

WHY THE RED DAWN?

Communists and advanced workers in the United States today are faced with a critical situation. Many of us have broken with or been expelled from the major organizations of our times and are consciously seeking the correct course to follow. But we are seeking as individuals or small collectives, our movement is fragmented and lacks a genuine Marxist-Leninist center to direct and lead it. As a whole, our movement is dominated by right opportunism. The ideology of spontaneity, the root of all opportunism, reigns. The rampant infestation of social chauvinism and American exceptionalism; the position that "political line is the key link to party building"; attempts to build broad-based social democratic parties from within the mass movement; the call to "go to the masses" as a solution to the crisis in our movement -- these and many other anti-Marxist lines prevail. The main forces in our movement continue the course set by the CPUSA of liquidating and, at best, belittling theory. Yet without consciously taking up the theoretical tasks demanded by our times and seriously applying the Marxist principle that "without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement," we will be unable to effectively make a qualitative break with opportunism and bourgeois ideology. Our movement needs a center, a genuine Marxist-Leninist center, one that will be powerful enough to defeat the right opportunist trend and consolidate the genuine Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers in this country into an organized and centralized force -- the party of the proletariat.

vs KKK? groups

It is to the fulfillment of these tasks that the Red Dawn Committee intends to dedicate itself. We were formed in the summer of 1976 after a heated struggle within the Workers' Congress that proved the bankruptcy, not of the original position of that organization, but of their leadership (for further explanation of this struggle, see the article on the split in the Workers' Congress). We have tried over the past year and a half to take up the theoretical work that we believe is necessary to lay a basis for building the ideological and political unity, first of our own committee, and now with other Marxist-Leninists in the U.S. We have tried to use the preparation of the propaganda for this magazine as a means to consolidate ideologically our newly-formed committee. Our own relative inexperience in doing this type of work, as well as the recent arrests of David Perez and Vincent Alba presented objective obstacles that we have had to overcome.* We have taken a year and a half to put out the first issue of this magazine because we refuse to race behind the ever-changing objective conditions, rushing to put out positions for the sake of putting out a position.

* One of these comrades, David Perez, is a member of the Red Dawn Committee. We had to work on the case as a matter of self-defense, which affected the work on the magazine because of our limited resources.

We have tried to place quality over quantity and struggled to utilize the science of Marxism-Leninism -- the direct and indirect experience of the international proletariat -- to distinguish between the morass of opportunist trends and the genuine Marxist-Leninist trend that exist in the world today. Communists must study opportunism in the context of the world today, a world that can only be understood in terms of Lenin's analysis that it is a world in the epoch of imperialism and the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat. The struggle of the proletariat for political power demands that we be able to make the distinction between opportunist and revolutionary trends with the same accuracy that Lenin and the other great teachers achieved. Failure to penetrate this question deeply and to quell the growth of opportunism can, in the long run, cost the masses millions of lives.

"Is there any connection between imperialism and that monstrous and disgusting victory which opportunism (in the shape of social chauvinism) has gained over the labor movement in Europe? That is the fundamental question of contemporary socialism. And having in our Party literature fully established, first the imperialist character of our epoch and of the present war, and second, the inseparable historical connection between social-chauvinism and opportunism, and also the identity of their ideological and political content, we can and must proceed to analyze this fundamental question." (Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," LCW, Vol. 23, p. 366)

These points may seem elementary to our well-read pseudo-Marxists, but the fact is this fundamental question of opportunist trends in the U.S. movement has not been fully understood from a historical or international Marxist-Leninist perspective. In this era it has become more important that all questions of the revolution be viewed in an international context. As Stalin explained:

"Formerly, the analysis of the prerequisites for the proletarian revolution was usually approached from the point of view of the economic state of individual countries. Now, this approach is no longer adequate. Now the matter must be approached from the point of view of the economic state of all or the majority of countries, from the point of view of the state of world economy; for individual countries and individual national economies have ceased to be self-sufficient units, have become links in a single chain called world economy; for the old 'cultured' capitalism has evolved into imperialism, and imperialism is a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the world by a handful of 'advanced' countries." (Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, p.28)

This includes the question of trends. Instead we have a multitude of bankrupt analyses of the communist movement in the U.S. -- for example, that an ideological break with revisionism was made in, say, 1972; or that breaking with the CPUSA automatically meant a break with revisionism.

Independently of the intentions of the propagators of these views, they objectively prevent a real ideological, qualitative break with revisionism, condemning the advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals to the ideological enslavement of revisionism. By their treacherous acts they hide the nature of classes, the particular interests of each class, and the historical mission of the proletariat. With their poisonous pens they attempt to write a distorted history of the world and of this country. Mouthing opposition to revisionism, these "communists" over and over state they are fighting against opportunism. This is not enough to distinguish a genuine Marxist-Leninist from the sham. The struggle against opportunism must be waged in the context of the historical expe-

rience of the international communist movement, and specifically in relation to the tasks that presently confront us.

And yet in our movement we have a very dangerous tendency, a clear anti-Marxist tendency, that views the different opportunist ideological and political currents as isolated phenomena whose history is either liquidated or distorted. This tendency has found fertile soil among the young revolutionaries inside the U.S. who, cut off from a continuous revolutionary movement by the utter bankruptcy of the CPUSA, fell victim to the historical tendency of the U.S. communist movement to pragmatism, social chauvinism and American exceptionalism.* The objective result of this tendency is a contempt for the kind of scientific theoretical work guided by the principles of dialectical and historical materialism that is necessary to raise the level of all revolutionaries striving to be communists from the quagmire of amateurishness and disunity to the realm of "professionalism" and unity. They spontaneously gravitate towards a glorification of practical work "among the masses" which liquidates the struggle for the final aims of the revolution in favor of its immediate gains. The treachery of the right opportunist leaders is that they attempt to develop theoretical justifications for bowing to the spontaneous movement of the masses. In order to defeat this, a profound historical assessment of the class struggle against opportunism must be developed.

For example, the worldwide struggle against modern revisionism and the new shades of right opportunism is but a continuation of the struggle waged by Lenin and the Bolsheviks against the social chauvinists and the opportunists of the Second International. In the U.S. the struggle against right opportunism -- which is the main danger -- is inseparable from the worldwide struggle against revisionism. Attempts by anti-Marxist theoreticians to divorce the struggle against all forms of opportunism in the U.S. from the international communist movement must be consistently opposed. Divorcing the U.S. communist movement from the worldwide movement fosters the view that the U.S. communist movement is unique -- i.e., American exceptionalism. Recently this has manifested itself in the position that ultra-"leftism" is the main danger in the U.S. -- a position which most of our movement has held in practice. ||

We are not saying that ultra-"leftism" can never be the main danger, or that the "left" can't be the main danger in one country while the right is the main danger in another. What we are saying is that this requires a deep and penetrating analysis of the objective and subjective factors in relation to the relevant tasks in each country, and not the kind of facile analyses that are in essence excuses for the continuation of right opportunism.

Furthermore these same anti-Marxists, in order to perpetuate their position that an ideological break with revisionism has been made, liquidate the necessity of relating today's struggle against right opportunism to the historical struggle of the proletariat in the U.S. against all forms of bourgeois ideology. They discourage revolutionaries from systematically studying our history, and they distort the true history of the communist movement in the U.S. For example, certain facts are conveniently overlooked or misinterpreted, like the fact that the CPUSA was never a bolshevik party (that it never implemented the resolutions of the Comintern to bolshevize itself); that Browder's revisionism came to power without major national opposition in the party, including opposition from Mr. Foster; that, contrary to popular opinion, the CPUSA was a revisionist association long before 1956 when Krushchev came to power in the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact the CPUSA was reconstituted as a party in 1946 by Foster, but unfortunately it was reconstituted essentially under the same old revisionist program.

* Pragmatism is the philosophy that the meaning or value of any action is determined by its immediate, practical consequences: "if it works, do it." It is especially popular in the United States.

Handwritten notes and markings on the right margin: "NBS", "CPUSA", "NBS", "1945?", "also?", and several checkmarks.

To further show the penetration of revisionism in the U.S. communist movement, look at the failure of the PLP and the POC to provide correct leadership in building a new communist party. Initially these groups attempted to advance the struggle for Marxism-Leninism. They failed because they were unable to make a radical, qualitative, ideological rupture with revisionism. To cover this fact merely by saying that they were Trotskyites or sectarian is not acceptable.

Without a historical analysis it is impossible to understand the different groups and organizations that have emerged inside the U.S. and that profess to be Marxist-Leninists, particularly alleged communist groups such as the RU, OL and CL, that were formed at the heels of the spontaneous movements of the late 1960's. Each organization points to the others' liberalism and opportunism; gives an account of how it has grown from smaller to larger; and professes to be the only true followers of Marxism-Leninism or Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. But each fails to mention what all these groups have in common: their unwillingness and inability to take up the theoretical tasks of the movement. They all ignore the conclusions Lenin drew from a similar period in the Russian movement:

"Such being the peculiar features of Russian 'criticism' and Russian Bernsteinism, what should have been the task of those who desired to oppose opportunism, in deeds and not merely in words? First of all, they should have made efforts to resume the theoretical work that the period of 'legal Marxism' had only just begun, and that has now again fallen on the shoulders of the illegal workers." (Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, p. 22-3)

The failure of the "anti-revisionists" is the failure of the previous generations of "anti-revisionists," from Foster to the PL, the failure to resume the theoretical work that had been started by the previous generation of revolutionaries, contributions made before Browder came to power, contributions that are virtually unknown today. *which?*

For the young revolutionaries of the 60's this became a crucial question. We developed with a minimal knowledge of the actual history of the communist movement. This crippling legacy has not been overcome.

Intensifying its crippling effects is the fact that veterans of the CPUSA helped forge the various organizations that became the worst representatives of right opportunism -- Leibel Bergman and the RU, Nelson Perry and the CL, Harry Haywood and the OL. A political alliance between veterans of the CPUSA and the worst petty-bourgeois intellectuals of the 60's has provided the ideological and political leadership for today's "vanguard left." They did not provide organizations like the BWC, PRRWO, ATM, IWK -- organizations that had developed in the main out of the spontaneous revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nationalities -- with genuine Marxist-Leninist leadership. As experienced Marxist-Leninists, it was their responsibility to bring the science of socialism to the advancing revolutionaries, many of whom were at the time ardently striving for it, and to lead these revolutionaries in the struggle against opportunism. Instead, they used the national organizations as recruiting grounds to add coloring to their mainly petty-bourgeois, white organizations and to spread anti-Marxist theories.

The veterans of the CPUSA were not wrong to make an alliance with the newly developing petty-bourgeois revolutionaries of the 1960's. Their error was that this alliance was not based on a correct assessment of the political and theoretical tasks of the movement. Rather than provide conscious Marxist-Leninist leadership to the movement, they were condemned to tail it.

When organizations like PRRWO or the BWC attempted to break from the RU or the CL they broke on the basis of particular political questions. Because they did not carry out in reality the theoretical tasks that are prerequisites for forging a Marxist party, although at times they gave lip service to these tasks, they were unable to make an "ideological rupture" with the new shades of revisionism. For example, when PRRWO and the BWC split from the RU in 1974 the struggle focused

in the main on the national question, although party building, economism, propaganda, etc. were superficially addressed. Later on, after a brief alliance with the CL, the break focused on the international question, particularly the question of the Third World and Soviet social imperialism, and again on the national question inside the U.S., the analysis of the Afro-American question. well?

PRRWO and the BWC in this regard carried on the errors made by individuals and groups who split from the CPUSA after Browder came to power, the error being to break with a revisionist organization on the basis of a particular line or position, such as opposition to the peaceful transition to socialism, or the blatant liquidation of the national question in the U.S., the liquidation of the revolutionary vanguard role of the party of the proletariat, or an attack on genuine Marxist-Leninist parties, the Party of Labor of Albania or the Communist Party of China. Their error was in their failure to get to the essence of the class struggle by repudiating the ideological basis of all opportunism -- bowing to spontaneity. *oversimplified.* *Spontaneity is "Kings".*

We would like to add that we are well aware that this is a cursory analysis of the U.S. communist movement and that in the future, we plan to devote great attention to it, particularly analyzing the implications of the kind of alliances mentioned above in greater detail.

Throughout this article we have spoken of the failure of the communist movement in the U.S. to carry out the theoretical tasks required to forge the ideological unity of genuine Marxist-Leninists for the future, and of the fact that only by placing theory in its proper position can we defeat the right opportunist trends that assail us. We have come to this conclusion after studying the formation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, particularly during the Iskra period. Without carrying out the theoretical work that will answer all the questions posed by the proletarian movement we will be unable to build a center of representatives of a genuine Marxist-Leninist trend in the U.S. Stalin places theory in its proper position when he says:

"Theory is the experience of the working-class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect. Of course, theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory. But theory can become a tremendous force in the working-class movement if it is built up in indissoluble connection with revolutionary practice; for theory, and theory alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inner relation of surrounding events; for it, and it alone, can help practice to realize not only how and in which direction classes are moving at the present time, but also how and in which direction they will move in the near future." (Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, p. 22)

He goes on to quote Lenin:

"The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory." (What Is To Be Done? p. 29)

At the Unity Conference in 1975, the Workers' Congress declared that the central task of all communists in the U.S., building the party of the proletariat, should be fulfilled through the Iskra plan. The newspaper, The Communist, was principally to have contained propaganda and to have been a collective propagandist, agitator and organizer. It was on this basis that we united with the Workers' Congress. Unfortunately these plans never materialized. If they had, there would have been no pressing need for the Red Dawn, since The Communist would have played the necessary role of developing a leading theoretical center, representative of the Marxist-Leninist trend in the U.S. Unfortunately, leaders of the present

But in 1975 (or now) Iskra plan wasn't enough. Needed 'lines of demarcation', but didn't have them.

Workers' Congress were, and still are, dead set against carrying through this task, in deed sabotaging it practically from its outset.

We are convinced that an Iskra-type newspaper is absolutely necessary. Without it, without the timely political exposures that it will conduct, the task of winning advanced workers to communism and defeating right opportunism is impossible. A regular national newspaper is necessary in the long run to weld the Leninist core. Lenin wrote:

"The masses cannot be trained in political consciousness and revolutionary activity in any other way except by means of such exposures. Hence, activity of this kind is one of the most important functions of international Social-Democracy as a whole, for even the existence of political liberty does not in the least remove the necessity for such exposures; it merely changes somewhat the sphere against which they are directed." (Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, p. 85)

And he continued:

"The consciousness of the masses of the workers cannot be genuine class consciousness, unless the workers learn to observe from concrete, and above all from topical (current) political facts and events, every other social class and all the manifestations of the intellectual, ethical and political life of these classes; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of all aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social-Democrats..." (Ibid., p. 86)

However, although we recognize the necessity of an Iskra-type newspaper, we also recognize the fact that it would be sheer idealism to try to put it out now. At this particular point in the development of our movement there is no leading theoretical center capable of organizing a network of agents and contributors on the basis of a sound Marxist-Leninist ideological footing. The theoretical foundations for a draft program have yet to be laid, and it is on this that we must concentrate our attention -- without it there is no basis for organizational unity of a leading, country-wide Marxist-Leninist center.

We want the Red Dawn magazine to serve as a vehicle to help create such a theoretical center and to help draft the party program. In it we plan to put forward our theoretical positions and analyses of our practical work, including topical exposures aimed at winning over advanced workers like the ones we had begun to do in the Workers' Congress. At the same time we hope to provide the movement with a regular publication to which independent Marxist-Leninists and Marxist-Leninist organizations with whom we have some principled agreement can contribute. The kind of principled agreements we are talking about must be based on what people do, and not just what they say. There are a number of organizations, such as the "Revolutionary Wing," who say that theory is primary, for example, but who in practice distort the theory of Marxism-Leninism and with whom we would not unite. Our yardstick for developing relationships will be the theoretical work that revolutionaries are doing to answer some of these questions, and how we work together to carry them out.

Concerning our editorial policy, we eagerly look forward to the day when enough agreement has been reached among Marxist-Leninists on a national basis to draft a political statement similar to the Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra in 1900, the basic ingredients of a party program, and to the day when we can relinquish the editing of the magazine to an editorial board representative of

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the national Leninist trend. Until that day, however, we insist upon taking full responsibility for the editing of the magazine. What we mean by this is that we reserve the right to clearly express our agreements or disagreements with any material published in the magazine that is written by contributors. We also plan to edit on the basis of consultation with regular contributors.

How does this differ from CR?

To sum up we would like to present five points which should serve as a guide for study and discussion.

1. The development of a national theoretical center and the draft of a party program require that the theoretical work be directed to instill among the advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals a profound grasp of the science of Marxism-Leninism, particularly study from the great teachers of Marxism-Leninism and their students who have made great contributions, combined with a steel-like proletarian internationalist stand. This can not be done without organized and planned study to answer all the questions of the movement.

2. It requires a firm grasp of the struggle against opportunism; consciously understanding the contemporary conditions and specific forms under which this struggle is being conducted; carefully and methodically establishing the concrete relationships between international currents or trends and the particular features of the United States. The welding of the party core can only be accomplished with a firm and consistent struggle against opportunism.

3. It requires that we grasp the principal strategic task of today -- building the party -- in relation to the other strategic tasks of building the united front and armed struggle, and carry them out by making propaganda our chief form of activity, concentrating our attention on winning the advanced workers to communism.

4. It requires that we address ourselves to understanding the character of proletarian revolution inside the U.S.; that we identify and correctly answer the strategic and tactical questions of the revolution in order to develop the party program.

5. It requires a qualitative change in the content and form of our literature. It requires the development of a regular Iskra-type newspaper along with theoretical journals and pamphlets or books with a regular network of agents who will attend to all aspects of its creation and distribution, including its organizational impact on the masses, and advanced workers in particular. In the course of this, agents must be trained in utilizing legal and illegal forms of struggle in order to guarantee the continuity of the publications.

Our goal is to train and unite from among the advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals true proletarian leaders and organizers, comrades who will dedicate all their lives and energy to carrying out the historical mission of the working class, the elimination of exploitation and all forms of oppression and the abolition of class society.

To those who say we lack people, our goals are too ambitious, we refer you to what Lenin said in What Is To Be Done?:

"There are no people -- yet there is a mass of people. There is a mass of people, because the working class and ever more diverse strata of society, year after year, advance from their ranks an increasing number of discontented people who desire to protest, who are ready to render all the assistance they can in the fight against absolutism, the intolerableness of which is not yet recognized by all, but is nevertheless more and more acutely sensed by increasing masses of the people. At the same time we have no people, because we have no leaders, no talented organizers capable of arranging extensive and at the same time uniform and harmonious work that would employ all forces, even the most inconsiderable." (p. 157-8)

Lenin compared the Iskra to the scaffolding around which a building is constructed. We would like to identify the Red Dawn magazine as an instrument which will play an important role in surveying the land, clearing the landscape, and laying the foundations upon which the scaffolding is founded and the building assembled.

J in CR