OPPORTUNISM CAN BE EXPRESSED IN THE TERMS OF ANY KIND OF DOCTRINE, INCLUDING THAT OF MARXISM. (Lenin)

Comrades, the August Twenty-Ninth Movement is now a little more than a year and a half old. In that time we have been able to develop a correct general line on questions facing the revolutionary movement in the United States. We have developed that line further by studying hard and assimilating and applying the theory of Marxism-Leninism through its integration with the concrete conditions of the class struggle. In the course of our development we were bound to make mistakes. However, the test of any Communist organization is its attitude towards its own errors.

Perhaps one of the most fundamental errors we have committed has been our (objectively) conciliationist stand towards the October League (OL). The political line and practice of the OL has revealed them to be a thoroughly right opportunistic organization, whose danger to our revolution cannot be underestimated.

Comrades the roots of our error:
1. Not fully understanding the historical development, danger, persistence and pervasiveness of opportunism in the United States.
2. The development of imperialism, with its vast superprofits, has created a huge material basis for the bribery of sections of the working class and the petty-bourgeoisie. This is the social basis of opportunism in the United States -- we did not fully grasp this.
3. We incorrectly made a qualitative distinction between revisionism (RCP) and right opportunism (OL).

"Fight, fail, fight again..."

Comrades, we should not find it hard to understand the strength and "resiliency" of opportunism and revisionism. Defeated in one form it is bound to assume another shape and dimension. It has assumed the form of the old line revisionism of the Second International. With the defeat of that "brand" of opportunism, it assumed the shape of modern revisionism (CPSU and CPUSA). When the bankruptcy of the CPSU was revealed, opportunism inevitably had to don another mask -- it had to assume another masquerade (RCP, CLP, OL).

The entire history of the development of Marxism-Leninism confirms that, along with its birth, development and growth, (and as an essential component in that growth) was the birth, development and growth of distortions and wars - opportunism. The struggle between these two world outlooks has been the main factor in the evolution of Marxism-Leninism. The ideological soil upon which right opportunism flourishes is the soil of reformism (we refer here to the advanced capitalist countries in particular). The material basis for its growth is, of course, the vast superprofits stol by imperialism from the oppressed nations of the world, some of which goes to bribing sections of the population to take the side of the bourgeoisie and to keep the masses "in line". The modern capitalist ruling classes long ago realized that reformism, in addition to erode force, is a more efficient method of conducting class combat. Along with their military prop the bourgeoisie reinforces their rule with social props who infect the masses with reformism (the essence of right opportunism and revisionism).

With the development of capitalism into dying and moribund imperialism came the development of democracy from a liberating mechanism into a rotting fetter upon the development of society. Whereas democracy was a necessary and progressive political weapon against the feudal monarchy -- it has now turned into its opposite, a weapon for the bloody repression of the working class, a chain which ties down the working class by a thousand links.

What this means is that reformism, or the philosophy that the fundamental contradictions of capitalism can be resolved WITHIN the confines of capitalist society, is the most dangerous enemy of the socialist revolution. (This should not give rise to the belief that capitalism relies only on reformism -- they use it in extremely effective combination with violence). If we do not defeat this poisonous ideology we will not be able to convince the workers that it is only by breaking through the boundaries of bourgeois democracy that they can receive a revolutionary education - can learn to make revolution. This means that we educate the masses through street actions, strikes, political demonstrations, etc. -- actions which are illegal. Ultimately we shall be leading the workers in the highest "illegal" act -- the armed seizure of power -- training and preparation must take place well before hand.

As long as the workers retain their faith in reformism they cannot make revolution. The bourgeoisie is well aware of the value of reformism and every day, in a million and one insidious ways, tries to turn the workers with this bourgeois spirit, to corrupt their revolutionary narrowness, to sap their initiative, to channel it along the line of least resistance.

U.S. - CRADLE OF REFORMISM

The historical development of capitalism in the United States has been almost "classical" according to Marx and Lenin. This means that the economic growth of the base worked smoothly and efficiently in inter-action with the political superstructure. Whereas in other countries, capitalism had to accommodate and compromise with a monarchical political system, here there was little of this to stand in the way of capitalist expansion.

In addition the United States has for some time been among the "great powers" which dominate and exploit vast sections of the globe. With their vast superprofits they have historically been able to respond to the working class struggle with reformation as a primary weapon in their arsenal. This is not to deny the long and bloody history of the U.S. bourgeoisie, who unhesitatingly resort to violence when they deem it necessary (especially against the oppressed nationalities of this country). However, as the representative of the vanguard of

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it is a "protective mechanism" which helps it to maintain itself as a system. Communists who fail to understand that the combination of reformism and coercive violence is the concrete reality that we must solve if we are to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat are bound to fall into opportunism. It is our duty to win the masses away from the dominance of reformism, and it is to the extent that we are able to do this that we will be able to lead the great insurrection against the capitalist class. We must stress that the process of winning the masses away from the influence of reformism can only be done through the revolutionary struggle for reforms.

No Marxist rejects the struggle for reforms, but they realize (1) reforms are a by-product of revolutionary struggle, and (2) it is their duty to link the concrete struggle with the ultimate socialist aim. Moreover we must educate the masses to carry out their struggle in a revolutionary way, that is, by breaking beyond the boundaries of bourgeois legality as we have said. To carry out these tasks: it is necessary to recognize the extent and depth of illusions about bourgeois democracy within the working class. Reformism, trade unionism, economism all have a long and involved history in the United States and it is inevitable that they will make themselves felt as ideological tendencies within the communist movement. So it is not a question of nasty Bob Avakian, or misguided Michael Klonsky but of definite tendencies that capitalism is bound to breed. This is not a small political question.

At this very moment in history the forces of revolution and counter-revolution are contending most sharply. The de facto world war between the two superpowers is gaining on a daily basis. It is just such a "turn" in the revolutionary process that brings opportunism to full maturity, that reveals all of its rottenness and corruption and social chauvinism. We must realize that if we do not wage an unrelenting, consistent and ruthless struggle against those bleeding heart "friends of the people" who blanch at the thought of open and honest ideological conflict), we shall be defaulting the leadership of the working class to opportunism.

War has the distinct advantage of bringing out the best and the worst in mankind. "(Wars) ruthlessly reveal, unmask and destroy those who are corrupt, outworn and dead in human institutions. (Lenni)

War will bring even more to the fore the question of practical leadership of the struggle -- the forces of Marxism-Leninism and the forces of opportunism. It will reveal all of their strengths and weaknesses in the case of war. We cannot wait for war to wage battle with the mealy-mouthed liberals who cough their cowardice with Marxist phrases and pithy homilies about "ties with the masses" and "popularization" into fear of giving the masses a revolutionary education, of helping them to break with reformism.

What is the Main Danger?

We want to address ourselves to the question of what is the main danger to revolution in this country.
We need only look at the Trotskyist Communist Labor Party to see the truth of this as they continue the shameless grovelling at the feet of Soviet social-imperialism and the leadership of the Communist Party of China. In our Unity Statement we refer to this left opportunism as the "new revisionists" (We are referring here to a tendency, not necessarily the out-Front revisionism of Moscow's principles). We do not doubt that this is an international phenomenon which is likely to coalesce at some point in the future. It is no accident that in many countries we have a variety of "M-L" groups -- undoubtedly some of these represent the same retrograde trend as the RCP and the OL.

This is not surprising -- both Trotskyism, old revisionism and modern revisionism are international trends, the same is bound to hold true for the "new revisionism". Understanding that the old tactics were no longer sufficient, opportunism had to do everything it could to prevent a close examination of its program, line and practice.

The easiest and best way was to focus the attention of revolutionaries on "ultra-leftism". And the nearest (and most opportunistic) way to do this was by setting on questions of style of work, of form, and to ignore the questions of the general content of the line of the movement. So the OL attacked the RU for being ultra-leftist and ultra-economist and the fact of the political content of RU's "intermediate workers organizations". If they did not see that whether or not the RU worked within the trade union structure they would only bring the workers into reformism. And that is the main problem, the main danger that we refer to.

To have brought up this unpleasant fact would have brought the inevitable comparison to OL's "workers unity" and "Fight-Back" committees which reek with the same reformism and the same "renders" of the RUCP (RCP). To point the finger at RU's opportunism would also have been a point at OL's opportunism on Watergate, where they said that the task facing the revolutionary proletariat was to "unparalyze Congress" or perhaps it would have pointed the finger at their position that federal troops would protect the black masses in Boston. Or it would have revealed the basic chauvinism of their position on Boston, where the OL continually refers to the forced busing of Black children, but ignores the question of the forced busing of whites. "Even" the liberals support forced busing of Blacks, but it is another question when it comes to busing white children ATM stands in favor of forced busing in Boston (although we think that Blacks have the right to choose whether they wish to be bused or not), but its starting point for the question of getting Black children a better education but a question of breaking the historically developed segregation pattern with all of its attendant political, economic and social ramifications. However, the October League wants the Black masses to get the state to defend their interests.

It is up to communists to sum-up the history of the state that has played in this country, or point to the experience of the '60's, where the state has revealed its ugliest features. And the fact that the state, based on its own experience (it need not always be direct -- or must every state act in the same way?), of course, like the devious opportunists that they are, the OL now puts forward "boldly" that the Black masses should protect themselves by "any means necessary". Avoiding the issue of breaking through the chains of bourgeois legality and calling for the armed self-defense of Blacks, the OL contents itself with vague and wishy-washy calls, while neglecting to carry out any systematic revolutionary work among the masses of Boston.

To show the extent of their disgusting line we can point to the march on Carson Beach in Boston. The OL correctly lays out that it was the task of communists to participate in this event, and in the course of it to expose reformists such as the leaders of the NAACP. The issue around which this exposure could have been done was around the self-defense of the demonstrators against police or white mob attack.

How did the OL claim to develop its tactics? By asking Atkins of the NAACP if he had any contingency plan in case of physical confrontation. He said that he expected no trouble, but in any did occur he expected the police to protect them. The OL said "nothing to that" and because they thought that Atkins had a contingency plan to meet with the possibility of violence, but it was just wasn't revealing it. Talk about your faith in reformism. They actually believed that the Black masses would protect themselves by any means necessary.

Instead of the OL receiving the OL's support to SMASH RIGHT OPPORTUNISM. Marxism-Leninism and opportunism are irreconcilable -- they co-exist only in struggle. Failing to understand this created the following dangers:

1. We helped to give the October League credibility among some forces where we had influence.
2. We confused many revolutionary forces.
3. We opened the solidarity of the revolutionary wing in the struggle against right opportunism.
4. This gave the OL the opportunity to zero its fire in on workers viewpoint, while pretending that it had a "close" relationship with ATM.
5. We confused our own cadre who consistently ran into the right opportunism of the OL in the course of their practice with them.

(We understand that when different organizations work together there are bound to be errors and conflicts -- this is true of even revolutionary organizations. However with the OL it was not a question of mistakes, but of an opportunistic line).

Opportunism "On the Line"

To see this opportunism most clearly we refer comrades to the section of OL's paper, the CALL, entitled "On the Line" which pur-
ports to be a summary of workers' struggles from around the country. What do we find here? We find that, according to the OL, Arnold Miller, the leader of the United Farm Workers, is leading the miners on to struggle, and that Miller is bound to, at best, wage a half-hearted struggle against the Klan, and that Miller is bound to do so. The workers that rely on the miners to crush the Klan. The "OL" organization is shot through with the workers that they must develop their own independent and revolutionary struggle, (in spite of reformism). We also find such as this:

"If fighting this system is communism," one striker said emphatically when I want to be a communist."

("Capital Strike Enters Fourth Month" of CALL, Nov 1975)

It is exactly the duty of communists to explain to the workers that striking for the better sale of the labor power is not communism, but trade unionism, and that it is only by going beyond trade unionism, that the workers can come out of the state. But the October League, by its own words, is content "to have brought home some of these lessons about working class unity and solidarity."

(quoted from the CALL)

We remind the leadership of the OL that it is the task of communists to link the immediate struggles of the class to the ultimate aim for those who do not know, or care to know, the dictatorship of the proletariat. But when an organization is shot through with reformism and illusions about bourgeois democracy, it is no wonder that they are content with keeping the workers under the hegemony of trade unionism (bourgeois ideology). One of the capital strikers said (quoted in the CALL) -- "They call anyone who fights back a communist."

"They" are referring to the October League, by their own words, is content "to have brought home some of these lessons about working class unity and solidarity."

Another interesting article in "On the Line" (CALL, Nov 1975) is entitled "HUF Hits New Labor Relations Board" and this article echoes the demand of the leadership of the United Farmworkers that the general counsel of the new California Agricultural Labor Relations Board be fired, or that he resign. The UFW leadership has been in office for years that the general counsel is acting vigorously enough on their unfair labor practices complaints.

We were very well that it was only the militancy and struggle of the farmworkers themselves which forced the new California Farm Labor Law from the bourgeoisie.

However, we always thought that it was the task of communists to explain to the workers that the state that the state serves the interest of the bourgeoisie, and that instead of accepting this state and keeping up this state -- the dictatorship of the proletariat. One thing that we know for sure (maybe the OL, all from reading too many books), is that only opportunists preach reliance on the state.

In the entire article the October League never once mentions a thing about the class character of the state, or about any possible alternative to this state. They polenise with the "left" opportunists about MUD will implement the new Farm Labor Law -- the leadership of the UFW or the "politicists and big labor leaders". Only the most craven opportunists would want the farmworkers to believe that the state is going to resolve their problems for them.

But this "left" opportunist tendency which developed from the movement of the oppressed nationalities, and which have a working class social base. Or maybe it would surprise the OL to learn that workers and oppressed nationalities are also capable of assimilating Marxism-Leninism.

Secondly, in advanced capitalist countries like the U.S. (which has advanced to superpower status), not only a section of the working class is bribed and corrupted with reformism, but also a section of the petty-bourgeoisie, its upper strata -- who also do not lap in assimilating and propogating reformist illusion.

It is not only ultra-leftism which the petty-bourgeoisie breeds, but also the spirit of "petitioning", of becoming junior partners to the "bourgeoisie" -- of right opportunism. But of course the OL would not want us to talk about this, someone just might draw the logical conclusion. Nothing reflects their social base better than OL's own history.

In the beginning, the October League carried out a truly ultra-left sectarian and dogmatic line. In their own words, they "must judge a communist organization by its political content." And after they have referred, one will find in the pages of the CALL articles of a propaganda nature, or good articles about "The 1931 Strike of the Leaders" which told the story of a strike which was linked up to the struggle against capitalism. But we must judge a communist organization by its general content, and how they explain to the workers the processes involved in their own struggles.

And it is in doing this that we show the workers that their only salvation (from a historical and practical standpoint) is socialist revolution. Examining the OL from this perspective we see their opportunism clearly, or at least only barely disguised by the thin veil of Marxism which they attempt to cover themselves in (one other point we want to make is that the OL seems to have succeeded in confusing some honest elements to some extent, with their chatter that "ultra-leftism" as the main danger to some of these comrades even in the OL is "left" because they have put forward a hegemonic scheme for party building (build the CALL, our Fight Back Organization, our Communist Youth League and you can join the "party")

Don't be confused comrades, the OL is uniting only with comrades who will accept their right opportunism and political line. They have no intention of "struggling out differences" within the party more than the OL intended to struggle out differences with their "left" opportunism-trotskists line within the ranks of the party.

We must not focus attention only on the scheme put forward, but must look carefully at the content of the line which an organization represents. Otherwise we will confuse form with content and lose our bearings in the struggle against opportunism.

The October League, as an explanation for their line that "ultra-leftism" is the main danger, is always referring to the petty-bourgeois social base of the anti-revisionist communist movement.

"In part, it ("leftism") reflects the social base of the communist movement at the present time. The fact that a great deal of the present day communists come from the ranks of the middle classes or the intelligentsia, is only natural. Every petty bourgeoisie of assimilating Marxism-Leninism."

The only thing "natural" about this statement is the opportunism. When the OL refers to organizations with a petty-bourgeois social base, they are referring only to themselves and the RU. Their chauvinism and paternalism leads them to neglect those communist organizations which developed from the movement of the oppressed nationalities, and which have a working class social base. Perhaps, it would surprise the OL to learn that workers and oppressed nationalities are also capable of assimilating Marxism-Leninism.

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from one extreme to another. But in this case what we have is not only flip-flopping, but pragmatism to boot.

The OL’s change in line was not motivated by principle, otherwise we would have seen some analysis and explanation of their former line. It was simply a case of their "Leftism," not working, of keeping them isolated and perhaps trying to find something which would "work." And it was not Marxism-Leninism which they found, but economism. In either case the name of the game is opportunism — it was born, went through its adolescence, and now struts across the stage of history as a full grown adult.

In the course of this development other events were occurring. Other organizations were being born particularly out of the struggles of the oppressed nationalities. These organizations have had to fight their way to the point of way for Marxism-Leninism. They have grown up (and grown strong) in the struggle against opportunism and revisionism. Out of this struggle was born and developed the two wings in the communist movement. An opportunist wing made up of OL, Guardian, RCP and others; and a revolutionary wing consisting of a number of groups and collectives throughout the country among which are ATW and PRMO. Moreover the revolutionary wing has developed in the face of constant revisionist pressures of the capitalist state and monopoly capitalism. This type of trade union takes an active part in all organs set up by the capitalist state and the employers.

These two wings of our movement are no accidental product of history, but are a natural occurrence of the class struggle. The dying and decadent bourgeoisie is bound to try and prettify its stinking flesh with fresh make-up and new clothes. It is the task of the revolutionary class to pull the mask off, to reveal to all the oppressed masses the true face of the enemy, in order that we may more easily place the body in its coffin and nail on the lid.

Finally, we challenge the October League to answer our arguments on their merits. We fully expect the OL to resort to the same type of name-calling, slander and invective that they did when responding to WVO’s polemics against them. Rather than dealing with the principles that we raise we anticipate that the OL will isolate in one mistake we have made, or personalities, or errors in our line — anything to avoid answering the issue of their opportunism.

Well, we say to our erstwhile comrades from the OL, "Pongola: Fire your best shot", you will only further reveal yourself to all the honest, selfless and dedicated revolutionaries of the United States.

In future issues we will go into some of our history with the OL, the development of conciliationism, their party building plan, and the national question.