OL on Fascism

In Red Papers, in our article entitled "The United Front Against U.S. Imperialism: Strategy for Proletarian Revolution," we pointed out that "the right opportunists, led by the so-called Communist Party, USA (Revisionist), are more difficult to isolate" than the "left opportunists "because they continually call for 'unity' and 'united front.' What they mean is 'unity' with the imperialists and 'united front' behind the so-called 'liberals' in the ruling class... They join with the people's forces only to lead them from the path of anti-imperialist struggle and proletarian revolution into the swamp of class collaboration and social imperialism...."

That is why the so-called "anti-monopoly alliance" and the "front for the struggle" between the "liberal" opportunists, with labor fat cats and black bootlickers as the front men."

It is clear from the practice of these traitors that it is a strategic alliance between the labor-liberal" opportunists, with labor fat cats and black bootlickers as the front men."

The key point that communists must link the immediate struggles of the people with the "struggle for long-range and general interests, educate the masses in a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary spirit, ceaselessly raise their political consciousness and undertake the his-
torical task of the proletarian revolution." Nor is it any accident that in this "reprint," OL drops the CPC position that a failure to do this, to regard in stead the "immediate movement as everything," is the "false" social democracy and simple petty bourgeoisie reformism that wraps itself in the cloak of "socialism."

None of this is any accident because in practice, "OL is developing a rightist social-democratic line in opposition to the revolutionary CPC international line as expressed in the 1963 proposal. OL, as we will show, will not build up the immediate struggles of the people with a long-range revolutionary strategy, and is not economically raising the people's political consciousness and educating the people in a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary spirit."

The united front against imperialism is a strategy for the long-range. It is a question of uniting all those who can be united into a broad united front, to oppose monopoly capital, defend democratic rights, oppose imperialist wars and other living conditions, oppose imperialist arms expansion and war, to defend world peace and to actively support the revolu-
tionary struggles of the oppressed nations."

In the 1972 "unity statement" between OL and a group called the Georgia Communist League, we find the following: "the U.S. proletariat, led by a genuine communist party must unite itself with all those forces who can be united into a broad united front, to oppose monopoly capital, defend democratic rights, oppose imperialist wars and other living conditions, oppose imperialist arms expansion and war, to defend world peace and to actively support the revolu-
OL...

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this crisis, the bourgeoisie—or sections of it—push the idea that Nixon alone is responsible, that getting rid of Nixon will solve the problem, that Nixon is a crook and a crooked politician. All these ideas have some influence among the masses, and the danger of tailing behind these ideas is increased by the necessity of struggling with the masses and mobilizing the masses in struggle to throw Nixon out.

In the present situation of sharpening conflicts within the ruling class, OL puts forward the position that Nixon represents the fascist section of the ruling class, as is the case with all fascist politicians. OL says that Nixon initiated “fascist measures prematurely,” but those “were met with widespread popular opposition, especially from working people, students, trade unionists, and influential sections of the ruling class itself.” (The Call, Dec. 1973, emphasis ours.)

Masses as Pressure Group

OL’s “strategy” based on this sort of analysis is to build a “broad anti-fascist movement,” and the clear implication of that line is that it is correct to unite with the supposedly “anti-fascist” section of the ruling class against the supposedly “fascist” section represented by Nixon. And while giving lip service to mass action to oust Nixon, in practice OL raises and supports the non-struggle slogan, “Impose Nixon.”

If one of their editors tells the cat out of the bag and end up openly in the revisionist camp, they put forward the idea that a mass movement is needed merely “so that pressure remains on the Congress to act,” thus reducing the role of the masses to Congressional pressure group. (See The Call editorial, April 1974.)

As we have said in previous articles about the movement to get rid of Nixon, the present situation has created greater opportunities to make use of contradictions within the ruling class and not to do so would certainly be a mistake. But a line that is based not on relying on the masses but on using the masses as a mere pressure group leads into the trap of siding with and relying on one section of the ruling class against another, and not utilizing the opportunity to raise the consciousness of the masses that the real enemy is not Nixon, another one or two politicians, or one section of the ruling class (the so-called “fascist section”), but the entire monopoly capitalist ruling class.

In the July Revolution, in dealing with the same tendency of OL to see everything as “fascism just around the corner,” we pointed out that “To label every case of ruling class corruption and every act of repression as the sure sign of impending fascism is not only to spread defensivism, but more than that to cover up the nature of bourgeois class rule, to conceal the fact that bourgeois democracy is a form of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat, and is always marked by violent repression.”

We don’t deny the possibility of fascism, especially as the revolutionary workers’ movement grows stronger and the position of the imperialists grows weaker. The point, however, is that only by now building a powerful revolutionary mass movement to overthrow the imperialist ruling class can fascism be prevented. Fascism can’t be prevented by ideologically and politically disarming the masses and tailing behind the “liberal” bourgeoisie. The political history of Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan and other countries during this century stands as clear testimony to that.

But the essence of OL’s (and OL’s) effort to justify every milk and water non-struggle position they take by raising the specter of fascism is the midst of every battle is precisely to limit the consciousness of the working class and oppressed people to bourgeois democratic demands and not to the need of advancing its revolutionary consciousness. This is the essence of the revisionist line—the imperialist system does not need to be overthrown, but only to be brought through bourgeois democratic reforms—and stands as a barrier to the building of proletarian leadership of the developing unity front and allows the “liberal” bourgeoisie to dictate the form and content of struggle. This superdefensive strategy is the strategy of defeat.

This OL-CL line of developing a non-struggle anti-fascist united front as a substitute for mass struggle under the leadership of the working class, and CP’s persuasion with the “ultra-left,” all come down into a petty bourgeois elitist distortion of the masses.

ability to grasp revolutionary principle and to organize for struggle. The line that gets peddled is “the enemy is strong and the people are weak.”

Mao on the U.S. Situation

To dispel the ideological smog coming out of L.A. and elsewhere, we recommend the reading or re-reading of Mao Tuntung’s “Talk With the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong.” In August 1946, (Selected Works, Vol. 4, pp. 97-101.) The situation is that World War II has just ended, U.S. imperialism is vastly strengthened while all other imperialist powers, allied and axis alike, are greatly weakened, and the U.S. ruling class is preparing to establish hegemony over the colonial and capitalist world, waving the atom bomb and threatening war against the Soviet Union, which was then still a socialist country.

The “American Century,” in other words, is about to commence, so tremble all ye faint-hearted. In the face of all this, and with the Chinese people themselves still fighting against the imperialist-backed Chinese reactionaries, Mao says: “All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful. Speaking of U.S. imperialism, people seem to feel that it is terrifically strong. Chinese reactionaries are using the ‘strength’ of the United States to frighten the Chinese people. But it will be proved that the U.S. reactionaries, like all the reactionaries in history, do not have much strength. In the United States there are others who are really strong—the American people.”

And, indeed, Mao’s analysis has turned out to be entirely correct. The “American Century” has turned out to be just another imperialist pipe dream, and yet here we have so-called revolutionaries trying to frighten us into cowering before the bourgeoisie with all their talk about impending fascism. In fact, this is a time to be greatly encouraged, as the U.S. imperialists go from one crisis to another and their strength in the world shrivels and their credit among the people of the U.S. falls faster than the dollar.

Our job is to unite with the people on the basis of a revolutionary strategy, and prove to them and build mass revolutionary struggle, and not go around preaching a rightist and detractor strategy of relying on the “liberal” bourgeoisie.

In the final analysis, this rightist line leads to adopting the stand of the “liberal” bourgeoisie, subordinating the proletarian line to this bourgeoisie line, and, in the long run, liquidating the proletarian line altogether. We have described in a number of previous articles in Revolution how OL does just that in relation to the outcast Nixon movement, attacking those who want to raise broader political concepts and ideas, and who see the need to rely on the masses and not on the “liberal” bourgeoisie, as “ultra-left.” (See article on the Throw the Blum Out and anti-Nixon dem- onstrations in the April 1973 issue of OL, also, in the May issue, “Unirapproach Congress or Organize to Fight?” a criticism of an OL editorial in the April Call).

The truth, of course, is that taking such a position on is not “ultra-left,” but that OL must scream “fascism” and “ultra-leftism” at every turn to cover up its own rightist line. This can be seen very clearly in OL’s line on the workers’ movement, and where that line leads in practice.

OL on Workers’ Movement: Toddling Behind the Hacks

Just as OL’s strategy on Nixon calls for uniting with one section of the ruling class against another section, which means surrendering the initiative to the ruling class, OL’s strategy for building the workers’ movement calls for uniting with one section of the trade union bureaucracy against another section—the “progressive section” against the “reactionary section.” This, too, ultimately comes down to relying on the labor bureaucracy as a whole, and also the bourgeoisie because it controls the labor bureaucracy.

The correct policy is to rely not on one section of the labor bureaucracy, but on the rank and file—mobilizing them and raising their political consciousness through struggle—and on the basis of this strength, forcing certain trade union officials to unite with the rank and file. The way to go is to unite with trade union officials as a tactic within the overall strategy of building the struggle, conscious and revolutionary unity of the working class, and its leadership in the anti-imperialist united front. Sometimes it is correct to unite with trade union officials, depending on the particular conditions, sometimes it isn’t. But uniting with trade union officials, no matter how “progressive,” can never be the basis of a revolutionary strategy.

And even when we do unite with the trade union support must always be conditional, depending on how willing they are to support the rank and file in their struggles. We give 100% support to the trade union officials, as OL demands, We give 100% support only to the rank and file and partial—“critical”—support to the officials insofar as they will support the rank and file.

For example, as Bob Avakian, representing the RU, pointed out in his speech at the Chicago rally for the UCW 1973, for the union-sponsored forum on “Roads to Building a Work- ers’ Movement,” while it was correct to give critical support to the election of the reform slate headed by

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The struggle to oust Nixon is an important tactic of the revolutionary movement. But it must be linked to the struggle against the entire ruling-class—something OL discourages in its efforts to cozy up to “liberal” politicians and trade union bureaucrats. Top photo shows N.Y.C. demo last March 9 to protest “Woman of the Year” award to Julie Nixon Eisenhower; bottom shows part of crowd of 250 greeting vice-president Ford when he tried to get over in Cincinnati last Feb. 20.

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Arnold Miller in the United Mineworkers Union, it is wrong, and misleading the masses, to view the election one-sidedly.

But this is exactly what OL did, saying things like the "possibilities that the new slate can put its program into effect—Ed. appear to be bright," without pointing out the limitations of that program and the contradictions within it that, in fact, will make it very difficult to put into effect, and without emphasizing the necessity of the rank and file to continue to build their movement and to rely on themselves to keep things moving forward.

In the August 1973 call editorial, OL attacked the RU for saying that the short-comings and limitations of such reform slates must be pointed out. OL said that it was the duty of communists to give "full support" to such campaigns and that "it became clear in practice that the RU line of 'critical support' meant No Support At All." (other emphasis.)

Anyone who followed OL's articles in Revolution is familiar with our work knows this latter statement is entirely false. We did give critical support to the RU line... .The same time emphasizing that the rank and file should keep the initiative in their own hands and continue to jam the union and not rely on it. As later events have proved, this stand was absolutely correct. First of all, the Miller slate, since assuming office, has attempted to ram in end to the various militant rank and file groups, such as Miners for Democracy and the Black Lung Association, claiming that there is no longer need for such groups now that Miller and other "progressives" are running the union.

What Does This Progressiveness Amount To?

But just what does this "progressiveness" amount to? It is true that the Miller slate has come up with some reforms, but there is another side to the picture, too. For instance, in the miners' "no gas—no coal" strike in February-March this year—a tremendous struggle in which 27,000 West Virginia miners struck for 20 days against gasoline shortages and a state rule limiting the amount of gas a person could buy—Miller sent his right hand man into a meeting to tell the miners that they "had made their point" and should return to work. The right hand man was booted off the stage.

And overall, the role of Miller and the reform leadership during the strike was characterized by efforts to trick the miners back to work before their demands were met by promoting a policy of relying on the efforts of a few and ignoring the driving force of the rank and file, and by preaching about the need to bring 'common sense' to the capitalists and their legal system as the way to solve the miners'-problems." (See story on the miners'-strike in the April 1974 Revolution.

Despite this and other examples of the Miller slate's efforts to head off the continued growth of the rank and file miners'-movement, OL still persists in putting

him forward as a hero and the driving force in the union. The July 1974 call, in its article on the recent miners'-protest in Alaska against the importation of coal from South Africa, credited the action to the "reform movement" led by Arnold Miller and the Miners for Democracy Caucus, which threw out the corrupt Tony Boyle leadership.

This approach negates the fact that the demonstration's great strength lay in the participation of thousands of miners, their jobs, and the rank and file organizing and work of other forces, including communists, who helped put together the May 22 Birmingham demonstration against Southern Co., which plans to import coal.

This approach also covers over the fact that Miller and the reform slate supported the demonstration only in a limited way, emphasizing only the question of how the importation of coal would mean new jobs for the miners and trying to appeal to the miners' narrowest interests. Many of the miners, however, had a much broader and internationalist outlook than this, as can be seen in the signs they carried: "Southern Co., Georgia Power, are Attacking U.S. Miners' Jobs and South African Miners' Fight for Liberation," and "Stop Slavery in South Africa, Stop Imperialism, Stop Southern Co.—Local 7813."

Another Example

Another example of OL's propeensy to build up reform labor "leaders" at the expense of the rank and file was their "full support" stand on recent reform candidates Bill Sadowski's campaign in District 31 of the United Steelworkers of America (U.S.W.) in Michigan.

As we pointed out in the November 1973 Revolution, "While Sadowski's campaign did raise issues that speak to some of the illusions of the rank and file workers in the mills, many workers were led by the Sadowski forces into believing that by just backing Sadowski's campaign, they could take control of the union structure and make significant changes, without building a mass rank and file movement.

During the campaign, the Sadowski forces refused to come out openly for the abolition of the no-strike agreement because they didn't want to endanger their election. After the election was stolen from the reform slate, the Sadowski forces still refused to come out strongly against the no-strike deal for fear of jeopardizing their chances for a new election, and have said that it would be useless to try to fight it now, calling on steelworkers to sit out until the next time the contract comes up.

Contrast this stance with the determined organizing going on all across the country by rank and file steel workers against this no-strike agreement, including the militant demonstration by 200 people—steelworkers and their supporters—in Philadelphia on May 26 against I. W. Abel, USWA president and chief engineer of the sellout no-strike deal. (Revolution, July 1974.)

Where does OL's "follow the labor leader" line lead to in practice? This is demonstrated most clearly in OL's position on the Brotherhood Caucus at the General Motors plant in Fremont, Calif. OL built this caucus up as just about the greatest thing in the world, and just a year ago was lauding its "leaders," especially in its role in "staying in line against the company," "active fighters," etc., etc. After the Brotherhood slate won significant support in the local's elections in June 1973, "the leading spokesman for the militant Brotherhood Caucus" elected to the key position of Shop Chairman, OL heralded the victory as "a New Voice—New Day" for the IAW local. (The Call, July 1973.)

In addition, the election, according to OL; "should break the stranglehold of the International IAW leadership, set a new militant direction on the union's struggles against GM, and significantly influence the struggles for rank and file control of other IAW locals around the country... "

But just one year later, in the July 1974 call, OL finds itself in the embarrassing position of having to strongly criticize these very same "leaders" for the way they used to laud and asked the rank and file to unconditionally follow. Commenting on the efforts of "a variety of forces to sabotage..." the June 2 demonstration outside the UAW Convention held in LA—a demonstration aimed primarily at getting the UAW to stop being an "unfriendly face to" the boycott, OL is forced to say: "Perhaps the most damaging sabotage came from a few of the top leaders of the Brotherhood Caucus who were not on the call, rather than pointing out unity and the progressive aspects while exposing the backward and bad aspects and empha-

sizing, for example, the significance of "peasap-

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Issues and acts independently.

In addition, we will continue to insist that what we must build is not a reformist but a revolutionary workers’ movement which takes up the struggles of all sections of the people and leads the fight against all oppression, unifying all who can be united in the process. Communists must help to make those links between different struggles as well as build struggle inside the plants, all the while raising the level of political consciousness as to the nature of the capitalist system and class struggle. If this is what OL means by building a "uniting front from below" and parallels us for, then we once again are more than happy to plead guilty.

OL, on the other hand, says that its "strategy" is to "move the trade unions to the left." Is it wrong to try to "move the trade unions to the left"? Of course not, but this is a strategy for building a revolutionary workers’ movement, or for proletarian revolution. To the contrary, it's a strategy for moving the workers’ movement to the right by trying to tie it to the tail of the labor bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie.

Comunists must, of course, work in trade union even the most reactionary, and support and build trade unions and the day-to-day economic struggles. But communists do this in order to raise the spark of political consciousness that are generated through such trade union struggles and raise the level of political activity, understanding and organization of the class.

For instance, whenever and to the extent possible, we must confront trade union officials with a mass movement that forces them to take a stand in support of the struggle, or be exposed for failing to take a stand and representing. To the extent possible, we should “move the trade unions to the left” in the sense that, by relying on the struggles of the rank and file and raising the workers’ political consciousness, we can get the trade unions, locals in particular, to take progressive stands, to officially support struggles and other political forces. This is not possible unless the American trade union apparatus to mobilize the masses of workers for struggle, and still less to raise their class-consciousness.

It is this reliance and tailing behind the trade unions that OL means by “moving the trade unions to the left,” and not representative words but also by their actions, and it is this that we and all Marxists-Leninists will always stand opposed to. This rightist line of OL is connected with the leaders and advanced workers to following behind the union bureaucrats, hat in hand, begging for action. And if that action doesn’t come, as it usually doesn’t, when approach comes down to peddling defeatism and a “how can we win, we’re so weak without official union support” line to the rank and file.

This is just what happened in the recently-ended wildcat strike at the Dasco paper products plant in Oakland, Calif., where OL and other forces blamed their own political backwardness and lack of dare-to-struggle spirit on the workers’ “unpreparedness” and “lack of organization.” The truth is that many of the workers were willing and ready to continue the fight and try and win over the other workers who were not convinced. But OL and the others weren’t liberation movementists. (See: Summation of the Dasco strike in this issue.)

As we said in an article on the Coalition of Labor Union Women meeting in the May 1974 Revolution, “This idea of making union work and ‘moving the unions to the left’ is the strategy of our movement...in practice means redefining the revolutionary united front strategy to a reformist, militant trade union strategy, where the major thing becomes passing resolutions, trying to influence ‘best’ union leaders with this ‘line’, everything else is secondary. (See: Summation of the Dasco strike in this issue.)

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OL on the Farah Strike

We want to give one more example of OL’s line on the workers’ movement which we think helps to make things perfectly clear. This is OL’s position on the Farah strike. The 22-month long Farah strike, as we pointed out in the April Revolution and in an article in Red Flag, represents an important victory for the entire class and also in the struggle against national oppression. In addition, it also represents an important victory for the struggle for the women’s equality and rights, as well as a step forward in unifying the largely unorganized Southwest.

The tremendous determination of the Farah workers inspired literally tens of thousands of workers and other oppressed people across the country, and led to the creation of dozens of Farah Strike Support Committees that helped spread the major political lessons of the strike, while at the same time giving concrete support to the strikers and further developing their political understanding and strengthening their resolve to bring Willie Farah to his knees.

Who was OL’s position on the Farah strike? First of all, The Call had almost nothing to say about the strike during the 22 months it lasted. There were a few short articles giving it’s explicit support and absolutely no analysis of how the strike was going, the development of support work nationally, and what the political significance of the strike was or for the overall class struggle and the struggle against national oppression. For all intents and purposes, The Call, OL’s newspaper, acted as if this strike didn’t exist.

Then, suddenly, when the strike has ended, The Call comes out with a big front page banner headline in a May 6th issue, “We’re United! Union Recognition Won!”. And OL proceeds to devote a good deal of the article underneath the banner headline to a statement saying that the Willie Farah and officials of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of American (ACWA) announcing the end of the strike! “We’re not strikes...no need for these strikes...when the strikers themselves...there is no mention of the development of the support work across the country and what role it played, and, most importantly, the fact that there was still no analysis of the political lessons of the strike.

But this is not the end of it. In the May issue of The Call, there is another article on the strike (we have literally gone from rags to riches), “Why the Farah Strike Won?”. At last we get OL’s political analysis of the strike.

The reasons for the victory, according to OL, “lies in the developing upsurge of the last five years of the Chicano liberation movement throughout the Southwest.” This movement, continues OL, has always been closely connected with the people’s struggle, and this movement, OL says, is a movement “for national rights.” And “To a larger degree than ever before, the labor movement has helped create a new context for the struggle, and to the extent possible, we should ‘move the trade unions to the left’ in the sense that, by relying on the struggles of the rank and file and raising the workers’ political consciousness, we can get the trade unions, locals in particular, to take progressive stands, to officially support struggles and other political forces, mobilized in support of the workers in El Paso and San Antonio a boycott of Farah products...” OL points out that the Chicano liberation movement and the women also supported the strikers, and that, given the support the strikers were getting from many quarters, “even the Roman Catholic Church in El Paso city council put pressure on Willie Farah to settle. This pressure finally forced Farah to allow for a vote among the workers...”

But it was the merging of the movement of the Chicano people for their national rights in the Southwest with the general wave of movements that made the difference,” The Call article sums up.

Struggle Not Limited to “National Rights”

Notice what OL has done here. On the one hand, it has reduced the Chicano liberation struggle, an anti-imperialist and revolutionary struggle, to a bourgeois democratic struggle for “national rights.” Are the Chicano people struggling for national rights? Yes, they are. Is it just a struggle for “national rights”? Yes, it is, and should be supported by all revolutionary and progressive people.

The real question is: is the Chicano liberation movement just a struggle for democratic rights? No, it is not. The Chicano liberation movement is part of the overall revolutionary movement of the working class to establish socialism, and it is only under socialism that the Chicano people’s full rights can in fact be achieved.

But OL say that the Chicano liberation movement is one and the same thing as the struggle for national rights, and in so doing, OL reduces this revolutionary movement to an infant.

On the other hand, OL has done the same thing with the working class movement. It has reduced the revolutionary working class movement to a reformist “labour movement.” OL claims that “the labor movement with strong influence from the left forces,” organized the boycott of Farah, and even added that “everything is on its head. The truth is that the labor movement—that is, the organized trade union movement—and especially the ACWA leadership, dragged its heels all the way on the boycott and other support activities, and it was only because certain communist organizations and other revolutionary groups pushed the nationalized rank and file workers and others that the boycott was so successful.

If OL’s “labor movement” had had its way, the boycott would have been strictly a token affair. In other words, it was the developing revolutionary workers’ movement and 6,000 workers and not the reformist “labor movement” that played the key role in building for the Farah strike. But moving beyond the specific developing revolutionary workers’ movement that brought to thousands upon thousands of people all across the country the political significance and lessons of the strike, something that OL’s “labor movement” didn’t do and never would do. It was explained that the strike was not only a struggle for unionization, although it included that, but the strike was part of the overall revolutionary working class struggle against the monopoly capitalist class and its state apparatus (courts, police, etc.) and, at the same time, part of the overall revolutionary struggle of the Chicano people and all other oppressed nationalities against that same monopoly capitalist class. And moreover, it was this strike that represented the merging of the revolutionary struggle of the multinational working class with the revolutionary struggle against imperialism, and represented a concrete example of the working class taking up the struggle against all oppression. This is what gave the strike its tremendous mass support and its tremendous strength. And this is precisely what OL’s analysis completely fails to recognize, reducing the strike, instead, to a struggle for a mere recognition of the workers’ right to vote of the workers. It makes no mention of the political forces, mobilized in support of the workers in El Paso and the El Paso city council for putting pressure on Willie Farah to settle. “This is why Farah allowed for a vote among the workers...”

In its May Day editorial, “Revolutionary Leadership Needed in Workers’ Movement” (in The Call, May 6, 1974), OL says straight up that “May Day is a day for communists to unite with the militant rank and file forces and consolidate this unity in the labor movement.” The RU’s overall slogan for May Day this year was “Workers Unite to Lead the Struggle Against All Oppression!” These two approaches clearly indicate, we believe, the difference between a line of building a revolutionary united front against imperialism under proletarian leadership and a line of leading behind against the OP.
OL on National Question

OL has just come out with a pamphlet, "For Working Class Unity and Black Liberation," which in essence is a public statement and call to all the black people in the U.S. The pamphlet makes a clear historical analysis of how the black people of this country have been used by the white rulers, the bourgeoisie, to suppress the struggle of the working class of all colors. The pamphlet points out that the white landlords, the bourgeoisie, and their government have used the black people as their tool to keep the working class of all colors divided and under control. The pamphlet challenges the black people to unite and fight for their own liberation, to challenge the white landlords, the bourgeoisie, and their government.

OL on the "Slavery" Problem

OL points out that this "slavery" problem is not just a historical problem, but it is a problem that exists today. OL argues that the black people are still suffering under the same system that oppressed them in the past. OL points out that the black people are still not free, and that the struggle for freedom is not over. OL argues that the black people must continue to fight for their freedom, and that the black people must unite to fight against the white landlords, the bourgeoisie, and their government.

Conclusion

OL points out that the struggle for freedom is not over, and that the black people must continue to fight for their freedom. OL argues that the black people must unite to fight against the white landlords, the bourgeoisie, and their government. The pamphlet challenges the black people to stand up and fight for their freedom.

The Mighty Contributions and Heroic Struggles of Black People in the U.S.

OL points out that the black people in the U.S. have made many contributions and have fought many battles. OL points out that the black people have contributed to the development of the U.S. economy, and have fought for their rights. OL points out that the black people have made many contributions to the world, and that the black people must continue to fight for their freedom.
REVOLUTION

Is the rural South the heartland of the Afro-American struggle today, as you say, even though the overwhelming majority of Black people, by your own statistics, live in the cities? If you really believe what you say in the Call article, then why don’t you come out and say it in the pamphlet, too, and take the “logical” step of joining OL in calling for “independence for the Negro Nation now!” Or if you don’t believe it, then why do you say it?

OL Pushes Ruling Class View of Black History

But all of this by no means represents the worst aspect of the Call article on Jane Pittman. According to that article, the CBS show was one of the most progressive and talked-about shows to come along in many years. A century of the Afro-American liberation struggle was revealed as Jane Pittman told her life story to a reporter. “The film,” The Call informs us, “presents the gains and setbacks of each period, always emphasizing that the struggle continues.”

We can only wonder whether OL was watching the same show as the rest of us! This film does not document the struggle of Black people, but shows them instead as primarily oppressed and passive. In the one clear instance where the film does show some Black people fighting back (in a barn when they are suddenly attacked by some KKK night riders), the Black people—and especially one Black woman who puts up the strongest fight—are shown getting hacked down.

There is nothing in this film about the heroic slave rebellions before the Civil War. There is nothing in this film about the heroic role played by Black people during the Civil War. There is nothing in this film about the militant and central role played by Black workers in the key organizing drives in auto, steel, etc. in the 20s and 30s. In fact, the whole brilliant and courageous history of struggle of Black people wouldn’t have been that at all if most Black people had been as passive as Jane Pittman.

According to the Call article, “Jane tells the reporter that every time a new baby is born, the people ask if he is going to be the leader who sees them through to completion liberation. The point Jane is trying to make is that as long as there is racist oppression, people will struggle against it.” Note how OL has to interpret things here for Jane: “The point Jane is trying to make is that as long as there is racist oppression, people will struggle against it.”

But that is not the point that Jane (that is, CBS, Xerox and the entire U.S. ruling class) is trying to make at all. The point they are trying to make, and the point they make throughout the film in dozens of ways, is that the masses of Black people are incapable of relying on themselves and waging struggle, that they should be passive and must wait and hope and pray for a “savior,” a “genius” or a “hero” to lead them out of the wilderness.

The masses of Black people and the masses of people in general, of course, do need leaders. But genuine leaders of the people recognize that it is not they as individual heroes who make history, who lead the passive flock of people into the Promised Land, but the masses of people themselves. True leaders of the people are those who can lead the people in making revolution. Obviously, this is not the kind of leader Jane Pittman-CBS-IDOL the U.S. ruling class is talking about, OL’s interpretation of Jane’s remark notwithstanding.

All that remains to be said about the “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman,” which you can see, by the way, in the fall if you missed it the first time around, is that by singing hymns of praise to it, OL clearly reveals to all its rightist line on the Black liberation struggle. This is not simply a matter of OL pushing into the forefront “progressive” Black petty bourgeois and bourgeois elements, which of course is bad enough; this is a matter of agreeing with and pushing to the forefront the ruling class’ own interpretation of the entire Black liberation struggle. We fail to see how OL can possibly attribute this to mere “ sloppy analysis.”

OL on Woman Question: More Rightism Still

We can’t go into detail here on OL’s rightist line on the woman question. We have already discussed in a number of Revolution articles how this line comes down around such questions as the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and the International Women’s Day March this year in Chicago. (See, especially, “Reply to OL on Woman Question: Why Working Class Must Lead,” August 1973, and “Chicago IWWD Speaks Two Line Struggle,” March 1974.)

OL’s work in this area essentially mirrors their work in the workers’ movement, the national liberation
movement, the movement to throw Nixon out, etc. Rather than seeing this linked up with and relying on the masses, mobilizing them and helping to develop their political consciousness, unity and organization in the course of struggle, and putting forward the need for the working masses, on the basis of their own strength, to unite with other sections of the people in order to de-velop the unified front under proletarian leadership, OL prefers to unite instead with petty bourgeois ele-ments, to try to get workers to follow this petty bour-geois leadership and to keep the struggle in the bour-geois democratic arena. More generally, OL limits the struggle for women’s liberation to bourgeois demo-criticro demands, rather than linking up these democra-tic struggles with the overall struggle for proletarian revolut-ionism and socialism—the only way the oppression and exploitation of women can be wiped out once and for all.

In the case of the struggles around women’s liber-ation, it’s primarily a matter of OL uniting with petty bourgeois women and labor union bureaucrats who support the ERA. Interestingly, the OL position on protective laws for women and the drive for the ERA was very different two years ago. In a pamphlet call-ed “Women Hold Up Half the Sky,” which contains a speech given on International Women’s Day, 1972, by a member of OL’s Central Committee, OL says, “Protective legislation for women and children which our fellow workers fought and died for 50 years ago, is gradually being stripped away under the cover of ‘equal rights.’ The capitalists are trying to convince us that equality means taking everything away from us so that nobody has anything and therefore we are all equal!!”

This, of course, is precisely what we have been say-ing in opposition to OL’s present position. But this, of course, is also before the ERA got out of Congress, and before it was taken up in a big way by organizations like the National Organization for Women, an organi-zation of mainly business and professional women, and—more recently, by the Coalition of Labor Unions Women, an organization made up primarily of labor union bureaucrats. And this is before OL had further devel-oped and completely consolidated its rightist line and defined communist work as tailing behind such organi-zations and such things as the ERA.

Contrast, for example, that 1972 speech with what OL says about the ERA and protective laws just one year later: “The short term disadvantages of not having some protective laws are often by the gains to be made once women are enfranchised in large numbers to en-ter the bigger, better-paying and more organized indus-tries (and where, given the growing imperialist crisis and growing unemployment, are all those jobs going to come from, we would like to ask OL). . . .

Although laws alone cannot bring about liberation, they can give women a somewhat better hold to fight in. Not only working women, but all women will bene-fit once the stigma of being a woman is lifted. Equal-ity under the law is a step in the right direction, giv-ing long encouragement to millions of women to con-tinue the struggle for full equality and democratic rights.” (OL’s CV, April 1973, emphasis ours.) What this “equality under the law” comes down to in the real world is being demonstrated right now in California, when the ruling class, through a body called the Industrial Welfare Commission, in finding the ERA very helpful in stripping away that state’s protective labor laws. OL, of course, can deny if they want that the IWC is using the ERA for this; they can even turn things upside down if they want, as a writer for the Guardian does, and say that what the IWC is doing is reversing the intent of the ERA. But, as Engels said, “Facts, gentlemen, are stubborn things.” And there are two major facts in this instance. One, that the ruing class, as can be seen by what is hap-pening in California, is using the ERA to step up its attack on protective legislation, as part of its frantic, overall efforts to get out of the crisis it’s in by squeezing even more profits out of the working class. Two, that in one year OL has completely changed its position on the ERA and protective legislation, and is now ready to sacrifice protective laws for the right to wait on the employment lines in the steel and auto industries, and for the blessed band of Congress to come down and “lift the stigma of being a woman.”

OL on the International United Front So, in every direction we turn, we find considerable evidence that in practice, OL’s “united front strategy” closely resembles the “anti-monopoly coalition” strat-egy of the revisionist CPUSA. They are not helping to build a united front based on the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. To the contrary, they are trying to get the proletariat to follow the reformist leadership of “liberal” and “progressive” petty bour-geois and bourgeois elements. What we say about the CP without any hesitation is increasing, and must also be said about OL: they continually call ‘or unity and united front, but when you get beneath the surface and discover what this means as far as what they are doing, it turns out they mean unity with the imperialists and united front behind the “liberals” in the ruling class, “with labor fac-es and Black bootlickers as the front men.”

OL can (and will) deny this until they’re blue in the face, but as we’ve said before, the proof of the

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paddling is in the eating. It doesn't matter how nice the pudding looks—it's its taste that counts. And while OL's "united front" may look nice and may on the surface look no different than the Marxist-Leninist understanding of united front, what you bite into of OL's united front you discover that it doesn't taste good. It tastes all too much like the revolutionists' "anti-monopoly coalition."

Given OL's rightist line on building the united front, the results are most glaring on building the international united front against the two superpowers—U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism—and in the Soviet Union.

The worldwide united front against the two superpowers has at its heart the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples, and includes other revolutionary forces of the world. Those of us who previously opposed the U.S. and USSR hegemony. This gives an opening to the rightist line of tailing behind these revisionist and revisionist ruling classes and to seeing revolutionary struggles in these countries as "subrogate" of the united front. Unfortunately, this is the kind of line that OL is beginning to push around certain things. For example, at several meetings of anti-imperialist forces, in some speeches, etc., OL has said that it is incorrect for revolutionaries in this country to call for the downfall of the Shah of Iran because he is against the patriotism of the social-imperialists into the Middle East and the Persian Gulf area, and is ready to use weapons he is getting from the U.S. imperialists to oppress any Soviet incursion in the area or any anti-imperialist movements in that area. And when the Shah of Iran visited the U.S. in July 1973, primarily to talk to Nixon about getting more weapons, there was a conference that OL ran in China (China News Agency) which dealt with the facts and reasons for the visit. OL had nothing to say about this, and no analysis of its own about the situation in Iran. OL did essentially the same thing when President Luis Echeverria of Mexico visited the People's Republic of China in April 1974. They ran a story press release and had no comments of their own about the situation in Mexico.

OL, obviously containing the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China in the world struggle with its own role and the role of Communist parties worldwide, has not yet led the people in their countries to power. In doing this, OL has ignored the principle and the warning that Mao Tsetung put down back in 1946, when the Chinese Socialist Union was correctly attempting to maintain certain agreements with the U.S. Britain and France.

Mao wrote: "Such compromises do not require the people in the countries of the capitalist world to follow suit and thus strengthen the overall united front and the people's struggle for liberation and socialism, it is not correct for communists in other countries, including China, to do the same thing.

While the Chinese make certain agreements with the Shah of Iran, it does not follow that the revolutionaries in Iran will let up even slightly in their efforts to mobilize the people to overthrow the Shah. And revolutionaries everywhere should not let the slightest hint of the weakness of the oppressed people in their countries who the Shah is, what he represents, why the Iranian people are rising, how he is trying to contain them, and why the exploiter and oppressed people of all countries should support the Iranian people's just struggle.

But we have no illusions. Most of the descendants and relatives of oppressed people all around the world are part of the U.S. working class, where political and economic policies imposed by the superpowers in these countries are forced to take refuge, and where students from these countries are joining together with the people of the U.S. to build support for the revolutions abroad and the revolution in the U.S., it is the responsibility of all U.S. revolutionaries to explain the fairest solidarity with those comrades.

Finally, we want to categorically state that the rightist line of OL is beginning to push forward on the international united front is certainly no service to the People's Republic of China. In fact, by using China as a cover for their rightist line, OL is aiding the Trotskyites and revisionists who are vehemently attacking the Chinese and the international and revolutionary united front line the Chinese have been instrumental in developing.

From 'Left' to Right

Before concluding, we want to go briefly into some of the history of OL because it brings out the essence of OL's failure to develop a correct line, and also brings out the core of unity between "ultra-leftism" and rightism—i.e., the failure to rely on the masses of people and a subjectivist world outlook that fails to apply the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to the conditions of the U.S.

From its beginning about three years ago, OL has maintained that "the creation of a new communist party—one of the Leninist type—has become the principal task for all communists in the U.S." (From original "Statement of the People's Republic of Georgia Communist League (M-L) and the October League (M-L)") published by OL in May 1972). This was reaffirmed in this issue of The Call in October 1972.

But sometime between the first publication of the GCL-OL statement in May 1972 and its re-publication in pamphlet form in May 1973, OL's conception of what party building means changed. This is reflected in several important differences between two editions of the unity statement, especially the more recent one is distributed today as "published by the October League (M-L), May 1972, reprinted—May 1973." (OL Unity Statement, p. 23, our emphasis.)

Changes between the first and second editions were made, as we already pointed out earlier in this article, with no explanation by OL; in fact, no indication at all that there had even been any changes. But leaving that aside, these changes are important because they indicate the development of OL's line from "ultra-leftism" to the rightist line they hold today.

The original differs in a number of places from the "reprinted" version, but the key change occurs near the end, in the section, "Building the New Party":

"Especially important at this time is the struggle against narrow practitioners, or playing the day-to-day struggle of the working class ahead of its final aims. The tendency to bow to the sporadicity of the mass movement, to fail to build, in spite of denunciation of Trotskyism, Leninism with the working class movement. We must develop propagandas and organizational organs that can bring communist ideas to the working class and unite the class in struggle. This must be done on a national scale with the emphasis now on broad political propaganda directed primarily to the advanced workers." (Unity Statement, May 1972, p. 26, emphasis ours.)

Shades of the Communist League, which OL heaps such criticism on now! What this "broad political propaganda's" approach to the "advanced workers" come down to in practice was babbling on the jargon of the proletariat of people (because they were "ultra-left" and therefore good), while at the same time trying to rope in the most ignorant and politically conscious workers out of the mass struggle and put them into study groups with OL members so they could become "communists."

But then something must have happened, because in their Unity Statement "reprinted" a year later, the above statement of OL's was to be found. Instead, on page 22 of the revised version, OL now states:

"While the principal danger in the general people's movement is posed by the right opportunist OPUSA, within the young communist forces the main danger is ultra-leftism. Due to inexperience and still shallow roots among the basic sections of the working class, the danger of a 'purer' view towards the mass struggle and negation of the united front pose an important obstacle. A manifestation of this ultra-leftist influence is the view of building a party first, then later engaging in the mass struggle. Sectarianism and unprincipled attacks within the communist movement are also symptoms of individualism and dogmatism."

From this and from statements in The Call, you would never know that OL itself was once a leading example of "ultra-leftism." A short time before the founding of OL, and before its merger with the GCL, somewhat similar lines were part of its platform. Its chairman, were united together as much in opposition to the line of the RU as for anything positive. And they justified this opposition by saying that the RU were "revisionist," a long way from the changes of "ultra-leftism" hurled at us today by these very same people.

We were "revisionist" primarily because we said that the strategy for revolution in the U.S. was the united front against imperialism, which they claimed was a "gimmick" to sucker non-proletarian forces into supporting the working class, and was in fact "a smoke-screen" for the CP's "anti-monopoly coalition." (This, of course, is almost comical given the present line of OL.)

Surprise of surprises, then, when OL turns around in its statement of unity with GCL and says, as we quoted earlier in this article, that the united front against imperialism in fact & the correct strategy for revolution in the U.S. In approximately one year, and with no explanation of how or why, the OL leadership, changed their minds—the united front was no longer revisionist garbage!

(We understand that their chairman claims OL never attacked the united front against imperialism strategy as revisionist, and that it's impossible to find anyone who is signing on paper to prove they did. Well, we're not going to search all the latrines in the U.S. OL can rely on the courts and us if they want, but we'll rely on the many people who heard them say it time after time in speeches after speech and leaflet after leaflet.)

We are not saying that communists can never change their minds, can never change their analysis of key questions concerning the U.S. revolution. But we are saying that communists do have a responsibility to explain to the movement and to the masses of people...
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why their viewpoint has changed, why they were previously in error. Communists are not like school children who try to correct errors before the teacher sees it. Communists are the conscious, organized, dedicated labor movement, and if they make an error they must explain it to the people and argue that things can be right and the struggle can move forward.

This is one of the most crucial points. If, like so many others who have missed the point, they ignore the 15 million people in the U.S. who have taken the initiative, and that the people who have taken the initiative are the whole revolution, carrying the struggle forward, then their argument is a nullity. If they do not take the initiative, then they are not working with the whole revolution, and the struggle can't move forward. The whole revolution is the movement of the people who have taken the initiative.

Basic Unity Between "Left" and "Right" Lines

Nora are we going into all this just to nail people to the wall, or will we try to understand their behavior? It is necessary to go into this because it shows that when one is acting alone, an isolated individual, it is easy to make mistakes. But when one is working with a movement, the whole movement can be seen to make mistakes.

What both "left" and right lines in the revolutionary movement—-and in all politics—have in common is that they are directed by the people of the world, the working people of the world, the people who will make the revolution. It is the people who will make the revolution who dictate the direction of the movement. The people who will make the revolution will direct the direction of the movement, and it is the people who will make the revolution who must be involved in the movement.

So, first of all, we will see that the people of the world are the ones who will make the revolution, and that the movement must be directed by the people of the world. The people of the world must be involved in the movement, and it is the people of the world who must be involved in the movement.

For ourselves, we have tried to make it clear that we think it is now possible to create the new party, because primarily on the work of the communist forces over the last several years, based on going to the masses, linking up with them in struggle, learning from the people while giving them leadership, these communist forces can now agree on what is the correct line for moving the struggle forward and can develop together a programme for doing so.

We believe that the key link right now is for all genuine communist forces to unite to start developing the programme for the party, because without a programme—the general battle plan—any party that will be formed will be only a paper party, incapable of leading the people.

OL pays no attention to this question of programme, and this suggests that perhaps OL is just interested in throwing around words about party building to appeal to some revolutionarily minded people, who actually want to help form the party, while OL at the same time continues to develop its rightist line and practise which, in fact, stand opposed to the building of a revolutionary Communist Party.

At this point, OL can make a contribution to building the new party and can contribute to building the revolutionary movement only by getting out of bed with the revisionists, bureaucrats, "liberal" politicians and what have you, by breaking with the ACWI, the masses, and by entering into principled, hard-hitting ideological and political struggle with other communist forces, including struggle over and genuine self-criticism of its past and present incorrect line.