



AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR
ALL POWER TO THE WORKING PEOPLE!



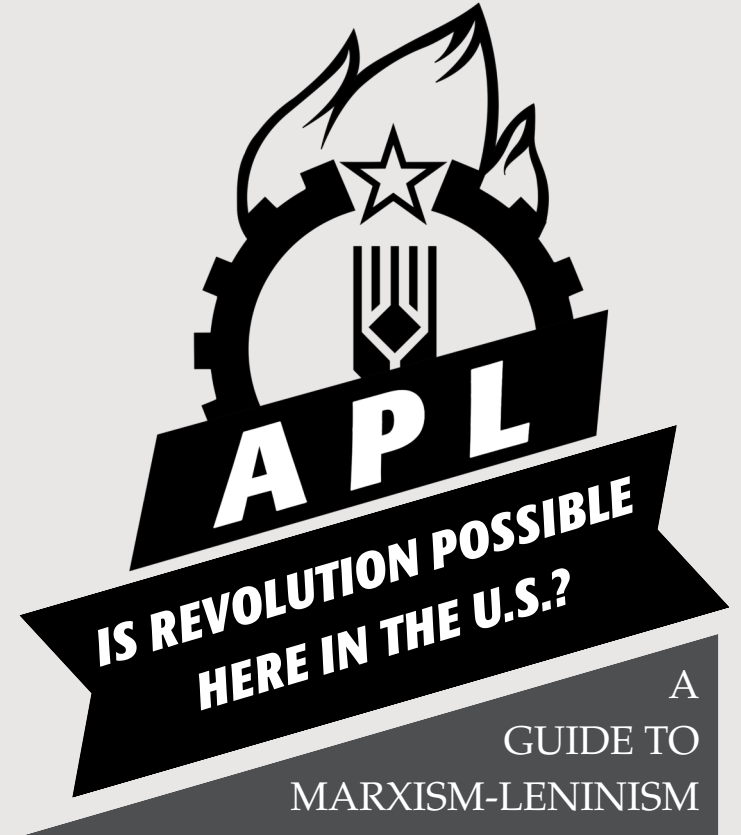
 **apredphoenix**



 **Red Phoenix News**



AmericanPartyOfLabor.com



by the American Party of Labor



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND OTHER COMMUNIST OR "MARXIST-LENINIST" PARTIES?

WHAT SETS US APART FROM OTHER LEFT PARTIES IN THE U.S. IS OUR CONSISTENT OPPOSITION TO ALL IMPERIALISM, HOLDING HIGH THE REVOLUTION AND THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE OVER THIS OR THAT REACTIONARY STATE, AND OUR BASE WITH THE MOST OPPRESSED SECTORS OF THE WORKING CLASS, INCLUDING: WOMEN, LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE, MIGRANTS, AND PEOPLE OF OPPRESSED NATIONS.

With the power of the American working class, and the workers of all countries, we have a world to win.

Onward, towards socialism!



APPLY TO THE APL

Table of Contents

Section 1: What is Marxism-Leninism?	2
Section 2: What is Class Struggle?	4
Section 3: Stages of Development	7
Section 4: Tasks of the Movement	11
Section 5: Struggles of Oppressed Peoples and Nations	16
Section 6: Revisionism and Anti-Revisionism	19

Introduction

There is a common misconception that working class people are politically powerless and that the best the working class can do is pick between the “lesser of two evils”. However, the working class is the most revolutionary section of society, while Democrats and Republicans are both figureheads of the reactionary ruling class: corporations, monopoly capitalists, and the imperialist military. Elections in the US do not bring meaningful or lasting change. Pursuing electoral reforms is not an effective strategy for bringing about changes which are beneficial to the masses of working class people. This is because the ruling class remains in power and has the ability to undo those reforms at any time. The root problem which requires change is capitalism. Marxism-Leninism is the ideology and practice of overthrowing capitalism and establishing a working democracy, against exploitation and oppression, and for a socialist future. This is why it is important to be a Marxist-Leninist today.



WHAT IS THE AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR?

WE ARE A REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY ORGANIZED AROUND LABOR MILITANCY, INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY, AND WOMEN'S AND LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS.

WE ARE...

ANTI-CAPITALIST

ANTI-FASCIST

ANTI-IMPERIALIST

ANTI-REVISIONIST

OUR GOAL IS TO UNITE THE PEOPLE STRUGGLING AGAINST THEIR OPPRESSORS IN THE U.S. AROUND THE BANNER OF MARXISM-LENINISM. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE U.S. CALLING THEMSELVES “MARXIST-LENINIST”, HOWEVER, WE KNOW THAT THIS GOAL CANNOT SUCCEED WITHOUT UNITING AROUND AN ANTI-REVISIONIST LINE WHICH REALLY REPRESENTS THE REVOLUTIONARY INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS.

6. What is Maoism?

Maoism is based on the work of Chinese revolutionary Mao Zedong. Despite having merit as an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolutionary, Mao Zedong denied the dictatorship of the proletariat in favor of a joint government including some sections of the capitalist class, and denied the scientific socialist philosophy. Maoists cover for their distortion of Marxism-Leninism by claiming to have discovered a “third and higher stage” of Marxism.

7. What is anarchism?

Anarchism is a petty-bourgeois, individualist ideology which rejects class struggle in favor of the struggle for the emancipation of the individual from the “oppression of all unjust hierarchies.” It rejects the existence of *all* state formations, including those with the working class at the helm. Opportunist leaders within the socialist movement who serve their own aims and not the interests of the working class, along with sustained bourgeois anti-communist propaganda and a culture of rabid individualism embedded within American society, have all contributed to the growth and popularity of anarchism within the US.

8. What is the importance of organization?

The history of revolutions has shown that the organized systems of oppression of the bourgeoisie cannot be defeated without our own organization. The problem of spontaneous movements with a lack of organization is that they are unable to build momentum from one revolutionary moment to the next. Moments of mass political participation, such as the 2020 George Floyd protests, are channeled into reformism and fizzle out with little to show for it, without leadership and organization to educate and prepare for the next revolutionary moment.

1. What is Marxism-Leninism?

Marxism-Leninism is the revolutionary, scientific ideology of the working class. It is revolutionary because the working class has an interest in establishing a socialist system, which can only be established through revolution. It is scientific because revolution can only be carried out on the basis of a correct understanding of society. Marxist-Leninists fight to dismantle the capitalist-imperialist system through socialist revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

2. What is revolution?

Revolution is the forcible overthrow of the rule of one class, and its respective social system, by that of a more progressive class.

(Note: the overthrow of one section of the ruling class by another of the same class, such as in a coup, is not a revolution.)

3. What is the dictatorship of the proletariat?

“The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming the ruling class, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organizing all the working and exploited people for the new economic system.”

—V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (1917)

In capitalist society, state power can be described as a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, or the ruling class of owners. Socialist revolution involves the working class (*proletariat*) taking state power. The dictatorship of the proletariat leaves no room for the bourgeoisie to remain in state power. Its function is to extend democracy to the working class and prevent the bourgeoisie from regaining power and re-establishing capitalism.

4. What is proletarian internationalism?

Manufacturing takes place across several countries, across several capitalist markets, with workers exploited in several countries in order for a single product to be made. This is the internationalism of the capitalists, or bourgeoisie. Proletarian internationalism is the fight for the working and oppressed peoples of all nations, which are all exploited by the same capitalist system. The workers of one country stand with the workers of all other countries. The only tool for combating bourgeois internationalism is through proletarian internationalism. Lenin argued that true internationalism is fighting for the revolution in our own countries. Only in this way can we really support the revolutions in other countries.

5. What is scientific socialism?

Scientific socialism does not simply condemn capitalism due to its exploitation and crises, but analyzes the material basis of its operation and the necessity of its overthrow by the proletariat in the course of societal development. It applies a materialist, class-based, and scientific world view while undertaking the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat.

6. What is materialism?

Materialism is the philosophical concept that material conditions are the sole explanation for how the world exists and develops. When applied to human society, this means that social life (*politics*) is inseparable from economic life, and that the current conditions of society are based on their development from past conditions. *Materialism* is the opposite of *idealism*. Basically, *materialism* means understanding the world in a scientific and secular way, while *idealism* means understanding the world in a spiritual, religious, unscientific way.

3. What is the problem of reformism with regard to elections in the US?

There is much talk in the US today about “the lesser of two evils” and which bourgeois candidate has the best shot at enacting basic reforms. However, the fact of the matter is that *both* the Democrats and Republicans defend capitalist interests, *both* are completely hostile to any kind of reforms which benefit the working class, and *both* parties plan to lead workers around the world to their deaths in inter-imperialist war. Building the independent mass organizations of the working class will be the decisive factor, not election campaigns.

4. What is social-democracy?

Social-Democracy is a petty-bourgeois, class-collaborationist ideology which makes some concessions to the working class in order to hold back socialist revolution. Social-Democracy is the classic example of *reformism*. The left-wing of social-democracy is democratic socialism.

5. What is Trotskyism?

Trotskyism is a petty-bourgeois, adventurist ideology which disguises counter-revolutionary ideas with ultra-revolutionary phrases. Trotskyists deny the possibility of the revolution succeeding in a single country, deny the struggle of oppressed peoples and nations against imperialism, and deny the experience of past socialist revolutions.

Section 6: Revisionism and Anti-Revisionism

1. What is revisionism?

Revisionism is the entry of bourgeois ideas into the socialist movement. To defend their class interests, the bourgeoisie tries to divert the proletariat from socialist revolution. Revisionism appears in the form of counter-revolutionary and anti-proletarian ideas. Marxist-Leninists defend the interests of the working class against unscientific, anti-Marxist ideas. *Socialism cannot be established by following a centrist, wavering line.*

2. What is reformism?

Reformism is a revisionist trend which denies the possibility of building a new system outside of capitalism and leaves the working class to struggle only for minor reforms within capitalism. Marxist-Leninists fight for reforms to expose the capitalist system and build the revolution, while reformists deny the necessity of revolution entirely.



Section 2: What is Class Struggle?

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” —Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party (1848)

Society progresses forward by the battles between the exploiters and the exploited, the oppressors and the oppressed, and the owners and the laborers. The aim of Marxist-Leninists is to engage in this battle for the emancipation of the working class from the owning classes, sharpening the contradictions, until the working class eventually prevails.

1. What is a class?

A class is a social group which has distinct property relations to the means of production. The members of a class either:

- a) own means of production and live by exploiting a class that does not;
- b) own means of production and live by means of their own work; or
- c) own no means of production and live by selling their capacity to work to members of a class that does.

A class in category “a” is an exploiting class, while a class in category “c” is an exploited class. Exploitation means living off the labor of others either partly or wholly.

2. What are the means of production?

The factories, machines, patents, land, etc.—anything from basic tools for manual labor to the most advanced technology used to carry out production.

3. What is the bourgeoisie?

The ruling class of capitalist society. The bourgeoisie owns means of production and takes advantage of it by hiring wage labor. By paying a lower price than the value of what is produced by this labor, the bourgeoisie subsists on the exploitation of wage workers. The *bourgeoisie* is commonly referred to as the *capitalist class*.

4. What is the proletariat?

Members of capitalist society whose only means of subsistence is to sell their ability to work for a wage or salary, and who do not own the means of production. The *proletariat* is commonly referred to as the *working class*.

5. What is the petite bourgeoisie?

Also referred to as the *petty-bourgeoisie*. Owners of small property, who own or rent small means of production. Sometimes, they work with the assistance of wage labor (*members of the proletariat*), but frequently, they do so only with assistance from their own families. The petty-bourgeoisie's class standing is unstable; their business is likely either to fail, or to exploit more labor, turning them into either a *proletarian*, or full-fledged member of the *bourgeoisie* respectively.

6. What is the lumpenproletariat?

A stratum of the working class (*proletariat*) which subsists by preying upon workers (*petty theft, scams, etc.*), does not own capital, lacks class consciousness of its place in the proletariat, and is uninterested in revolutionary advancement.

6. What is the cause of the oppression of women and LGBTQIA+ people?

Private property. The modern concept of gender is based on a basic division of labor by physical characteristics. As private ownership developed, it became associated with the male sex through this basic division of labor. Because the only way to determine male parentage for inheritance of private property is through a monogamous, patriarchal relationship, patriarchy became an inherent oppressive feature of class society. As a result of the defense of private exploitation, women, LGBTQIA+ people, and others who do not participate in a monogamous, patriarchal relationship face gender oppression.

7. What is the cause of racism?

The defense of slavery and other exploitation. Racism has its origins in the colonization of the Americas by European powers for the development of capitalism. To facilitate the extraction of resources for the development of capitalism in Europe, "race theory" was created to adapt slavery to these circumstances and divide the oppressed classes. Racism can be abolished through the abolition of exploitation and persistent struggle.



4. Why do Marxist-Leninists support national liberation struggles?

National oppression affects all classes of the nation, but it is the proletariat that bears that vast majority of the suffering inflicted by the imperialists and national oppressors. By uniting the proletariat and other working masses against imperialism and national oppression, the working class mass movement can prepare itself for uniting against capitalism. Marxist-Leninists support the proletariat and working masses of oppressed nations against imperialism and exploitation. Marxist-Leninists *do not* support the struggle of the bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation for the right to exploit.

5. What is the basic solution to national oppression?

Self-determination of nations, including the right to secession. As part of the effort to abolish capitalist oppression, socialist society will facilitate the unity of all nations based on democratic principles. However, this unity cannot be democratic without the right of oppressed nations to form their own state.



7. What is meant by the term progressive?

That which helps the forward development (*progression*) of society.

8. What is meant by the term reactionary?

That which holds back the forward development of society. Society is developing in a continuous process. Attempting to slow this process or to “return” to a past stage of society (*which in reality no longer exists, or is an idealized version of the past which never existed to begin with*) is the essence of what it means to be reactionary.

9. What is class consciousness?

A person’s social/class/political consciousness refers to their personal interpretation of the antagonisms of class society. A person’s class consciousness is *influenced* by their actual class standing, but not *determined* by it. A person’s consciousness has no direct effect on their class relations. For example, a wage worker may be racist or believe that having billionaire capitalists is good, but this has no affect on the fact they are still proletarian. Workers may have a false class consciousness that does not reflect their actual class standing. This manifests often in the American proletariat as a wish to become the exploiters.

Section 3: Stages of Development

1. What is feudalism?

Feudalism was the system dominated by small-scale agricultural production and whose ruling class were hereditary owners of the land (*nobility*). Monarchs taxed lesser lords to use their land, who in turn expropriated products from the labor of serfs and peasants that lived on the land granted to the nobility. The term “landlord” originates from feudalism, as all land had a specific lord that controlled it. While at one time *feudalism* was the predominant social system on earth, today, it is almost entirely extinct as a system, having given way to *capitalism*.

2. What is capitalism?

Capitalism is the system which grew out of feudalism. Capitalism is the social system where property-less wage workers (*proletarians*) are exploited by property-owning capitalists (*bourgeoisie*). Under capitalism, the ruling class is the bourgeoisie. The characteristic features of capitalist society are large-scale production, private ownership of the means of production in the hands of the bourgeoisie (*the exploiting minority*), and the state as the *dictatorship of capital*. Because of the contradiction between social production and individual ownership, the *capitalist* system is unstable and will inevitably be replaced by a *socialist* system through proletarian revolution. In capitalist society, the principal contradiction is between private ownership and collective, or social, production.

Section 5: Struggles of Oppressed Peoples and Nations

1. What is nationalism?

An institution associated with the rise and consolidation of capitalism. Nationalism can *temporarily* play a progressive role, such as in the struggle of a colonized people for national liberation, however, in the era of imperialism and socialist revolution, nationalism is inherently reactionary within the imperialist nations.

2. What is a nation?

“A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.”

—J.V. Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question* (1913)

3. What is the cause of national oppression?

The cause of national oppression is the drive of the imperialist capitalist class for super-profits. They utilize greater levels of force to maintain high levels of exploitation of the working classes of another nation. Competition between the bourgeoisie of different nations causes the imperialist bourgeoisie to keep nations oppressed in order to better extract labor and resources. In order to secure control of the market for themselves, the bourgeoisie of a nation with a more developed market suppresses the rise of the developing bourgeoisie of different nations.

8. What are the main tasks of the working class mass movement in the US?

- a) Raising the masses of workers in the US to political consciousness, freeing the mass organizations from reformist leadership;
- b) Creation of an organized and revolutionary mass working class movement;
- c) Creation of a united Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, free from all anti-working class ideas; and
- d) Creation of a united front against fascism and imperialist war, linking the revolutionary movement in the US with the revolutionary and anti-imperialist movements of other countries.



3. What is imperialism?

Imperialism is the most developed stage of capitalism. It is a dying capitalism in a desperate struggle against the emergence of socialism. The basic features of imperialism are:

- a) Consolidation of huge multinational corporations which plunder and divide the entire world amongst themselves;
- b) Inevitable war between imperialist blocs for the right to plunder and re-divide the world; and
- c) The appearance of a global imperialist system which unites the proletarians of the world for the task of socialist revolution.

By uniting against the entire imperialist system, the working class can achieve revolution where the imperialist system is weakest. This can only be done by consistently fighting for revolution in one's own country and in every country (*proletarian internationalism*).

4. What is the function of the state under imperialism?

As with every state, the state under imperialism is the machine which one class (*in this case, the capitalist class*) uses to suppress another and protect its own class interests. The state is made up of special armed groups and other tools for domination over its class enemies. The main organs of the state in the US today are the police, the "justice" system, the military, and the three branches of government. Under imperialism, the state fuses with the big banks, weapons contractors, and stock exchange to consolidate and arm the dictatorship of capital against the proletarian revolution and imperial rivals.

5. What is fascism?

Under the normal conditions of capitalism, the main tool the bourgeoisie uses to preserve its rule is parliamentary “democracy”. As crises intensify and the people become conscious of the impossibility of meaningful change under the current institutions of capitalism, at some point the show of elections is no longer sufficient to hold back the growing mass movement of the working class, and a new tool is introduced: violent suppression of all working class political organization. A key feature of fascism is the creation and targeting of an “out group”, which may be a racial or ethnic minority, religious group, or political movement, as a means of diverting the working class from attacking the bourgeoisie. Fascism is a feature of all capitalism in the imperialist era. How much it appears in any country is relative to the strength and consciousness of the mass movement. When the mass movement is powerful, organized, and revolutionary, the working class can fight back the rise of fascism to some extent. When a powerful mass movement is disorganized by reformism and other counter-revolutionary ideas in the movement, the most reactionary and imperialist bourgeoisie form a fascist dictatorship to crush the disorganized working class movement while it can no longer defend itself. While Fascism often makes use of false “revolutionary” rhetoric, its policy is that of imperialism. *The only way to stop fascism for good is through the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

6. What is historical materialism?

The analysis of how advancements in human society occur and what causes them. All of the individual relations of production together form the economic base, which serves as the foundation for the legal, political, and social “superstructure” of society. As the productive forces develop they strain against outdated property relations, prompting them to be overthrown and enter into a new societal stage.

6. Is revolution possible here in the United States?

Yes. Revolution is not only possible, but *necessary*. As a society, we cannot solve the growing threat of imperialist war, fascism, continued economic crisis, and climate change without socialist revolution. What is required for revolution is that the masses of workers become conscious of their class position and refuse to return to the old exploitative system. In short, the task of the movement is to raise workers to the level of political consciousness through persistent organizing, education, and action. Through the fight for revolution here in the US, we can assist and be assisted by workers fighting for socialist revolution around the world. With the power of the American working class, and the workers of all countries, we have a world to win.

Onward, towards socialism!

7. Is the United States fascist?

Like all imperialist countries, US society has many fascist characteristics: increasing repression of the right to organize and strike, rampant reactionary nationalism and militarism, state sanctioned attacks on oppressed nationalities, immigrants and people of color, LGBTQIA+ people, etc., often with the aid of fascist paramilitary groups (*the Proud Boys, ICE, etc.*). To answer the question, no, there is not a consolidated, explicitly fascist dictatorship in the US *at the moment, however*, the threat of fascism will continue to develop at the pace of the growing mass movement and cannot be ignored.

“So soon as the workers begin to stir against their servitude and to fight consciously for their liberation, the “freedom” rapidly disappears and gives place to the whip.”

—R.P. Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution* (1935)

4. What is the difference between the dictatorship of the proletariat and any other state?

The state is the armed force which one class uses to suppress its class enemies. By this definition, the dictatorship of the proletariat is also a state. The difference is that while all other class states are armed organizations of a handful of capitalists and other exploiters for their right to exploit the majority of the working people, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the armed organization of the majority of the working people for the suppression of the previous ruling class as they try to undo the gains of the revolution.

5. How is the dictatorship of the proletariat established?

Through the process of violent socialist revolution. Capitalism requires violence to maintain its rule and it will require violence to overthrow it. By training itself to resist suppression from the capitalist state, and by drawing in all the most oppressed masses, the working class mass movement builds the framework for the new society, culminating in the seizure of power by the working class. The process of revolution itself creates the proletarian state.



7. What is socialism?

Socialism, or the lower stage of communism, is the social system where having seized state power, the working class collectively controls the means of production, abolishes exploitation, and builds society towards communism. The basic features of socialism are:

- a) abolition of private property (*exploitation*) through a planned economy geared towards people's needs, not profit;
- b) the distribution of goods and necessities on the basis of "*he who does not work, neither shall he eat*";
- c) the working class as the sole holder of political power (*dictatorship of the proletariat*); and
- d) the progression of society towards communism.

8. What is communism?

The more developed counterpart to socialism is called the higher stage of communism, or simply communism. Socialism and communism are different levels of development. The basic features that distinguish communism from socialism are:

- a) the distribution of products according to need rather than work performed by each individual;
- b) the abolition of currency; and
- c) the withering away of the dictatorship of the proletariat as state power, as class distinctions have vanished, therefore, there is no longer a need for a state.

Only when the masses of workers and even the former exploiters have forgotten how to live under capitalism can classes, and therefore class dictatorship, disappear. Without the dictatorship of the proletariat, they will not disappear.

Section 4: Tasks of the Movement

“Marxism-Leninism teaches us that the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie builds up continuously and will certainly be crowned with the victory of the proletariat and its allies. But for this struggle to be crowned with success, the proletariat must be organized, must have its own vanguard party, must make the broad masses of the people conscious of the necessity for revolution, and lead them in the fight to seize state power, to establish its own dictatorship, to build socialism and communism, the classless society.”

—Enver Hoxha, *Imperialism and the Revolution* (1979)

“I repeat: the experience of the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has clearly shown... that absolute centralization and rigorous discipline of the proletariat are an essential condition of victory over the bourgeoisie.”

—V.I. Lenin, *“Left-Wing” Communism, An Infantile Disorder* (1920)



1. What is the vanguard?

The most revolutionary, class conscious, and politically active members of the working class.

2. What is a party?

An organization that represents the interests of a class or section of a class. Bourgeois parties represent various competing sections of the capitalist class. Due to the socialized, international and diverse character of the working class, the united proletarian party must represent the interests of the entire working class: the complete revolutionary overthrow of all oppression and exploitation.

3. What is the purpose of the vanguard party?

The revolution can succeed when the workers who already act as leaders of the working class, the vanguard, are united and organized towards the complete overthrow of the capitalist-imperialist system. The purpose of the vanguard party is to unite these workers around the fundamental interests of the working class, around Marxism-Leninism, and organize them into a force which can lead the revolution. For this purpose, the Marxist-Leninist vanguard party must be disciplined, democratic, centralized, and free from all counter-revolutionary and anti-working class ideas.