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The Need for Theory

One of the defining human qualities is the capacity of human beings to learn and apply scientific theory. By theory, we mean the laws inherent in the objective, material world. Through practical experience, sense perception and scientific investigation, human minds not only reflect the phenomena of the world but learn the inter-relationships and inner connections of things and come to know how the world works.

Such knowledge of theory – of the laws governing the motion and development of the objective, external world – is decisive in empowering humans to change the world. Take the every day example of an individual who is fixing a car. He/she must rely on knowledge about how the motor or the car's electric system works. Indeed, people may and do begin working on problems – begin changing the world – with little knowledge of theory but in the course of their practical activity, it is precisely the ability of humans to grasp the laws of motion of things which enables them to solve problems and effect change. Over thousands of years, humans have continually learned about the laws of nature in order to cultivate crops and create modern industry. This knowledge, accumulated over centuries, is a decisive part of the ability of contemporary humanity to secure its necessary means of subsistence.

So too, mastering theory is a decisive part of the struggle of the working class for emancipation. Since its very emergence, the modern working class has been in motion and struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression and with the aim of gaining its emancipation. The work-

ing class has a tremendous amount of experience under its belt, having, amongst other things, created its trade unions, its independent political parties and even gained the first experiences in building the new, socialist societies. The task of contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory is precisely to generalize this experience and uncover the laws of motion of contemporary social and political life in order to provide illumination and orientation for the working class movement for emancipation. The workers need contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory (which lays bare the laws of motion of human society) to develop their movement on a solid foundation, to clarify the aims of the movement and zero in on what social transformations are necessary to gain emancipation and in order to work out the strategy and tactics of their movement.

Precisely because contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory is essential to the success of the workers' movement, the capitalist class does everything to suppress this theory. At all costs, the capitalists want to prevent the workers from coming out as class for themselves, conscious of their own aims. Thus, the bourgeoisie concoct and propagate their ideology on the widest possible scale in order to de-politicize the workers, mystify every social problem and cover over the fact that it is the capitalist economic and political system which is the cause of our oppression and the roadblock to social development.

Capitalist ideology especially tries to obscure and mystify the basis of change, development and motion and the role of the working class itself as the creator of the new, social-

ist society. The bottom line of bourgeois ideology is that social development has ceased, that capitalism is the eternal and best social system and that the workers must remain forever as a subordinate class – exploited, oppressed and excluded from the political power.

In the fight against contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory, the capitalists rely on social democracy and liberalism. These political-ideological trends are imported into the workers' movement through the labor aristocracy and opportunism with the goal of keeping the movement under the domination of bourgeois ideology. In addition to promoting every illusion in the capitalist system and the capitalist political parties, social democracy and liberalism especially work to prevent the workers from coming out as a class for themselves and unfolding a conscious, systematic and independent political movement. The social democrats and liberals openly express contempt for theory and insist that the workers, at most, can concern themselves with certain partial, immediate issues – with minor demands to partially ameliorate their exploitation.

In fact, when such partial struggles break out – such as struggles against the privatization of government services or against new forms of capitalist exploitation such as part-time work, the liberals and social democrats work to isolate and confine these struggles by refusing to discuss the root causes in the anti-social agenda of the government and the crisis of the capitalist system. But it is only by developing such class consciousness that the workers can

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link together the many partial struggles, develop their generalized political movement and find permanent solutions.

This contempt for theory is closely linked with the conception of social democracy and liberalism that the working class is a backward class – a slave class – incapable of thinking and acting independently on the basis of its own aims and agenda.

The Workers Party holds that the work of elaborating and popularizing contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory is an important touchstone of one's attitude and stand towards the working class and its struggle for emancipation. Only on the basis of scientific theory can the workers release their creative and revolutionary power, consciously organize their movement and empower themselves. Theory – i.e., the consciousness of the workers about society and their own movement – is the foundation upon which the movement develops. Theory alone gives confidence, conviction and scope to the movement and provides the basis for working out the strategy and tactics for advancing.

For example, in the course of participating in many fronts of the anti-war struggle, our Party always zeros in on the capitalist-imperialist system as the cause of war and exposes the current features of U.S. imperialism's

drive for world domination. This theory is an essential part of revealing the real class interests behind the government's chauvinist propaganda, of creating the consciousness necessary to unfold a systematic and proactive anti-war movement and of showing what social transformations are necessary in order to realize the world of peace and friendship so ardently desired by the peoples.

In promoting the philistine attitude of disregarding theory, social democracy and liberalism get a great deal of help from various "left" sects which convert random "Marxist" phrases into lifeless dogmas. Such sects advertise themselves and are, in fact, advertised by the capitalist media itself as the staunchest "defenders" of socialism and Marxism. But the every day experience of activists and workers shows that these sects convert theory into religious mantras and use these mantras to split and marginalize the movement. Such dogmatists have no interest in solving the problems facing society nor in helping the workers organize themselves. Rather these sects are content to promote their "pet peeves" from the sidelines and try to create artificial divisions and factions amongst the workers and people.

Contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory is irreconcilably opposed to dogmatism which is nothing but a form of bourgeois ideology used to create artificial splits amongst the people and sterilize human thinking by forcing it into pre-made frameworks which acknowledge only dogma and never reality.

Contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory arises from the concrete analysis of concrete conditions and is always in service of the actual movement of the workers for emancipation.

Today, nobody should be fooled by the surface events. Despite the

continuing offensive of the capitalist class, a profound class polarization is deepening every day. The crisis of capitalism presents urgent questions concerning the path of social development and every day the workers and people are coming to grips with and looking for solutions. Amongst other things, people are very aware of their deepening political alienation and marginalization from political life, people are looking for ways to resist and reverse the anti-social agenda of the bourgeoisie and fighting against new forms of capitalist exploitation. People are coming out in opposition to the aggressive war program of U.S. and world imperialism and aspiring to create a world of peace and friendship.

Contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory starts from such actual contradictions and the profound demands and needs of the workers' movement and aims at working out the independent political program of the workers and carrying through the ideological and theoretical work necessary to advance this movement. A starting point of the contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory is to further elaborate and popularize the program of economic rights, democratic renewal, a democratic foreign policy and socialism. Part and parcel of contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory is working out the forms and methods of the independent organization of the workers themselves – the theory and tactics of building the party of the working class and the mass workers' press, of the struggle for political power, of the struggle against opportunism and social democracy, etc.

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