



AUGUST 29th MOVEMENT

The following are statements put forth by the comrades of ATM in answer to a series of questions that we presented to them in the spirit of Unity - Struggle - Unity that should characterize the relations among Marxist-Leninists. In no way do these brief statements represent the totality of formulations that on these issues the comrades of ATM have developed, but they reflect the method and reasoning with which these comrades approach these questions.

In terms of the ERA, we reaffirm our position of opposing it, as we consider it a sham reform (see the article in Resistencia - On the Woman Question, Vol. 7, No. 2 pgs 6-7). However, we want to make clear that (1) we make a distinction between the method and reasoning on which the comrades of ATM base their support for the ERA and the method and reasoning right opportunists such as the OL, use in their approach to it, (2) that we do not consider the position on ERA a line of demarcation between genuine Marxist-Leninists and opportunists at this time, (3) We will definitely take into consideration the positions of these comrades and their suggestions that we study a series of Lenin's articles, and the resolutions by the Communist International in order to better understand the question of reforms in the capitalist society. We think that it is the duty of all Marxist-Leninists and advanced elements to do the same and, (4) in the near future, we will deal again with the ERA.

On the question of the bribery theory, our organization deals in depth with it in the publication on the Communist Labor Party, which we announce our last issue and which will be out soon.

**** O N E R A ****

"We must disagree with your position on the ERA. We don't think that the comrades have reached their conclusion based on an all-sided analysis of the issue. We make a distinction however between comrades like yourselves, RWL and PRRWO which took an honest approach to the question -- and groups like WVO which took a dishonest, demagogic and sophistic approach to the question. Our view is that we must start by an examination of the MOVEMENT of women for their democratic rights, what the various forces are in that movement, the nature of their demands, and the tasks of communists flowing from this analysis.

Our starting point is that the masses of women lack democratic rights. This lack of rights is sanctioned outright by law, or is sanctioned de facto. They do not have the same rights as men when it comes to getting jobs, job promotions, training, control of their bodies, etc, etc. In response to this, women have fought back -- putting forward various partial demands. It was petty-bourgeois women who, as the most cultured and literate sector of women, summed up these partial demands and put forward the demand for EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN. There is nothing strange in this, Lenin once remarked, that every demand raised by the revolutionary working class (through its vanguard) had been raised before us by the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie, (and even the bourgeoisie is raising the cry for equal rights for women). And of course, these sectors and classes raise these demands for THEIR OWN CLASS INTERESTS. Nothing strange or profound about that either. However it is up to us (communists) to analyze the partial demands of the working class women, to sum-up and synthesize these demands (the mass line). It is our view that if we sum up all the partial demands of women we can see that the common thread to them all is equal rights for women. It then becomes our task to link all the partial demands and struggles of women to this basic demand to show women that their partial demands flow from this basic demand. Moreover, we must expose to women that their lack of rights flows from class society and that only the overthrow of the capitalist class can "solve" the women question ultimately. In the meantime, we

must utilize the struggle of women for equal (democratic) rights for three purposes:

- (1) to train the working class to wage a consistent struggle for democracy. Lenin teaches us that if the working class is ever to administer a true proletarian democracy (as part of its dictatorship) it can only learn how to do this through a consistent struggle for democracy under capitalism.
- (2) If we do our work right, the masses will learn revolutionary methods of struggle -- i.e., that only to the extent that they wage a revolutionary struggle for democracy will they win any kind of significant concession from the bourgeoisie. If they "win" equal rights by relying on Betty Ford or Bella Abzug, or on petitions, or on electing women city councilmen then they will get a watered down concession which the bourgeoisie will certainly use to split the class, as well as to dissipate the revolutionary energy of the class, (the recently passed Farm Labor Bill here in California is a good example of this). If however they win this concession as a result of mass demonstrations under revolutionary slogans, through political strikes, massive work slowdowns, etc., then it will be as genuine a concession as it possible under capitalism. This is what is meant by saying that real reforms is a by-product of revolutionary struggle.
- (3) We will show the masses of women, that it is not a question of "lack of rights" which underlies their misery, but the system of private property. Winning this concession will lay bare the class contradictions of society.

If we don't take up the struggle for women's democratic rights we will give the leadership to the petty-bourgeoisie. Right now there is a debate and struggle going on inside the National Organization of Women (NOW) between the bourgeoisie who want to confine NOW to feminist issues aimed at the upper petty-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, and the petty-bourgeoisie women who want to aim their work at working women and oppressed nationalities. The petty-bourgeois women have been winning out which means that they will be taking the democratic rights issue into the class. If WE don't give leadership to this struggle, we will default the leadership to the petty-bourgeoisie.

As for the arguments that the bourgeoisie will use ERA to take away protective legislation -- they aren't waiting for the passage of the ERA to begin this process. As the crisis intensifies, they are already wiping out protective legislation. It is not our task to counterpose protective legislation to the ERA but to fight to protect and expand protective legislation (to all workers), and as well as to fight for the ERA.

As for the argument that the ERA will help bring on fascism, we have not seen one fact which backs this up -- just quotes from Palme Dutt, etc. We must watch out for falling into a knee-jerk response to every reform struggle, which come forward which is not initiated by communists. Otherwise we will be standing on the sidelines on a number of issues. It is our view that we can only train the masses to make a revolution through a struggle for their economic and political rights -- it is in these struggle where they learn that capitalism cannot be saved, and that they learn revolutionary methods of struggle. It is our position that we should struggle to win the leadership of the women's struggle for democracy by fighting for their rights under the slogan -- EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN, FIGHT FOR THE ERA! This slogan puts forward the basic demand of women (mass line), and also shows that they must FIGHT for it (not merely support the ERA, or the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois women leading the ERA movement). We hope that this will give you a little better idea of our view on this question. We think that the way we pose the question differentiates us from the OL's basically reformist presentation of the question. We refer comrades to the first three articles in Volume 23 of Lenin's Collected Works, as well as Revolutionary Cause Vol 1 No 4, the Alamosa article, as well as the Communist International resolutions of 1928 and 1930 for more clarity on this question.

**** ON THE BRIBE THEORY ****

"The bribe theory. We should clarify that we make a distinction between bribery and privileges. While we hold that the social props of the bourgeoisie are certainly bribed (bought off), we do not hold that all, or the majority of the Anglo-American proletariat is bribed. However, we do believe that, as a whole, the Anglo-American proletariat has temporarily benefitted from the vast super-profits stolen by the U.S. imperialists from the nations and peoples of the world (included the oppressed peoples here in the U.S.). There is nothing strange about this -- Engels pointed out the same phenomena in regard to the English working class, and time has certainly proved how temporary those privileges were (the English working class is worse off than much of Europe). It is not hard to see that the Anglo-American working class has certain economic and political advantages denied (de facto and by law) to the oppressed nationality workers. We do not think that White workers must give up their privileges before we can have a revolution. What they must do is to struggle to end the system of national oppression which stands as the basis of privileges for one group and lack of rights for another. We are certainly confident that the entire working class will be able to unite in its common class interest to end the system of national oppression and privileges once and for all.

As for the social props, that's another story. They will definitely not be getting 20 grand a year, expense accounts, de todo -- under socialism. They are bought and paid for by capitalism to do a job, i.e., to channel the struggle of the working class into reformism -- the line of least resistance (Revolutionary Cause Vol 1 # 3, O.L. article)."

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