

The Party Building Movement Today



I. TOWARD A SINGLE ALL-U.S. COMMUNIST PARTY

A The primary objective of the U.S. communist movement today is the formation of a single, authoritative, all-U.S. communist party; a party that can unite all U.S. communists and win all class-conscious workers and revolutionary intellectuals to its ranks; a party that can provide enduring revolutionary leadership to all the struggles of the American people against U.S. imperialist rule. This will be the vanguard party of the working class, dedicated to the overthrow of existing monopoly-capitalist relations, and to the establishment of working class state power. This vanguard party must be able to become the leader of the working class and aim strategically to forge and lead the broadest possible united front of classes, nationalities and other social groupings, uniting all who can be united against the imperialist system. This party must have a clear internationalist perspective and work always to heighten the solidarity of the American people with the revolu-

tionary movements of countries, nations and peoples throughout the world. Lastly, it must be prepared to continue the revolution after the seizure of power and carry the class struggle on to its end, namely, the complete eradication of class society. The U.S. Communist Party can be only a Marxist-Leninist Party, a party guided by the scientific world outlook of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

B Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is the only scientific theory of socialism; the only non-utopian and non-deceitful theory of socialism. Karl Marx, in collaboration with Frederick Engels, first formulated the theory of scientific socialism in the mid-1800's, thus giving birth to Marxism. After their death, V.I. Lenin inherited, defended and greatly expanded the Marxist theory in accordance with the developments and requirements of his time. He found the road to the establishment of the world's first socialist state. This he was able to do only in close connection with his continued battle against all of the contemporary opponents of Marxism. Especially important, he exposed the revisionist leaders of the Second International (i.e. the then current international socialist movement) as the greatest contemporary distorters and betrayers of Marxism.* Because of the international and historic significance of Lenin's contributions to the theory and practice of Marxism, Marxism became known as

**Revisionism—a trend inimical to Marxism, based on a "reconsideration" or revision of the fundamental thesis of Marxism. The essence of revisionism is to rob Marxism of its revolutionary content and turn Marxist ideology and the communist movement into a theory and movement that no longer oppose capitalism but rather serve capitalism.*

Marxism-Leninism. Under the leadership of Lenin and his successor Joseph Stalin, a worldwide system of socialism (over a dozen socialist countries and communist parties in almost every country of the world) was created, guided by the theory of Marxism-Leninism.

After Stalin died, anti-Marxist revisionists within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and in many other parties, including the Communist Party of the USA, were able to capture leadership and divert these great parties from the socialist road. The result was: 1) the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and in a number of other once socialist countries and 2) the splitting of the world communist movement into a revisionist and a communist camp. In setting back the world communist movement, these modern day revisionists have proven to be the worst enemies of Marxism, even worse than the revisionists of the Second International.

Mao Tsetung, the leader of the socialist revolution in the world's largest country, China, did not fall for the phoney theories of the revisionists and saw through their evil deeds. Like Lenin before, Mao upheld Marxism in the international communist movement and exposed the revisionists. In leading the fight against the modern revisionists, he inherited, defended and greatly expanded the theory of Marxism-Leninism. He explained how the revisionists came to power, proved that their rise to power was not inevitable, and laid down the requirements of the struggle to prevent their ascendancy to power in other socialist countries and communist parties. In doing this, he criticized Stalin for having made certain errors, while at the same time upholding Stalin as a great Marxist-Leninist. Mao's contributions to the theory and practice of Marxism rank him with Marx and Lenin. In the present era, Mao Tsetung

Thought is Marxism-Leninism. To be a Marxist-Leninist today, in the last analysis, is to adhere to Marxism-Leninism as developed by Mao, or to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

C Marxist-Leninists must provide a revolutionary class consciousness to the people's movements. Socialist consciousness is imparted only when the Marxist-Leninists have won the support of the people and become their leaders. They must unite the working class and make it conscious of its position in society, so that it can accept its historical mission (i.e. to lead in the overthrow of capitalism). The working class must come to view itself as the revolutionary vanguard, to unite around itself all potentially anti-imperialist sectors of the population, and to lead this united front onto the revolutionary road. Without the conscious direction and guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, such unity is not possible and the popular movements could not transcend the narrow limits of bourgeois reformism.* The people could not correctly analyse nor overcome the complex problems that their movements will face and persevere amidst these difficulties. Only under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, exercised through the leadership of Marxist-Leninists, can the people's struggles end in final victory.

The communist party is the vehicle for Marxist-Leninist work, for the provision of class conscious leadership. Without a communist party which unites all U.S. Marxist-Leninists, adheres to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, and achieves authority among the masses, the revolutionary potential of the working class can-

*Bourgeois reformism—the struggle for social reform that does not challenge, but rather assumes the permanence of capitalist relations.

not be realized. The working class will not be able to forge the necessary unity of all anti-imperialist forces. The united front cannot be aimed squarely toward the overthrow of imperialism. Without a communist party the people have nothing. It is through the leadership of the communist party that mass movements pass from spontaneity and become thoroughly revolutionary.

D The establishment of a new communist party in the U.S. has been the immediate objective of the communist movement in the United States ever since it became evident that the old communist party the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) had irreversibly fallen into the grip of modern revisionists. With the death of its chairman, William Z. Foster, the CPUSA lost its greatest and most capable opponent of revisionism. His death cleared the way for the absolute consolidation of the revisionist grip over the entire party. Since then, the CPUSA has degenerated into a thoroughly bourgeois party, a revisionist party, a great distorter of Marxism-Leninism, an apologist for the sins of U.S. imperialism and the chief U.S. outpost for Soviet social-imperialism. The CPUSA has sold its soul to foreign imperialism and is now an enemy of all genuine communists, an enemy of the working class, of all oppressed nationalities and of all who fight for freedom, liberation and socialism.

Aside from the CPUSA, there are other revisionist parties operating in the U.S. who cloak themselves in pseudo-Marxist and pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric in order to fool the people and divert them from the revolutionary road. Such parties are the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party, the neo-Trotskyite Progressive Labor Party, the neo-revisionist Communist Labor Party and others. All these parties share a common essence with the CPUSA, and that is their absolute and

unrelenting opposition to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. They are wolves in sheep's clothing and are extremely dangerous to the communist and workers movement. The existence of these masqueraders makes it all the more urgent that the party of genuine Marxism be formed as soon as possible.

E At present, a number of Marxist-Leninist parties, organizations and collectives exist in the U.S., aside from a great many independent Marxist-Leninists. All of these formations arose in opposition to revisionism and Trotskyism. All have, to one degree or another, contributed to the defense and application of Marxism to U.S. society. Some of these groups have narrowly and mistakenly proclaimed their party, their organization or their trend as the only one that is fully Marxist. The failure to distinguish between major and minor differences, the clinging to narrow group interests and the lack of a willingness to unite causes the movement to remain fragmented and causes new formations to continually arise.

Over and above this sectarian malady permeating our movement, a growing confusion, the emergence of revisionist tendencies, and a significant level of political backsliding has emerged among important sectors of the movement. This continues to go unchecked. None of the existing organizations, including those with the most advanced political programs, have yet shown the ability to counteract and stem this rising current. Instead they have raced away from the problem amidst a flurry of self-adulation and the infantile flinging of labels onto others.

The willingness of each group to proclaim itself the vanguard is all too apparent; being the vanguard is not. A leadership demonstrating the ability to unite all U.S. Marxist-Leninists and displaying sufficient understanding of the re-

quirements of leading the class, national and other progressive movements of the American people has yet to emerge. The formation of a single, authoritative and all-U.S. Marxist-Leninist party remains the immediate objective of the U.S. communist movement.

II THE U.S. COMMUNIST MOVEMENT TODAY

A The existence of three major forces, grouped around three co-existing political lines, today characterizes the U.S. communist movement. Other forces and lines also exist, but these three are by far the most influential and important. One of these views is in essential accord with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. The other two, to a greater and lesser extent, represent serious departures from Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. The issues of debate between the three tendencies are of such vital importance to the future of our movement that no delay is acceptable on the part of U.S. communists in the thorough study of these issues in order to come to grips with them. The correct resolution of these issues in accordance with Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung Thought, is of the utmost importance for our movement. At the same time, the will to unite must be upheld within our movement and differences must be handled with the goal in mind of curing the illness to save the patient. Any other approach will only lead to further setbacks. Though a full analysis of these three tendencies is yet to be done, the following describes their more important features.

B The first tendency is represented by the Communist Party (M-L), the I Wor Kuen, the August Twenty-ninth Movement (M-L) and others. They, from the point of view of politics, are the most advanced organizations within the U.S. communist movement today. In the main, they have con-

inually raised their understanding of, and appreciation for the Marxist-Leninist analysis and summation of world experience elaborated by Mao Tsetung and the Communist Party of China. These groups have seriously begun to immerse themselves in class struggle and are energetically gaining experience in the practice of making revolution by attempting to provide class conscious revolutionary leadership to the day-to-day struggles of the American people. They have taken a consistent stand against revisionism ever since their formation.

At the same time, these groups suffer from certain shortcomings. Their chief shortcoming is the tendency toward ultra-"leftism" and sectarianism. This is most evident in their bent toward exaggerating the intensity of class struggles in the U.S. today, and correspondingly, their restricted implementation of united front policies on all levels. The result of these maladies is their inability to decisively overcome their general isolation from the broad masses of American workers and the population as a whole.

Within the communist movement, in inter-organizational affairs, the "leftism" and sectarianism of these groups also plays a disruptive role. Too often, they tend to fling such labels as "rightists", centrists", "conciliators", and "opportunists" at those with whom they disagree and they engage in merciless criticism and heavy handed tactics. Being quite casual in proclaiming others "enemies", these methods they employ do not help, but rather impair the struggle for Marxist-Leninist unity. They have not learned to distinguish between the out and out revisionists (i.e. the CPUSA, the PLP, the CLP, etc.) and those within our movement that have fallen into confusion and lost their bearings. The main form of struggle within the communist movement must be

that of persuasion.

Upholding the most backward views within the communist movement today are a loose, but fairly wide, assortment of organizations and collectives. Prominent among them is the current staff of the GUARDIAN newspaper and the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC). In the past, many of these forces upheld Mao's Thought. However, now they have raised an open challenge to Mao's Thought. Their opposition is sometimes veiled in doubts and questions and often issued in the form of attacks on other American communist groups. It is, however, a genuine attack on Mao's Thought and not a matter of tactical difference, either with other American groups, or with the present leadership of People's China.

An important thrust of their criticism is centered on Mao's thesis on capitalist restoration in the USSR. They maintain that capitalism has not been fully restored in the Soviet Union. From this position a myriad of criticisms, complaints and attacks against China's Marxist-Leninist policies on many specific questions (Angola, Zaire, etc.) arise. This opposition centers on a fundamental pillar of Mao's entire political line. It directly challenges Mao's thesis on the continuation of class struggle under socialism and of the significance of the rise to power of revisionism in the socialist countries. Implicit in this challenge is the anti-Marxist theory that socialism can exist in a country that is not ruled by a dictatorship of the proletariat. This thesis is all too reminiscent of the trotskyite theory of the degenerate workers' state. It is a serious departure from Marxism. Paralyzed in their thinking by this dangerous notion, step by step, these forces have lost their political bearings.

Claiming to be consistent "anti-revisionists", their main efforts today have been directed at discrediting Mao Tsetung Thought. They have even called Mao an "idealist" and those who follow him "dogmatists" and "slaves". Independently of each other, both the GUARDIAN staff and the PWOC have called for the formation of a new "anti-revisionist" party that considers "dogmatism" (i.e., Mao Tsetung Thought) to be the main danger confronting the U.S. communist movement. This notion, that anti-Mao Tsetung Thought is consistent with anti-revisionism, that a middle-ground exists between the two, can find no material basis. The further these forces pursue their current misadventure, the harder it will be for them to escape the fall into revisionism. Either they must return to Marxism and fully grasp the correctness of Mao's thinking, or they will, sooner or later, turn revisionist. It is not possible to walk the middle line for very long.

Closely connected with their general error in departing from Mao's Thought, they also make serious errors in their understanding of the national question inside the U.S. They maintain that the right to self-determination is a demand that has progressive application only for full nations (i.e. nations fulfilling Stalin's criterion of nationhood). They are unable to fully appreciate and support the revolutionary potential of nationalism among America's oppressed nationalities. They attack as dogmatists those who uphold revolutionary nationalism and the right to self-determination for minority nationalities in the U.S. Once again, these groups depart from Marxism-Leninism on a vital question. They require a lot of re-education.

Though clearly the most backward politically, the tendency represented by the PWOC and the GUARDIAN should not be viewed in the same way as the consolidated revisionist parties (i.e. the

CPUSA, SWP, PLP, CLP, etc.). Many in this tendency have important histories of fighting revisionism. Principally, they must be characterized as confused. Importantly, they do not represent a cohesive trend, and a solid unity among them is not likely. In fact, among them, especially among the less extremist, there exists a growing uneasiness about the open challenge to Mao's Thought of the more extreme. Some of these forces have important strengths. They often are good at appreciating U.S. conditions, maintain a non-sectarian style of work and are sincerely willing to reach out to popular attitudes, prejudices and misconceptions in a good way. In the main, they can and must be won to Marxism. To win them to Marxism, it is all the more necessary that the more politically advanced forces discard their sectarianism.

DThe third major force in the movement is represented by the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), the largest of today's Marxist-Leninist formations. Previously known as the Revolutionary Union, the RCP played a leading role in the formative years of today's movement. While continuing to make contributions, over the last few years it has developed important bad tendencies both in its general political line and in its practical policy. Not long ago, it unilaterally severed its connections with the rest of the movement and proclaimed itself the only genuine vanguard. The RU has engaged in destructive name calling of others as "bundists", "centrists", "conciliationists", "cockroaches" and "creatures." More importantly, and increasingly, it has departed from Marxism-Leninism in a number of its central positions.

The first important departure from Marxism was the RCP's (then the RU's) reversal of its previously correct position firmly upholding revolutionary Black nationalism. This it did

behind the psuedo-Marxist theory that "all nationalism is nationalism and in the final analysis bourgeois". Thus the RCP developed a thinly veiled version of PLP's thesis that "all nationalism is reactionary".

Now, the RCP has compounded this error by further slipping from Marxism on international matters. Claiming to uphold Mao's analysis of the "three worlds", and under the guise of "applying" it to the "tasks of the American people", the RCP distorts the main essence of Mao's theory. Denying its universal applicability as the strategic guide for all Marxist-Leninists, the RCP maintains that the three worlds analysis is merely a diplomatic maneuver on the part of the socialist state in China. As such, they say, it is "correct for them, but not for us". In direct contradiction to Mao's thesis, the RCP maintains that no alliance is possible between the peoples and governments of the Third World, nor between the Third World and the Second World. The bottom line of the RCP's rejection of Mao's view is their underrating of the revolutionary significance of national and democratic movements in the world today. This error is directly related to their negation of the revolutionary potential of nationalism among the Black people in the U.S. Both of these errors derive from a common "economism" in RCP thinking. Despite its revolutionary ultra-"left" trappings, the RCP suffers from a restrictive view which allows it to see no farther than the "worker vs. capitalist" economic class struggle. It is bound by this "left-economist" thinking to distort and misunderstand reality.

The RCP view of the international situation is of serious consequence, not simply because it deviates from Mao Tsetung Thought, but because it tries to pass itself off as Mao Tsetung Thought. As such, it serves to mislead people and obscure

Mao's thesis. Although the departures from Marxism on the part of the RCP are very serious, in our opinion they are not as grave as the open opposition to Mao's thought which is characteristic of the views of such groups as the GUARDIAN and the PWOC.

In addition to these errors, the RCP shares the "left" and sectarian maladies of the rest of our movement. Though their current position on the Sadlowski campaign in the United Steel Workers represents a welcome shift, "leftism" continues to chiefly characterize their mass work and inter-organizational relations.*

E The Bay Area Communist Union has both unity and disagreements with most of the forces in the communist movement. With some, our differences are primarily a matter of basic political line and orientation. With others, they are more of a tactical nature, of immediate tactical policy. With a few, we have differences of both kinds. BACU upholds Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and is convinced that the single all-U.S. communist party cannot base itself on an opposition to, or distortion of Mao's Thought. It must be based on a concrete application of Mao's Thought to U.S. conditions and adhere to Mao's

*The Sadlowski campaign-As a liberal reformist candidate, Ed Sadlowski ran for the position of international president of the United Steel Workers in 1977. Though he lost by a vote of 2 to 1, he carried the major "basic steel" locals of the union. Most Marxist-Leninist groups boycotted the election and attacked Sadlowski as a phoney. Earlier, the RCP applied similar tactics in the campaign of Arnold Miller in the United Mine Workers. RCP's critical support for Sadlowski represents a positive and more realistic tactical approach.

Thought on all other matters. However, we recognize the complexity of things in the modern world and know that it is not a simple matter to grasp and correctly apply Mao's Thought. Despite our differences with the above mentioned forces, (excluding the revisionists and trotskyites), we regard them all as communists and as part of one communist movement. Together, we share a common anti-imperialist history, and we all seek to overthrow U.S. Imperialism.

Of late, confusion has crept into our ranks. We have yet to produce a markedly distinct and qualified political leadership capable of forging the unity we need and the political clarity we require. BACU extends its hand in comradely unity to all forces in the movement. Wherever possible we should unite, work together and support each other. On those points of disagreement, we should continue to struggle with patience and persistence. We must learn to distinguish between major and minor issues, unite on the major ones and continue to struggle on the minor ones. Differences should not overshadow and make impossible unity on other points.

As a local organization, BACU is necessarily limited in its experience. We desire to merge our organization into a greater unity as soon as possible. Toward this end we seek to develop further our contacts and working relations with all parties, organizations and collectives, as well as with the many independent Marxist-Leninists. At the same time, we recognize that more than desire is required to achieve this goal of unity. Therefore, we are committed to the fullest development of BACU as an independent communist organization.

III REVISIONISM-THE MAIN OBSTACLE

Previously, BACU maintained that "leftism", sectarianism and dogmatism together constituted the main obstacles to the advance of our movement. This view was expressed in our pamphlet, A BEGINNING ANALYSIS...of February, 1976. We no longer hold that view.

That view emerged as our response to the eruption of ultra-"leftism", sectarianism and dogmatism which characterized the preceding period: 1) The RCP had severed its relations with the movement in a flurry of phrase mongering and "left"-sectarian schematic programs. 2) The after shocks of the Continuations Committee (the means by which the CL, now the CLP, disrupted the communist movement) were still strongly felt. 3) The October League (now the CP(ML)), was showing signs of a developing "leftism" and sectarianism. 4) Finally, no Marxist-Leninist analysis of that time contained an adequate and consistent criticism of our movement's permeation with "leftism", sectarianism and dogmatism. It was necessary to take this stand at that time.

However, events since that time and further study have convinced us to change this view. These events have been discussed. Our previous view was one-sided. In regard to the CL, we criticized its "leftism" and dogmatism, but did not point to its main essence, revisionism. We criticized the RCP's "leftism" and sectarianism, and some of its more fundamental political errors, but did not point to its essential error, its "economism". In fact we objected to the characterization of the RCP as "economist", because we could not see that its "leftism" could be, and was, compatible with its "economism". Further, we recognized, but underated the significance of, the GUARDIAN'S unwillingness to go along with Mao's thesis on the restoration of capitalism in

the Soviet Union.

We made other such one-sided judgements. "Leftism", sectarianism and dogmatism continue to plague our movement, but of greater importance is the threat to our movement's entire foundation now raised by the challenge to Mao Tsetung Thought.

B Despite the numerous errors and zig-zags in the development of the modern U.S. communist movement, it has made important progress. The movement has matured and its influence has grown. It has yet to make a decisive break with its isolation from the workers of the United States and the population at large. However, advances away from its student origin have seriously begun.

Practically from its onset, when the movement first emerged from among the most advanced sectors of the 1960's anti-imperialist movements, the modern U.S. communist movement aligned itself with the Marxist-Leninists and anti-revisionist communists throughout the world. Almost uniformly, the entire movement recognized Mao Tsetung as the foremost Marxist-Leninist of our time, and Mao Tsetung Thought as the Marxism-Leninism of today.

Now, within the U.S. communist movement, an open challenge to Mao's Thought has been issued from one quarter, a distortion from another, and confusion reigns among a great many. Lastly, among others who wish to escape from reality, a casual air exists regarding these important developments. Underestimating the significance of these differences within our movement, these last mentioned communists do not consider resolution of these issues to be central to the party building process.

Revisionist tendencies, lack of vigilance toward revisionism, and political backsliding in general, have become important currents within our movement. The rise of these ill currents within our ranks has demonstrated that our movement's initial grasp of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought was fairly shallow. With the activities of the revisionist and trotskyite parties on the rise, especially since the Soviet and Cuban offensive in Africa, the danger of these currents existing within our movement is all the more profound. Their existence represents a potential floodgate through which revisionism and trotskyism can gain entrance into our movement and prey upon it. It was not too long ago that revisionism, donning a "left" cover, entered our movement in the form of the Communist League, causing all sorts of disruption and destruction. The ability of revisionism to creep in among us, not only in its more apparent Rightist form, but also in its less obvious "leftist" form, makes these ill currents within our movement all the more dangerous.*

Revisionism is the main danger and obstacle to the advance of our movement at this time. Only by paying close attention to this problem and actively working to deepen our movement's grasp of, and commitment to, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, can this rise of revisionist currents be curtailed. That our movement, or a large part of it, may travel the false road to revisionism, is a real and apparent danger. This demands that all U.S. communists, make as their first and foremost task a defense of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and a criticism of revisionism.

*For a further discussion of "Left" revisionism, see the Political Report in this pamphlet.