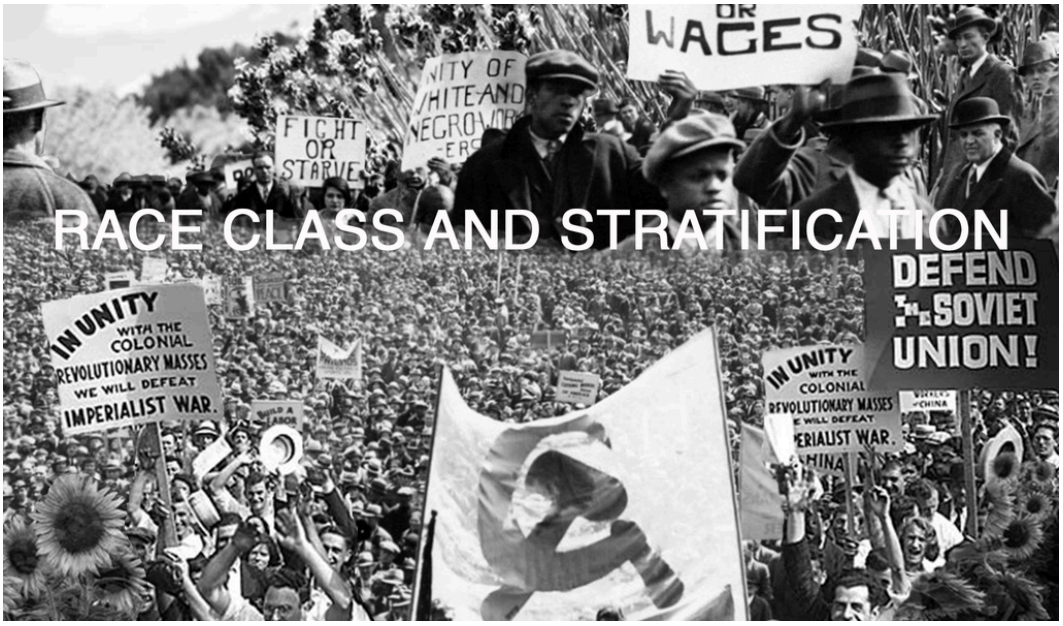
One Hundred Flowers: Race, Class, and Stratification[1]

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We are excited to ring in the New Year with another piece in our "One Hundred Flowers" series. We are accepting guest submissions, rebuttals, and criticisms for publishing that may not align with the official positions of the editors here at Struggle Sessions. We see this as part of a humble endeavor to acknowledge that wrong views from progressive people (whether that be those who have submitted pieces that have been published here in the past, or from guests who submit them) should be engaged with deeply and not simply suppressed. This piece delves into controversies around postmodernism and ideas such as privilege theory, internal colonialism, the "colonizer"/"colonized" dichotomy, and features a history of the Communist Party of the United States of America's (CPUSA) organizing with Black people as a focus. The author uses an understanding of stratification, of contradiction, of uniting all who can be united with, and of ideological struggle, in order to touch on an issue critical for the movement: how can we help transform and mobilize all positive factors against sexism, racism, etc.?

One Hundred Flowers: Race, Class, and Stratification

[1] https://struggle-sessions.com/2020/01/02/one-hundred-flowers-race-class-and-stratification/

Article by Cathal

Introduction

At some point in the 1970's, with general assistance from US imperialism, postmodernism began to be utilized on campuses around the world, but mainly in the US. This was, in part, to uproot and subvert the role of Marxism, resulting in the fact that there are few if any genuine Marxist academics left in the US, none of whom have maintained their revolutionary character. The main feature of postmodernism, which is highly useful to the imperialist ruling class, is the fact that it stands opposed to liberal rationalism and all things modern, including Marx, Darwin, the period of bourgeois revolution, etc. Throwing away the scientific approach to analyzing society and its problems gives way to a subjectivist approach, which seeks to negate history and materialism, instead centering "discourse" and "narrative" as the basis for change and development. This can only lead to incomplete or incorrect conclusions and cannot serve the proletariat as a class.

The careful observer will note that postmodernism has grown since the 70s not only to displace marginal campus Marxism in academia, but to contend with liberal bourgeois hegemony itself by becoming the new common sense for the so-called left in imperialist countries. We are faced with the question of exactly how a set of ideas, a framework, which is (supposedly!) so focused on championing the oppressed sections of society is useful to the imperialist ruling class which operates on the basis of oppression and exploitation. The matter is complicated, due in part to the fact that postmodernism must by its very framework attack itself tirelessly, remain, nebulous and the subject of subjectivist personal interpretation. This is due to its concept of diffused power. Diffused power plays its insidious role through displacing and diverting classical concepts central to Marxism via its attack on liberal enlightenment–this is the main reason it benefits imperialism.

For imperialism to carry out its rule it relies on the stratification or the division of the working class themselves. This fact is what allows postmodernism to produce a metaphysical framework which has traction, especially among what could be called the trendy left, those who do not seek a scientific examination of society, but who through perception instead seek to rally around the diffused power concept and place worker against worker. This tendency to divide by taking the bait of the ruling class pre-dates postmodernism. While historically Communists have sought to unify the class against the interests of the ruling class, the contemporary self-proclaimed Marxist will have limited understanding and gravitate toward default positions of postmodernism. In

this paper we seek to highlight this through an examination of history and theory, which we intend to help serve the new wave of revolutionary thinking in the US.

In place of Marx's theory of the stratification of society, the adherent to postmodernism brings the theory of diffused power, an overinflated conception of skin privilege, with an overemphasis on "colonialism." While all of these seek to illuminate actual and real oppressions and unequal social relationships, in reality they are dispensing with and not deepening class analysis. For instance, skin privilege theory is often inadequately applied to a lack of specific oppression, when lacking this or that oppression does not automatically make one a privileged section of society, nor does it automatically make one align in any way with the camp of the oppressor. Through only looking at one aspect–the lack of a specific oppression–the adherent to postmodernism will jump to the conclusion that a group of people will necessarily enjoy a "privileged" status, which, when taken to its extreme, we see that the adherent of postmodernism will convince himself that all those who lack this or that specific oppression are now part of the ruling class, or enjoy class power as such. A colonial "class" is constructed in their imagination. This "class" is one with no defined relationship to production which gives them a concrete class character. The only perceivable course from this is to divide, and not unite.

We know it is the bourgeoisie and the state in their exclusive command which carry out oppression; it is not a "privilege" to lack oppression, as a privilege indicates an unfair advantage, and all proletarians have a common long-term interest in combating oppression. This is not to say that social privilege is non-existent, but that it is often misdiagnosed. Instead of superficial trends that over-focus on one aspect, Marxism seeks to understand the world through its interrelated contradictions.

Postmodernism, though it intentionally seeks to be undefinable, most often relies upon the teachings (at least partially) of Michel Foucault, who drew most heavily on Nietzsche while rejecting Marx. Nietzsche, the forefather of fascist philosophy serves his purpose still. Foucault of course regarded Nietzsche as "the philosopher of power, a philosopher who managed to think of power without having to confine himself within a political theory." (1) This ability to be unconfined by political theory only resides in the imagination. In reality, power is always related to the mode of production, and the class which rules over this presents its own political theory; the class which is ruled also has its quest for power situated within a political theory—Marxism. Thus, instead of centralized science (such as Marxism) Foucault and others like him imagine a purely subjectivist, decentralized, "local science" to make science horizontal.

This has resulted in the idea that power is not centralized in one class, oppression is not carried out by imperialism, but is instead mediated through the interaction of individ-

uals which may or may not result in imperialism. Everything is horizontal, everything is subjugated to individual experience. Thus, interpersonal problems and contradictions among the people are no more or less important than the contradictions between classes. Those weak in theory will tend to take this approach: the enemy is whoever poses a contradiction to the narrative of interest, the enemy is then "white people," "cis people," "able bodied people," "colonizers," etc. and the things that make up the contradictions among the people take on the character of contradictions between the people and the enemy.

Marxism on the other hand is not so horizontal, and neither is class society or power. Nonetheless Marxism does not ignore the various contradictions that make up a society, by looking no further than the Communist Manifesto we can see this clearly:

"In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank."

Unlike the postmodernists, which express the idea that antagonisms are increasingly made more complicated, in a continual process of mitosis, Marxism holds that with the invent of capitalism, antagonisms are actually simplified, forging the broadest basis for unity among the oppressed against one main antagonism—the bourgeoisie:

"Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat."

Marxism expresses that power is held by the ruling class of any society, and that the ideology of this class manifests itself in the superstructure, so power ultimately has its source in the mode of production and can always be linked to the relationships to production. Hence the variety of oppression finds its expression more and more in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. For Foucault and others like him, power has no source at all and is simply based on "force relationships" which exist everywhere in all classes, so it is therefore diffused. If you can force anything at all then you are the holder of power, abstracting power ultimately, making any fleeting temporary phenomena, action, or an argument, etc., power's manifestation. This is unsatisfactory to Marxism, which sees even force as a contradiction, and differentiates force from power.

Power for Marxism is control over production, resulting in a state to administer to the ruling class' interest. The solution is armed proletarian revolution, a violent act of overthrowing the ruling class and smashing its state, bringing about the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. For the postmodernist, it is a series of social rituals,

verbal observance, cultivating personal relationships, cultivating "empowerment." In reality, power is always fused around the ruling class; this provides the Marxist with the definition of the state. Finally, postmodernism is a tireless quest for individuality at all cost, and this on the surface makes it get confused for liberalism, which is a major and dangerous mistake. In the final analysis postmodernism is hyper-individualist, derivative from the same philosophical springs as fascism, and has far more in common with the later ideologically than is comfortable for most to think about (anti-liberal, anti-rational, anti-scientific, anti-democratic, etc.)

Marxism holds that the world is delineated into three camps and these are forced into existence by the struggles between the bourgeois and the proletariat. The delineation of the world is the first world, that is imperialist superpowers, mainly the US, the second world, or the smaller and less dominant imperialist powers which collude and contend with the first, and finally the third world. Most of the world is in this latter category of oppressed and dominant nations. This is not to be confused with Deng Xiaoping's mutated three worlds theory which has nothing in common with what was put forward by Mao.

This delineation results in national oppression and resistance to national oppression, giving the world a set of four major contradictions, the first being the contradiction between the imperialist nations and nations oppressed by imperialism, which is the principal contradiction today. The second contradiction is between the bourgeois and the proletariat which takes place in all countries. The third is between the imperialists themselves, who collude and contend externally resulting in proxy wars, internally with the contradiction between monopolies and the imperialist country itself. The third contradiction was once between socialist and capitalist counties, but with no socialist countries today this contradiction takes on the character of a contradiction between capitalism's existence and socialism's emergence. The vast majority of social problems–from internal class contradictions to wars and uprisings–are rooted in these four major contradictions.

What is more, society is not simply stratified into classes, but each class is in itself stratified. Ideas of postmodernism seek to obscure this in order to "oppose" it in ways that actually maintain it. Due to the metaphysics inherent in the framework of postmodernism it cannot come to verifiable Marxist results. After all, it often holds that power is diffused, anyone can have power over anyone else, provided they do not suffer the same specific oppression or are not situated in the same specific strata even if they belong ultimately to the same class. Hence class war is not that between classes anymore, but that between individuals or groups of individuals within a class, between strata, between men and women, between black and white, Chicano and black, black

and immigrant, etc., thus the eternal division of a class takes place. This only serves the ruling class; it cannot effectively liberate the oppressed classes as it prevents the unity required to fight the system.

Postmodernism wages its attack against the three instruments of the revolution, without which the proletariat is incapacitated. It attacks the Party by demanding a multitude of parties specific to every group and strata opposed to the others. It destroys the army by diffusing the power of the enemy and dividing it between the people which makes it completely impossible to carry out anything but eternal self-defense at best. It destroys the united front mainly though insistence on unprincipled unity, foreclosing prefiguratively on the genuine unity needed to win. It over-blows or ignores class categories by subverting the class analysis with identity politics, resulting in viewing the declassed and the lower strata of petty bourgeoisie and sometimes the semi-proletariat as hybrid vanguards—eliminating the very definition of what a vanguard is. As postmodernism grows like an oozing cyst in academia, it struggles to replace liberalism as the hegemonic ideology of bourgeois society. When postmodernists move to organize they appear as seemingly progressive, presenting a pro-people guise that has become something of a default among the so-called left, leading to the people rallying around them in a temporary quantity. However, due to the inherent low quality of the idea, this quantity is forthwith combated and eroded, leading to endless splits and impediments to building stable bodies and organizations. Their organizations then face regular-to-consistent defection, expulsion and splits; they are inherently in peril from the start, pitted against one another and prone to be dominated by unstable and arrogant personalities which stand in for analysis, synthesis, and political line. Like anarchists, through an unscientific conception of leadership the most vocal, most resourceful, or those who stack the most oppression behind their personal identities are raised to the top regardless of the correctness of their line, and oftentimes this results in leaders who lead for any other reason than their ability to lead politically. In other words they are viewed as correct not by virtue of their politics but by virtue of their perceived identity; they are viewed as correct on the basis of their identity.

A point of clarification: no Marxist believes that there is no relationship between identity and politics; many who come to politics from facing direct oppression on the basis of being a woman, being black, queer, working class, etc. will have a general grasp on the feelings and experiences of their people specifically and the masses generally. This connection should not be denied, yet it also is not a shield for promoting bad politics. As revolutionary ferment intensifies it stands to reason that those experiencing direct and specific oppression, or those people who compose the deepest and most profound sections of the proletariat, will come to be revolutionaries themselves, and of course communists, provided that the work of the revolutionary elements now existing

is carried out correctly. These revolutionaries from specifically oppressed groups are necessary to bring revolutionary politics to their communities and this cannot be ignored either. In order for any of this to be accomplished, the idea that identity equals good political lines must be eradicated. Communist leaders from specifically oppressed communities are valuable and should be sought out, none the less they must first be qualified as leaders by their tenacity, political level, and ability to unite the rank and file; their dispositions and adherence to MLM cannot be overlooked for any other factor, to do so is opportunism plain and simple.

On Stratification

"[T]he social stratification and the distribution of property in the declining Roman Empire completely correspond to the level of agricultural and industrial production at that time"- Engels, *Origin of the Family*

Class society, according to Marxism, is of course a stratified society. It stratifies first into classes, then due to bourgeois right, we see ability, access, and endowment create internal strata within each class. Capitalism—and consequently imperialism—relies on the upkeep of these different strata, forcing a contradiction to emerge between those within a given strata within classes. In his masterful polemic *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx explained the purpose and existence of bourgeois right, which includes a set of contradictions: those between town and country, between mental and manual labor, skilled and unskilled labor, etc. and in capitalist society this includes contradictions related to the reserve army of labor and unemployment. Furthermore, Marx was correct to insist that all rights are contingent on inequality, opposing the idea that bourgeois right as mentioned above would be overcome in socialism, as socialism will inherit these birthmarks of capitalist society and will emerge again and again with considerable contradictions:

"In spite of this advance, this equal right is still constantly stigmatized by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is proportional to the labor they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an equal standard, labor. But one man is superior to another physically, or mentally, and supplies more labor in the same time, or can labor for a longer time; and labor, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This equal right is an unequal right for unequal labor. It recognizes no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment, and thus productive capacity, as a natural privilege. It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right. Right, by its very nature, can consist only in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are

measurable only by an equal standard insofar as they are brought under an equal point of view, are taken from one definite side only – for instance, in the present case, are regarded only as workers and nothing more is seen in them, everything else being ignored. Further, one worker is married, another is not; one has more children than another, and so on and so forth. Thus, with an equal performance of labor, and hence an equal in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal.

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly – only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" (2)

It is only in the highest stage of communist society, at the luminous summit of communism, that such inequality is overcome, and we see that it is idealist to think otherwise. Natural endowment in the form of work ability, and unnatural endowment in the form of access granted by the ruling class, all serve to stratify the proletariat. We see this in the division of labor as well. This exists in every capitalist society objectively of the ethnic composition of society, and it is a requirement of capitalist production. The division of labor will still persist in communism's lower stage – socialism – and must be overcome gradually and with world people's war.

Labor stratification is a requirement to maintain capitalist relationships, and due to the above stated reasons, the workers themselves are unequal, be it by ability or by recognition, so the capitalist must find among its proletariat those who will help service its system and it must award them with the position of a higher strata. This inequality among workers not only helps the capitalist administer exploitation smoothly with management and informants in the ranks of the worker, it also does a disservice to proletarian unity and spreads much confusion among the class. In Capital Vol 1 Marx explains the emergence of such a stratum:

"The capitalistic employment of machinery, on the one hand, supplies new and powerful motives to an excessive lengthening of the working day, and radically changes, as well the methods of labour, as also the character of the social working organism, in such a manner as to break down all opposition to this tendency, on the other hand it produces, partly by opening out to the capitalist new strata of the working-class, previously inaccessible to him, partly by setting free the labourers it supplants, a surplus working population, which is compelled to submit to the dictation of capital." (3) By creating a surplus working population, we see the emergence of workers who compete for lowering wages, a bulk of humans existing as a pressure valve to maximize capitalist profit. These are people who are lowered into a whole stratum of unstable workers, which in given conditions can be recruited as scabs, etc. as they can be economically compelled to work for less, cross picket lines or starve. Beyond the issue of scabbing or working for less wages, the US is home to one of the most vulgarly stratified proletariats in all of human history; racism and sexism play no small part in carrying out and reproducing this stratification of the US proletariat. For this the capitalist will withhold access to education, manipulate its laws to disadvantage whole sections of the class, up to and including mass incarceration, provide unequal pay for equal work, unequal hiring and firing practices, etc. Suffice it to say it does not exploit or oppress its proletariat equally, without regard to maintaining both the division of labor and the stratification of the proletariat. The ruling class will create inequality among the working class to cause infighting over the crumbs of its labor.

This stratification takes place within all classes, as we understand there is a lower, middle, and big bourgeoisies, as well as the same for the petty bourgeoisie. Some petty bourgeoisie barely receive enough to survive while others live very well. Even the imperialists have those whose profit pales in comparison to others. They all share the same relationship to production as their class siblings, but have various modes of living, and for the working classes, we see the ability to transcend strata is far more difficult—if not closed off to them entirely.

Anti-revisionist and Communist Comrade Mary Inman—expelled from the Browderite CPUSA for her commitment to the role of women in the revolution—explained that the common basis for unity exist among the class even when obscurantist notions align with the interests of bourgeois division. Regarding the women's question in the US she stated:

"Thus it is evident that the legalization of women's subordinate status was not the act of men; that middle class men did not legalize the relatively lower status of middle class women, nor did working class men legalize the relatively lower status of working class women, nor did all men collectively legalize the subordinate status of all women

collectively. "Instead, the binding of woman to inequality by law, was the act of the men of a numerically small class that was so powerful economically and politically that it could pass and enforce laws harmful to the majority of the population." (4)

In opposition to ideas that the division of labor resulted in "unpaid labor", anti-revisionist and Communist Harrison George, the first to defend the Bolshevik revolution stated:

"You say: 'So the woman, trained for emergence, is fed a whole library of ideas, to keep her safe in the grueling, unpaid labor of the home'. It is grueling, no doubt, but it is not 'unpaid'. Here you have for the moment gotten away from the error that women in the home are idle, useless and non-contributors to society, and admit that they 'labor'. But you instantly get onto the wrong track in saying they are 'unpaid'. Well, what is the wage of a slave of any kind? Subsistence.

And there you have it. The housewife gets a subsistence wage, as does also her husband–who happens to be the one that brings it home. It is a family wage. The intermediary circumstance of the man bringing it home obscures the economic fact that the housewife's wage is the same as that of her husband–subsistence, if, as, and provided he is lucky enough to have a job. . ." (5)

This is critical to understanding that it is the ruling class alone which benefits from stratification which exists between men and women, that the housewives of the proletariat as well as the men have the interest of collectivized reproductive labor against privatized reproductive labor. It is the opportunist, and of course the postmodernist who cannot fathom such a condition and instead must situate the contradiction between working men and working women as the main contradiction. Likewise they would argue that due to belonging to a relatively higher, less subjugated strata it is the proletarian man who holds "power" over proletarian women, this "power" is diffused according to postmodernism and not fused according to Marxism. Working men may at some point be awarded the illusion of power over working women, but no real power over their own labor or the fruits thereof. Like the smell of bread, the illusion of power will not nourish the proletariat.

The two referenced Marxist-Leninists were correctly adhering to Marx himself who expressed that while the semi-proletariat might experience pauperism, the workers themselves, proletarian or semi-proletarian, two strata of the same class, collectively suffer under capitalism:

"The folly is now patent of the economic wisdom that preaches to the labourers the accommodation of their number to the requirements of capital. The mechanism of capitalist production and accumulation constantly effects this adjustment. The first

word of this adaptation is the creation of a relative surplus population, or industrial reserve army. Its last word is the misery of constantly extending strata of the active army of labour, and the dead weight of pauperism." (6)

Thus, the stratifying of the proletariat is carried out only in accordance with the needs of and in the interest of the bourgeoisie, at the expense of the subjugated proletariat class as a whole. This is a major indictment against postmodernism, divisive identity politics and overblown theories of "privilege". The arguments of the postmodernists rely on primarily two points: first they will argue that we are book worshiping dogmatists doting over every word and utterance of Marx, which is not true since Marxism itself as a framework for revolution has evolved in class struggle past Marx the man. The second argument is to cite the material, short term benefits some workers receive at the expense of others, which is carried out in production to speed up production through wage incentives and bonuses, as well in society-at-large through unequal law enforcement and specific oppressive practices creating stratas. It is pointless to deny tangible short term benefits to certain sections of the class, these benefits however cannot be allowed extension to the majority of the class. The argument for this seems credible on the surface until the long term interests of the class are considered objectively — when this is done, all of the awards, incentives, and divisions can be seen as serving the maintenance of the exploitation of the class, and as protecting and insuring capitalism's existence by strengthening the impetus against revolution.

In the litany of contradictions, Marx observed that there was stratification stemming from stratification:

"Among the agricultural labourers, those of England, the wealthiest part of the United Kingdom, were the worst fed. The insufficiency of food among the agricultural labourers, fell, as a rule, chiefly on the women and children, for 'the man must eat to do his work.' Still greater penury ravaged the town-workers examined." (7)

A Marxist understanding of class remains superior in all respects to the desperate perceptions of postmodernism, and remains more powerful as it is the framework possible for leading the unification of the proletariat and navigating it away from the traps set by the imperialist ruling class. Marxism operates on certain economic laws which are scientific as a method of understanding the world, leaving only the most anti-Marxist, anti-Communist and shamelessly bourgeois thinkers left to argue that Marxism as a framework is just a "dogma," and that to be "undogmatic" means they must rip out all definitions, adjust all the content, and rely on the tenets of postmodern thought—after all Marx contaminated his ideas with the birth defect of being European. We must insist, in the spirit of Lenin and Mao and all great Marxists, that those who distort and

mutate Marxism to divide the class amongst itself, or unite it with imperialism, are in fact not practicing Marxism but practicing revisionism.

For revolutionaries to successfully navigate through the minefield of postmodernism's quest for ideological hegemony, to practice the principle of uniting and not dividing the class, a firm grasp of Marxism and consequently the teachings of the great Marxists is a requirement. Postmodernism presents certain categories as common sense, skin privilege being one of them. These theses are based often on partial facts forced through a metaphysical framework and returned to the would-be progressive as a better way of understanding the world.

For Marxists it must be understood that this "privilege" is most often not privilege as such, and not in the long term interests of those it is seemingly, relatively awarded to. More often what is passed as static privilege is a lack of specific oppression or inclusion in a certain middle stratum of the class, and by observing the real power posed by class unity against the false illusory power of short term marginal benefits, one becomes prepared theoretically to carry out the practical work of class unification against the bourgeoisie. This requires advancing from the question Mao posed as the first question of the revolution: "who are our enemies, who are our friends?" This must be combined with several understandings, the first being that power is fused around the imperialist ruling class, and not diffused among the oppressed classes. Second, the division of class cannot be ignored nor can it be treated as a natural occurrence with no relationship to maintaining capitalism. In other words, if the divisions sewn among the stratum of the masses serves the imperialist ability to rule it can neither be reproduced by revolutionaries, which would only strengthen the agenda and operation of the ruling class, nor can revolutionaries pretend such stratum does not exist, which again serves the agenda and operation of the ruling class.

On the contrary, we must understand firmly what was presented by Chairman Gonzalo, that is to which masses do we go? The answer on no uncertain terms relied on Lenin's advice to go to the deepest and most profound masses first and educate them in revolutionary violence, bringing them forward, consolidating them so that they can win over the intermediate and bring up the backward. This is Mao's formula for conducting the mass line and uniting all who can be united against the principal enemy, which in our case is against the principal enemy of the world—US imperialism. Insisting upon uniting and not dividing is not insistence that all of the proletariat maintains equal footing; it is simple adhering to the correct Marxist principle of making revolution.

On the Labor Aristocracy

"This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, or 'labor aristocracy', who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook, is the

principle prop of the second international, and, in our days, the principal social (not military) prop of the bourgeoisie, for they are the real agents of the bourgeoisie in the working class movement, labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism. In the civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie they inevitably, and in no small numbers, take the side of the bourgeoisie, the 'Versaillese' against the 'Communards'."- Lenin, *Imperialism*

"Formally the movement is at the moment a trade union movement, but utterly different from that of the old trade unions, the skilled labourers, the aristocracy of labour." –Engels, *Letter to Sorge* Lenin addresses the highest stratum of the working class, identifying that these have been 'bourgeoisified,' this is no sloppy category invented by Lenin but a fact in the development of a critique of political economy. It is verifiable and scientific. Engels explains this section as the product of the contradiction between skilled and unskilled labor. We see from the above quotations that there is a reason for the existence of the labor aristocracy, as well as a purpose or a use, as their advantages economically, socially, etc. provide them the ability to act as enforcers of the capitalist class. It is important that this section of the class is understood as such: as the most active source of reformism and chauvinism. In understanding how and why classes are stratified, we must contend with the composition of the highest and lowest stratums.

In capitalist society, which holds true for class society generally, skills are not equally accessible. The whole capitalist superstructure has the function of reproducing capitalist society based firmly on its mode of production. Bourgeois schools of any sort are oriented around training individuals for their post in the class hierarchy of society, with very little to offer in terms of transference between classes. While there are the often lauded examples of individuals who "pulled themselves up" with education to shift from one class to another, we know that in spite of the bourgeois myths, this is still a question of what skills are granted and not something possible to just anyone in the class. Being proletarian is not a conscious choice, obviously. In a society like the US, where race is a factor in stratifying the class and society, access is often granted along racial lines. Access is often denied in mass to black people, and they are more often than not, as mentioned, denied employment, employed unevenly at lower wages, or prevented from advancing into skilled trades.

The existence of these barriers and specific oppressions however do not automatically translate to the notion that white people are by virtue of whiteness granted the position of labor aristocrats. This formula does not hold up economically when evaluating the labor aristocrat as a minority of lieutenants among the working class, they are a specific category within the class' relationship to production. While it is true that the labor

aristocrats will be predominantly white, it is also true that the vast majority of whites are not going to be labor aristocrats. Opportunists have tried for decades to mutate and bend the concept of a labor aristocrat to include the majority of proletarians. The "Third Worldists" will insist that, via their muddy "net exploiters" theory, that all in the US are global labor aristocrats. The adherent to identity politics seeks the superficial analysis that all whites are labor aristocrats, hence they remove the term from its specific definition. For an aristocratic strata to function according to the necessity of capitalism, it has to be composed of a minority of the class, to suppress the majority of the class in the interests of the bourgeoisie. It would not do to have a majority (more than half of the US proletariat is white) serving this function. The US remains the world's second largest producer, meaning that it relies upon a sizable proletariat, and must organize labor according to its needs.

It is not through theoretical discipline, discovery of new conditions or any other viable scientific method that the opportunist comes to these conclusions, it is through a slight of hand trick with Marxist political economy which banks on peddling its wares to those who have been slack in studying Marxist political economy. The deception of the opportunist is all the more common when the study of political economy is not in vogue among nascent activists in the US, who must overcome their shortcomings and not simply go in for charity or militant confrontations. Those who attack Marxism on the basis of it being a "totalizing ideology" are mistaken on the nature of society and cannot grasp the role of contradiction within all things. Engels was of course correct to insist that the contradictions are not simply between classes, but between individuals themselves, and furthermore he was so bold to suggest a solution to the interpersonal contradictions:

"Competition is the completest expression of the battle of all against all which rules in modern civil society. This battle, a battle for life, for existence, for everything, in case of need a battle of life and death, is fought not between the different classes of society only, but also between the individual members of these classes. Each is in the way of the other, and each seeks to crowd out all who are in his way, and to put himself in their place. The workers are in constant competition among themselves as are the members of the bourgeoisie among themselves. The power-loom weaver is in competition with the hand-loom weaver, the unemployed or ill-paid hand-loom weaver with him who has work or is better paid, each trying to supplant the other. But this competition of the workers among themselves is the worst side of the present state of things in its effect upon the worker, the sharpest weapon against the proletariat in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Hence the effort of the workers to nullify this competition by associations, hence the hatred of the bourgeoisie towards these associations, and its triumph in every defeat which befalls them." (10)

The efforts to nullify the sharpest weapon against them is nothing less than organization. Engels was one of the greatest Communists of his time, next only to Marx and is today for good reason regarded one of the greatest teachers of Marxism. It is through his mastery of revolutionary science and his role in consolidating and defending Marxism that has caused him to earn such a place in world history. His analysis neither slipshod or lacking investigation, he understood the given conditions in which a class comes about and the reasons it comes into direct and near immediate conflict with the exploiting class, using the example of the USA he exclaimed:

"[T]he movement was only just on the start; there was but a series of confused and apparently disconnected upheavals of that class which, by the suppression of negro slavery and the rapid development of manufactures, had become the lowest stratum of American society. Before the year closed, these bewildering social convulsions began to take a definite direction. The spontaneous, instinctive movements of these vast masses of working people, over a vast extent of country, the simultaneous outburst of their common discontent with a miserable social condition, the same everywhere and due to the same causes, made them conscious of the fact, that they formed a new and distinct class of American society; a class of – practically speaking – more or less hereditary wage-workers, proletarians." (11)

Thus a new class was consolidated in the conditions of the official end of slavery and came into disorganized battle immediately. This phenomenon was not without its internal contradictions. Engels was also aware, that in the period with mass immigration to the US, US born workers would receive a relatively privileged status of aristocrats, here he uses the term more generally than Lenin does specifically at the beginning of this section. However, the general aristocratic section is not to be regarded as lacking revolutionary potential, as he explains that:

"The tendency of the Capitalist system towards the ultimate splitting-up of society into two classes, a few millionaires on the one hand, and a great mass of mere wage-workers on the other, this tendency, though constantly crossed and counteracted by other social agencies, works nowhere with greater force than in America; and the result has been the production of a class of native American wageworkers, who form, indeed, the aristocracy of the wage-working class as compared with the immigrants, but who become conscious more and more every day of their solidarity with the latter and who feel all the more acutely their present condemnation to life-long wage-toil, because they still remember the bygone days, when it was comparatively easy to rise to a higher social level." (12)

' Unity was not foreclosed on the basis of stratification, nor of the contradictions identity, nor of the identity of the groups in question. In the above quote Engels is

addressing a general rather than a particular labor aristocracy, in other words, a relative aristocracy that formed between US born workers and immigrant workers who will work in worse conditions for lower wages. Of course, within this contradiction there is stratification of each group, with relatively better off immigrant workers compared to lower immigrant workers, and relatively better off native born workers than lower native workers. We see that this is an indisputable fact of the organization of labor under capital. Engels when addressing the issue of the English working class labor aristocracy was far less sparing. When speaking of the particular, specific labor aristocracy he reported the following:

"[T]heir condition has remarkably improved since 1848 there can be no doubt, and the best proof of this is in the fact that for more than fifteen years not only have their employers been with them, but they with their employers, upon exceedingly good terms. They form an aristocracy among the working-class; they have succeeded in enforcing for themselves a relatively comfortable position, and they accept it as final. They are the model working-men of Messrs. Leone Levi & Giffen, and they are very nice people indeed nowadays to deal with, for any sensible capitalist in particular and for the whole capitalist class in general." (13)

This upper stratum of the class, is precisely awarded with incentives to not only be more manageable, but to aid the bourgeoisie in every way in the management of exploitation. They are the first to receive reforms, hence they act as reformists against revolutionary struggle, they act as a pressure valve in the union movements, and are the first to auction off the rights of the worker at the negotiating table with the elite. Even when it came to the right to vote in England, the labor aristocrats took their seat at the masters table, leaving the majority of the class without any democratic rights. Engels again:

"In spite of the mass movement of the workers for universal suffrage the second electoral reform law, owing to the treachery of the opportunist trade-union leaders, granted the franchise only to house-owners, householders and tenants of flats who paid an annual rent of no less than £10. Thus, only the labour aristocracy was enfranchised; the mass of urban workers, the small farmers and the rural proletariat did not receive the right to vote under this measure, which was adopted on August 15, 1867." (14)

Above Engels expresses a familiar dynamic to all organic mass movements, explaining that sooner or later the bourgeoisie sends in their labor lieutenants to reign in the masses. Whether this is done through union officials, paid staffers of bourgeois politicians, or NGO's and those with ideological fidelity to their methods, the struggles become captured and liquidated once in their grasp. It is precisely the work of militants

on the ground which will drive the struggles forward to more unbridled confrontations, breaking the bottlenecks imposed by the aristocrats.

To combat the influence of the bourgeoisie among the working class, to situate the labor aristocracy in this fight, we must first understand these strata, generally and specifically. In the instance of white working class, there is indeed a general aristocracy, which can be understood as non-antagonistic in they can be won over via ideological and practical struggle, through challenging their chauvinism and insisting upon long term class interests in unity. History shows that the bourgeoisie fears and hates this and will use every means, physical and academic, to oppose it. On the other hand, within a the privileged stratum of the class, there are the specific aristocrats, be they managers, highly skilled laborers, agents of yellow unions, etc., which while these are developed enough to be visibly 'inclusive', everyone knows that they are composed of mainly white people, who have been granted access to promotions and training not extended to any of the lower class stratums. The Sixth Comintern Congress expressed the connection between strong labor aristocracy and imperialism as inseparable:

"This systematic bribery was and is being very widely practiced in the most powerful imperialist countries and finds most striking expression in the ideology and practice of the labor aristocracy and the bureaucratic strata of the working class, i.e., the social democratic and trade union leaders, who proved to be the direct agencies of bourgeois influence among the proletariat and stalwart pillars of the capitalist system." (15)

Meaning that, with revolutionary inevitability and the degeneration of capitalism under the heightened contradictions of imperialism, there emerges the "labor lieutenant," the direct agents of bourgeois imperialists in the working class. The emergence of such a section of workers bribed by imperialism has been taken by defeatist intellectuals to spell the end of any revolutionary organizing in the strong centers of imperialism. We must remember that imperialism is a colossus with clay feet, and insist as the Comintern did that this bribery can only temporarily stave off revolutionary crisis:

"By stimulating the growth of the corrupt upper stratum of the working class, however, imperialism in the end destroys its influence upon the working class, because the growing contradictions of imperialism, the worsening conditions of the broad masses of workers, mass unemployment among the proletariat, the enormous cost of military conflicts and the burdens they entail, the fact that certain powers have lost their monopolistic position in the world market, the break-away of the colonies, etc., serve to undermine the basis of social democracy among the masses." (16)

Thus, the mechanism designed for the survival of imperialism, in the end is the very threat to its existence. Its safety measures only strengthen the oppositional forces to it, for by implanting its agents in the class, class antagonism do not weaken but only

sharpens. Marxists, with the obligation of analyzing classes and their composure, have the added burden of practice, a practice based on the theory of uniting all who can be united against a common enemy. While the postmodernist-left, the legal-left, the social democratic, left etc. will all insist on unprincipled "left unity" which negates ideological struggle, they will equally neglect, or deny the dire need to understand which classes, and which forces within the class can be united against the enemy of monopoly capitalism and how. Opportunists, with total disregard for the type of work it takes to unite the class with itself and its allies, will use every bit of misunderstood theory they can traffic with to do just the opposite. For this reason we understand revisionism as the main danger to Marxism, it is the form of capitalist ideology which is deployed internally among Marxists. It is only though insistence on theoretical discipline, and more importantly its application to practice, that allows verifiable understanding.

On the Colonies "Lenin established that there are many forms of imperialist domination, but two are typical: The colony, which is the complete domination by the imperialist country on the oppressed nation or nations, and an intermediate form. The semi-colony, in which the oppressed nation is politically independent but economically subjugated."-GPL

"Imperialism is the most barefaced exploitation and the most inhumane oppression of hundreds of millions of people inhabiting vast colonies and dependent countries. The purpose of this exploitation and of this oppression is to squeeze out super-profits. But in exploiting these countries imperialism is compelled to build these railways, factories and mills, industrial and commercial centers. The appearance of a class of proletarians, the emergence of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the growth of the liberation movement-such are the inevitable results of this "policy." The growth of the revolutionary movement in all colonies and dependent countries without exception clearly testifies to this fact. This circumstance is of importance for the proletariat inasmuch as it saps radically the position of capitalism by converting the colonies and dependent countries from reserves of imperialism into reserves of the proletarian revolution." JV Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*

"In Western Europe, the home of Political Economy, the process of primitive accumulation is more of less accomplished. Here the capitalist regime has either directly conquered the whole domain of national production, or, where economic conditions are less developed, it, at least, indirectly controls those strata of society which, though belonging to the antiquated mode of production, continue to exist side by side with it in gradual decay. To this ready-made world of capital, the political economist applies the notions of law and of property inherited from a pre-capitalistic world with all the

more anxious zeal and all the greater function, the more loudly the facts cry out in the face of his ideology. It is otherwise in the colonies." Marx, *Capital Vol. I*

"There [in the colonies] the capitalist regime everywhere comes into collision with the resistance of the producer, who, as owner of his own conditions of labour, employs that labour to enrich himself, instead of the capitalist. The contradiction of these two diametrically opposed economic systems, manifests itself here practically in a struggle between them. Where the capitalist has at his back the power of the mother-country, he tries to clear out of his way by force the modes of production and appropriation based on the independent labour of the producer. The same interest, which compels the sycophant of capital, the political economist, in the mother-country, to proclaim the theoretical identity of the capitalist mode of production with its contrary, that same interest compels him in the colonies to make a clean breast of it, and to proclaim aloud the antagonism of the two modes of production. To this end, he proves how the development of the social productive power of labour, co-operation, division of labour, use of machinery on a large scale, &c., are impossible without the expropriation of the labourers, and the corresponding transformation of their means of production into capital."

"In the interest of the so-called national wealth, he seeks for artificial means to ensure the poverty of the people. Here his apologetic armor crumbles off, bit by bit, like rotten touchwood."

"We have seen that the expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil forms the basis of the capitalist mode of production. The essence of a free colony, on the contrary, consists in this – that the bulk of the soil is still public property, and every settler on it therefore can turn part of it into his private property and individual means of production, without hindering the later settlers in the same operation. This is the secret both of the prosperity of the colonies and of their inveterate vice – opposition to the establishment of capital." Marx, *Capital Vol. 1*

For colonialism to take root initially the colonizer must treat the land as public, a thing that is seen as up for grabs or to be bought cheaply. Contrary to the privatized land of a developed capitalist system. As a consequence of this characteristic of especially new colonies, the proletarian labor the capitalist brings to the newly settled land is no longer bound to him, but becomes a settler on the "public land." This is done as a necessary bulwark against the lands' original inhabitants. These former laborers become a landed class in itself, and through their own labor on this land, which is not exploited that is to say of which they reap the benefit directly, they are in many cases able to build on this basis profitable businesses, and as so, these settlers of new colonies are no longer imported proletarian laborers. They have changed into capitalists themselves,

the degree of which they achieve this depends on their resources, industriousness, and ability to maintain control of the land from the displaced inhabitants. This took place in the US even while it remained a colony of England, as the former laborers hashed out a life prohibited in their mother country.

Thus we see over time with the development of industry, the settler (former proletarians in many cases) become landed, develop industry and become the bourgeoisie, relying on economic crisis and the myth of prosperity in the new land to import more proletarians. It is when land is no longer frontier land, so-called public land, which must be settled to prevent the rebellion of native people, that the class relationships crystalize, and the proletariat, both imported and of native born, are no longer able to use the existence of the colony to transcend class. Instead from this closure of the frontier, the bourgeoisie grows to monopolize. While some of the proletariat imported from Europe were used in the case of the United States as a bulwark against the indigenous North Americans, this did not in all times and conditions constitute their principal aspect. Many settlers were used as such temporarily and in turn converted into proletarians when this use was no longer the immediate pressing necessity of maintaining the colony. Likewise, the indigenous people, their ancestors and those mixed with Europeans have also, in their vast majority, become proletarianized. They have been subjected to capitalism and this determines their principal aspect as proletarians. The proletarians of European and indigenous stock, as well as the black proletarians have all changed from whatever class they once belonged to and been converted to the common class of the proletariat, and it is from here they can develop unity on this basis.

Comrade Stalin was correct to identify that in the third world, the necessity of building industry and infrastructure for production and distribution was an example of the bourgeoisie calling forth its own gravediggers, as the bourgeoisie cannot exist indefinitely without a proletariat. In the semi-colonies today the imperialist nation maintains semi-feudalism by stagnating national capitalist development and making the whole nation instead dependent on foreign capitalism.

Classes do not remain in stasis, through dialectical processes in given conditions a class of laborers brought to colonies by industrialists can and did become the propertied class, maturing at uneven rates into the bourgeoisie, and unlike in a developed industrialized country, this was made possible by the need to the settlers to carry out genocide against the original inhabitants. In doing this the new American bourgeoisie required its own proletariat, which were filled with the ranks of laborers from Europe, captured slaves from Africa (who were bonded to semi-feudal agricultural conditions for some time) and mixed race inhabitants. In the later process we see another class transference,

emerging a new proletariat. The extension of relative social privileges or what Inman called the relative subjugation of the other, are devices maintained in the interest of modern imperialism built on colonial foundations, and in the exclusive interests of the ruling class monopoly capitalists.

Chairman Mao Zedong while being far from the US was acutely aware of its internal contradictions, and because he was a thoroughgoing materialist, he always stressed understanding the internal contradictions of the enemy imperialists. He provided several insights into how the stratification of the people in America was carried out giving the example of the southern US black population at his time:

"In general, only the most backbreaking and despised jobs are open to them. Their average wages are barely a third or a half those of the white people. The proportion of unemployment among the Negroes is the highest. In many states they are forbidden to go to the same school, eat at the same table, or travel in the same section of a bus or train as the white people. Negroes are often arrested, beaten up or murdered at will by the U.S. authorities at various levels and by members of the Ku Klux Klan and other racists." (21)

A careful examination of our reality shows that this is basically as true today as it was when Mao said it in 1963. While it has been given a makeover and laws have formally changed, the majority of black people in the US still experience this type of oppression, in that they work for less wages than white proletarian counterpart and they face massive and still the highest levels of unemployment. While, legally, they may not be forbidden from attending the same schools formally anymore the same schools are closed to them through being economically and culturally unavailable the door is still closed. While they may be able to ride on the same section of busses and trains as white people, black working class neighborhoods continue to not have the same access to public transportation as white areas and what they have is less reliable. The weight of oppression through mass incarceration of black people, and judicial and extrajudicial extermination by both state and non-state actors, are as prevalent today as they ever were.

Likewise Mao understood the US imperialist ruling class to maintain this subjugation with both hard military tactics and soft tactics:

"The Kennedy Administration is insidiously using dual tactics. On the one hand, it continues to connive at and take part in discrimination against Negroes and their persecution, and it even sends troops to suppress them. On the other hand, in the attempt to numb the fighting will of the Negro people and deceive the masses of the country, the Kennedy Administration is parading as an advocate of "the defence of human rights" and "the protection of the civil rights of Negroes," calling upon

the Negro people to exercise "restraint" and proposing the "civil rights legislation" to Congress."(22)

We could substitute Kennedy for Obama here and have the quotation remain exactly correct if we put it up against the maneuvers of imperialism against the Black Lives Matter movement. Terms change, laws are modified, but repression is carried out nonetheless and one section of the people is subjugated physically and ideologically by the state.

At no point did Mao fail to put correct emphasis on the contradiction, nor did he fail to place the correct charges on the guilty:

"The fascist atrocities of the U.S. imperialists against the Negro people have exposed the true nature of so-called American democracy and freedom and revealed the inner link between the reactionary policies pursued by the U.S. Government at home and its policies of aggression abroad." (23)

He went so far as to correctly identify the atrocities, lack of democracy and total abuse as fascist atrocities, without being hyperbolic in the least. Furthermore he identified the culprit as US imperialism, this was not by accident or due to lack of analysis, he did not use the catch all term "white people" because he understood class and its means of dictatorship: "I call on the workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals, enlightened elements of the bourgeoisie and other enlightened persons of all colours in the world, whether white, black, yellow or brown, to unite to oppose the racial discrimination practised by U.S. imperialism and support the American Negroes in their struggle against racial discrimination. In the final analysis, national struggle is a matter of class struggle. Among the whites in the United States, it is only the reactionary ruling circles who oppress the Negro people. They can in no way represent the workers, farmers, revolutionary intellectuals and other enlightened persons who comprise the overwhelming majority of the white people." (24)

The fact that it is the reactionary ruling circles that oppress black people and not the workers who oppress them is because the workers themselves do not rule, they lack political power or control over production. Similarly to busting the racist myth that people outside of the US are "stealing our jobs" the workers have no say where the factories are built or who is hired in them. Nor do they have any say in how the US is run, as this is the prerogative of the capitalist, if it was not then the dictatorship of the proletariat would not be on the agenda of every red.

Mao, unlike postmodernists was adamant in the military viewpoint that it takes the united majority to overcome the minority of oppressors. This is inherent in all his writings, his theory on People's War, Cultural Revolutions etc., by identifying US

imperialism as the oppressor and exploiter of the American people and the people of world Mao insisted on focusing on them as the principal enemy:

"At present, it is the handful of imperialists headed by the United States, and their supporters, the reactionaries in different countries, who are oppressing, committing aggression against and menacing the overwhelming majority of the nations and peoples of the world. We are in the majority and they are in the minority. At most, they make up less than 10 per cent of the 3,000 million population of the world. I am firmly convinced that, with the support of more than 90 per cent of the people of the world, the American Negroes will be victorious in their just struggle." (25)

This position was not one of inconsistency with the rest of Mao's views; it is consistent with Maoism itself. In 1957, during one of the great anti-rightist campaigns Mao identified the views of rightists as those which diminish the masses in their majority and instead rally around their own preferences, rebutting this he explained:

"We must believe that in China, as everywhere else in the world, the majority of the people are good. By the majority, we mean not 51 per cent but over 90 per cent. Of the 600 million people in our country, the worker and peasant masses are our mainstay. In the Communist Party, the Youth League and the democratic parties and among the students and intellectuals, the majority are invariably good people. They are kind-hearted and honest, they are not crafty and don't have ulterior motives. This should be acknowledged. It has been borne out in every political movement." (26)

He specified everywhere else in the world, not as a lapse in analysis but precisely because it was his view that the masses make history. It is right opportunism which scoffs at and detests the masses in their majority, it is Mao who held that, "more than 90 per cent of the people everywhere are our friends and comrades. Don't be afraid. Why be afraid of the masses? There's no reason to be." Of course, there are those who insist that they have outthought the masses, and that Mao should just 'stay in his lane' to these types we can only insist that they comprehend the words of Mao with a bit of self-reflection, "All wisdom comes from the masses. I have always said that it is intellectuals who are most ignorant. This is the heart of the matter." (27)

It is important that revolutionaries not only grasp the dialectical process insisted upon by Marx to comprehend the process and history of colonialism in the US, but that they insist upon upholding the analysis of Mao. Their reversal of the verdict is only a ruse, another right opportunist attempt to display contempt for and avoidance toward the masses, to help legitimize the bourgeoisies division of the working class, prevent unity and see to counter-revolution at all stages. Any lip service they pay to armed struggle or People's War is likewise rusted through. While the precise demographics of the US are obscured and unverifiable due to incorrect census and imprecise categories,

all accounts place the majority of the population as white, a fact that extends to the working class as well. With the non-white minority populations any expectation that these groups individually or combined are capable of waging People's War, or any successful armed struggle for that matter, lacks military sense. It is left in form, right in essence. Most often these strategists are, when you get down to it, presenting what would be genocide from a military viewpoint as revolutionary. The fact remains; class unity is a pre-requisite to waging People's War.

This is not to state that the task at hand is not arduous and difficult, all revolutionary tasks are. Furthermore the history and culture derived from colonialism, as well as the stratification of the US working class create added difficulties. US chauvinism must be tirelessly combated at every turn; short term perceived interests and the illusions of petty powers and privileges must be eroded. White supremacist views, in the advanced and under-developed forms, must also be combatted. In this struggle the question of "to which masses do we go" is ever pressing. Instead of delivering white working class people to the hands of fascists on a silver platter, remolding and education must take place; this is the duty of revolutionaries. It is not sufficient to simply write off such a large section of the working population as tainted by matters largely beyond their control, nor for the fact that the ruling class has been relatively affective in their efforts to divide the masses. The only Maoist position is to proceed from the principal that the masses make history and that socialism is only possible when won by and defended with People's War, which is a war of the masses.

The framework of colonized class vs "colonizer class" is alien to Marxism, which in conditions of national liberation views national liberation as the form that class struggle takes, in which all classes are evaluated and vulgar reduction is avoided. Maoism has also made clear that the path for the nations oppressed by imperialism is New Democratic Revolution, and that for industrialized, or imperialist countries, the path is Socialist Revolution. Terms like "neo-colonial" are also used to obscure the role and function of imperialism, as stated by the General Political Line of the PCP:

"[Chairman Gonzalo] rejects the term 'neo-colony' used by revisionism in the 1960s, whose basis is the conception that imperialism applies a softer form of domination and which led them to the characterization of a 'dependent country.' Later, applying Chairman Mao's thesis that a period of struggle was opening against the two superpowers that contend for the repartition of the world, and that one must specify who is the principal enemy of the moment, defined that the principal imperialism that dominates Peru is Yankee imperialism, but asserted that one must ward off Russian social-imperialism that penetrates the country more each day, as well as the actions of the imperialist powers that are not superpowers." (28)

Semi-colonial corresponds to the conditions of underdevelopment, the preservation of semi-feudalism by the hands of a foreign imperialist power, which dominates an oppressed nation. This is a term specific to the third world and not applicable to the first. Mao describes semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism as follows:

"The self-sufficiency of feudal times have been destroyed but the exploitation of the peasantry by the landlord class remains intact. Not only is it intact but it is linked with the exploitation by the comprador class, usury capital dominates economic life. National capitalism develops to an extent but it is not the principal pattern of social economy, it is flabby and is mostly associated with foreign imperialism and domestic feudalism in varying degrees.

The rule of emperors and nobility has been overthrown. In its place arises bureaucratic rule of the landlord class then the joint rule of the landlord class and big bourgeoisie. Imperialism controls not only vital economic arteries but the military capacity as well. Economic and cultural development is very uneven because it has been under the domination of imperialist powers. This causes a state of disunity.

The people become more and more impoverished under the dual oppression of imperialism and feudalism. This results in a lack of political rights." (29)

Following this we can understand Mao's position that in semi-feudal semi-colonial countries the main enemies are feudalism and imperialism, with imperialism being the foremost because "national oppression by imperialism is the more onerous." Mao insisted that New Democratic Revolution is the path for such countries and laid forth the following:

"Thus, the new type of democratic revolution clears the way for capitalism on the one hand and creates the prerequisites for socialism on the other. The present stage of the Chinese revolution is a stage of transition between the abolition of the colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and the establishment of a socialist society, i.e., it is a process of new-democratic revolution. This process, begun only after the First World War and the Russian October Revolution, started in China with the May 4th Movement of 1919. A new-democratic revolution is an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution of the broad masses of the people under the leadership of the proletariat. Chinese society can advance to socialism only through such a revolution; there is no other way." (30)

Such clearing the way for capitalism to create the prerequisites for socialism is not valid in capitalist countries. Any demands at such are based in fantasy and not reality, resulting only in the possibility of strengthening capitalism and negating the contradiction between capitalisms existence on one hand and socialisms emergence on the other.

On racial unity

"We got to face the facts. That the masses are poor, that the masses belong to what you call the lower class, and when I talk about the masses, I'm talking about the white masses, I'm talking about the black masses, and the brown masses, and the yellow masses too." –Chairman Fred Hampton

If we apply to Marxist theory the stale idea that a colony is in permanent stasis, and that all people with certain ethnic features are, therefore, forever-settlers, we see through our scientific approach that the semi-slave conditions of black people and the ruthless extraction of profit have deeply affected the US superstructure, and the US imperialist ruling class has managed to make these cultural defects created within the superstructure useful for the purpose of stratifying labor.

At the Sixth Communist International Congress, the position was reached which adopted the work of black Communists in the US. It laid out that black Americans in the US south, in what is called the Black Belt, constituted an oppressed nation. It also outlined that all black people in the US must be united with in the fight for their equal rights. According to the 1928 Comintern Resolutions:

"The great mass of the Negro agrarian population are subject to the most ruthless exploitation and persecution of a semi-slave character. In addition to the ordinary forms of capitalist exploitation, American imperialism utilizes every possible form of slave exploitation (peonage, share-cropping, landlord supervision of crops and marketing, etc.) for the purpose of extracting super-profits. On the basis of these slave remnants, there has grown up a super-structure of social and political inequality that expresses itself in lynching, segregation, Jim Crowism, etc." (31)

The southern states, contrary to the more industrially developed states to the north did not secure land with the same means as a conventional colony. In the northeast and the original US colonies, as mentioned in the last section, laborers themselves were converted into a landed class, transforming small manufacturers to the league of the bourgeoisie themselves. In the south the capitalist, due to the needs of the north and of Europe for agricultural products, was agriculturally oriented. It would not do to have white laborers helping the project of genocide and consequently becoming agricultural competitors, though these did exist and often became poor themselves in competition with the planter class. The planter bourgeoisie instead enlisted the enslaved to do their dirty work. This distinction operated similarly, in that like the north the land was not devoid of its original people — here people had to be fought and exterminated in order to prevent them from taking back their ancestral hunting grounds and fertile land. Hence actual white settlers and mainly the bourgeoisie used enslaved black people to murder indigenous peoples all across the US south. In some cases white militia

carried out the genocide in places like Texas, and in places like Louisiana forcing black slaves to murder indigenous people was not uncommon. While there were cases of enslaved Africans being used in genocide against the native populations there were also cases of Native Americans owning black slaves, notably the Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole. In any case this does not even partially absolve the white slave traders and slaveholders, who were the holders of power in the south and alone were able to control the state machinery, supported by non-state militia formulated exactly for this purpose. It is well beyond the capacity of this article to devote pages to the current status of national oppression in the US today, it is our position that while related, this complex debate must be carried on elsewhere.

Upon "emancipation" most black people in the south remained bonded to the land, this time as sharecroppers and subsistence farmers. More still remained partially employed or unemployed and without land to work. These would serve as the reserve army of labor, allowing for extraction of super-profits from equal labor. These "post-slavery" conditions should more accurately be called semi-slavery conditions, and as we see they still affect black people today. The yellow unions, like the American Federation of Labor, were opposed and struggled against by the Communist Party of the USA, who fought for the inclusion of the newly emergent black proletariat. To win the mostly immigrant and white CP over to these lines extensive education had to be carried out and the correct political line had be conducted. As a result of these measures, historically the CPUSA stands among the most effective at anti-racist organizing and among the very first organizers for civil rights and against segregation. The Comintern itself combated white chauvinism among the US Communists. It ordered that:

"It is the duty of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. to mobilize and rally the broad masses of the white workers for active participation in this struggle. For that reason the Party must consider the beginning of systematic work in the south as one of its main tasks, having regard for the fact that the bringing together of the workers and toiling masses of all nationalities for a joint struggle against the landowners and the bourgeoisie is one of the most important aims of the Communist International…

"To accomplish this task, the Communist Party must come out as the champion of the right of the oppressed Negro race for full emancipation. While continuing and intensifying the struggle under the slogan of full social and political equality for the Negroes, which must remain the central slogan of our Party for work among the masses, the Party must come out openly and unreservedly for the right of the Negroes to national self-determination in the southern states, where the Negroes form a majority of the population. The struggle for equal rights and the propaganda for the slogan of self-determination must be linked up with the economic demands of the Negro masses,

especially those directed against the slave remnants and all forms of national and racial oppression. Special stress must be laid upon organizing active resistance against lynching, Jim Crowism, segregation and all other forms of oppression of the Negro population." (32)

The Communist International of the Great Lenin and Comrade Stalin was not calling for sit-ins, die-ins, or putting hands up in a show of surrender, all popular but limited tactics today. The Comintern was instructing the wholesale struggle against white attitudes in the south, that white workers must be organized to confront these views and won to the support of black people, and furthermore, resistance to lynching was not done as an act of protest or letter writing or petitions, but through organizing armed self-defense and literally combat. The history is one of white workers under communist influence fighting the police alongside black workers, in some cases being jailed or killed. It was a history of advances and retreats, all which led to eventually being sold out by opportunism. It is critical that this history is understood, and not ignored.

The Comintern insisted that focus must be placed on the importance of the Party leading the newly emerged black proletarians, who would be critical to the task of organizing the masses of black people. Focus must always be placed on centering the proletariat as the most revolutionary class, the revolutionary subject. They even stressed that when conducting the struggles for the cause of black people among whites, that this must be done on the basis of proletarian unity, meaning that white workers must struggle for unity by supporting the civil rights and liberation struggles of black people. The Comintern stressed that the number one enemy of black people everywhere in the world was imperialism:

"The Negro race everywhere is an oppressed race. Whether it is a minority (U.S.A., etc.), majority (South Africa) or inhabits a so-called independent state (Liberia, etc.), the Negroes are oppressed by imperialism. Thus, a common tie of interest is established for the revolutionary struggle of race and national liberation from imperialist domination of the Negroes in various parts of the world. A strong Negro revolutionary movement in the U.S.A. will be able to influence and direct the revolutionary movement in all those parts of the world where the Negroes are oppressed by imperialism." (33)

In fact, this 1928 prediction came true in the late 1960's when the Black Panther Party for Self Defense emerged to inspire similar formations all over the world among black people, be they indigenous Australians, or Dalit people in India. The BPP for all of its shortcomings did not gloss over white chauvinism, nor did they view it as an insurmountable thing preventing unity among the masses. Like the Communists before them, they sought to overcome white chauvinism with mass organizing, understanding

that all those who are exploited have a joint interest in the seizure of political power, the only sound basis for determining enemies and friends. So where does white chauvinism come from? The Comintern resolutions make this clear, as did BPP leaders like Fred Hampton who sought to organize across racial lines. The Comintern Resolutions of 1928 state on no uncertain terms:

"The Party must bear in mind that white chauvinism, which is the expression of the ideological influence of American imperialism among the workers, not only prevails among different strata of the white workers in the U.S.A., but is even reflected in various forms in the Party itself. White chauvinism has manifested itself even in open antagonism of some comrades to the Negro comrades. In some instances where Communists were called upon to champion and to lead in the most vigorous manner the fight against white chauvinism, they instead yielded to it. Like the workers parties of the Second International, there were those who sought to align themselves with imperialism. In accordance with Lenin's methods of combating this in the Second International, the Comintern directed the US Communists to carry out organized campaigns to restrict, combat and erode chauvinism with internationalism:

"An aggressive fight against all forms of white chauvinism must be accompanied by a widespread and thorough educational campaign in the spirit of internationalism within the Party, utilizing for this purpose to the fullest possible extent the Party schools, the Party press and the public platform, to stamp out all forms of antagonism, or even indifference among our white comrades toward the Negro work. This educational work should be conducted simultaneously with a campaign to draw the white workers and the poor farmers into the struggle for the support of the demands of the Negro workers." (34)

They relied on the Marxist science expressed by the Great Lenin, quoting him in their resolution:

"The center of gravity in educating the workers of the oppressing countries in the principles of internationalism must inevitably consist in the propaganda and defense by these workers of the right of segregation by the oppressed countries. We have the right and duty to treat every socialist of an oppressing nation, who does not conduct such propaganda, as an imperialist and as a scoundrel." (35)

For Lenin, a failure for socialists to come to the side of the oppressed, when one is from the oppressing nation means that the "socialist" in question has succumb to revisionism, that is they continue to use the title socialist while in reality being agents of imperialism.

The Comintern saw the necessity of recruiting and training black leaders in Marxist theory and, in order to accomplish this, the CP would have to go among the people in their struggles and work toward cultivating Marxism-Leninism, today this would mean Maoism, among black people. Not only was the training of black Communists necessary, but the struggle of black people itself, was for the first time ever centralized within the Party's general work:

"The Central Executive Committee must work out plans designed to draw the Negroes into active participation in all these campaigns, and at the same time to bring the white workers into the struggle on behalf of the Negroes' demands. It must be borne in mind that the Negro masses will not be won for the revolutionary struggles until such time as the most conscious section of the white workers show, by action, that they are fighting with the Negroes against all racial discrimination and persecution. Every member of the Party must bear in mind that 'the age-long oppression of the colonial and weak nationalities by the imperialist powers, has given rise to a feeling of bitterness among the masses of the enslaved countries as well as a feeling of distrust toward the oppressing nations in general and toward the proletariat of those nations.'" (36)

The Comintern did not take to counterpoising the masses against one another, their departure point was to have white Communists and advanced white workers prove their merit to black people and through serving their struggles understand the legitimate 'bitterness' and feelings of distrust that exist among black people. The success of organizing the black masses during the Third Period would have been impossible without this departure point, and large scale participation of black people in the struggle for socialism is impossible today unless this is grasped. In short, when black people express bitterness, distrust, etc. against white workers, this is not without good reason. It is not baseless, and this must be demarcated from those opportunists who just insist on muddling and confusing the question of enemies and friends in the interests of imperialism.

A revolutionary, especially white revolutionaries, must be the most active in opposing white chauvinism and racism. They must prove with their actions the merit of their words, otherwise these words are empty, and they promote distrust. There is the added damage of revisionism, which has betrayed the black proletariat more than any other, for this reason anyone promoting Marxism among the masses of black people has the responsibility to prove it in practice before expecting anyone at all to go along with them. Sectarianism, rigidness and an unforgiving elitist attitude are the worst things to bring to the table. If the white proletarians of the US are to accomplish unity with the proletariat generally they must be trained in the school of internationalism, won firmly to the side of black people.

This is why US Maoists have argued that the black proletariat is central to the task of socialist revolution and liberation of all peoples from white supremacy and why Mao insisted that:

"The evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and throve with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the black people." (37)

Black people are necessary for socialist revolution in the US, such a great task is impossible without their participation and furthermore socialism is in the interest of the vast majority of black people, this is the basis for uniting people—their own interests even if they do not perceive them as such. We can understand one main reason for the existence of a white dominated legal-left, a failure to apply revolutionary science to the active struggles of the masses, especially the struggles of black people, which the legal-left seek to buy up and liquidate via NGO's into the dead end of Democratic Party posturing in most cases and reformist social democracy in other cases. For revolutionary movements, which are on the resurgence after a long period of retreat the issue is in some cases the same, and in others a matter of finding ones footing or being manipulated by bourgeois ideas away from carrying out the revolutionary work necessary for the reconstitution of the truly multinational Communist Party. The Comintern stated that:

"Only by an active and strenuous fight on the part of the white workers against all forms of oppression directed against the Negroes, will the Party be able to draw into its ranks the most active and conscious Negro workers — men and women — and to increase its influence in those intermediary organizations which are necessary for the mobilization of the Negro masses in the struggle against segregation, lynching, Jim Crowism, etc." (38) Segregation, lynching, and Jim Crowism etc. all live on to this day in a variety of forms, thus the revolutionary (and all revolutionaries of all races) must without fail engage in the active and strenuous fight for black people and they must mobilize white workers as part of this fight. This is done precisely by fighting their own backwardness. For the postmodernist this revolutionary thesis is denounced as "capeing," "whitesplaining," etc. Just like the white chauvinist, the thought of class unity is upsetting.

A sound Marxist analysis relies on the internal contradictions of a group, for the same reason that the Comintern grasped the need to combat white chauvinism, they also saw the need to combat the sections of black society which sought capitulation and surrender to imperialism. Contrary to the ramblings of right opportunism which uphold the church as a progressive pillar of the black community the Comintern expressed that:

"In the work among the Negroes, special attention should be paid to the role played by the churches and preachers who are acting on behalf of American imperialism. The Party must conduct a continuous and carefully worked out campaign among the Negro masses, sharpened primarily against the preachers and the churchmen, who are the agents of the oppressors of the Negro race." (39)

Important to note, that this resolution was not a call to attack every church with abandon, but to specifically warn against those in the black community who are agents of imperialism.

The question of the black struggle for self-determination was not separate from the internal two-line struggle inside of the CPUSA, with the Lovestone faction (followers of Bukharin) insisting on ignoring the issues facing black people. Their position was that industrialization would solve the question in time, making the matter one of waiting instead of fighting. Lovestonites were eventually expelled from the Party as right opportunists. The left line was more complex and more precise. First all efforts must be taken as detailed above to combat white chauvinism, resist and do battle with the vestiges of slavery etc. to fight tooth and nail for equal rights in the north and south, and the right to self-determination in the south.

This meant opposing the numerous opportunist trends like the 'back to Africa' line which expressed itself in wholesale deportation or mass exodus, resulting in abandoning the struggles of the black nation up and to that point (the Garvyites took an issue with being in the US thus they avoided the real issue of US imperialism which oppresses black people everywhere), as well as the Communists opposition to an "all back, or 100 percent black" nation in the south. We will explore some of the positons taken in these struggles by the Communists in the 1930's through both direct accounts and Comintern Resolutions. At least a decade before the 30's the struggles between left and right positions on the question of the black struggles emerge: Cyril Briggs, one of the early black Communists in the US, (as well as the founder of the African Blood Brotherhood in 1919, a black liberation organization) struggled tirelessly with Marcus Garvey:

"Garvey accused Briggs of being 'a white man passing as a Negro'… The rest of the decade, this personal dispute assumed an increasingly ideological cast. While Briggs devoted and increasing part of his energies to trying to recruit black members for the Communist Party [from his contacts in the African Blood Brotherhood], Garvey took positions on racial and economic issues that seemed to align him with the most conservative forces in the United States. Expressing contempt for black organizations that emphasized civil rights and social equality, Garvey held a meeting with the leader

of the Ku Klux Klan and began to openly express skepticism that blacks could escape second class-citizenship in the United States." (40)

While Garvey slipped into an alignment with white racists, on the basis that white and black people were irreconcilable enemies and that it would be better for black and white to separate as totally as possible, the Communists fought hard against the position and for integration. The Comintern Resolutions, while defending the right to self-determination for the black nation condemned all forms of narrow nationalism that impeded class unity between white and black proletarians, by placing equal rights on the agenda:

"The struggle for the equal rights of the Negroes does not in any way exclude recognition and support for the Negroes' rights to their own special schools, government organs, etc., wherever the Negro masses put forward such national demands of their own accord…The broad masses of the Negro population in the big industrial centres of the North are, however, making no efforts whatsoever to maintain and cultivate a national aloofness, they are, on the contrary, working for assimilation. This effort of the Negro masses can do much in the future to facilitate the progressive process of amalgamating the whites and Negroes into one nation, and it is under no circumstances the task of the Communists to give support to bourgeois nationalism in its fight with the progressive assimilation tendencies of the Negro working masses." (41) A Marxist analysis of the contradictions is necessary to understand how bourgeois nationalism comes into contradiction with revolutionary black nationalism, and how simultaneously there can be progressive assimilation into one white and black nation. This is yet another point which will make the postmodernist inclined squirm in their arm chairs.

The Communists knew that the struggle for equal rights could not be left to the whims of industrialization as the Lovestonite revisionists proclaimed, nor could it be opposed as the KKK and the Garvyites desired, nor could it be without bloodshed and combat as the liberal apologists for the vestiges of slavery still insist. For the Communist revolutionary the battle for equal rights was:

"[A] relentless struggle in practice against all manifestations of Negrophobia on the part of the American bourgeoisie" and that without this relentless struggle it, "can be nothing but a deceptive liberal gesture of a sly slave-owner or his agent. This slogan is in fact repeated by 'socialists' and many other bourgeois politicians and philanthropists who want to get publicity for themselves by appealing to the 'sense of justice' of the American bourgeoisie in the individual treatment of the Negroes, and thereby sidetrack attention from the one effective struggle against the shameful system of 'white superiority': from the class struggle against the American bourgeoisie. The struggle

for equal rights for the Negroes is in fact, one of the most important parts of the proletarian class struggle of the United States." (42)

Not only was this a great struggle demanding great sacrifice but it is one of the most important parts of proletarian class struggle. Central to all of this was the struggle to develop class unity: "The struggle for the equal rights for the Negroes must certainly take the form of common struggle by the white and black workers. The increasing unity of the various working-class elements provokes constant attempts on the part of the American bourgeoisie to play one group against another, particularly the white workers against the black and the black workers against the immigrant workers and vice versa, and thus to promote divisions within the working-class, which contributes to the bolstering up of American capitalist rule. The Party must carry on a ruthless struggle against all these attempts of the bourgeoisie and do everything to strengthen the bonds of class solidarity of the working-class upon a lasting basis." (43)

These constant attempts on the part of the bourgeoisie still take place today; one form is that of postmodernism and the diffused power concept as discussed in the first section, this way racist division is presented in the form of left rhetoric instead of the classic conservative right rhetoric. The rhetoric of settler vs colonized, the overblown definition of privilege as power, the idea that colonialism is central to understanding national oppression, etc. all, intentionally or not, plays one group against another, promotes division among the working class and contributes to bolstering up capitalist rule. Stemming from the need to strengthen the bonds of class solidarity for the working-class on a lasting basis the Comintern gave instruction that white workers were to march at the head of struggles for black liberation and make breaches everywhere possible in the walls of segregation and reactionary racist laws. Likewise black workers were instructed to carry on tireless activity among the black working masses to free them from their distrust of the white proletariat and draw them into a common front for revolutionary struggles against the imperialist bourgeoisie. These are instructions which are particularly important for revolutionaries in the US today.

A major impediment to this is the tendency inherited from postmodernism which manifests itself in various forms to regard stratification and national oppression as the continuum of 'colonialism,' which even in the 30's was something the Comintern and the Party in the US were dealing with. This tendency has only strengthened with the influence of mutated postmodern thought by the red-washed postmodernists.

Imperialism and colonialism are related, but they are not the same thing and we cannot abide by treating the oppression of racial and ethnic minorities as colonialism outright, we cannot let the distinctions be lost in the similarities. The Comintern Resolutions stated that:

"It is not correct to consider the Negro zone of the South as a colony of the United States. Such a characterisation of the Black Belt could be based in some respects only upon artificially construed analogies, and would create superfluous difficulties for the clarification of ideas. In rejecting this estimation, however, it should not be overlooked that it would be none the less false to try to make a fundamental distinction between the character of national oppression to which the colonial peoples are subjected and the yoke of other oppressed nations. Fundamentally, national oppression in both cases is of the same character, and is in the Black Belt in many respects worse than in a number of actual colonies. On the one hand the Black Belt is not in itself, either economically or politically, such a united whole as to warrant its being called a special colony of the United States, but on the other hand this zone is not, either economically or politically, such an, integral part of the whole United States as any other part of the country. Industrialisation in the Black Belt is not, as is generally the case in colonies properly speaking, in contradiction with the ruling interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie, which has in its hands the monopoly of the entire industry, but in so far as industry is developed here, it will in no way bring a solution to the question of living conditions of the oppressed Negro majority, or to the agrarian question, which lies at the basis of the national question." (44)

Hence it is wrong to present the thesis of "internal colonies" as the newer generation of Maoists are prone to do. This has to be understood in the context of importing post-modern categories into Marxism, by either laziness or inexperience, or a mechanical understanding of materialism. Internal colonies, colonies proper and semi-colonies are not sufficient to describe national oppression in the US let alone the matters of labor stratification, white supremacy and capitalist development, integration, assimilation, etc. This is the case even while national oppression is the same regardless of the colonial condition, but instead of getting into these matters there are those eager to wave the catch-all framework of colonized vs colonizer, which we have already exposed as faulty. We have tried to limit discussion to the points most relevant today, it is beyond the scope of this paper to get into the matter of the right to self-determination of the oppressed nations, as well as the items in the Comintern Resolutions which have transformed in modern conditions, including the development of industry, emigration from the Black Belt, remigration to the Black Belt, the land question, etc., as such important matters deserve articles as lengthy or lengthier than this one.

On the practical application of the Comintern Resolutions

Of utmost importance was the Communist position that combating chauvinism among whites was a responsibility of whites, although black Communists were encouraged to struggle against the chauvinism of white comrades. Hence a lesson for us, while

combating over-blown privilege theory which seeks to counterpoise worker to worker, we would be remiss if we allowed this position to be distorted into claims of what is often called by reactionaries "reverse racism" or if we were to allow any idea that there is such a thing as "black chauvinism." Communist and journalist Vera Sanders put the issue well:

"Chauvinism is the aggressive attitude and oppression of one nation over another. Can we for one moment seriously entertain the contention that Negros are aggressively exercising their national rights over the whites? No! What these comrades mean in making charges of 'black chauvinism' is that these Negroes are race conscious as well as class conscious and this we must certainly commend and not reject." (45)

The Communists in the US were by no means the initiator of the struggles against racist chauvinism in their movement, their history of large numbers of immigrants in the foreign language leagues, tended toward hostility or indifference toward the masses of black people. The US south was traditionally ignored by the Party which was stronger on in the Northeastern and Midwestern industrial hubs, where black people were recruited but in insignificant numbers. It was the Comintern of the great Lenin and Comrade Stalin which applied consistent pressure to the Party in the US to emphasize black issues at heart of all class issues.

The success of the Great October Socialist Revolution had no small effect on the consciousness of workers all over the world, including the black working class of the US.

The prestige earned by being the world's first successful socialist revolution meant that when the Soviet revolutionaries spoke, and workers and Communists in the US listened. This was not simply a matter of subservient observation to theory or policy, it was the practice of the Soviet Union to combat and resist Great Nation chauvinism at home and abroad. This indeed was a major point of the Communist International.

In practice the Communist Party of the Soviet Union invited black Communists from the US to study abroad. There they were treated to Party schools, trained as cadres and leaders. The Soviet leaders understood that black people in the US represented one of the most oppressed groups in the world, and that their resistance at home was a critical part of resistance to imperialism. The black comrades who trained in the Soviet Union also provided the best analysis of conditions which faced black Americans, information which would be instrumental to the Comintern's ability to draft its resolutions and carry out its practice. Among this information gathering, the CPSU compiled grievances from their guests on chauvinism in the US section of the Comintern, being the CPUSA. Even when these complaints came from non-Communist sources, the CPSU would act on them, reprimanding Party leaders in the US. The CPSU as vanguard of the

world proletarian revolution at that time did not slack at its task, special ideological training was provided to black American's so that they could master and apply Marxism-Leninism to their conditions at home. While in the Soviet Union they were exposed to a multinational network, not only of the many races and nations that composed the Soviet people, but of people from all over the world including Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, with these multinational groups including European Communists as well. Nothing like this could be experienced in the segregated black ghettos of the US. The best students were promoted to serve on Comintern Committees, where they developed theoretical positions on the black question in the United States. They taught and learned respectively, strengthening the role of the great Communist International.

Black Communist revolutionaries like Cyril Briggs did not leave the combating of white chauvinism to white people alone. They demanded their white comrades take up the fight while providing great practical examples by never backing down in the face of white racism. They reprimanded their white comrades at any sign of chauvinism or paternalism, so common in the Party that these confrontations were frequent. They took on the simultaneous task of uniting black people, and building the multi-racial, multinational CP.

In labor, the stiffest opposition to the efforts of the black Communists was found in the reformist trade unions like the AF of L, who agitated both against Communism and racial unity. AFL president William Green warned all unions who participated in events put on by black Communists that they would lose their charters. The AFL sought to prevent the organization of black workers by black Communists, while maintaining what was in essence a segregated union against black people.

Black Communists, inspired by and influencing the trajectory of the Comintern began to see headway in the late 20's at the Sixth Congress of the CPUSA. In March 1929, five black Communists were elected to the Party's Central Committee, and from there they went on to organize black workers committees in each of the Party districts, and elected Central Committee member Briggs as the head of the black department of the Central Committee. Under Briggs leadership the Party determined May 10-20th to be "National Negro Week" in which special effort would be placed on commemorating Black revolutionary heroes and the struggles against slavery as well as the struggles for equal rights. Beyond commemoration of the heroes the Party was instructed to carry out intense work on the black question at every level, analyzing both conditions and culture as well as ideological trends among black people.

The black leaders of the CPUSA were among the fiercest fighters the US proletariat has ever produced. Acting on the Comintern Resolutions which they helped to draft, bourgeois influence among black people was equally combatted. Through Harlem

based mass organization the Tenants League, black landlords who charged black tenants sometimes as much as three times the rent of white residents, all in the while forcing them to live in crumbling, rat infested buildings, were combated without mercy. This is all in the face of the bourgeois press, including much of the black press lauding the black landlords and portraying their properties as liberal progress. The black church itself was not to escape the ire of the proletarian revolutionaries, especially considering that at the time the churches were some of the biggest landlords. They would collect donations from the very communities they were plundering and impoverishing with exorbitant rents, and the Communists were among the only forces to mobilize the community against them. This kind of confrontational militancy against class enemies, black or white ones, resulted in a swelling of the mass organizations, with Tenants League alone swelled to more than 500 in a short time. The TL argued that the black middle class, be they landlords, editors, businessmen, or ministers, profited off the exploitation and misery of black workers forced to live in the ghettos. It was argued that they had a financial interest in the maintenance of segregation. Black Communist Richard Moore explained:

"The Capitalist caste system, which segregates Negro workers into Jim Crow districts, makes these doubly exploited black workers the special prey of rent gougers. Black and white landlords and real estate agents take advantage of this segregation to squeeze the last nickel out of the Negro working class, who are penned into the 'black ghetto.' Rents in Negro Harlem are already double, sometimes triple those of other parts of the city." (46)

Resistance to eviction commenced and protests were often brutalized by the police. The Communists were unrelenting and proved able to carry out street combat. Contrary to this militant confrontation of recognized class enemies, the followers of Marcus Garvey refused to use tactics that could result in confrontations with the state or authority, while being totally willing to use reactionary violence against Communists, equal rights activists, and any other group they saw as oppositional to their segregationist aims. Communists were the first to point out that the Garvyites had no qualms whatsoever about aligning literally with the ruling class including its most reactionary and racist elements.

The Comintern program of the Sixth Congress explained that:

"Garvyism, which formerly was the ideology of the Negro small property owners and workers in America, and which even now exercises some influence over the Negro masses, like Ghandhism, has become a hindrance to the revolutionization of the Negro masses. Originally advocating social equality for Negros, Garvyism subsequently developed into a particular form of Negro "Zionism" which, instead of fighting

American imperialism, advanced the slogan: 'Back to Africa'! This dangerous ideology, which bears not a single genuine democratic trait, and which toys with the aristocratic attributes of a non-existent 'Negro kingdom,' must be strongly resisted, for it is not a help but a hindrance to the mass Negro struggle against American imperialism."

It was the combative and militant actions of the Communists that earned them mass support. The Party organized regular street meetings and refused to seek permits. As the police would break up these meetings the Party would send constant back up to the black Communists from white areas of the city. In one incident thirteen people were arrested and police opened fire on the crowd as a scare tactic. In response the people rallied around the Party and fifteen black residents of the neighborhood applied for membership and joined. After this, crowds of up to 2,000 people would gather to hear the speeches of the Communists and would boo and hiss, and threaten to rebel when the police would intervene. Every inch of ground, every word spoken was fought for bit by bit by the Party, and for the first time in large numbers the masses were able to hear and learn about Communism. This was won through taking on the police and the spilling of blood, both the blood of Communists and the blood of the masses which mingled, as well as the enemy's blood which nourished the struggle when spilt.

The onset of the Great Depression only spurred forward the work of the Communists in black urban centers. The Party branch in Harlem united all workers against unemployment and evictions. After a large demonstration against poverty conditions and unemployment held in Union Square, which saw the highest participation of black militants uniting with white workers, the Party held the first integrated dance at the Rockland Palace Ballroom located in Harlem on 155th St, ending the event with all in attendance singing the Internationale. Attendance of meetings bloomed due in part to the fact that the Party was the only force organizing regular rallies against the growing suffering of the working class in the Depression, and the racial inequalities that were magnified by it.

In these struggles the contradictions between the Communists and reactionary nationalists in the Garvyite movement only increased. Garvyites would confront Communists at anti-lynching meetings, leading to one altercation which resulted in the death of black Communist Alfred Levy, who died as a result of injuries obtained from Garvyite reactionaries and the police. The same week a Mexican Communist named Gonzalo Gonzalez was murdered by the police in lower Harlem while defending a Communist march against police interference. The Party responded by rallying support for the two fallen comrades, resulting in over 2,000 attending their respective funerals to honor them and protest the police and reactionaries. The protest followed the hearses

through the streets of Harlem. According to the Amsterdam News, "several thousand Communists of every race and color thronged Lenox Avenue."

Even with the increased unity attained by the work of the Party, white chauvinism within its ranks were not fully purged, especially among the foreign language sections, which in some cases would refuse to attend meetings in black neighborhoods and set their meetings in notably racist Italian neighborhoods, to prevent black participation. The Party leadership used these cases as public examples and denounced them. In some cases, public trials were held against those being tried for white chauvinism, an expellable offense.

The CPSUSA was the first political organization in the US, socialist, anarchist or otherwise that carried out a comprehensive program of integration, defining participation in cultural affairs such as integrated dances, community functions, etc., as a requirement, demanding the greatest degree of social fraternization between black and white comrades, inside and outside of the Party. The Party leadership struggled against the odds to make this kind of atmosphere possible.

The Central Committee tried Finnish worker August Yokinin publicly for white chauvinism. Yokinin defended the racist expulsion of black comrades from what was meant to be an integrated dance, arguing that if black comrades were allowed to dance, they would also attend the Finish bathing houses, and he found the idea of bathing with black people insufferable. This of course was during the time of segregation and his backward views were those of many stubborn and backward white workers, the fact that he was a member of the Party only meant more so that he had to be made a public example and reprimanded. The Party itself was to publicize the trial of Yokinin as much as possible.

The Party distributed leaflets encouraging the masses of Harlem to witness the trial. The times reported that the hall holding the trail was crowded beyond capacity long before the hearing begun, "every one of the 1,000 chairs were occupied and 1,000 more persons stood," reported the Times. The Jurors were composed of 14 Communists, half black and half white. The prosecutor argued for expulsion, insisting that if people with these types of views were allowed to remain in the Party, the Party could not hope to carry out the Comintern Resolution which stated that white workers must win the confidence of black people. Richard Moore, a leading black Communist, had taken to defending Yokinin: he agreed with the nature of the charges, but argued that due to the Party's inability to conduct sufficient educational campaigns against white chauvinism, expulsion was too strong. In essence he argued that the crimes of Yokinin were due to fault of the Party and that since the accused had admitted guilt, there was

no point in subjecting him to the humiliation of expulsion, the harshest punishment for a Communist. Moore stated that:

"We must remember that a verdict of expulsion in disgrace from the Communist Party is considered by a class-conscious worker as worse than death at the hands of the bourgeois oppressors. As for myself, I would rather have my head severed from my body by the capitalist lynchers than to be expelled in disgrace from the Communist International."

To which the entire audience clapped and cheered. The jury returned with the verdict, where they chose to expel Yokinin from the Party, but with the option to win back admission, only by earning it in taking an active role in the struggles for black people in Harlem. Yokinin, having pled guilty agreed to this, including agreeing to educate those at the Finnish club on the trials proceedings and to take up the fight for the admission of black people into the club. He further took up leading protests against a restaurant in Harlem which refused to serve black people. Very few were disappointed with the results of the trial or the commitments of the guilty to rectify his mistake, and to correct his backward views through practice and serving the people. Support also came from the Jewish Communists for the campaign against white chauvinism. They were enthusiastic, as they saw the struggles against anti-black racism and antisemitism to be part and parcel of the same battle.

The trial against Yokinin is of importance for revolutionaries still. In the current age of call out culture, where everyone is "canceled" for infractions far more innocuous than the obvious racist insubordination of Yokinin, the Party's actions to reform the expelled, before allowing the possibility of readmission stand out in stark contrast. The CP took with earnest seriousness the need to confront white racism, and the dire need to reform those among the precariat, it would have been unthinkable to just get rid of Yokinin, leaving his views as they were and sending him away from the Party bitter and rejected. While expelling racists has a clear benefit to black people, it is not as beneficial as having a former chauvinist placed under the guidance of black revolutionaries, forcing him to work alongside them in the strict service of black people. Through exposure to the reality of black people, and through combating and resisting anti-black oppression one's views can be changed, and a potential enemy of the people is transformed into a genuine servant of the people. The verdict was clear and the penalty was not light, and in the end this was good for everyone involved and another militant was developed for the struggle of black liberation.

Yokinin would be arrested during this time for being a foreign born Communist and he would face deportation. Upon his release on bond however he resumed his duties and continued to speak out publicly against racism. While on bail and facing deportation,

black and white workers alike rose to his defense and many rallies were carried out and the Party organized his defense. What is important in all this, is the Party's methods for handling its internal contradictions, its mobilization of the masses, and its commitment to the principle that change takes place through upheaval and struggle, including the transformation of individuals. The Yokinin hearing reached far beyond that single member of the Party and set the example for many more to come.

As time would have it, when the Third Period of the Comintern would be developed and advanced by the Seventh Comintern Congress into the People's Front, with US opportunists and chauvinists under the leadership of the revisionist Earl Browder misapplying Comintern Directives against the black struggle. Browder replaced all leading black cadres with those loyal to him. First using then centrist and eventually revisionist Harry Haywood, then finding Haywood too far to the left for his interests, Browder sent in more capable agent James Ford. Cyril Briggs and others were transferred and expelled. "Americanism" became the branding for Browderite revisionism, cults and churches also were brought into prominent leading positions in the formerly Communist led movement and militant struggles were done away with for a class collaborationist approach which did not offend the landlords and sought to avoid conflict with the police.

In Fords campaign to liquidate the revolutionary black Communist leaders he denounced them as "nationalists," and when Communists sought to fight for employment of black people at stores that would only hire whites, Ford denounced this struggle on the basis that they should tail the white workers and first organize them into unions. In spite of Communists insisting this was a failure to support the masses, Ford neither budged from his excuse nor did he ever actually organize the white workers, and the struggle for employment was taken up by black reactionary nationalists, including one Abdul Sufi Hamid who referred to himself as "black Hitler."

Ford and the Browderites declared a struggle against Black Nationalism that was almost equal to the struggles against white chauvinism, while ceding leadership to reactionary nationalists to eliminate revolutionary black Communists. A focus was based on quantity at any means, at the expense of political education and the quality of the movement. As a result, both quality and quantity would suffer over time. Briggs, unlike Ford who replaced and opposed him, applied correctly the theory of the united front, several years before it had been implemented as official Comintern Policy, and as a result of his foresight the Browderites got rid of him and supplemented their mutated line in place of the united front. By 1934 Richard Moore would be replaced by Harry Haywood who himself would be replaced by the fall of the same year, for being too far to the left. Haywood himself remains one of the most well-known black Communists from the

US, who would split from the Party after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in opposition to "destalinization" only to come out and defend arch-revisionist Deng Xiaoping after the death of Chairman Mao. It is no coincidence that Browder used men like Ford, who were black men, educated in Ivy League universities and from bourgeois backgrounds, because they could endear themselves to Harlem's black elite strata of intellectuals and bourgeoisie in ways that immigrant born black radicals like Briggs could not. Here stratum and class within the black struggle was used to cripple and end the high period of black liberation struggles in the late 20's and early 30's.

For our purposes, we can understand that the role of Browder and his supporters to distort Comintern advice and promote US chauvinism in the form of "American Exceptionalism." This was at the expense of the working class, in that it effectively destroyed the Party's work among black people by means of forced class collaboration, resulting in capitulation and the dissolution of the Party in 1945, only to be reconstituted in form without revolutionary content by the revisionist William Z. Foster. So as far as the Party's revolutionary examples and prestige is concerned, to when it was destroyed and degenerated by revisionist leadership, we find examples in both the positive and negative. In any case, the Party's experience as one of fighting white chauvinism to unite around black liberation is one of the most important parts of its history.

Conclusion

Against Marxism, we see a variety of charges leveled, sometimes even by those claiming to adhere to the former. These tend to be based not on Marxist works, or even Marxist frameworks, but borrowed, and often incorrectly from postmodern academics, we encounter charges of "orientalism" when Chinese imperialism is evaluated, a term taken from Edward Said and used and reused on social media to a point of it hardly being recognizable. We hear of "post-colonialism" borrowed from Gayatri Spivak, which more often than not is used outside of the intended context, and in a totally superficial way. Her theory of the subaltern (a concept taken from militarily lexicon, but its use inspired by Antonio Gramsci), is most often used by opportunists to subvert and replace the Marxist understanding of classes being stratified and at times vacillating. Still, its merits, that it is able to identify some of the deepest and most profound masses, does not manage to make its way into the analysis of the red washed postmodernist. Instead of receiving these constructs as they were intended, we encounter a bastardization of them, not exceeding the bastardization of Marx, Lenin, Mao, etc. spewed forth by the very same scam artists.

Theories intended to identify and sometimes confront specific oppressions are blended into a concoction only fit to divide and oppose one worker against another, foreclosing the revolutionary potential of the masses. The opportunist, while calling us dogmatic, will still cling to their narrow and often wrong conclusions derived from their mistaken readings of postmodernists. They will praise their own eclectic and individualistic interpretations as if they were sacred artifacts, with the very idea of examination to them equaling a challenge of the enemy. Their artifacts, when looked at closely will crumble to dust and they know it, which is why hyper defensiveness, and opposition to ideological and two-line struggles, are their very trademark.

We will hear a million and one excuses, arguments that we should skip reading Mao or Stalin and instead only read Anderson or Fanon. We will hear that to express the limitations of privilege theory is tantamount to a racist denial of racisms existence, and we will be told that Mao was of course wrong about who could be united and that we better read Sakai. When we insist that Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and Gonzalo among many others are upheld by us because their theory has resulted in undeniable revolutionary accomplishments and ongoing practice, we will be told to 'stay in our lane', that we are either white, or brainwashed by whites, and they, the students who dispense with Marx et al. and cling to Said, Spivak, Fanon, Foucault, Sakae et al. are the real and only Marxists! Like the committed student of Trotsky these 'revolutionaries' need no evidence of success in revolution, no evidence of successful practice and no evidence that their ideas are anything more that ideas.

Like the Garvyites before them the red-washed postmodernist will deny any possibility of unity across the lines of their identity preference, and they too will fail to confront US imperialism and instead confront "white people," an ever changing target. Like Ford they will insist that community organizations and churches do not have a class character, and that the united front does not need Communist initiation and leadership, etc. In all cases they seek to treat enemies as friends or friends as enemies.

In some cases, they are simply clever enough to eradicate Marxism-Leninism or Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in essence while parading about its image, while taking up the title and relying on bourgeois ideology. After all they are not like the "dogmatists" even if their "heterodoxy" has resulted in the total gutting of Marxism as a method, framework and guide to practice. Their ideas would be as incorrect under any name, but when they parade their trash as Maoist ideas, it is only made easier to dispel them with a basic examination of Maoist theory, something they conveniently ellipse. At the same time as these bad anti-Marxist elements operate, there are plenty who simply have not sought out thorough theoretical study in the Maoist discipline, making them particularly vulnerable to opportunists because of their experience combined with the

common place. This unfortunate condition only means that as the practice and study improve among the second camp, they come into contradiction with the first, adding to the instability inherent in organizations which unite around exaggerated division.

Understanding strata, and the history of the proletariat in the US, which means understanding the real issue underlying it all, opens the road for genuine mass work. It allows the beginning of the real mobilization of the masses to combat racism, chauvinism, sexism, etc. In the final analysis, only that which seeks to unite the broad toiling masses, against their narrow group of exploiters (the imperialist ruling class) is worthy of flying the red flag of Marxism. Imperialism is such a vile and repugnant beast, and with US imperialism as the main enemy of the US proletariat, as well as the main enemy of the world, it is quite good at dividing the people and obscuring its hand. Understanding US imperialism as the enemy necessitates grasping it as the principal oppressive force, distinguishing between the principal and secondary contradictions. We must oppose those, who in the phony name of progress and trendy activist intellectualism, come up with excuses to present secondary contradictions as the main contradiction. They treat imperialism itself as equal to the contradictions among the people, which we know now will seek to include the majority of people in the enemy camp of imperialism. This in essence only obscures the fight against the imperialist ruling class.

The contradictions among the people, which make instantaneous unity impossible, only demand the struggle for unity—this is the Maoist process in which all unity undergoes. This struggle to unite the class is not without hardship and patient work among the masses, this becomes all the more important against the opportunist and revisionist camp. Impetuosity, superficial analysis, and the rejection of Marxism are all ghosts which must be exorcized by the Communist movement.

What has become clear is that those who rely on postmodern categories, those who talk excessively about 'privilege' theory, those who denounce any possibility of uniting the class with itself and with its allied classes in the united front, etc. exhaust time and effort on a litany of topics but have not found the time to critically study the material and history of Communists in their own country, or take seriously (again with critical examination) the line of the most advanced black liberation organizations such as the BPP or ABB, etc. Furthermore, these types of individuals and organizations depend on a lack of theoretical understanding, ignorance on the topics of history, philosophy, political economy, and scientific socialism, in order to hock their nonsense.

This article contrary to how it will undoubtedly be taken by those still in the mud of postmodernism, those who have yet to bleed out its poisonous influence, is not an attempt at unprincipled unity, any more than it is a call to ignore the imperialist crimes in which white workers have either helped to conduct or have benefited from. On the

contrary it is a challenge to struggle for principled unity, by uniting to confront white supremacy, as well as reactionary views which tear the class asunder. It is a challenge to delve deeply into the complex contradictions we face presently as well as the muddled and bloody history of the worlds sole hegemonic imperialist super power. The most shining examples of resistance exist in the history of the ICM, and notably in the political lines of the Communist International. The spirit of internationalism and armed struggle must live on in our politics – the clever sounding rhetoric and jargon of postmodernism must be overcome. Revolutionary theory and practice must be taken seriously in the interest of reconstituting the Communist Party and uniting the majority in the application of revolutionary violence and the initiation of People's War. With this task firmly in our hearts there is never too much to ask. Present conditions only make learning from the past and correcting our errors all the more pressing.

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