

RCP update:

Positive trends in the RCP?

RIM publishes magazine upholding Mao

In the last issue of MIM Theory, the collapse of a Maoist organization in the United States this year received detailed attention. This issue contains various contributions on the recent work done by the other remaining Maoist organization—the RCP. The RCP deserves MIM's attention at this time because it has been three years since the MIM's predecessors had to grope to a summation that the RCP did not serve the cause of Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought adequately.

MIM's critique of the RCP has gone through three drafts, and still it is not official MIM literature. Meanwhile, three years have passed. Is the need to form "another" Maoist organization of the same nature as it was three years ago? Those who wonder about Maoism in the United States can not help but ask.

This issue presents various views on the RCP.

The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, which took the name of MIM's predecessor organization, has published a slick magazine in support of Mao Zedong's path to communism.

In its original international declaration, the RIM said that the principles enunciated by Lenin remained key to the struggle against revisionism. In the magazine *A World To Win 1986/7* though, the RIM stresses that "without upholding and building upon Mao's contributions it is not possible to defeat revisionism, imperialism and reaction in general." (p. 4)

This is a positive step by the RIM.

The RIM went further to say that "*he [Mao] raised the science of revolution itself to a qualitatively new level.*"

Perhaps this spirit rubbed off, because within the same magazine, the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) issued the best statement it has made on Mao Zedong Thought. The statement is not unlike positions taken officially by MIM and developed by individual MIM comrades in literature now under discussion within MIM.

1) the RCP stands against the line that Mao Zedong primarily made his contributions as a military strategist or strategist for the Third World. Indeed, the RCP correctly acknowledges that "Mao's single most important contribution to the body of Marxism is the theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat." (p. 27)

The RCP goes on to say, "Can anyone deny that upon seizing power in an imperialist country the proletariat will also face very acute contradictions between the socialist road and the capitalist road? Certainly the soil for new bourgeois headquarters to arise within the party in power will be at least as great in a (formerly) imperialist power as in former colonies and semi-colonies." (p. 27)

2) the RCP recognizes the internationalist stance of Mao by quoting him to the effect that the final victory of socialism can not be won but on a world scale.

3) the RCP upholds Mao in "On Contradiction" by pointing out the need to develop the internal basis of revolution in the United States and other imperialist countries. "Communist have to learn to seize hold of the contradictions within society and not wait hopelessly for "deus ex machinas." (p. 29)

4) the RCP recognizes internal struggle as the lifeblood of the party. "The need to keep the party truly revolutionary is universal."

5) the RCP raises discussion of the united front, which it started in 1969! "Mao stands in sharp contrast to all those many forces which declared united front on Monday only to essentially liquidate the independent ideological, political and military role of the proletariat on Tuesday morning." (p. 34)

6) the RCP quotes Lenin on the necessity of the struggles of the masses with all their impurities and basically anti-capital thrust. (p. 35)

7) the RCP recognizes that Lenin's military tactics did not show the genius that Mao's did in establishing power on a proletarian basis. If the military in the imperialist countries is not handled correctly, it will serve as a basis for counterrevolution.

Comrades, it seems that the RCP is moving in a good direction. The theoretical/line statement in *A World to Win* by the RCP along with the improvement in the Revolutionary Worker in reporting on concrete mass movements from an independent and revolutionary point of view—recent articles on the Hormel strike, previously taboo—are credits to the RCP. (See "Chicago Irangate Forum," 2/23/87, "Howard Beach: Double-Edged Indictments," "Kiko Martinez Sentenced," "Protests Against Amerika," 2/16/87, "Revolution Books Forum on 'Crisis in the Middle East,'" "Breakdown the Border Conference," 3/2/87)

It seems that since the publication of "Support Every Outbreak," the concrete experience of the anti-imperialist contingent sent to Germany, the creation of No Business As Usual and RCP participation in other mass movements, the RCP has demonstrated some genuine practices of Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought.

MIM must encourage such trends and give credit where credit is due. It would not be correct to attack the RCP the same way all the time while the RCP's practice and line change.

At the same time, MIM must not hastily generalize that MIM's independence as an organization is no longer required. Indeed, the sketchy information offered here does not touch upon the issue of whether or not various individuals in the RCP leadership are genuine. Nor has MIM done a recent collective investigation of the RCP's internal and external political practices.

Rather, MIM members must constantly investigate and re-evaluate the RCP in a more thorough-going way. The RCP's nature is not a simple issue.

Correspondence:

Comment on the formation of an international communist organization

On the question of democratic centralism at the international level, we do not think that this is simply a question of the present situation. The problem involved here is whether we can conceive of an International organisation as a World Party with its norms of democratic centralism. Our evaluation is that such an understanding would ignore the reality of the present world and the complexities of world revolution finally turning into a straitjacket rather than aiding the process of communist revolution.

Thus we see this as one of the reasons, and an important one, for the ready acceptance of the dissolution of the Comintern by the then Communist parties. In other words the problem is not one of correcting bureaucratic tendencies as manifested in the Comintern in the past but of criticising the basic concept on which it was founded. This is why one of the main tasks in founding an International of a new type is that of seeking out and evolving a viable organisational form.

As you have correctly pointed out maximizing the ideological struggle among genuine communist parties while maintaining a level of unity that is possible is essential for carrying out this collective task. At the same time this unity does not remain stagnant, the development from the Joint Communiqué [referring to the communiqué of the RIM which caused us to change our name to MIM—ed.] to the formation of the RIM was a development of this unity which has still to be carried forward.

On the question of "focussing" on their country—in our opinion this is not bad but good. We consider the main aspect of internationalism to be that of carrying forward revolution in one's own country. The problem is that one cannot do this properly without a correct internationalist line, without a correct understanding of the international situation. Because the revolution in each country is and should be carried out as part of the world revolution.

--A comrade from the revolutionary, Maoist newspaper *Mass Line* of India

Criticism of both the MIM and the RCP

The problem with a paper such as RCP's Revolutionary Worker is not just that we disagree with them on certain points, even important ones. It is that their whole approach is not M-L, but at best that of a petty-bourgeois revolutionary trend. We really suggest looking at some of Lenin's *Iskra* articles, available in two old, red International Publishers "Iskra Period" volumes, for what we see as models of political exposure. This is not to say that other things, such as a lit. list or a "wire service" are of no use. We just don't see that they really show a way forward at this time.

--A comrade from a now defunct organization

Bullets, by Bob Avakian, RCP Publications

The Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) USA has written a book of little quotations, barbs and comebacks.

The book has a white cover in paperback. It's the size of Chairman Mao's original version of *Quotations from Chairman Mao*.

Unfortunately, the format similarities go beyond size. The quotes are about the length of Mao's. The citations are done in the same style underneath every quote. The chapters in the book are very similar too.

To defend Mao's *Quotations* against the current revisionists in China is different from copying something that Mao himself did not approve of.

Despite Avakian's slap at Mao Zedong and sabotaging of the Maoist movement in the United States, (One has to wonder if he realizes that he is setting himself up the way Lin set up Mao.) there is much to agree with in *Bullets*. Except that MIM analyzes the current situation as a world war, the book's content deserves a 99% rating.

For example, according to Avakian the rape situation in the United States is reason enough to make revolution. Another quote of Avakian's puts pacifism in its place by comparing the violence of the rapist with that of the victim defending herself.

How perfect that the content of Avakian's book will evoke the defense of many revolutionary-minded people. Genuine communists will become attracted to the RCP and their efforts will stand discredited with occasional but outrageous deviations--the attacks on homosexuality, the slogan "Smash buses!" from RU days and now worst of all the personality cult already discredited by Mao himself. MIM must consider the possibility that the RCP is a largely genuine organization led and designed by agents of the state to attract and set up Maoists for discrediting.

Comment on *A Horrible End or an End to the Horror*, by Bob Avakian

First of all, no genuine Marxist-Leninist would even think about "if there's going to be a chance to make revolution." We maintain that either revolution will prevent world war, or world war will bring about revolution. No "ifs," "ands" or "buts."

Second of all--"A Horrible End"?--There's no doubt that a nuclear war would cause the deaths of hundreds of millions of people and the suffering of hundreds of millions more. But--did not the first socialist state in the world emerge during the First World War? Was socialism not established in Europe after WWII? And did not the People's Republic of China emerge after that?

Comrades, I urge everyone to buy Avakian's book and send in criticisms of their wishy-washy, capitulationist, phrasemongering nonsense, and request them to cease calling themselves Marxist-Leninists.

--A reader

Response to comment

This seems a rather harsh assessment of the RCP for the wrong reasons. It seems that Mao's phrase about world war and revolution is no longer completely applicable. The possibility exists for world war that results in the vaporization of the human race. By some assessments, after a nuclear winter (see the work of Stephen Gould and Carl Sagan), the only life that would remain would be that life miles under water in the oceans.

Fearless materialists realize that the human race is not the center of the universe. A nuclear fuck-up on this planet won't mean shit for the universe. Nothing in dialectical materialism says there has to be a human race.

Mao himself believed the human race would end in the long run. "There is nothing in the world that does not arise, develop, and disappear. . . . In the end the whole human race will disappear, it may turn into something else, at that time the earth itself will also cease to exist." (Stuart Schram ed., *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, p. 110)

It is easier than ever for the imperialists to throw away the human race in a single battle. This is a matter of scientific concern, not something that can be refuted by Mao's saying about nuclear war and revolution. Of course, all proletarians wish it were not so that the imperialists could destroy the world in a final battle of World War III, but wishful thinking is not the same as analysis. Just because the stakes are so high, it is all the more imperative that the proletariat use its brains to advance revolution.

The only thing I would offer for certain is that imperialism will die--one way or another.

It is even possible the imperialists and social-imperialists will end World War III, perhaps to clamp down on successful revolutions in Latin America initiated by the Senderos and to prepare for World War IV as press reports indicate they already are. There exists the possibility for the immediate future that the imperialists will muddle through.

In the end, imperialism will die though, either from revolution or nuclear suicide.

Personally, I would offer the probability of 51% that revolution will eventually destroy imperialism after some combination of conventional and nuclear war. The other 49% goes to possibility that the imperialists will go at it full tilt and destroy the human race. In my analysis the two sides have pretty even chances. Perhaps our efforts tip the balance slightly, but not so much as to justify wishful thinking.

Does this mean give up? No, I haven't anyway.

It is true that among a good fraction of the youth there is a line that says the chances of avoiding all-out nuclear war this century are pretty small, maybe 1% or less. With such an analysis, the next step is often to say "live while you still can." These youth justify political apathy and pursuit of yuppie pleasures by saying that they want to live their last few years well.

It is tempting for the wishful proletarian to conclude from the actions of yuppie-pleasure seekers that the 1%-chance-of-life-analysis is wrong, simply morally wrong. This, however, would only be wishful thinking and these youth are not naive enough to be convinced by wishful thinking alone.

Those who say as I do that there is a good chance for revolution need to make concrete analyses that prove it.

MIM's ongoing internal struggle to assess the RCP: What Is the Nature of the RCP? Is It Worth Criticizing?

As I've mentioned, I've never said that the RCP deserves "main blows," but nevertheless my "line" is based on Lenin's conclusions.

To begin with, Lenin called the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks "petty-bourgeois democrats with near-socialist phraseology." Did Lenin spend much time polemicizing against these groups, or did he think that they were not much more than "irrelevant"? The whole point, is that the criticism of revisionism, either from the "left" or from the right is necessary, particularly at this stage of welding a party together. You dwell on your assumption that the rise of the bourgeoisie inside the party has something to do with holding state power. Didn't Mao warn that if the revisionists usurped state power the country would change colors and become a fascist country? Plus, Trotsky did not hold state power--how could he when he formed the "Opposition"? Stalin and the genuine Bolsheviks held state power. The GPCR was a struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and the questions of who would win out was "not settled," as Mao pointed out. If one holds state power, how can there be an usurpation? Besides the question has nothing to do with holding state power for the simple reason that bourgeois influence and ideology are constantly cropping up in the party. Let us assume a genuine party. How can it be there if a new bourgeoisie is not being generated? I've always maintained that the RCP was a Trotskyist organization.

--A comrade in criticism of an early draft of criticism of the RCP

Response to MIM Theory 5 from a founding member

... We came together because we shared a common viewpoint about how a leftist should carry out both theoretical and practical work. We wanted to achieve immediate political goals even if it meant working with revisionist and opportunist scum, but we also wanted to win over people to fundamental, long term political ideals.

We avoided both the liquidationist error, and the isolated dogmatist error. Effective political organizing requires both achieving concrete aims, and winning people to a political line so they will fight for the right causes in the future.

I think we had the right idea about party-building when we formed RADACADS in 1982/83, and I am convinced that MIM is taking the correct position now in these matters. If one is going to be a Maoist in America, one must follow the MIM line to have any chance for success.

Internal letters of MIM reproduced for discussion

Labor aristocracy, how important in the United States?

On the industrial proletariat--the auto and steel industries, etc. You say "to get to the right strata is difficult." First we have to define it--it is those strata of workers who have the least paying, hardest physically demanding, dirtiest jobs, in industry as a whole, but particularly in large factories in which there are also larger percentages of minority nationality workers. Read Lenin's "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement," October 1916. In this strata lies the core of the industrial proletariat. Here the link to the national question is obvious. The material conditions of the white workers in this strata undermine the influence of racism, patriotism etc. It is this strata to whom we are supposed to be introducing the ideas of socialism. How you can call sections of the working class middle class is a little beyond me. The size of one's earnings is a factor, but not the decisive factor.

I don't understand your position on Mao's analysis of classes. You say "for one, the proletariat is small and circumscribed here." But not in China, in 1927? What exactly do you mean about the nationalization of the land and factories taking into account "US debts to the oppressed countries"? You may be talking about "unselfish cultural aid," but it is necessary to take into account first the "debts" to the oppressed nations internal to the US borders.

Whether you like it or not, the people who work with their hands in factories are the most advanced class; whether in auto plants or steel plants. There are the bribed upper strata, the "labor aristocracy," which is no small section. If I remember correctly, you mention that you think that the insurrection will be brief and will take place in the armed forces. Again this is where we differ. I don't have any idea what the duration will be, but I do know that a proletarian revolution will be a civil war that will be fought on one side by an army of urban guerrillas who will be for the most part factory workers. Your belittlement of "shop-floor issues" simply shows your impetuosity. What did Lenin write *What Is to Be Done* for? We're supposed to convert economic struggles into political struggles.

--A comrade in criticism of a MIM comrade's line