlds' is based not on a united front against (all) imperialism and reaction, but only against the superpowers.

As for the people of the 'third world', the workers and peasants, they are discouraged from overthrowing their 'own' bourgeoisie for the sake of struggle against the superpowers. Internal class struggle is neglected in favor of class peace and class collaboration.

CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE IMPERIALIST POWERS

As imperialism develops, the contradictions between imperialist powers intensify. The fact that capitalist and imperialist powers stand in contradiction to the superpowers doesn't mean that these countries are essentially different from them. In fact, their differences are only of degree. In general, the 'second world' countries actively support and defend the superpowers by allying with one or the other in competing blocs (e.g. NATO and the Warsaw Pact). But the theory of 'three worlds' characterizes these 'second world' countries primarily as allies of the 'third world', confusing quantity and quality, and putting smaller capitalist and imperialist countries in a different 'world' from the larger ones. Further, the theory of 'three worlds' belittles the identity of interests of the classes in power in the 'first' and 'second worlds'. Western European countries have the same basic economic system as the superpowers and the same bourgeois class holds state power. The contradictions between them and the superpowers, such as the struggle for markets and spheres of influence, are strictly of an inter-imperialist nature. The theory of the 'three worlds' distorts the real world by putting them in separate 'worlds' altogether. The Chinese say:

We support the second world countries and people in their struggle to oppose superpower control, intimidation and bullying and defend their security and national independence. We support their efforts to improve relations with third world countries on the basis of

equality. We appreciate the efforts of the West European countries for unity against hegemonism. (Peking Review No. 41, 1977, p. 38)

Rather than weakening the whole imperialist system by isolating the superpowers, stressing the differences while ignoring the similarities strengthens imperialism by obscuring the inter-imperialist nature of the contradictions between the various imperialist powers and shoves proletarian struggles into the background.

The theory of 'three worlds' puts countries with the same social system in entirely different 'worlds', yet puts countries with entirely different social systems in the same 'world'. So while France, Holland, England, Japan and Canada are in a world apart from the US and USSR, socialist China is put in the 'third world' with countries like Chile, Iran and India.

CONTRADICTION BETWEEN SOCIALIST AND CAPITALIST SYSTEMS

The theory of 'three worlds' negates, confuses and obscures the fact that in the era of imperialism there are basically only two social systems, the moribund and decaying capitalist system and the rising and developing socialist system, outside the bounds of imperialism. The theory of 'three worlds' divides countries not according to their social system, or the class holding state power, but according to their level of economic development, regardless of whether they are capitalist or socialist. Some countries are also considered 'non-aligned', or pursuing a "policy of independence, peace and neutrality". But in the present era no country can be independent of both capitalism and socialism.

The theory of 'three worlds' fails to acknowledge that socialist countries are fundamentally different from capitalist ones, and puts them in the same 'world' as colonies and oppressed nations, as though they are still under the domination of their former colonial masters.

China is a socialist country. China and the other third world countries share a common experience and face common fighting tasks. China belongs to the third world. We stand firmly with the other developing countries and people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and other regions. (Peking Review No. 41, 1977, p. 38)

What is missing here? China and Chile both belong to the 'third world'. Both have suffered the ravages of imperialism, and could even be considered to have a similar level of economic development. But their social systems are qualitatively different. There is an aspect of similarity, but the aspect of difference is much greater, and it is this that is consistently glossed over. There is nothing wrong with 'standing firmly' with these countries; in fact, it is the duty of a socialist country to support revolutionary and liberation movements in other countries. The problem is that this unscientific theory obscures the differences between them.

The theory of 'three worlds' is undialectical and contrary to Marxism-Leninism. It minimizes the leading role of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle against capital, obscures the relationship between the imperialist countries and their colonies, distorts the relationship among imperialist powers, and confuses the fact that there are two social systems in the world. We urge everyone to study the "Theory and Practice of Revolution" and to analyze the questions raised independently and critically.

We are in the process of developing a proposal for joint study of such questions which we see as part of the complex struggle revolutionary theory.