

AGAINST OPPORTUNISM AND AMATEURISHNESS: THE STRUGGLE TO BUILD THE PARTY

Let no active worker take offence at these frank remarks, for as far as insufficient training is concerned, I apply them first and foremost to myself. I used to work in a circle that set itself very wide, all-embracing tasks; and all of us, members of that circle, suffered painfully, acutely from the realization that we were proving ourselves to be amateurs at a moment in history when we might have been able to say, paraphrasing a well-known epigram: "Give us an organization of revolutionaries, and we shall overturn Russia!" And the more I recall the burning sense of shame I then experienced, the more bitter are my feelings towards those pseudo Social-Democrats whose teachings "bring disgrace on the calling of a revolutionary," who fail to understand that our task is not to champion the degrading of the revolutionary to the level of an amateur, but to raise the amateurs to the level of the revolutionaries. (Lenin, What is to be Done?, Foreign Languages Press: Peking, 1970, p.156)

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COMRADE X AND THE TWO-LINE STRUGGLE TO BUILD A PARTY

For the past 18 months the communist movement has been involved in an intense ideological struggle, the outcome of which will determine the strategy, line and fate of the socialist movement for years to come. Concretely, this struggle has focused on the central task facing the working class movement: Will the working class have the scientific leadership of a new non-revisionist Communist Party, or will it continue to subordinate itself to bourgeois reformism? Will we continue to glorify the spontaneous movement in the form of the Guardian, October League and Revolutionary Union? Will the new party emerge from the mass movement or will it be built by class conscious forces basing themselves on the science of Marxism-Leninism?

Over six months ago our organization decided to join the party-building movement. Since that time we have developed ourselves through struggle both internal and external to our organization. Although the struggle has taken many forms, two lines have clearly emerged. One line characterized by individualism, empiricism, and disdain for Marxist-Leninist theory and for historical lessons, pretends to strive for the building of a new communist party, but in practice always puts spontaneity in command and assumes that a party will somehow emerge from the spontaneous mass movement. This line harbors anti-communist attitudes by always denouncing organization and discipline and by isolating Marxist-Leninist theory from the practical work of communists. The other line makes building a party an immediate practical task, rather than an abstract goal to be duly acknowledged and then set aside. This line recognizes that socialist ideology develops separately from the mass movement, that Marxist-Leninist theory-- which is a science -- must be studied and learned, and that training ourselves in the history and application of Marxism-Leninism is a necessary first step in building a party which can be the organized core and advanced detachment of the proletariat.

In the process of this two-line struggle we have deepened our understanding of opportunism, particularly in relation to our past associations with the now defunct Venceremos Organization. In resolving this two-line struggle some comrades have left our organization. It is in this light that we made the decision to publish our former comrade's letter, which represents the most conscious expression and at the same time the most sophisticated rationalization of the opportunist line. Therefore, we feel that we must answer each of his arguments in a systematic fashion. We know that the history of the formation and growth of Marxist-Leninist parties is one of struggles against bourgeois ideological trends, whether from the Left or Right. Further, it is the duty of Marxist-Leninists to "smash attacks in the fields of theory, fundamental line and policy and to chart the correct road for the proletariat and oppressed peoples and nations in their struggles." (Whence Our Differences, Foreign Language Press: Peking, p. 165). That is, in order to make an active contribution to party-building we must carry on the class struggle against revisionism; we must realize that "only shortsighted people can consider factional disputes and strict differentiation between shades inopportune or superfluous. The fate of Social-Democracy for many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one or the other 'shade'." (Lenin, What is to be Done?,

Foreign Languages Press: Peking, pp. 28-29).

First, we will show that the principal error, our former Comrade makes is his distortion of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge. Although the author presents himself as a communist theoretician, we will show that he is a vulgar materialist and an empiricist (Mao Tse Tung, "On Practice") We will also show that his philosophy differs only in detail from that which led Venceremos Organization into dissolution. Second, the other errors of the author stem from this principal error. He belittles the subjective factor, or what Lenin called "the conscious element", namely, the power of a class-conscious organization of Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries -- a new non-revisionist communist party. This leads Comrade X to overestimate the present level of consciousness, organization, and unity of the communist movement, and to underestimate the power of bourgeois ideology. In turn, he glorifies spontaneity -- consciousness in embryo -- by talking about the "revolutionary" actions of the reformist mass movement. He ruthlessly belittles the necessary theoretical and political transformation from petty-bourgeois ideas, as if a few nasty people thought up a scheme to purge others. Moreover, Comrade X describes "bowing before spontaneity" as a "catchword", as if that phrase did not sum up our past errors in Venceremos, as if Lenin's What is to be Done? had never been written. In the final analysis the author uses Marxism-Leninism as a nice adornment which can be used to fit every occasion, and which can be learned from the everyday mass struggle. What he overlooked is that Marxism-Leninism is the scientific summation of the laws of development of human history - a science that must be studied. Revolutionaries that don't understand that science obviously can't apply it and if they can't apply it, they will bring more confusion to the working class movement.

Third, rather than recognize the qualitative change which our organization has undergone in the struggle against revisionism, he accuses us of being "dogmatic". We will show that he has "no idea what dogmatism really is let alone how to combat it." (Whence Our Differences, p.335) and that it is not our organization that has failed to recognize the mistakes of the past, but our esteemed critic himself.

For all of these reasons we must conclude that Comrade X embraces a petty-bourgeois class stand and upholds the opportunist line, which hides from the masses the very ideas that they need in order to win.

COMRADE X'S STATEMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION

"Marxism-Leninism is full of vitality, and it is invincible because it grows out of and develops in revolutionary practice, ceaselessly drawing new lessons from new revolutionary practice and therefore ceaselessly enriching itself." (Whence Our Differences?, p. 340).

I find myself in agreement with the basic thrust of Z's points, particularly when I witness the response of comrades, a response which is by now something of an unwritten policy of the organization. I am therefore in a position where notwithstanding some meaningful qualification of this unwritten policy my remaining in the organization really loses its purpose.

1. The statement that "we need to continually test out our theory through practice and analyze it as we are building a party," is not "revisionist making-the-spontaneous-movement-primary," or "bowing before spontaneity" or "belittling the conscious element," as our present-day catchwords would have it, but fundamental Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge. The outcome of this setting-up of "revisionist" strawmen is to say that our practice now must be restricted to "theoretical practice", that is, "practical" struggle within the theoretical movement? I do not agree with this restriction, because I do not believe that it will help us in forming, or contributing to the formation of, a genuinely advanced detachment.

2. I also agree that the way in which Y was treated was an undialectical and mistaken method of leadership, and I can only assume that it will be repeated in relation to Z. Quite aside from the undemocratic manner in which input to the criticism paper in answer to Y was gathered (I for one didn't get to see Y's paper until after our fully-stated response had already been sent to him, and know that such wasn't the case of other comrades), and aside from specific differences I would have with the paper itself and with the way leadership and cadre related to Y after he left -- I do not think that our paper was formulated in such a way as to serve the end it should have

The position was expressed that Lenin and Stalin nearly always formulated their positions as polemics exposing this or that opportunist deviation not for the purpose of persuading their adversaries, but in order to educate the masses. This is true, but such should not have been the purpose of our response to Y. Here we should have been trying to educate toward the end of persuading him to recognize his theoretical errors (which I am convinced would have been possible), and to re-align himself with us. Instead we educated no one, and only succeeded in turning valuable, dedicated revolutionaries against our undertaking. Not to be able to distinguish our friends from our enemies, between incorrect ideas and a comrade still open to criticism and struggle, is to exhibit a severe handicap in theoretical development.

Underlying both of Z's points is a criticism of the development of this organization which gets right to the heart of Leninist principles of revolutionary organization. It has been to arrive at the recognition that socialist consciousness does not arise organically from the proletarian mass struggle, but is the fruit of scientific knowledge of the bourgeois intelligentsia. But, if we have knowledge of what? Engels tells us, in no uncertain terms: what distinguishes scientific socialism from utopian socialism (which is also the product of bourgeois knowledge), is that it is based on the practical historical reality of the proletariat, it is based on the existing practical mission of the proletariat.

Secondly, what is the bearing of this theoretical knowledge on the proletariat? As Marxist theory makes explicit, from the "Theses on Feuerbach" down to "Where do Correct Ideas Come From?" it is the real, historical proletariat as a guide to action in changing the world. Any extraction of this knowledge from the practice of the proletariat converts it back into bourgeois contemplative knowledge.

What, then, is our role? We are vehicles of theory, not sources of theory. Our task is to bring theory to the object of that theory, the proletariat. And we do this by education among the advanced and intellectually developing members of the proletariat. We are proletarian intellectuals by virtue of systematic interaction with the proletariat. The universal truth of Marxism-Leninism only becomes material force when it is grasped by the masses, and it will be grasped by the masses when it is presented not only as universal truth but as concrete and practical truth as well. The socialist-minded intellectual gains knowledge of that concrete and practical truth by involvement in the proletarian struggle, an involvement which takes the form of direct contact with the most advanced members of the class.

For what is ultimately most crucial in forming the party is not the theoretical distinction between the socialist movement and the spontaneous movement, but the full, dialectical relationship (including but not limited to that distinction) between socialist theory and mass struggle. Because the origin of the two were distinct, it is that our goal is to keep them distinct! Preparing for a party may mean emphasizing theoretical training; but in no way should it mean withdrawal from practical interaction with the advanced workers. "Withdrawal" is precisely the term being used by some comrades of the Communist League forum, from which we're in some senses withdrawing our guidance, can hardly lead us to such a strategy.

What is the term for the error which some comrades, if not

"On the one hand, it is necessary at all times to adhere to the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, or otherwise the error of Right opportunism or revisionism will be committed; on the other hand, it is necessary at all times to start from real life, link oneself closely with the masses, constantly sum up the experience of mass struggle and examine one's work in the light of practical experience, or otherwise the error of dogmatism will be committed." (Whence Our Differences, p.336)

In attacking revisionism we have correctly appealed to the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism; but by confining our use of these principles to strictly theoretical struggle we have fallen into a tendency to extol our separation from the concrete revolutionary practice of the masses, and thereby to rely upon dogmatism. We're beginning to learn what revisionists are like; but what are dogmatists like? If we hear what the Chinese Communist Party says about them, we will recognize still another attack on Marxism-Leninism and another enemy of the revolutionary proletariat:

"The mistake of the dogmatists lies in turning the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, i.e., the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, into something withered and petrified. Dogmatists distort Marxism-Leninism in another way. Divorcing themselves from reality, they contrive abstract, empty formulas, or mechanically take the experience of foreign countries and force it on the masses. Thereby they cramp the mass struggle and prevent it from achieving the results it should. Leaving time, place and conditions out of account, they obstinately stick to one form of struggle. They fail to understand that in every country the mass revolutionary movement takes highly complex forms and that all forms of struggle required have to be used simultaneously and complement each other; they fail to understand that when the situation changes it is necessary to replace old forms of struggle by new ones, or to utilize the old forms but fill them with new content. Therefore, they very often cut themselves off from the masses and from potential allies, so falling into errors of sectarianism..." (Whence Our Differences? p.341-342)

The greatest scientific strictness is dogmatism, is treating Marxism-Leninism as a lifeless formula, if it is not combined with the practical recognition of revolutionary spirit.

So that when I hear Z say that ways must be found "in which we will be able to identify and work with and educate and be proletarianized by the most advanced workers," I do not hear "revisionism," or "making the spontaneous movement primary," but I hear a rejection of dogmatism. I hear the statement of Lenin referred to by the Chinese Communist Party in its struggle against revisionism and dogmatism; in "Against the Boycott" Lenin said,

"Marxism differs from all other socialist theories in that it represents a remarkable combination of complete scientific soundness in the analysis of objective conditions of things and of the objective course of evolution and the very definite recog-

dition of the significance of revolutionary energy, the revolutionary creative genius and the revolutionary initiative of the masses -- and also, of course, of individuals, groups, organizations and parties which are able to discover and establish contact with these classes." (quote from Whence Our Differences?, p.340)

Does this organization recognize both sides of the dialectical combination? Is it going to continue to belittle all attempts to learn from the practical struggle of the people? I think the time has come for this organization to show the strength to take a self-critical view of what it has been doing and saying.

First, this organization should criticize itself for its relation to both Y and Z in mistaking non-antagonistic for antagonistic contradictions, a very serious error which is bound to hold back the movement in all its aspects. We should try in a principled way to draw these comrades back into struggle with us on the points they have raised.

Second, we should critically examine our policy of "strategic retreat," which in fact has meant completely divorcing ourselves from the mass movement. As a corrective, we should move to establish systematic ties with intellectually advanced workers toward the end of drawing them into the party-building movement, and developing them and ourselves as trained membership core of a real advanced detachment. No word in the body of Marxist-Leninist theory suggests that this process can, or should, wait until after the completed formation of the party!

III. EMPIRICISM, VULGAR MATERIALISM vs. DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Comrade X, begins his explanation of Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge (p.3) by pointing out quite correctly that scientific socialism is based on the practical mission of the proletariat. He points out that Marxist-Leninist theory is, therefore, a guide to action in changing the world. This is also true. The question is, does Comrade X apply this? Apparently not because he skirts around the key question of how the proletariat obtains this scientific knowledge. How can Marxism-Leninism "guide" the proletariat if the proletariat is, as of yet, unconscious of Marxism-Leninism? How can proletarian intellectuals bring Marxism-Leninism to the class if they themselves do not grasp its meaning or method? By evading these key questions, our former comrade cleverly blurs the role of a communist party. This kind of vagueness, diffuseness and elusiveness is characteristic of Comrade X's entire paper. We must remember, however, that:

"An opportunist by his very nature, will always evade formulating an issue clearly and decisively..., seek a middle course...(and) wriggle like a snake between two mutually exclusive points and try to agree with both..." (Lenin, One Step Forward Two Steps Back, Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1969, p.200)

As he continues his argument, Comrade X's deviation from Marxism-Leninism becomes more apparent. "Any extraction of this (theoretical) knowledge from the practice of the proletariat converts it back into bourgeois contemplative knowledge." (p.4)

With this statement we can see why our former comrade belittles our attempts to become conscious Marxist-Leninists. Marxism-Leninism describes dialectical materialism as the revolutionary theory of reflection. In order to correctly reflect the direct and indirect experience of the international working class movement, Marxism-Leninism must "extract" the essential from the dross--much like one extracts juice from an orange. By using this method Marx, Engels Stalin and Mao discovered and summed up the laws of human history from a proletarian point of view. If these proletarian theorists had never extracted knowledge from the spontaneous working class movement and deduced scientific socialist knowledge, then Marx's Capital, Lenin's What is to be Done? and Mao's On Contradiction would never have been written. If they had not reflected upon, interpreted and changed the world then we would have nothing but a jumble of disconnected facts, and no scientific knowledge whatsoever. Without proletarian science the working class would never be able to see beyond immediate everyday experience. A proletariat without a grasp of its historic role as the only revolutionary class, without an understanding of its ultimate aim--socialism--is easily thrown off course and manipulated by the bourgeoisie. In fact, what Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries and communist parties should do is to "extract" the manifold bits and pieces of perceptual knowledge from the spontaneous movement of the masses, sum up this scattered knowledge with the science of Marxism-Leninism and apply this rational knowledge to the real world. This is how a non-revisionist communist party forges

knowledge into a weapon of the proletariat. This is how a communist party transforms an unconscious labor movement into a conscious communist movement. Thus, "all scientific (correct, serious not absurd) abstractions reflect nature more deeply, truly, and completely." (Lenin as quoted by Mao Tse-tung, "On Practice," Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-tung, Foreign Languages Press, Peking 1971, p. 70).

"Fully to reflect a thing in its totality, to reflect its essence, to reflect its inherent laws, it is necessary through the exercise of thought to reconstruct the rich data of sense perceptions, . . . eliminating the false and retaining the true . . . in order to form a system of concepts and theories--it is necessary to make a (qualitative--ed.) leap from perceptual to rational knowledge." (Ibid., p. 75)

Comrade Lenin points out that there are two kinds of theory, bourgeois and proletarian. Both are based on reflection. X To say that "any extraction of . . . knowledge from the practice of the proletariat converts it back into bourgeois contemplative knowledge," (p. 4) is to say that all rational knowledge is bourgeois. This statement denies materialism. It refuses to acknowledge that different concepts reflect different class interests and that ideological struggle within the communist movement is a form of class struggle. Further, it is to deny the role of a communist party, which is to take the fruit of these struggles--proletarian science--to the working class. Once this theory is grasped by the masses, it becomes a material force capable of changing society and the world. "The role of a vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory." (Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, p. 29)

The theory of knowledge which our former comrade advocates is called empiricism. Empiricists think that knowledge can stop at the lower perceptual stage and that perceptual knowledge alone is reliable while rational knowledge is not. The error of empiricism is what led to the dissolution of Venceremos Organization. Venceremos not only failed to bring Marxism-Leninism to the mass movement, it failed to scientifically sum up the experience of the organization itself. Mastering the teachings of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao was considered "too intellectual" for the "practical" revolutionaries of Venceremos. X According to Venceremos and Comrade X, studying proletarian theory is not studying the real world, it is "extolling our separation from the concrete practice of the revolutionary masses." (p. 5) This view reduces practice to mean only immediate experience and equates all theory with dogma. It is actually a clarion call to tail the spontaneous movement.

Lacking any scientific guide, Venceremos was characterized by frantic aimlessness. Venceremos cadre became even more confused as they hopped from one spontaneous action to another. They continuously called the masses to action, rarely, if ever, mentioning the ultimate aim of socialism. Venceremos assumed that as the mass movement became more militant the masses would resort

more and more to armed struggle until they overthrew the government. Along this line, it glorified the most unconscious actions as revolutionary. For example, Venceremos called Mark Essex a "Black Viet Cong", failing to point out that individual acts of desperation are a product of capitalist society and that in order to be truly revolutionary they must be transformed by the most advanced theory and organized into a single irresistible torrent. Infatuated with spontaneity, Venceremos never understood that armed struggle "must be subordinated and properly coordinated with the main methods of struggle, that are embodied by the enlightening and organizing influence of socialism." (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 2, "Guerrilla Warfare", Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965, p. 221) Such influence is impossible without Marxism-Leninism and a non-revisionist communist party, which is the only organization capable of coordinating legal and illegal struggle. Moreover, Lenin tells us that it is a crime to throw the vanguard into decisive battle without the support or at least the benevolent neutrality of the broad masses. Venceremos, on the other hand, believed that there could be decisive battles by a small minority even before the vanguard was won over to Marxism-Leninism. This is anarchism, pure and simple.

Venceremos was like a frog who lives in the bottom of a well. When the frog looks to the top of the well he thinks he sees the entire sky. Rather than use Marxism-Leninism to jump out of the well and see the entire sky, Venceremos stayed at the bottom of the well, jumped from side to side and called this "revolutionary practice". Venceremos glorified direct experience and "merging with the masses" as revolutionary. Venceremos talked about "testing theory through practice" (p.3) but in reality this meant making the spontaneous movement everything and the building of communist leadership nothing. Venceremos like other empiricist-opportunist organizations had an all-activity, anti-theory character. Because theoretical training was never seriously undertaken, Venceremos members did not replace their bourgeois outlook with a proletarian outlook. Thus the only theory they could "test" was bourgeois theory.

Venceremos extolled the "concrete revolutionary practice of the masses", (p.5) but in fact this infatuation with unconscious militance veiled Venceremos' lack of a clear line on any issue. Venceremos cadre ran to the masses for their theory, instead of taking theory to the masses. And so when X accuses us of belittling "all attempts to learn from the practical struggle of the people," (p.6) we hear Venceremos loud and clear, beckoning us back into a marsh of reformism and confusion. Chairman Mao has described the errors of empiricists like Venceremos and our former comrade:

"(These) vulgar 'practical men' who respect experience but despise theory; and therefore, cannot have a comprehensive view of an entire objective process, lack clear direction and long range perspective and are complacent over occasional successes and glimpses of the truth. If such persons direct a revolution they will lead it up a blind alley." (Mao Tse Tung, "On Practice", Selected Readings, p.75)

At the root of Venceremos' and X's errors is the vulgar mechanical materialist philosophy that says practice in the mass movement is always more important than a grasp of the viewpoint, class stand and method of Marxism-Leninism. Vulgar materialists use theory only to solve immediate problems. They think they can go from former practice to new practice without using Marxism-Leninism to extract the correct from the incorrect. They do not understand that Marxism-Leninism reflects not only their own direct experience but the history and lessons of the international working class movement as well. In other words vulgar materialists judge themselves according to the quantity of direct experience (perceptual knowledge) in the reform movement and belittle all attempt to make a qualitative leap to rational (communist) knowledge. They think that the only way communists can create a party is through constant contact and participation in the mass movement and that the party will evolve from an increasingly militant mass movement. This is the view of the opportunist Revolutionary Union (RU):

"Where does the party come from? Like correct ideas it does not drop from the sky. It must be built, forged from mass struggles."
(Guardian, April 25, 1973)

The more sophisticated vulgar materialists admit the need for theory but refuse to recognize the significance of theoretical struggle in building a non-revisionist communist party. These people try to strike a nice balance between Marxist-Leninist theory and practice in the mass movement. This is what X means when he admits that preparing for the party "may mean emphasising theory" (p.4) but it should not mean "divorcing ourselves from the mass movement" (p.6). This would be fine if there was no theoretical chaos in the communist movement, if revisionism was not the dominant force, if the working class was not saturated with bourgeois ideology, and if the communist movement had solved the major theoretical questions -- fascism, the national question, women's liberation, etc. -- facing the working class and oppressed nationalities. But this is definitely not the case. We must begin these theoretical tasks now. And in order to begin them we must retreat from the mass of contrived projects designed to "raise the level of the spontaneous movement" -- an endless stream of defense committees, "community work", prison work, etc., all of which lead to the subordination of communism to reformism. To argue for more participation in the spontaneous movement in a time of theoretical chaos, in a time when there is no communist leadership, is to use Lenin's phrase - like wishing the mourners of a funeral many happy returns of the day. It is not the job of communists to "raise the level" of the spontaneous movement. It is our job to change that movement qualitatively by giving it an aim -- socialism.

Dialectical materialism is diametrically opposed to the vulgar materialist view. Marxist-Leninists see (theory and practice as a unity of opposites), each unable to exist without the other, and each struggling against each other. In given conditions each aspect transforms itself into its opposite. This is how "matter can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter." (Mao Tse Tung, "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From", Selected Readings, p. 503) However, in any contradiction one aspect is principal and

the other aspect is secondary. There is not a metaphysical balance or "combination" (p.6) (see, Mao Tse Tung; On Contradiction", Selected Readings, pp. 112-117) Rather, the development between the two contradictory aspects is uneven, with the principal aspect determining the character of the thing. Thus, if we have a dual objective of forming a class-conscious core and linking it to the mass movement, one aspect, and not both, must be principal. How can the core link up with the mass movement when there is no core? And a mass movement without a core -- a nationwide non-revisionist communist party -- is a mass movement led politically, ideologically, if not organizationally by the bourgeoisie. Therefore, to talk about a "full, dialectical relationship" (p.4) between the mass movement and socialism at a time when there is no class-conscious core is absurd and metaphysical. It is an attempt to fabricate an equilibrium between theory and practice. In effect, however, it reverses what is secondary and what is principal. (u)

In times of party-building such as the present, dialectical materialists see the propagation of Marxism-Leninism theory and consequently the struggle against revisionism and opportunism as the principal forms of class struggle. This struggle is waged primarily in the communist movement, separate from the spontaneous movement, but it will affect the course of both for years to come. Unlike Comrade X and other vulgar materialists who dogmatically advocate constant contact with the spontaneous struggles as the way to create a party, dialectical materialists insist that the party only indirectly develops from the spontaneous movement. Like Venceremos, Comrade X fumbles along in the old way, advocating a metaphysical harmony between theory and practice "We need to continually test our theory through practice and analyze it through practice." (p.3) Refusing to recognize the primacy of theoretical training and struggle at this time, he attacks the present party-building movement with the same phrases and vehemence with which the Economists attacked Lenin for "overrating the importance of ideology." (Lenin, quoting the Economists, What is to be Done?, p. 46)

Dialectical materialists, on the other hand, maintain that the only way to form a Party is by bringing together the most conscious representatives of the proletariat, those advanced workers who are able to apply Marxism-Leninism to the specific problems of the class, struggle for the correct line and take this line to the class in the form of a new non-revisionist communist party. This is the Leninist method of building a party. To imply, as Comrade X does, that we don't have enough forces, that we should first recruit more advanced workers from the spontaneous movement (p.6) is at best to confuse the issue and at worst to obstruct socialist revolution. (u)

Chairman Mao draws a clear line between dialectical materialists and vulgar materialists, that is, between Marxist-Leninists and opportunists in this way:

"The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, 'Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.' When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as of yet no guiding

line, method, plan of policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy ... This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism." (Mao Tse Tung, Selected Readings, p. 116) GW CONTRADICTION (I+L+K)

In other words, the dialectical materialist view is that a non-revisionist party qualitatively changes the mass movement with its creation, development, and growth; that the high quality of class consciousness, discipline, organization and firmness of principal of a communist party, which at first represents only a numerically small but most advanced section of the proletariat, will be able to assume the leadership in a movement of millions. In this way quality is transformed into quantity. This is what Lenin meant when he said a dozen wise men are better than a hundred fools, that a dozen tried and true communist leaders were far more of an asset to the revolutionary movement than a hundred scatter-brained worshippers of the spontaneous movement. This is the history of the Bolshevik party, the Communist Party of Albania, and the Communist Party of China.

The Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China summarized the dialectical materialist view as follows:

"Chairman Mao teaches us that 'the correctness or incorrectness of line decides everything.' If one's line is incorrect, one's downfall is inevitable even with the control of the central, local and army leadership. If one's line is correct, even if one has not a single soldier at first, there will be soldiers, and even if there is no political power, political power will be gained. This is borne out by the historical experience of our party and by the international movement since Marx." (Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1973, p. 17)

Summary
Our former comrade apparently disagrees with the historical lessons of the international communist movement, and the Leninist method of building a party. We shall cite three examples:

- 1) "We are vehicles of theory, not storehouses of theory." (p.4)

Comrade X shows his true colors with this statement. On the one hand he swears that he agrees with building a new communist party at this time, but on the other hand he attacks the primary task of the party-building movement -- clearing away the theoretical fog by defeating the opportunists and formulating political line. The un-principled implication here is that the current participants in the party-building movement are armchair revolutionaries having no past or present contact with the mass movement. No, the party-building movement did not drop from the bookshelves, comrade; it is a result of piles of spontaneous, unguided experience in factories, the student movement, community

work, prison movement etc. And this is just the experience of our organization! The present party-building movement is a result of the entire history of the working class movement as well as many hard-fought battles against revisionist ideology. We have 200 years of indirect history to sum up and over 120 years of Marxist-Leninist theory to apply to our present situation. What we must now do is give this work communist content.

The second unprincipled implication here is that building a new communist party is not proletarian practice. What, then, are study groups, ideological struggle and pamphlets like this? Lenin spent most of his life writing polemics which exposed the opportunists and guided the proletariat to victory. Engels wrote, we must "constantly keep in mind that socialism, since it has become a science demands that it be pursued as a science, i.e., that it be studied." (Lenin quoting Frederick Engels, What is to be Done?, p.32) To accuse us of being "store-houses of theory" at this point in the party-building movement is ridiculous.

2.) "Preparing party-building may mean emphasizing theoretical training; but in no way should it involve a withdrawal from practical interaction with advanced workers." (p.4)

This quote reminds us of Lenin's description of one Economist as "a man who talks and because he says nothing is insured against error." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.62) What may we ask, have we been doing if not winning ourselves and other advanced workers over to Marxism-Leninism? Far from isolating ourselves from advanced workers, we have redoubled our efforts to consolidate advanced workers through study. Does this mean that all we do is study? Hardly. Our comrades are employed in shops, plants and other sections of the proletariat. These comrades are, at long last, learning to put forth communist ideas. We are, however, gladly isolated from long-standing petty-bourgeois and lumpen hacks who have no connection to the proletariat, those who disdain Marxism-Leninism and who seek only to tail after the spontaneous movement. Last year at this time we were involved in at least ten different projects. We continually ran into other "leftists" who were not close to the working class. We were fighting against everything from drugs to police repression, but we didn't know what we were fighting for! We fit Lenin's description of revisionism perfectly: we sacrificed the long range goal of socialism for the sake of the real or assumed advantages of the moment. (see Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism", Collected Works, Vol.15, Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1963, p.37) As a result, in most, if not all, of these struggles we ended up tailing after poverty pimps, lumpen blowhards and other non-proletarian deceivers. With typical vagueness, Comrade X accuses us of being apart from the "concrete revolutionary practice of the masses" (p.4) but he never defines "advanced workers" or explains what kind of practice he's talking about.

The assumption here is that we already have a clear understanding of theory, line etc. and that all we have to do is run out to the masses, find the advanced workers, and build the party. The implication is that we don't have

enough advanced workers at this time to build a new party. (p.6) This is the line which the Revolutionary Union expressed at last year's Guardian Forum on party-building. This line of thinking confuses what is primary with what is secondary and postpones building the party until some unspecified date in the future. It is an old trick used by all Economists who argue that the "mass movement relieves us of the necessity of clearly appreciating and fulfilling the tasks set before us." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.56) Our principal task is to train ourselves to be communists -- the ideological and political leaders of the class. If we have learned anything from the masses it's that the most oppressed and exploited sections of the working class want proletarian ideology. Moreover, they despise our past amateurishness and our slavish submission to spontaneity. And, "Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology being developed by the masses of the workers in the process of their movement the only choice is: either the bourgeois or socialist ideology." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.48) This means two things: 1) we can't find socialism in the mass movement and 2) we can't bring the working class communist ideology unless we know what we're talking about, i.e., unless we study it. As Charles Loren notes in his recent book, Struggle for the Party; "How can the communist movement protect the political and ideological independence of the labor movement when it has failed to achieve that independence itself?" (Struggle for the Party, Cardinal Publishers; U.S.A., p.11)

Please don't confuse the issue with your one-dimensional ideas which consider only the quantity and not the quality of our contacts! Don't talk to us about the masses we are unable to reach at this time, because that is only anarchism. The Marxist-Leninist view is entirely different.

"It is to enable the mass of a definite class to learn to understand its own interests and its position, to learn to conduct its own policy, that there must be an organization of the advanced elements of the class, immediately and at all costs even though at first these elements constitute only a tiny fraction of the class." (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol.19, p.409, our emphasis)

It is impossible to have your cake and eat it too. It is impossible to have a "dialectical combination" (p.6) until the communist movement has achieved independence! We will reach the masses, but we will do it as communists!

3.) "We need to continually test our theory in practice and analyze it as we are building the party." (p.3, agreeing with another comrade)

As we have pointed out, this is another form of the metaphysical "theory of equilibrium" (see Mao Tse-tung, "On Contradiction", Selected Readings, p.117) which refuses to recognize what is primary and what is secondary at any given time in the contradiction between theory and practice. Hopefully, it is clear that this is a mechanical materialist theory, failing to recognize the

qualitative leap from perceptual to rational communist knowledge and degrading all attempts to build a party. This is the same line which Lenin condemns for making "organic" (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.46) connections with the primary -- before the communists know what they are doing. Historically this is an Economist line which accuses Marxism-Leninism for placing the "revolutionizing of dogma higher than the revolutionizing of life," (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.76) or, in the words of Comrade X, when he says that we "extol our separation from the concrete revolutionary practice of the masses and thereby rely on dogmatism." (p.4) Is this not an attack on the independent theoretical work required to build nay non-revisionist communist party? What better way is there to camouflage his worship of spontaneity and to embrace the line of the Guardian, October League, and Revolutionary Union.

To suggest, as Comrade X does, that we should continually "test out theory through practice and analyze it as we are building the party" (p.3) is to say that the party will grow out of the mass movement. Interestingly enough, the Economists of Russia suggested just such a method of building a party. Tactics they said, are a "process of growth of party tasks, which grow with the party." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.158). The History of the CPSU(B) sums up the line of Comrade X and other opportunists:

"The Economists no longer dared openly to contest the need for a political party of the working class. But they considered that it should not be the guiding force of the working class movement, that it should not interfere with the spontaneous movement (our emphasis) of the working class, let alone direct it, but that it should follow in the wake of this movement, study it and draw lessons from it." (History of the CPSU(B), International Publishers, 1939, p.35)

IV. BUILDING THE PARTY -- A CONCRETE ANALYSIS OF CONCRETE CONDITIONS

Why We Need a New Communist Party

If we accept Lenin's dictum that the heart of Marxism is a "concrete analysis of concrete conditions" then we must look at our present situation and ask what is missing? Is it that the working class and oppressed nationalities are lacking in militance or unwilling to fight capitalist exploitation and oppression? Certainly this is not the case. Otherwise President Johnson wouldn't have had to call in 14,000 troops in 1967 to protect the ruling class's own fortress -- Washington D.C. -- from an onslaught of the Negro masses, 70% of whom were from the working class. Two weeks ago, most of San Francisco was shut down by a strike of municipal employees, who in turn were supported by bus drivers, transit workers, teachers, etc. No, the U.S. working class is not now, nor has it historically been lacking in militance. What is missing now and what has been missing historically is a Marxist-Leninist detachment of the working class "armed with a knowledge of the life of society, ... of the laws of class struggle, and for this reason able to lead the working class and its struggles." (History of the CPSU(B), p.46) Like an army without a general staff, the U.S. working class movement has been discarded and drowned in a sea of bourgeois ideology. Using its time-honored weapons of bribery, national chauvinism, male supremacy and economism, the imperialist ruling class has chopped up the working class into separate and easily manageable compartments. And now, when the decadent imperialist system, ravaged by crisis of its own making, is turning into an open fascist dictatorship, when the working masses and oppressed peoples have lost faith in the permanence of the capitalist system, communists must create a polarity between bourgeois and proletarian interests. Indeed, the "strength of the present day movement lies in the awakening of the masses (principally, the industrial proletariat) and that its weakness lies in the lack of consciousness and initiative among the revolutionary leaders." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.34)

This is precisely why we must build a non-revisionist party. If the working class is to become an independent political force and fulfill its duty of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, then it must become conscious of its task as a class. Yet, as long as we live under a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, no aspect of bourgeois society is going to teach the working class its historic role. The only way this can be done is through the actions of communists. Lenin wrote:

"We have said that there could not yet be Social-Democratic (communist) consciousness among the workers. It could only be brought from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own efforts, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that is necessary to combine

ERRATA

- page/line
- 2/15 Should read: He ruthlessly belittles the necessary theoretical and political transformation from petty-bourgeois radicalism to proletarian revolutionism. He describes the struggle against opportunism as "setting up revisionist straw-men," as if ideological struggle does not flush out bourgeois ideas, as if a few nasty people thought up a scheme to purge a few others.
- 7/18 Thus in fighting opportunism we must fight these characteristics. We must draw definite lines of demarcation and clarify the real issues.
- 15/3 making connections with the spontaneous movement primary before communists know what they are doing.
- 18/42 In our present situation, the revisionists are the henchmen of the fascists. For example, in Chile
- 20/34 "The spontaneous movement
- 25/3 "'same old stuff.' Little do they know that it is no easy matter to acquire this stuff." (Mao Tse-tung, "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art," Selected Readings, p.282)
- 25/7 As we have pointed out, what Comrade X forgets is that if an organization fails to consolidate

OTHER ERRATA

- 7/28 Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao
- 12/16 The Party of Labor of Albania

Errors in spelling and punctuation are typographical. We don't feel that these errors detract from the overall content of the paper.

- 2/5 and an empiricist. We will also show that

in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.37)

In other words, because bourgeois ideology is much older, more fully developed and possesses immeasurably greater opportunities for being spread, it is able to dominate and direct an unconscious working class into reformist channels. Therefore, the working class cannot spontaneously develop an awareness of itself as an independent political force. The proletariat needs leadership that can develop an analysis of the class struggle beyond the limits of trade unionism, terrorism, and other kinds of reformism. Therefore, a party based on Marxism-Leninism is a necessity because it is the only vehicle that can teach the proletariat what it needs to know. Lenin vehemently defends the need for just such a conscious element. He says, "all belittling of the role of the 'conscious element,' of the role of Social-Democracy, means quite irrespective of whether the belittler wants it or not, strengthening the influence of bourgeois ideology over the workers." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.46) Further, "the spontaneous struggle of the proletariat will not become its genuine class struggle until this struggle is led by a strong organization of revolutionaries." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.166)

Our critic, Comrade X, chooses to overlook Leninism when he refers to the "concrete revolutionary practice of the masses." (p.5) May we ask how there can be "revolutionary" practice when the proletariat has no leadership other than the bourgeois leadership of piecards like Meany, the Communist Party U.S.A., and its junior partners and conciliators the October League and Revolutionary Union? Lenin teaches us that we must combat bourgeois hegemony by creating proletariat hegemony, by diverting the working class movement from spontaneity and bringing it under the wing of communism. "Renunciation of the idea of hegemony," Lenin stressed, "is the grossest variety of reformism." (Lenin, "Reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic Movement", Collected Works, Vol.17, p.233) Secondly, Lenin linked the idea of proletarian hegemony with the leadership of a revolutionary party of the working class, pointing out that without the leadership of a party all talk about proletarian hegemony and revolution was meaningless. A proletariat without a party cannot be revolutionary. "The proletariat is revolutionary only insofar as it is conscious of and gives effect to this idea of the hegemony of the proletariat." (Ibid, p.232)

Are we "divorcing (ourselves) from reality", or contriving "empty abstract formulas" (p.5) when we apply Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the U.S., when we strive to build this hegemony and instill the class-consciousness which the proletariat is presently lacking! Isn't it rank tailism and the glorification of spontaneity to babble about the "revolutionary practice of the masses" when the proletariat has no general staff? Isn't it standing reality on its head to spend an entire essay talking about the "practical mission of the proletariat" (p.4) and avoid the most pressing practical task -- building a new party!

The Struggle Against Revisionism

Bourgeois ideology has continued to dominate and divide the working class movement. Using the super-profits derived from its colonies, U.S. imperialism has permanently paid off a small but potent sector of the working class. "This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, of the 'labor aristocracy', who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook...is the principal social (not military, prop of the bourgeoisie." (Lenin, Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Foreign Languages Press: peking, 1970, p.10) Within the communist movement there has developed a corresponding trend that professes an adherence to proletarian ideology but actually propagates bourgeois ideology. These opportunists distort Marxism-Leninism to serve the interests of the labor aristocracy. They deny such fundamental Marxist-Leninist principles as the necessity of smashing the bourgeois state and establishing a proletarian dictatorship. By advocating the bankrupt conception of a "peaceful road to socialism", revisionists subordinate the interests of the proletariat to those of liberal bourgeois parties, coalitions etc. Historically, revisionist parties from the time of Kautsky and the Second International to Gus Hall of the "C" PUSA have stifled the forces of revolution and justified the continued existence of capitalism.

Historically Marxist-Leninist parties have been formed and steeled in struggles against revisionism. Since 1957 and the Moscow Declaration, Marxist-Leninists led by the Chinese and Albanian Communist Parties have considered revisionism to be the main enemy within the international working class movement. Likewise, Lenin consistently pointed out that revisionism was "the principal enemy of Bolshevism" and that unless a determined, ruthless struggle was conducted against opportunism, it was useless to talk about the struggle against imperialism. The reasons for Lenin's adamant stand are clear; "Revisionism is opium to anesthize the people, it is beguiling music for the consolidation of slaves. As a political grouping revisionism constitutes a detachment of the bourgeoisie and for imperialism" (CCP, Leninism and Modern Revisionism)

*Ultra-Left
assessments*

While revisionism is a powerful detachment of imperialism internationally, it is the dominant force inside the U.S. working class movement. Since the death of Stalin, the Soviet Union has degenerated into a social-imperialist bastion of reaction. Consequently, social-imperialism already has its "advanced detachment" in this country. It takes the form of the "C" PUSA and various Trotskyite groupings. Even inside the so-called non-revisionist movement, the conciliationist lines of the RU and OL are hardly different from those of the "C" PUSA.

As imperialism is increasingly battered, it will resort more and more to open terrorist dictatorship -- fascism. Of necessity it will rely on the revisionists to deflect the blows of the oppressed nations and working class. For example, in our present historical situation, the revisionists are henchmen

of the fascists. In Chile we saw how the forces of revisionism (Soviet social-imperialism) and the U.S. imperialism contend and collude to stifle and attack the working class movement. The revisionist "C" PUSA still upholds the Allende government as an example of the "peaceful road to socialism." Likewise, the U.S. imperialists, understanding that revisionism is the key to their continued power, upholds Chile as the international model for fascist counterrevolution.

Our work is cut out for us. If the communist movement is going to unite the working class and attack imperialism it must first of all divide the working class from its present opportunist leadership which serves the bourgeoisie.

"The international struggle between revolutionary Marxism and revisionism towards the end of the 19th century was the prelude to the great revolutionary battles waged under the banner of Leninism, will prove a symbol and a signal for the growth of the great proletarian revolutionary movement... Guided by Marxism-Leninism, the revolutionary movements of the people of various countries form an irresistible torrent." (Communist Party of China, "Leninism and Modern Revisionism", Whence Our Differences, p.97)

If we expect to liberate the working class from reformism then we must rid the communist movement of opportunism. Comrade X disagrees with us on this point. He disagrees with Lenin who says that "in order that it (the communist movement) may grow up more quickly, it must become infected with intolerance against those who retard its growth by their subservience to spontaneity." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.51)

The first task is to expose the present day Economists in the form of the OL and RU. As we have tried to point out it would be very difficult for Comrade X to expose these conciliators of the "C" PUSA because he agrees with them. Perhaps a few quotes will illustrate this point:

"Does this organizations recognize both sides of the dialectical combination? If so, what is it doing to prove it? Is it going to belittle all attempts to learn from the practical struggle of the people?...we should critically examine our policy of 'strategic retreat,' which in fact has meant completely divorcing ourselves from the mass movement." (Comrade X, p.5)

"This is the 'ultra-leftist' view that abandons the mass movement for some high ideals -- idealism -- some ideals about a communist party." (OL as quoted in the Guardian, May 2, 1973)

"This 'theoretician' began showing his true colors little by little, First, by sneaky attacks on the RU and telling the working people the only thing they could do was to immediately form a workers' party.

He overlooked completely the need for a mass movement and mass struggle." (Red Papers 5, RU, p.68)

"In sum, we conceive a path to socialism in America...as encompassing struggle for progressively more radical measures, as dictated by necessity, to realize the potential for abundance, knowledge, culture and human happiness created by the genius of American labor and science." (New Program of the Communist Party U.S.A., New Outlook Publishers, 1970, p.94)

Common to all this ideological palsy is a misunderstanding of the concrete conditions, a belief that the spontaneous movement should go still further before it has the leadership of a communist party. As we have pointed out earlier, Economism turns the world on its head. Just at the time when the proletariat needs theoretical leadership the Economists tell us that by building a new party we are deserting the masses! Looked at objectively, continuous spontaneity buoys the interests of the two classes, the bourgeoisie because it likes to contain the struggles on the level of reforms; the petty-bourgeoisie because it likes reforms. The Economists are the representatives of these classes in the spontaneous movement. The class conscious sections of the proletariat, on the other hand, have no material interest in maintenance of the capitalist system. They see reforms as only a by-product of working class struggle. They, therefore, understand that a proletarian ideologist is worthy of the name;

"only when he precedes the spontaneous movement, points out the road, and is able ahead of all others, to solve all theoretical, political, tactical and organizational questions which the material elements of the movement spontaneously encounter." (Lenin, "A Talk With Defenders of Economism", Collected Works, Vol.5, p.316)

Why is it that Comrade X agrees with the Economists? It is because, like them, he has failed to make a correct proletarian analysis of the present conditions. In fact, he joins them in representing the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie. The spontaneous movement continues to grow but the conscious leadership lags behind this growth. The proletariat calls out for leadership and the opportunists respond. "Learn from the practical struggle of the people" (p.6) The spontaneous movement lacks the ideologists sufficiently trained theoretically to be proof against all vacillations; it lacks leaders with such a broad political outlook, such revolutionary energy and such organizational talent as to create a militant political party on the basis of the new movement." (Lenin, "A Talk With the Defenders of Economism", Collected Works, Vol.5, p.316) Comrade X doesn't combat spontaneity, he bows to it. The problem is not that we have divorced ourselves from the interests of the masses, its that Comrade X has failed to divorce himself from the line of the opportunists.

Comrade X proved his loyalty to Economist politics when he refused to struggle against such influences within our organization. Is it any wonder that he

describes the two-line struggle as "setting up 'revisionist' straw-men"? (p.3) Is it any surprize that he moralizes about turning "valuable, dedicated revolutionaries against our undertaking" (p.3) without ever mentioning the political issues or that Comrades Y and Z believe that a new communist party will develop out of the mass struggle? No, he takes the same unprincipled stand as the Russian opportunist Plekhanov took: "it is better to put a bullet in one's brain than fire on one's comrades." (Lenin quoting Plekhanov, One Step Forward Two Steps Back, p. 165) Suddenly the long-range interests of the proletariat recede and the entire question becomes a personal issue, an accusation that the Comrades Y and Z were treated unfairly. Oh, those cold, dogmatic communists, they never give the individual an even break, they always think of the organization and the proletariat first! What we have here is a classic example of a liberal democrat, who, because he loses a debate, looks for excuses, seeks out sympathizers, and manufacturers sob stories along the way.

First, what really happened was that Comrade Y dropped out of the organization without prior warning. He then wrote a one page ode to bourgeois ideology, cataloguing all of the guilt trips that he had learned in Venceremos. In this masterpiece of opportunist confusion he agreed with the line of the RU and accused us of being Trotskyites. Indeed, how could we afford to lose such a "valuable and dedicated revolutionary"; someone who deserted the organization without a word of forewarning and who took all of 15 confused minutes to explain the whys of his departure, and then refused further struggle!

Sarcasm aside, are we trying to build an organization fit more for leading cocktail parties than battles? On the contrary, we are attempting to build a communist party which will "imbue the millions of unorganized non-party workers with the spirit of discipline and system in the struggle, with the spirit of organization and endurance. But the party can only fulfill these tasks if it is itself the embodiment of discipline and organization, if it is the organized detachment of the proletariat." (Stalin, The Foundations of Leninism, Foreign Languages Press: Peking, 1970, p.106)

Does this mean we can tolerate a low theoretical level, undisciplined actions, and many different shades of opinion? Of course not, for this would only concilliate confusion and weaken the organization. If we expect to win over the vanguard of the proletariat then we must guarantee that the party runs like a factory. (see Lenin, One step Forward Two Steps Back, p.187) Communists realize that ideological unity alone is not enough and that "the proletariat can become an invincible force only when its ideological unification is consolidated by the material unity of an organization." (History of the CPSU(B), quoting Lenin, p.51)

To make the task of building a strong organization of revolutionaries appear as an obstacle to the development of a revolutionary movement, as Comrade X does, is to fall into a mire of metaphysics. History has proven that the only organization capable of leading the tens of millions of exploited and oppressed toilers to the dictatorship of the proletariat is a communist party. Opportunism in matters of organization manifests itself in the "failure

to understand that the mass character of the movement does not diminish, but increases, our obligation to build a strong and centralized organization of revolutionaries capable of leading the preparatory struggle, every unexpected outbreak, and, finally, the decisive assault." (Lenin, "A Talk With Defenders of Economism", Collected Works, Vol.5, p.318)

What is Comrade X complaining about if not the qualities of non-revisionist communist party?

These qualities can only be developed in struggles against ideological and organizational opportunism. The correct line only develops in opposition to the incorrect line. The struggle for a correct line on these issues is more important than friendship and is the only basis for comradeship. That is why in our reply to Comrade Y's letter we criticised his opportunist point of view and stressed that Marxism-Leninism was the only basis for future unity. When opportunism is the dominant influence on the working class movement, when the conciliation of bourgeois ideology is fashionable, communists must purge this influence from their ranks and win the vanguard to Marxism-Leninism. Strong parties are the product of an intense ideological -- class -- struggle. A communist party "maintains its independence only by fighting for it." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.50) Far from "mistaking non-antagonistic for antagonistic contradictions", (p.6) the struggle between X, Y and Z and our organization is part of the overall class struggle to rid the proletariat of petty-bourgeois influences. Far from "holding back" (p.6) the movement, these struggles advanced it. As a result of these struggles we have continued to rid our organization of vestiges of Venceremos -- ideas which have held back the movement for a long time.

Lenin points out that it is only through a struggle against revisionism that the party is built:

"Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm lines of demarcation. Otherwise, our unity will be purely fictitious, it will conceal the prevailing confusion and hinder its radical elimination." (Lenin, Vol.4, p.354)

V. CONCLUSION: WHO IS THE REAL DOGMATIST?

"The huge spectre you call 'dogmatism' i.e., genuine Marxism-Leninism, is haunting the world and it threatens you." (Communist Party of China, "More of the Differences Between Comrade Togliatti and Ourselves", Whence Our Differences, p.354)

In order to attack the heart and soul of a communist party -- Marxist-Leninist theory and strong centralized organization formed from the struggles against revisionism -- Comrade X must charge us with "dogmatism" (p.5). In doing so, he disguises his own form of dogmatism: his narrow vulgar materialist glorification of unconsciousness. Because he fails to make a concrete analysis of concrete conditions and belittles Marxist-Leninist theory, he is forced to justify his rigid views by painting a one-sided, inaccurate picture of a polemic which the Communist Party of China conducted against the Soviet revisionists in 1963-1964, "More on the Differences Between Comrade Togliatti and Ourselves", from the book Whence Our Differences.

To read Comrade X's selection of quotes from Whence Our Differences one would think that the Communist Party of China had written a polemic against dogmatism. Just the opposite is true. At that time (1962) the Soviet, French, and Italian revisionists were attacking the Chinese for being "dogmatic". For example, the French Communist Party accuses the CPC of "denaturing Marxism-Leninism to the point of retaining only rigid formulas, and assuming the right to be high priests in charge of enunciating dogmas." (CPC quoting French CP, *ibid*, p.332) We are indebted to the Chinese for pointing out how opportunists use the word dogma as a pretext for attacking Marxism-Leninism and collaborating with the bourgeoisie.

"To discard Marxism-Leninism on the pretext of shaking off a dogma is a convenient trick. Lenin exposed this trick of the opportunists long ago:

'What a handy little word "dogma" is! One need only slightly twist an opposing theory, cover this twist with the "bogey of dogma" -- and there you are.' " (*Ibid*, p.330)

Comrade X uses the word dogma as a pretext for belittling the theoretical preparation necessary for building a new party. He maintains that, "The greatest scientific strictness is dogmatism...if not combined with revolutionary spirit." (p.3) According to Comrade X, the more scientific communists are, the more dogmatic they are. Sinking into vulgar materialism, and anti-communism, Comrade X equates Marxist-Leninist theory with dogma and divides theory from practice. This is exactly what the bourgeoisie would like us to think about Marxism-Leninism.

Marxist-Leninists, on the contrary, understand that a knowledge of science gives the working class "confidence, the power of orientation, and an under-

standing of the inner relations of surrounding events." (Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, p.22) Only delirious utopians would argue that "revolutionary spirit" could exist without a material basis or succeed without scientific leadership. Please, excuse us for being so scientifically strict, but how is it possible to ascertain where revolutionary spirit resides if we do not undertake "A strictly objective appraisal of class forces and their interrelations before undertaking any political action"? (Lenin, Left-Wing Communism, Foreign Languages Press: Peking, 1970, p.18) Pray tell, how do we give this revolutionary spirit any leadership or guidance unless we have won over the vanguard to Marxism-Leninism? And once the party is built what is its heart and soul based on if not its political line? What produces a political line if not "strictly scientific" application of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions? In an attempt to pierce the confusion to which Comrade X clings so tenaciously, we would like to ask one further question: Does the proletariat lack a) fighting spirit, or, b) scientific guidance? (Choose one.)

It is quite clear that by equating scientific strictness with dogma it is not us but Comrade X who turns Marxism-Leninism into a "lifeless formula". (p.5) Chairman Mao corrects Comrade X's error in this way:

"One studies the theory of Marxism-Leninism with a purpose, that is, to integrate Marxist-Leninist theory with the actual movement of the Chinese revolution and to seek from this theory the stand, viewpoint and method with which to solve the theoretical and tactical problems of the Chinese revolution. Such an attitude is one of shooting the arrow at the target. The 'target' is the Chinese revolution, the 'arrow' is Marxism-Leninism. We Chinese Communists have been seeking this arrow because we want to hit the target of the Chinese revolution and of the revolution of the East. To take such an attitude is to seek truth from facts. 'Facts' are all the things that exist objectively, 'truth' means their internal relations, that is, the laws governing them, and to 'seek' means to study." (CPC, "More on the Differences Between Comrade Togliatti and Ourselves", Whence Our Differences, p. 342-343)

At the root of Comrade X's deviation from Marxism-Leninism is his petty-bourgeois class stand. First, like many well-educated people, our former comrade believes that grasping proletarian ideology is a relatively simple matter. Comrade X thinks it like an axe that one need only pick up and use. According to Comrade X, serious study takes too much time and therefore, separates communists from what is more important -- the reformist movement. This is why, after only a few months of training ourselves, he slanders us as dogmatists divorced from the spontaneous movement. Chairman Mao confronted this same attitude in the Communist Party of China:

"We have many comrades who are still not very clear on the differences between the proletariat and the petty-bourgeoisie. There are many Party members who joined the Communist Party organizationally but have not joined the party wholly or at all ideologically. Those who have not joined the party ideologically still carry a great deal of the muck of the exploiting classes in their heads,

and have no idea at all of what proletarian ideology, or communism, or the party is. 'Proletarian ideology?' they think. 'The same old stuff.' (Mao Tse-tung, "Talks at the Yen-an Forum On Literature and Art", Selected Readings, p.282)

As we have pointed out, what Comrade X forgets is that an organization, if it fails to consolidate itself around proletarian ideology and discipline, can only bring the working class the ideology with which its members have grown-up -- bourgeois ideology.

Second, because Comrade X belittles the theoretical struggle involved in the transformation from petty-bourgeois radical to class conscious proletarian, he ends up romanticizing the spontaneous movement. The reason is simple: as long as the working class movement is unconscious, the petty-bourgeois is free to dabble in the spontaneous movement. What better way to avoid introducing socialist ideas or building a party than to marvel at the unconscious militance of the working class. "Wow, the workers sure do fight don't they?" In this way petty-bourgeois individualists and organizations can have their Marxism and their liberalism, too. However, when a non-revisionist party is formed the voyeurs of the spontaneous movement must choose sides. They must submit to the iron discipline of a party and adhere to Marxism-Leninism. There is not room for third ideologies, ultra-democracy or eclectic "freedom of criticism." (see Lenin, What is to be Done?, chapter I) A revolutionary party of the working class cannot afford such luxuries.

Representing the petty-bourgeoisie, Comrade X does not want the mass movement to get beyond spontaneity. He dogmatically clings to the patented formula -- practice, practice, practice. The best rationalization that the petty-bourgeois can come up with is that the mass movement and the party should grow together. This way you can harmoniously "identify and work with and educate and be proletarianized" (p.4) all at the same time! This is the way you can reject the "dogmatism" (p.4) of those Marxist-Leninists. In this way you can pose as a supporter of the working class while in fact you are stifling its development. We would be the last ones to underestimate the importance of remoulding a petty-bourgeois outlook by integrating with the working class. Members of our organization have been doing this for several years and we will continue to do it for the rest of our lives. We suggest the Comrade X try it, too. What we are opposed to, however, are those people who tell the workers only what they already know -- that they are exploited and oppressed. We are opposed to those people who brag about their "integration" with the masses but who never win workers over socialist ideas. The last thing advanced workers want is somebody to "identify" with them. Rather, they want to know the way out of this capitalist cesspool. At present the only forces in the communist movement that stand in the way of a new party "and prevent it (the mass struggle) from achieving the results it should" (p.5, X quoting the CPC) are those petty-bourgeois elements, such as Comrade X, that fawn on the posterior of the proletariat.

"A vanguard which fears that consciousness will outstrip spontaneity,

which fears to put forward a bold 'plan' that would compel universal recognition even among those who think differently from us. Are they not confusing the word 'vanguard' with the word 'rearguard?'" (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.104)

Comrade X will, of course, deny that he has joined the rearguard forces who are sabotaging the movement to build a new party. The facts, however, prove just the opposite. Comrade X's line is hardly distinguishable from that of the RU or in particular the OL. What we find in Comrade X's paper is the familiar two-pronged attack on the party-building movement: 1) the unprincipled and inept attempt to label the party-building forces as dogmatic sects isolated from the masses and 2) the simultaneous appeal to the mass movement as the solution to the problems confronting us. It is precisely this line which conciliates the power of the bourgeoisie and allows the media to tell the working class that the anarchistic SLA and the ideologically bankrupt "C" PUSA are its "leaders". If we were to follow this line we would continue to stumble along in our old amateurish fashion, like the person "who is flabby in theory and pleads the spontaneity of the masses as an excuse for his own sluggishness..." (Lenin, What is to be Done?, p.155) We would never see that it was precisely our past infatuation with the spontaneous unguided revolution that prevented us from grasping our most immediate practical task -- building an organization of class conscious, disciplined revolutionaries. Lenin aptly summarizes our present situation:

"Worship of spontaneity seems to inspire a fear of taking even one step away from what 'can be understood' by the masses, a fear of rising too high above mere subservience to the immediate and direct requirements of the masses. Have no fear, gentlemen: Remember that we stand so low on the plane of organization that the very idea that we could rise too high is absurd!"