

THE SPLIT IN THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAT  
(a response to "Critique of the LSM Position")

In the last issue of the NAAIC newsletter a "Critique of the LSM Position" was presented by the Chicago Anti-Imperialist Collective (CAIC). The intent of the article was to "clarify... differences and to refute certain errors so that the Coalition can move forward." We strongly question that the real intent of this article was to advance the coalition when it attacked LSM as a class enemy of the international proletariat and proceeded to attack the very principles of the anti-imperialist practice of this coalition.

CAIC directed its "Critique" to the Richmond, Canada LSM Information Center publication: "Principles of Liberation Support Movement's Anti-imperialist Work". The Bay Area LSM is a separate and autonomous organization from the Information Center. However, we support the position of this pamphlet and consider it the theoretical basis of our practical work. We, therefore, feel a responsibility to respond to this "Critique".

CAIC bases its arguments on misconceptions of Marxist-Leninist analysis and the history of capitalist development. We urge that NAAIC members reread the "Critique" in the last newsletter along with this article. Our response is directed to CAIC's three main points.

1. CAIC states: "A 'class' is defined primarily by the relationship to the means of production, not by geographic location or level of living. There can be no 'proletarian nations' until worldwide communism has been accomplished and we have achieved a classless society. To think otherwise is to diminish the significance of the workers' class struggle within these so-called 'proletarian nations'."

LSM quotes Lenin, who does not limit "class" to the relationship to the means of production. He includes the "magnitude and mode of acquiring the portion of social wealth" of which a particular group or class disposes, (this is generally referred to as material conditions) and other important aspects: "Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their role in the social organization of labor, and consequently, by the magnitude and the mode of acquiring the portion of social wealth of which they dispose. Classes are such groups of people, one of which can appropriate the labor of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social production."

V.I. Lenin (our emphasis)

True, class is not defined by geographic location, but rather by the place occupied within a historically determined system of social production. In the era of monopoly capital, this system is the internationally based imperialist system, which is at this point in history dominated by the U.S. ruling class. ("The first world and the third world are the same system")

The concept of "proletarian nations", misunderstood by CAIC, means that the dominant feature of these nations is that the majority of the population belong to the "laboring masses". This is a recurrent concept in the literature of Marx, Engels, and Lenin - that is the development of capital, the tendency towards the concentration of capital, leads to a world system where "nations of peasants" are dominated by "nations of bourgeois". (terms quoted from Communist Manifesto)

CAIC maintains that LSM obscures and neglects class analysis within countries like Angola or Mozambique. We remind them that "Principles..." is a summary of the analysis underlying our anti-imperialist practice. We refer CAIC to the many publications by the LSM Information Center which develop the class analysis of the imperialist system as a whole, as well as particular regions within its empire, i.e. Towards An International Strategy; Getting Hip to Imperialism, Alcan, Jamaica and Cabora Bassa; Peasant Types and Revolutionary Potential in Colonial Africa; . . .

2. In their second point, CAIC gives an oversimplified definition of class. Class is defined, they say, solely by its relationship to the means of production - and this relationship is synonymous with material conditions. This definition is too limited to deal with the complex phenomenon of classes (and strata within classes) in the imperialist era. By confusing material conditions with relationship to the means of production, CAIC is in effect rejecting the materialism in Marxist dialectical-materialism. We refer CAIC to Mao's "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society" (1926). Mao demonstrates first the condition of each class in Chinese society by determining their economic status and from this analysis draws conclusions regarding the attitudes of each class to imperialism and the Chinese revolution. In other words he shows that the subjective attitudes of each class is based on its objective condition.



CAIC argues that LSM mistakenly contrasts the U.S. workers' standard of living to workers' of separate societies. That it is only relevant to define class position in relation to other classes of the same society. CAIC bases their class analysis on the national boundaries of the U.S. and not the socio-economic system of imperialism. The Angolan peasant, who has been forced into the migratory labor system of southern Africa is indeed a part of the same system of social production as the U.S. worker.

A correct analysis of the socio-economic system of imperialism must begin with a consideration of all the class relationships within it. This would include a comparison of the magnitude of social wealth at the disposal of each class in this system. In this comparison it is clear that there is a large difference in shares of "social wealth" within the international working class. LSM is not arguing that the larger share of social wealth of the workers in the metropolitan countries, in itself undermines the revolutionary potential of that class. What is important is the method through which they obtained that condition. The crux is whether the better material conditions are a result of revolutionary class struggle or class collaboration. An example of the former is that within socialist countries the material and social being of the working classes has been qualitatively changed. Yet simultaneously with the struggle to improve their own conditions - build the economic base for socialism - these countries contribute in important and concrete ways to the revolutionary national liberation movements throughout the world.

CAIC continues by claiming that in the last 50 years, the U.S. capitalists have extracted greater surplus value from their use of U.S. working class labor-power than have any other capitalists in the world... "Therefore, the U.S. working class is among the most exploited of all working classes." This argument is absurd! CAIC is trying to rationalize their swing away from anti-imperialist politics. They are obscuring the difference between the "rate of exploitation" and the "condition of exploitation". It is the technology of the industrial nations which allows the worker to reproduce his day's wages many times over - not a greater intensity of labor-power. But it was the labor-power of the proletariat of the underdeveloped countries, working under backward and miserable conditions for sub-subsistence wages, that created the material base of this technology. It is also this cheap labor force that creates the super-profits which enable the ruling classes to buy-off (high wages, shorter hours, the welfare state...) a majority of the workers in the metropolitan nations.

3. We do not have room to respond here to the errors in CAIC's understanding of the development and rise of imperialism. This we will do in a later issue of the newsletter. Instead, we'll direct ourselves to the question of the labor aristocracy.

Marx and Engels recognized the tendency of imperialism to split the workers and strengthen opportunism among the workers. (The political content of opportunism is class collaboration) For several decades they traced this connection systematically. Lenin, after the collapse of the second international at the beginning of W.W.1, showed that the split in the working class movement is bound up with the objective conditions of imperialism. He traces the development of "opportunism" within the labor movement first as a 'mood', then as a 'trend' and finally as a 'group' or 'stratum'.

"The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalist in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or given nation against all the others."

V.I. Lenin, Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism, 1916, P. 152, Chin. Ed.

It would be undialectical to ignore the development and expansion of imperialism since 1916. The ability of the ruling classes to "bribe" the workers of the industrial nations has increased many times what it was after W.W.1. It has increased to the point where the dominant feature of the working class is its general policy of class collaboration. LSM's position is not that this is a permanent state - that would also be undialectical. It would be ignoring the weakening of imperialism by the wars of national liberation.

Conclusion: The material and political support work by LSM is expressed in the principles of this coalition. It is not a cop out! It is not a rip-off, but it is our duty. Support for the armed struggles of Asia, Africa and Latin America is essential not for abstract humanitarian reasons, but because the emancipation of these "proletarian nations" is the precondition to our own revolution.

LSM does not feel we should reconcile ourselves to the split in the international proletariat, but as Marx, Engels, and Lenin did - expose it. "Unless the economic roots of this phenomenon are understood and its political and social significance is appreciated not a step can be taken toward the solution of the practical problems of the Communist movement and of the impending social revolution." V.I. Lenin, Ibid, p. 10.



NOTE: The following was LSM/Bay Area's submission to the last newsletter, which was mailed but never received. Because it did not appear in that newsletter, we are reproducing it here in this issue.

Bay Area Liberation Support Movement / P.O. Box 756 / Berkeley, Ca. 94701

### CRITICISM OF THE THIRD NAAIC CONFERENCE

After three conferences and two full years of existence, this coalition has yet to justify itself as a viable political entity through concrete anti-imperialist practice. In nearly all cases, NAAIC has increased the productive output of member groups by little or none, and individual organizations continue to maintain a minimal (and often, as in the case of the newsletter, less than minimal) commitment to the coalition. Our view is that this situation stems directly from: 1. fundamental differences over exactly what the focus of NAAIC activity should be (although this is clearly stated in the founding principles); and 2. very destructive liberal tendencies with regard to principled ideological struggle, discipline, comradely criticism/self-criticism, and initiative, commitment, and follow-through on projects and resolutions. Since the most prominent ongoing NAAIC "activity" in these two years has been its annual conference, we present here our opinions regarding the 3rd conference of NAAIC held this past August in Madison.

The Africa Caucus which we participated in, and the breakdown within it, were highly indicative of the problems in the coalition as a whole. The only prepared proposal presented, material support or otherwise, was the MPLA Printshop Project, submitted by the LSM/IC. Last year's conference passed a similar resolution, thereby undertaking the printshop as a NAAIC-sponsored project, but for the most part, commitments were not fulfilled. For this reason, and because it is a well-planned, much needed project already being implemented, LSM/Bay Area came prepared to actively push for renewed support for the printshop as the only on-going material support project of NAAIC. A struggle ensued over whether the Africa Caucus would support the printshop resolution, and these points emerged: 1. CCLAMG stated that it disagreed fundamentally with LSM/IC politics and therefore could not work with the IC in any capacity; 2. both CCLAMG and other groups felt that the printshop was LSM's "pet project" which LSM was trying to coerce other groups in NAAIC to participate in. (One individual, while agreeing it might be a worthwhile project, stated, "Go ahead and work on it if you want to, but why try to make us work on it if we don't want to?")

Our responses to these developments, stated during the Caucus meetings were: 1. These arguments do not explain the failure to carry out commitments made last year to the project. If such reservations were felt, then they may have been grounds for not endorsing the proposal a year ago. The current withdrawal of support by member groups actually constitutes a reneging on their previous commitment, bringing into serious question whether other such proposals that are endorsed by NAAIC can be expected to receive the concrete fulfillment of commitment that they require. 2. The assertion that the printshop is LSM's "pet project" being forced on NAAIC is an unprincipled distortion. The MPLA Printshop Project is (quoting from the IC resolution) "based on the stated needs of the Movement and prepared with the Movement's active cooperation." The LSM/IC has explored its feasibility, prepared a thorough plan of action, initiated the project within NAAIC, and carried out partial implementation of the project; but the pledges made to the Printshop Project were ultimately made to MPLA, on whose behest the project was begun, and those groups who did not honor their commitment should consider seriously the implications of damaged credibility among the liberation movements which are involved. 3. CCLAMG's position vis a vis the LSM/IC poses the untenable contradiction of two organizations united under the principles of unity of the coalition, yet one of whom cites fundamental and irreconcilable political differences with the other which precludes any further working relationship. Our view is that within NAAIC there exists a range of political differences, but the coalition's principles of unity form the basis of our political commonality because we agree that working together within them we can advance the struggle to defeat imperialism. For one group to refuse to work with another because of political differences which lie outside the scope of these points of unity is both divisive and counter-productive, and indicates a negative and defeatist attitude with respect to struggle in a constructive and comradely fashion.



When our request for endorsement of the printshop resolution was defeated, we called on member groups of the Africa Caucus to offer other proposals for consideration. We stated that we could not speak for the IC, but that LSM/BA would not take the position of complete non-cooperation with CCLAMG or any other NAAIC group, despite the fact that we have similar theoretical disagreements with them. We will evaluate any proposed project on its merits, that is, the extent to which it is clearly anti-imperialist in content and serves to advance the concrete anti-imperialist practice of NAAIC. We awaited the presentation of other proposals but they were not forthcoming. No projects of any kind were proposed, other than the rejected printshop resolution, revealing an appalling disregard for serious pre-conference preparation. On this point a distinct reluctance to engage in self-criticism was shown, and instead an attempt was made to resort to brainstorming and spontaneous inspiration in the last minutes of the caucus meeting in order to come up with even a single resolution to present to the coalition as a whole. This having failed, the Africa Caucus returned to the final plenary meeting with nothing concrete to show for its hours of caucus deliberations.

Some critical points regarding the rest of the coalition and the conference: 1. The greatest expenditure for the previous year was some \$900 in travel expenses for steering committee meetings which proved largely unproductive because there existed virtually no programs for the steering committee to implement. 2. Many of the resolutions passed by this conference were, as in the past, no more than recommendations of policy for individual groups, rather than projects designed for concrete coordinated activity within the NAAIC framework. 3. The Latin America Caucus seemed optimistic about working together, and sponsored some promising resolutions, but tended to ignore the political crisis in the coalition as a whole. It should be remembered that at the first two conferences the Africa Caucus appeared to hold the most promise for genuine practice and cooperation emerging from the coalition. To sidestep or ignore fundamental questions of political principle in favor of gaining more immediate practical goals in our specialized areas of work is an unhealthy tendency which can lead only to an unstable and temporary unity at best.

Conclusion: 1. The NAAIC points of unity do not preclude political differences among member groups, nor do they preclude that members engage in areas of practice not specified in the three points; but they do require that all NAAIC groups engage in one or more of the three stated areas of anti-imperialist work with respect to the coalition. This is the purpose for which NAAIC was created, and this is where its energies must be focused. We must not allow this body, whose founding principles defined its duties to the international struggle against imperialism, to become a catch-all for many different aspects of left politics, embracing areas of practice, whether valid politically or not, which properly lie outside the framework of this coalition. 2. There must be willingness in NAAIC for principled struggle over what we disagree on, and there must be willingness to unite over what we agree on, namely support for the national liberation struggles. This degree of unity must be carried over and expressed in concrete practice, or it is meaningless. 3. Finally, the liberalism which prevails in NAAIC, and which was manifested at the conference by the lack of serious preparation, reluctance to criticize, accept criticism, or be self-critical, etc., must be struggled with openly through principled criticism and self-criticism. This is a fundamental task which must be begun before NAAIC can move out of its stagnancy and toward productive service to the anti-imperialist struggle.



CHICAGO COMMITTEE FOR THE LIBERATION  
OF ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE AND GUINEA  
2546 N. Halsted, Chicago, Ill. 60614  
312-348-3370

CCLAMG is continuing its work in the areas of education and material support for MPLA, FRELIMO and PAIGC.

In December, FRELIMO representative Sharfudine Khan visited Chicago, and CCLAMG participated with several other local groups in the organization of his visit. He spoke at two public meetings, radio shows, a high school, a workers' group (Gary, Indiana), and held several interviews.

In honor of the victorious struggle of the people of Guinea Bissau, CCLAMG has produced a POSTER and a PAMPHLET: (both may be ordered from the above address)

#### POSTER

A beautiful silk-screen poster commemorating the independence of Guinea Bissau under the leadership of PAIGC - scenes of the struggle silhouetted against a rising sun and map of Africa, with quotation from PAIGC. Prices: \$1.25 (\$1.50 by mail), or \$1.10 in lots of 10 or more. All proceeds will go directly to PAIGC.

#### PAMPHLET

"The Sun of Our Freedom: The Independence of Guinea Bissau"

A 36-page pamphlet of quotations, poems, official statements, and photos of the heroic struggle of the Guinean people.

Price: 50¢ (bulk rates available on 10 or more)

On January 19, in observance of the first anniversary of the assassination of Amilcar Cabral by Portuguese agents (Jan. 20, 1973), and in affirmation of the sure victory of PAIGC against colonialism and imperialism, CCLAMG presented a film program, "Free People in Guinea Bissau." This new film (Swedish-made) focuses on reconstruction and education in the new Republic's liberated areas, and includes discussions with Cabral. Available from TRICONTINENTAL FILM CENTER, 244 West 27th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001

PEOPLE'S RECOGNITION OF GUINEA BISSAU - CCLAMG is circulating the petition (reserve) in solidarity with the people and party of Guinea Bissau. We urge groups and individuals to circulate the petition and return to the indicated address by the end of February. They are hoping for more than 10,000 signatures! Petitions will be presented to PAIGC, with copies to the U.S. State Department.

LITERATURE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA....more than 75 books, pamphlets, posters, and buttons about the liberation struggles in Africa are available through the New World Resource Center. (2546 N. Halsted, Chicago, Ill. 60614). Write for literature list.

# Message of Support and Solidarity

## To The People and Party of The Republic of Guinea Bissau

We recognize the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Guinea Bissau.

In this historic moment, we join with the people of Guinea Bissau in celebrating this latest triumph over Portuguese colonialism and its allies.

Guided by the determined leadership of the Partido Africano de Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), this great expression of the right of self-determination attests to the strength and will of a vigilant people.

Recognizing that newly independent governments have had to resist international pressures aimed at undermining their sovereignty, we pledge our solidarity with you in the face of any pressures.

Be assured that your countrymen and women are welcome among us.

Be assured also that we are prepared to discuss exchanges between our peoples, based on equality and mutual respect.

In the spirit of liberation and good will, we rejoice with you.

I affirm the Message of Support and Solidarity to the People and Party of the Republic of Guinea Bissau. I wish to add my voice to those recognizing and celebrating this newly formed government. I also wish to urge the Department of State to extend full diplomatic recognition to the Republic of Guinea Bissau.

NAME

ADDRESS

RETURN PETITIONS TO: Committee to Support the Republic of Guinea Bissau  
164 Madison Avenue, Second Floor  
New York, N.Y. 10016