

COMMUNISM IS ACTION NOT A BELIEF

February 1, 2002 by Floyce White

Many working-class people are drawn into struggle through an initial contact with one or another petty-bourgeois movement. Most are disgusted and repelled; those who remain are slowly won to liberalism. They come to see the totality of bourgeois causes as "the movement." Activists get jerked from one urgent campaign to another. The ever-present need for an immediate show of numbers causes the "struggle within the struggle" to be nicely and conveniently suppressed. Slogans, writings, and actions are adopted that do not threaten property relations. Anger is channeled into sham confrontations of "civil disobedience" rather than takeovers. As activists get involved in more issues, their struggles become increasingly distant from the material distress that set them into political action.

Lacking any process of long-term development of struggle, the "proletarian milieu" gets defined by opinions on issues instead of as the condition of being working-class people in struggle to end class society. The presence of capitalists within each organization ensures that any position on any issue must be pro-property. The presence of many small capitalists is what keeps a petty-bourgeois movement petty bourgeois. Capitalists are class conscious because of their business activity; any idea that challenges their domination is viciously expunged. Each multi-class faction develops a basketful of positions as its manifesto, platform, or program to guide action. The long-term process of ongoing discussion, debate, criticism, and self-criticism is replaced by quoting authority figures or reciting the "party line." Particularly odious is the wholly-false concept of *group opinion* that pressures each member to participate in actions and distribute statements already decided by some majority vote, consensus, committee, or "leader." Disagreement is labeled "petty bourgeois" even though agreement is always for a pro-capitalist solution. Disagreement means quitting, splitting, or acting against one's beliefs. Spontaneity, flexibility of tactics, multiple approaches, individual initiative—all are stifled by conformity. Bossed over as if employees, the circle is complete when working-class activists announce the work orders to the masses.

Many working-class activists try to wash their hands of bourgeois politics by concentrating on workplace or neighborhood issues. This strategy is not effective. The property system always generates sellouts among the dispossessed. To save their privileged positions, traitors always silence any talk of overthrowing the system. These labor lieutenants of capital create conservative company unions or liberal "us only" unions, but never build long-term relations with meaningful acts of support. Token solidarity is limited to "our" industry, country, or local. Traitors turn community-action groups into voter-turnout machines, parapolice, or "poverty pimps" for government grants. Anti-worker politics limits the choices to various liberal reforms. "Throw the bums out" instead of explaining why all reformers are sellouts. "The workers aren't ready" instead of raising the anti-property demands that make workers

ready. Lifelong reformers become the slickest practitioners of bourgeois politics and the slimiest apologists for the capitalist system. Working-class activists face the same underhanded methods and the same ulterior motives in every political arena. The absence of capitalists merely opens the possibility for working-class solidarity. Fearless and persistent struggle with communist ideas is necessary to win workers away from anti-worker politics.

In the course of writing these articles, people ask me if I am a “left communist” or an anarchist. No. These flyers are a criticism of the petty-bourgeois socialist movement and a self-criticism of my participation in it. The struggle of the poor against the rich is named for its goal: communism. If it were called something else, the rich would have dirtied that name. As working-class activists raise their demands in petty-bourgeois movements, the names of those movements get soiled too. The search for a “New Left,” a third way, or a special appellation reveals the shallowness of petty-bourgeois “anti-capitalism.”

Communism is not a specialization to be vaunted or a program to be waved. Communism is not accidentally created during endless repetition of the mistakes of the past. Communism is the definitive state of being, expressed in the words and deeds of the dispossessed. There is no such thing as a “capitalist communist.” We must not pussyfoot around the bourgeoisification of struggle by calling rich comrades “intellectuals”—or worse, “workers” due to belief. Comrades from capitalist family origins are, at best, sloppy reporters and wannabes who consciously and unconsciously use every trick, humiliation, and malfunction as their actual anti-communist being. To emulate them or to accept their limited goals is to play the fool and traitor. In opposing the routines of daily life—going to work, going to bed, going to the store—we find the threads of communism. Our slogans must be:

SHARE NOT TRADE
ABOLISH EMPLOYMENT—END WAGE SLAVERY
NO RENT—NO MORTGAGE—NO HOMELESSNESS
COMMUNISM IN OUR LIFETIME

This article is the fifth in a series, available at <http://www.geocities.com/antiproperty>