

During the past five months there has been a sharp political struggle taking place in the Buffalo Workers Movement. Although much of what was said concerned the specific practice of BWM, the struggle reflected two basic trends which have emerged within the Marxist-Leninist movement in the United States today. To put it simply, the struggle - both within BWM and nationally - is between sectarianism and dogmatism on the one hand and independence of political thought and action on the other.

The struggle reached a head when a group of BWM members sharing basic political unity with the October League (M/L) and its "Unity Trend" party building effort put forward a proposal calling for BWM to combine its mass work around CETA and S-1 with that of the OL-initiated and led "Fight Back" organization. After a series of internal discussions, this proposal was defeated. With that, about one-third of the organization, those people sharing unity with the OL and "Unity Trend", resigned.

Although the people who resigned were, for the most part, active members of BWM, their resignation does not seriously affect either the current practice or the continuity of the organization. Quite the opposite. For the past five months our work was seriously hampered by the disunity and sectarianism promoted by the OL and "Unity Trend" forces. During the internal discussions, our practice virtually ceased. Their resignations have brought a higher and more effective level of political unity to BWM.

One immediate benefit of this split is that it allows our organization to build on our existing unity - both in practice and theory - with the trend represented by the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee, The Guardian weekly newspaper, El Comite, and other independent and non-sectarian Marxist-Leninist forces in the U.S.

There were two issues at the center of the internal struggle, both of which are of major importance for the Marxist-Leninist movement in this country. The first concerns building a new and genuinely effective Communist Party in the U.S., and the second concerns how we view the international situation, particularly in regard to the role and nature of the Soviet Union.



# DOGMATISM & SECTARIANISM

## *the sickness on the left*

### PARTY BUILDING IN THE U.S.

Both the majority of BWM and the OL "Unity Trend" minority see a new and multinational Communist Party in the U.S. that is truly capable of uniting and providing leadership to the diverse struggles of our times as an absolute necessity. Our differences are sharp on the key question of how this is to be brought into existence. The minority view states that the main errors of the communist movement in the U.S. are those of right opportunism and revisionism. This view states that the conditions are ripe for this move.

The position of the Buffalo Workers Movement is that dogmatism and sectarianism, not revisionism and right opportunism, are the main obstacles within the party building movement in the U.S. The actions and positions of the OL-Unity Trend forces are leading them into the same sectarian trap that other pre-party groups have fallen into in recent years. Their errors are essentially the same as those made by the Progressive Labor Party, the Communist League, the Revolutionary Union and other groups before them. These groups have become discredited and isolated sects. By abstracting political struggle and turning Marxism-Leninism into dogma, they have succeeded only in driving wedges between themselves and the working class and oppressed peoples of this country.

Revisionism represents the main danger to the communist movement on a world scale. Within the U.S. party building movement, however, it is the sectarianism and dogmatism of the OL-Unity Trend and similar ultra-left groupings that strengthens and feeds revisionism. In response to their own isolation, they are intensifying their claims to be the only correct practitioners of Marxism-Leninism. This, in turn, increases their divisiveness and arrogance in practice. If we take a close look at prior party building efforts, we find that such practice only serves to disrupt and set back mass work and to demoralize progressive forces. Our experience as part of VVAW/WSO, when the Revolutionary Union's sectarianism and ultra-leftism split and destroyed that organization, is a vivid example of such practice.

The building of a new and genuinely effective Communist Party will be accomplished not by sectarianism and dogmatism, but by the conscious and patient efforts of communists and progressives who fully involve themselves in mass struggles and who link these struggles up on the common ground of class oppression. This can only be done with a political line in tune with the particular conditions we face in this country. An example of the failure to develop such an independent line is obvious in the OL-Unity Trend treatment of the international situation.

# Aim the main blow at U.S. imperialism

## THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

The OL-Unity Trend forces state that we should unite all who can be united to oppose the two superpowers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. They see the U.S.S.R. as the "rising", most dangerous and most aggressive superpower and base this on an analysis that holds that the U.S.S.R. has become a totally capitalist country in the past twenty years. The implications of this view are clearest in Africa, where OL-Unity Trend forces claim the victory of the MPLA in Angola makes that nation a client state of the Soviet Union because it was the recipient of material support from the U.S.S.R., as well as volunteers from socialist Cuba, during its struggle for national independence.

In substance, these views are a dogmatic rendering of the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China. The BWM has great respect for the vast accomplishments China has made on its unique road to socialism, but we believe that in recent years their foreign policy has made significant errors. Its dogmatic application on the part of U.S. revolutionaries serves to undercut support for national liberation struggles in Puerto Rico, Iran, Chile, Southern Africa and other parts of the world. It serves to develop an unreal analysis of world events that puts the ultra-leftists of the OL-Unity Trend variety in objective agreement with the most reactionary and jingoistic elements of the U.S. ruling class.

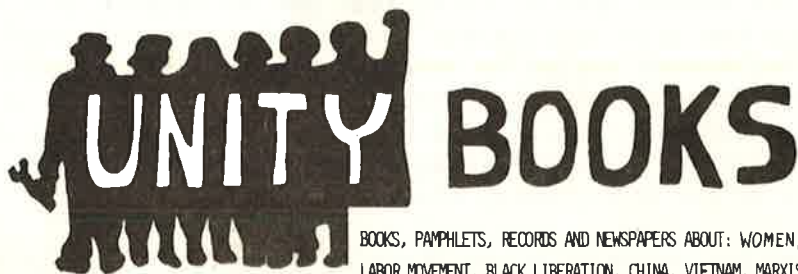
The BWM clearly does not agree with the OL-Unity Trend that the U.S.S.R. represents the main danger to the world's peoples and that this stems from the full-blown restoration of monopoly capitalism in that country. However, we don't have a fully-developed position as to the exact nature of Soviet society. We do see that the U.S.S.R. is not a socialist country and that there exists a ruling strata of bureaucrats and managers intent on restoring capitalist economic relations within Russia. We see that class distinctions exist and are being strengthened by this strata. The legacy of socialism is such, however, that it's a gross over-simplification to say that this emerging ruling strata has fully succeeded in restoring monopoly capitalism to the U.S.S.R. This is reflected in Russia's contradictory foreign policy. In some areas, such as India and the mid-east, it clearly has a definite imperialist posture. In others, such as Indochina, Cuba and Angola, the policies are those of material support of revolutionary regimes. Instead of Russia overtaking the U.S. as the world's most dangerous imperialism, we see both superpowers declining in the face of the revolutionary tide in the world today.

Of the two superpowers, it is clear that the U.S. remains the world's most aggressive and dangerous imperialism. While it has suffered setbacks as a result of the Vietnam war, it is still the main prop of numerous fascist and reactionary regimes around the world. It maintains its stranglehold on the world's economy and is carrying out its plunder of raw materials and surplus value at an intensified rate. Such occurrences as the Mayaguez affair and the deliberately-provoked tree-cutting incident in the Korean DMZ show that the U.S. has become more unstable and aggressive since Vietnam, not less so. The U.S.S.R. seeks to exploit U.S. weaknesses and setbacks, and is becoming more aggressive in doing so. But it is not the stronger or more dangerous superpower. To view it as such is dogmatism. To impose such views on revolutionary struggles within the U.S. breeds sectarianism.

One result of the recent political struggle in BWM is that it has brought a higher level of political unity to our work. Our positions on party building and the international situation have been adopted as organizational positions. This means that active members can express disagreements with the positions internally, but cannot publicly refute them once they have been adopted. The result of this is that we will be more careful in adopting such positions in the future and that we will be able to more effectively put them into practice in our day-to-day work.

Our day-to-day work is continuing with new energy and direction. Our major areas are still workplace organizing, mainly CETA - and anti-repression work, such as our efforts to defeat S-1 and to oppose the racist frame-up of Kenny Johnson in Buffalo courts. In addition, UNITY BOOKS will continue. We are also at work to restructure the BWM to meet our new needs and ensure that vital work, such as the newsletter, does not fall behind again. If you'd like to participate in any of this, or to get more information, get in touch. Our mailing address is the same (Box 902, Buffalo 14205), and the Bookstore is at 428 Grant Street (near Bird) on the West Side. Phone: 882-8232.

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