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# TWO OPPOSING LINES IN THE C.P.U.S.A.

This very brief history of the international communist movement - and its state today - is presented not simply as some interesting historical background. Whether one pays attention to this history and adjusts one bearings accordingly is a fundamental question of proletarian internationalism. This history represents the international experience of the world communist movement - experience which has been tested time after time in countless countries of the world. Any party formed today which does not conform to the basic contours and conclusions of this history cannot be considered a genuine vanguard political party of the proletariat.

Yet here in the United States, do we find communists today paying attention to this history, drawing proper conclusions from it? Frankly, comrades, we do not. On the contrary, organizations and individuals strut around speaking of the "new" communist movement. As should be evident, and as we will demonstrate, the current communist movement is not new. Communism has been planted in U.S. soil for almost 125 years, dating back to the work of Joseph Weydemeyer, Frederick Sorge and Adolph Douai, who, just four years after Marx and Engels published THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, founded the Proletarian League in New York, basing their program on this great historic document.

Why then do some speak of the "new" communist movement? It is because the genuine communist movement today is cut off from its history. It has been an important tactic of every opportunist, as it is of bourgeois ideology in general, to focus attention strictly upon the immediate moment, to breed subjectivism, in order to advance some "new" theory or idea which corresponds to simply a fragment of experience, the momentary matter, rather than the larger picture. By speaking of the "new" communist movement, the opportunists seek to cut the very foundation out from beneath the task of party building today. That foundation is none other than the history of the world and U.S. communist movement - a history which, if studied correctly, provides vital lessons about the task of party building today, lessons which these advocates of the "new" communist movement would rather avoid.

Moreover, behind this opportunist effort to focus attention strictly on the immediate moment, lies a national chauvinist line on the relation between the U.S. communist movement and the international communist movement. It denies the historical connection between struggles today and struggles in the past, between struggles in this country and struggles around the world. Rather, it carries with it all the bravado of the super-power mentality, as if the world began, continued and is centered now, upon the "new" communist movement of the United States, the horizon of which these opportunists cannot see beyond.

Comrades, genuine Marxist-Leninists do not take this approach. We strive always to study current conditions, but to study them in the light of the history of the workers' and communist movements nationally and internationally. We take up this study to answer those questions which face the revolutionary movement today.

We find that, for instance, the very same struggles carried on within

the communist movement over the nature of the party, the Black national question, the main form of opportunism, etc., etc., have been carried on many times before.

And in each case of attempting to answer these problems, the advancement of the U.S. communist movement came down to a question of whether or not U.S. communists could overcome the national chauvinism bred by living in the largest imperial power of all time, reject the thesis that conditions are exceptional here, and abide by the authority and unity of the international communist movement. When this occurred, the communist movement advanced - when it did not, there were setbacks.

In studying the history of the communist movement in order to oppose opportunism on the theoretical front, we found an important paradox. In no other country of the capitalist world has capital accumulation proceeded at such a pace or so closely conformed to the fundamental laws of Capital as outlined by Marx. It is no accident that the final chapter (Ch. 25) of the first volume of CAPITAL, entitled "The Modern Theory of Colonization," is an analysis and summation of the concentration of capital in the U.S.A. At the same time, or more correctly we might say, because of this, Marxism has traveled an extremely tortuous course in the U.S., sinking roots only with the greatest effort and over an unusually long period of time.

Beneath the rich soil of U.S. labor's militancy lies the hardpan of "American Exceptionalism", the sterile clay of bourgeois ideology in the communist movement. There has been no greater example of the deepening of the opportunist position of exceptionalism than the layers and layers of "American Exceptionalism" - layers of bourgeois ideology which must be broken through by genuine forces - whether in the form laid down by the early German immigrant socialists, by Lovestone, Pepper, Browder, Foster, Dennis, Gus Hall or the Revolutionary Communist Party of the U.S.A. today.

## PROBLEMS OF TURNING HISTORY INTO THEORY

In taking up the struggle to oppose opportunism on the theoretical front, by studying the history of the struggle between Marxism and opportunism in this country, we must begin with the realization that there exists no single authoritative work as a guide, and that, for the most part, this ground must be broken afresh. Foster's HISTORY OF THE CPUSA, for example, is riddled with subjectivism from cover to cover. Therefore, this is only a brief introduction to a study which must one day be completed to firmly found the Party.

A second stumbling block in taking up this investigation is that, because of the traditional belittlement of the role of theory in our communist movement, no corps of trained theoretical workers exists to take up this task. To take up the struggle against opportunism, the ideology and political line of the bourgeoisie in the communist movement, and defeat it decisively on the theoretical front, we must unite our camp to shoulder this responsibility. When Engels spoke of three fronts of the class struggle, the economic, political and theoretical fronts, he certainly recognized that the struggle on the theoretical raised the same need for strategy and tactics

to defeat the enemy as either of the other two. The lack of troops trained to take up and wage a successful campaign on this front points to the special responsibility of all Marxist-Leninists to arm themselves with theory, in order to defeat the enemy on the decisive front of the class struggle at this time.

Theory, as Comrade Stalin has pointed out, is the experience of the working class of all countries taken in its general aspect. What we will now begin is one of a long series of steps which must be taken in order to know the experience of the working class struggle in the U.S. and to apply this knowledge to the steps which must be taken in order to know the experience of the working class struggle in the U.S. and to apply this knowledge to the task of changing the world. We take up this study in order to confront the tasks before us, knowing that every communist revolutionary is faced with the problem of how best to carry on the revolution. As Chairman Mao has said: "In the building of a socialist society, everybody needs remoulding - the exploiters and also the working people." "Everybody should study and remould himself."

Only by grounding our movement in the traditions of the revolution can we continue the revolution. In order that we may do this and remould ourselves to meet the tasks before us, we must unearth these traditions buried under years of opportunist distortions. For this, we must go back to the earliest days of Marxism in the United States in order to grasp the underlying historical connection between the communist movement of today and the communist movement of the past.

## EARLY CLASS STRUGGLES (1776-1852)

The early development of Marxism in the U.S. corresponded closely with the rise and development of the modern proletariat in the U.S. Up until the end of the 19th century, the immaturity of the U.S. working class and the forces of production were reflected in the immature development of Marxism. This was the pattern in Europe as well as in the U.S.

Manufacturing did not develop during the colonial times, as production centered around immediate needs on a small geographical scale. Larger markets did not develop, impeded by the lack of adequate transportation.

By the mid 18th century, the U.S. had developed a considerable capacity to appropriate natural resources - but this was impeded by British colonial rule. The emerging bourgeoisie realized the contradiction, and this was the impetus for the bourgeois democratic revolution of 1776. This revolution was a genuine bourgeois democratic revolution against mercantilism, which meant the exploitation of Britain's American colonies for the benefit of the British manufacturing class. Though this revolution was a progressive step, it reflected all the emerging class contradictions of the time. Many soldiers and workers found themselves, at the war's close, with worthless currency, while the bourgeoisie of the time had utilized the war to consolidate their property interests.

This contradiction led to many spontaneous mass revolts, one of the most famous was the Shays Rebellion by which ruined soldiers and common

masses rose up against the consolidation by landlords of political control over private property. This was to foretell the steady sharpening of class contradictions. "A government of property, for property, and by property" was the slogan of the bourgeoisie. The masses of the workers were disqualified from voting, primarily through property qualifications. Of a population of 4,000,000 in 1790, only about 120,000 or roughly 3% of the population had a right to vote. In the Constitution there is not a word for the workers, and slavery was officially approved. (The U.S. Constitution replaced the earlier Articles of Confederation and represented a tightening of the control of the bourgeoisie over the mass opposition which was on the rise).

It was not until 1793, entirely from the pressure of the mass revolutionary movement, that a Bill of Rights - the first ten AMENDMENTS to the Constitution - emerged and, then, it had written into it that Blacks were three-fifths of a human being. There were no rights for national minorities or women.

#### LANDED PROPERTY VERSUS INDUSTRIAL CAPITAL - THE SECOND PHASE OF THE BOURGEOIS DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

In 1790 - the population of the U.S. was less than 4 million, over 3.7 million living on the rural land. It was not until the 1820's that industrialization began in the U.S. From a small, rural and insignificant manufacturer in 1820, just four decades later by 1860, the U.S. had become the second largest manufacturer in the world, just behind Great Britain.

This rapid development was a product of the vast economic resources of the continent, which the bourgeoisie seized from Mexico and the Native Americans with brutal efficiency. The driving force for this expansion was the contention between the slavocracy and the Northern bourgeoisie, each requiring the expansion of their control. The expansion of agriculture and the toleration of slavery in the South provided much of the capital base for industrial development. This industrial development advanced even more quickly due to the relative absence of feudal remnants and the relatively cheap supply of labor power.

By 1861, with the Civil War, the contradictions between the level of productive forces and the relations of production had developed to the breaking point. The northern bourgeoisie realized the necessity of smashing the southern slavocracy in order to turn the entire country into an economy of wage slaves. Chattel slavery had to go.

Marx supported the Northern cause and roused the whole European working class to provide concrete material support and to pressure their bourgeoisies not to intervene on the side of the South. Marx supported the northern bourgeoisie because he realized that the defeat of slavocracy was required in order to complete the bourgeois democratic revolution. The defeat of the Confederacy was necessary in order to allow the nation's productive forces to develop, to promote bourgeois democracy and to allow the emerging proletariat to organize itself along united lines. Marx vividly captured the essence of the situation when he stated that "Labor cannot emancipate itself in white skin, where in the Black skin it is branded."

The Civil War became the opportunity for a rising bourgeoisie to fully consolidate its hold, and out of the war, emerged the material basis for what was later to become the huge trusts and monopolies of imperialism.

The Revolution of 1776 and the Civil War together had the effect of sweeping aside almost all feudal institutions in the U.S. - except in the

Black Belt - opening up an unhindered field for Capital.

This relative lack of feudal institutions, together with the abundant supply of land available for the taking, a developed labor supply fresh from the influx of European immigration and slaves, along with other factors, provoked a rate of capital accumulation such that the world had never known.

Marx foretold the unfolding of these events when he stated that "when the transition to the factory system takes place in that country [the U.S.], the ensuing concentration will, compared with Europe and even with England, advance in seven league boots."

Later, Engels was to speak of the "purely bourgeois fashion" in which Capital accumulated in the U.S. From the 1840's through the 1870's, U.S. industry began to expand geometrically, and the industrialists' consolidation of state power was achieved. Corporations emerged. The Civil War represented the second stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the U.S. After the War, the formation of an oppressed nation in the Black Belt South began to take shape, while the multi-national proletariat began to emerge.

#### RISE OF THE BLACK NATION

During the period of slavery, the Black struggle was a slave question, a conflict between slave and slavemaster. With the Civil War and the "emancipation" of the slaves, the Northern capitalists set up a bourgeois dictatorship in the South to consolidate its gains (Reconstruction) and, in order to strengthen its social basis, granted Blacks full democratic rights (13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution).

The bourgeoisie, however, was unable to carry even the agrarian revolution through to the end; it was forced by economic necessity to ally itself with the Southern landlords in defeating Reconstruction, and, by 1877, Blacks were forced back into a semi-feudal share-cropper existence. Having been cheated of their land, the basis for bourgeois-democratic rights, Black people were soon disenfranchised of all the rights granted in the Constitution. Thus, it is precisely the failure of the agrarian revolution that molded the Black question into the Black National Question.

The Black nation proceeded to develop under conditions of national oppression at the hands of the emerging imperialists, in an effort to violently retard the economic and cultural development of the Black nation and to perpetuate the semi-feudal form of exploitation in Southern agriculture and, hence, the basis of the super-exploitation of Black workers all over the country. National oppression was met by resistance in the struggle of the Black masses for equality - which can only be realized through the revolutionary struggle for the right of self-determination of Blacks in the Black Belt - and against bourgeois theories of "racial inferiority".

It is no accident that revolutionary Marxism nowhere placed the question of an oppressed people, that is, a social question, as a race question. Race as a category of natural science, i.e. a supra-historical concept, exerts no influence upon the social development of people in contemporary class society. The efforts of the bourgeois theoreticians of "race" to artificially transplant a category of natural science into the realm of social phenomena is merely an attempt to furnish a "scientific" pretext for national colonial policy. But, false race ideologies thus created play an important role. These facilitate the isolation and segregation of the masses of the oppressed nation from those of the oppressor nation, create barriers to working class unity and facilitate the super-exploitation of the oppressed nationalities. Thus race ideologies give the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nation the possibility

of deepening and perpetuating the national oppression of weaker peoples, retarding the unified assault by the multi-national working class and undermining the revolutionary alliance of national and workers' struggles.

The Black Nation is forged by the blows of the rise of U.S. imperialism. From 1865 to 1898 capitalism began the transition from industrial to financial capital, and finally to monopoly capitalism. The working class emerges in this period as a fully modern proletariat. Though the U.S. still remained a rural country, with only 1/3 of the population in the urban centers, by 1894, it had become the world's leading industrial producer and American monopoly corporations had already set out to ravage and pillage the world.

Capitalism in the U.S., as elsewhere, was built upon the labor and oppression of nationalities and minorities.

In the South, where slavery promoted the development of the northern bourgeoisie up until the late 1840's and in the Southwest, the land, the new sources of raw materials and the labor supply provided an important impetus to the development of capitalism.

In the Southwest, the Mexican-American War of 1848 was the means by which a growing bourgeoisie sought to expand its material base against the Southern slavocracy, by seizing the land of the Mexican nation. The material basis for the rise of the Chicano nation resides in this seizure of land, when workers and peasants were forced off the land to become wage slaves on the railroads, in the mines and fields, and later in the factories.

#### EARLY MARXISTS IN AMERICA

During the period of rising capitalism, through 1898, the major task confronting the emerging working class was to organize itself, for its own protection in unions. There could be no other course for the economic defense of the workers. Until this was achieved it would not be possible to organize the political offense of the working class, through its own independent political party.

Ever since the very early development of capitalism in the U.S., the working class has taken spontaneous efforts to defend its economic rights. As early as 1786, Philadelphia printer journeymen organized the first strike in the U.S. against the master printers over a \$6 cut in wages per week. Shortly after that, in 1792, the first labor union was organized in the U.S. among Philadelphia shoemakers. It had taken the workers in the U.S. some 185 years, from the settling of Jamestown in 1607 until 1792, before any real form of organization developed. This period corresponded to the appearance of industry and the beginnings of wage-slavery in the U.S.

Still, by the middle of the 19th century, the U.S. lagged behind somewhat in the pace of manufacture as compared with Europe, and this had its effect on the development of Marxism in the U.S. and the rise of the subjective factor in the revolution.

As we mentioned earlier, soon after the publication of the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO in 1848, an associate of Marx and Engels, Joseph Wedemeyer, traveled to the U.S. in 1851 with other German immigrants who had fled after the failure of the Revolutions of 1848-50. Just one year after arriving, Wedemeyer and friends founded the Proletarian League and published the first American Marxist paper, DIE REVOLUTION. These early Marxists actively engaged in trying to build the labor movement and supported the anti-slavery struggles. The comrades in the Proletarian League set out to clarify some fundamental ideological issues in order to promote the political organization of the working class. While they realized the relative backwardness of the U.S. workers' grasp of socialist ideology or even of

the nature of the high level of development of capitalism, these early comrades suffered from many dogmatic and sectarian tendencies which limited their early influence.

Soon after, the First International was founded by Marx in 1864, a chapter opened in the U.S. By 1871, the International Workingmen's Association or First International, had eight sections in the U.S. with 293 members - but only one section was largely native born, an indication of the sectarianism which still plagued the early Marxists. The IWA was founded on the knowledge that through combined action and mutual discussion the working class would learn the truth of communism from the lessons of its own experience, if given the conscious leadership that the Marxists should supply.

The IWA in America was torn by strife between bourgeois liberalism which pushed utopian schemes, the Lassalleans who openly opposed trade union work as useless, and the genuine Marxists, who, while seeking to uphold the teachings of Marx, remained mostly isolated from the working class because of harsh sectarian view and the inability to apply theory as a guide to action. Finally, the IWA was dissolved in New York in 1876.

#### UNIONIZATION AND EARLY SOCIALIST PARTIES

In 1866 the National Labor Union (NLU) was founded in Baltimore with a program which paralleled closely that of the IWA. Led by William H. Sylvester, the National Labor Union backed women's emancipation, resolved to organize Black workers (there were nine Black delegates to the 1869 NLU Congress) and immigrant workers, to engage in political action, and supported the Greenback movement. The internal contradictions of the NLU, its lack of centralized leadership and its lack of concrete work led to its dissolution in 1872.

Out of frustration from working with the broken promises of the NLU, the National Colored Labor Union was formed in 1869 by Black workers.

In 1869 also, the Knights of Labor, a semi-secret organization was founded in Philadelphia by clothing cutters. By the late 1880's, most of the trades had moved into the recently founded A.F. of L., due to the sell-out leadership of the Knights of Labor under Terence V. Powderly.

In 1881 in Pittsburgh Samuel Gompers and Adolph Strasser led the founding of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (FOTLU) in opposition to the Knights of Labor. The FOTLU led the struggle in the U.S. for the eight hour day, and, in 1886, it became the American Federation of Labor. The A.F. of L. grew rapidly composed of craft unions and skilled workers and opposed the collectivist and utopian schemes of the Knights of Labor leadership. However, Gompers swung to the other end, and advanced the view that workers could only improve their lot through "pure and simple trade unionism." Gompers turned rabidly anti-socialist in views and moved the union away from revolutionary Marxism, ignoring work among the Black masses and immigrants.

Even so, the trade unions grew astronomically, from union membership of 200,000 in 1883, to 1 million in 1886.

During this period, the communist movement developed, for the most part, along side of, rather than amidst the trade union movement.

The Socialist Labor Party was formed in 1877 from a merger between the Social Democratic Workingmen's Association (a remnant of the IWA), and the Illinois Labor Party. Marx and Engels repeatedly refer to this party as being dominated by doctrinaire and dogmatic German Marxists. As late as the 1880's the meetings of this organization were still con-

ducted in German - a clear indication of the inability, or unwillingness to bring revolutionary Marxism to the masses of workers.

Racked by the Marxist-Lassalleian split over the relative importance of industrial and political action, the party was ripe for mis-leadership, and it came when Daniel De Leon forged unity in the SLP in 1889 around his ballot box socialism. He sought to use the trade unions merely as a tactical stage for bourgeois elections. De Leon led the SLP down the road of syndicalism and white chauvinism, denying the need to organize Black workers on the basis that the Black workers was supposedly only oppressed as a member of the working class.

As the reformist and dogmatic character of the SLP became evident, dissidents split from it and formed the Socialist Party of America in 1898, headed by Eugene Debs, Morris Hillquit and Victor Berger. The SPA was basically Fabian socialist and relied upon a program of the peaceful evolution toward socialism and electoral politics. At its height, the SPA had a membership of 135,000 - but it remained without deep roots in the working class and with a reformist program.

The result saw a floundering SLP under De Leon. To counter the SPA, De Leon tested the waters of industrial unionism, which led to the formation of the International Workers of the World (IWW), in a joint effort with left-wing elements from the SPA, including Debs and Big Bill Haywood of the Western Federation of Miners.

The political program of the IWW can be described as

- 1) opposition to the right wing line of Gompers in the A.F. of L.;
- 2) the need to merge in order to advance the struggle collectively; and
- 3) a genuine sentiment for the most part in opposition to Capital.

The IWW took up the cause of those workers disowned by the A.F. of L. - the western miners, lumberjacks, agricultural workers, foreign-born, Black workers, women workers and industrial workers. But as the IWW moved to lead these struggles, all the contradictions of the anarcho-syndicalist line emerged. The strikers were given little in the way of long range benefits from the union, because of the IWW anarcho-syndicalist aversion to organization. Often after extremely bitter and bloody struggles, the workers were left with no local union organization at all, as the IWW moved on.

In other respects, however, the IWW was not unlike the A.F. of L. which it sought to oppose. Both rejected the necessity for political struggle, and both rejected the necessity for advanced theory, for a concrete analysis of the conditions of capitalism at that time.

With the death of Engels in 1895, the world communist movement, and that in the U.S., had suffered an enormous loss. Both Marx and Engels had made tremendous contributions to the rise of the workers' and communist movements in the U.S. These were basically the instructions to pay maximum attention to the trade unions, to merge with the working class, and to eradicate all "narrow, moss-grown sectarian tendencies out of the workers organizations."

For a period of nearly half a century Marx and Engels closely guided the communist work being carried on, from laying out the basic strategy of the Proletarian League up to defining the nature of opportunism in the SLP, and the means of overcoming this sectarianism. What Marx and Engels criticize most about the socialist movement in the U.S. was the failure of early Marxists to base their work on an evaluation of the objective tasks which faced the proletariat.

The guidance offered to the U.S. movement was merely part of the work carried on by Marx and Engels in guiding the communist movement internationally. Even though Bolshevism was born in 1903,

it was not really until the Russian Revolution that the unity and authority of the international communist movement was again consolidated.

The absence of any international authority comparable to Marx or Engels laid open the channel for various opportunist lines and sects to emerge under the name of socialism in the U.S. - most of which found their way into the Second International or followed an anarcho-syndicalist line.

The U.S. working class emerged as a unified class rather late, in relation to Western Europe. When it did emerge, its development was very rapid due to the intensity of the socialization of industry which laid the foundations for the trusts, cartels--and imperialism. This late development enforced the dominance of bourgeois ideology, which promoted practicalness and narrowness in political outlook. The relatively slow development of Marxism in the United States is directly linked to U.S. industrialization.

Engels explained this clearly when he pointed to the "purely bourgeois fashion" of capital accumulation in the U.S. made possible by:

- A - the absence of feudal remnants which promoted greater competition between capitalists;
- B - the availability of free land in the west gained by the slaughter of native Americans and Mexicans;
- C - the division of the working class which resulted from chattel slavery, the immigration of various nationalities, and the colonial conquest of the Southwest.

These objective conditions had their reflection in the subjective factor. These conditions produced a long standing disregard for theory, and the reliance upon pragmatism as a basic line of action--manifested in strong sectarian and anarcho-syndicalist tendencies in the U.S. working class. This retarded the political consolidation of the class.

For these reasons, Marxism had to fight for every inch of influence within the rising proletariat, and went through three major ideological struggles up to 1919.

Each of these three major ideological struggles between Marxism and opportunism corresponded to the needs of the proletariat, facing specific problems thrust upon it by the objective conditions.

The first problem facing the class was to consolidate and organize its forces on the economic front, in order to defend its interests in the face of industrial capital's growth and power (1850's to 1870's). The main task of communists was to direct the militant unionization of the working class. The FIRST TWO LINE STRUGGLE was against the sectarian socialists who refused to help organize the class for its defense on the economic front, vowing instead to only work in the "political sphere." This opportunist line flowed from a lack of applying Marxism as a guide to action. There was no understanding by the sectarian socialists of the needs of the class or the nature of the concrete conditions. Their line of "purely political work" revealed itself as the interest of the bourgeoisie.

The second problem for the proletariat was to demarcate itself politically as a class, in order to take the offensive against capital (1870's to early 1900's). The main task of communists was to give political direction to the class in the formation of the first working class parties, broad enough to unite all sectors of the class. THE SECOND TWO-LINE STRUGGLE was against the reformist line of the Gompers' led trade unions which pushed that the working class did not need to be a political force but could best defend its interests through "pure and simple trade unionism", and through voting for the friends of labor in the bourgeois parties. Again, the opportunist line was unable to understand the needs of the class produced by changes in the objective conditions. To continue to

focus on the economic struggle by denying the need for taking the offensive on the political front served the interest of capital. Engels took the lead in criticising the sectarian German socialists for not properly giving the class direction in the face of this new form of bourgeois influence.

As the proletariat developed out of these earlier struggles it was faced with the consolidation of imperialism and the ripening of the objective conditions for revolution. The third problem facing the working class was to elevate its political development to meet the needs of the rising proletariat to defeat monopoly capitalism. In the U.S., where the political independence of the class had never been firmly established, the difficult task of organizing a party of a new type which could concentrate the force of the proletariat for a decisive blow against imperialism was a formidable problem. The difficulty of fulfilling this task was reflected in THE THIRD TWO-LINE STRUGGLE.

On the one hand the socialist parties continued to push for the need of broad mass parties, especially the newly formed SPA which had close ties with the AFL. On the other hand, the Industrial Workers of the World, which understood the importance of industrial unionization, denied the need for any political party. Both trends denied the role of theory as a guide to action and neither was able to give the movement the leadership demanded.

Here, as elsewhere, the U.S. movement was guided forward by the leadership of the international communist movement, this time by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the only forces in the world who correctly grasped the link in the chain which moved world revolution forward. **LENIN LENDS A HAND**

The triumph of the Russian Revolution in October 1917 was a great source of



encouragement and of struggle among U.S. communists. Workers in various parts of the country took militant action in support of the October Revolution. Bolshevism spread to the U.S. quickly.

But most important, was the profound theoretical contributions Lenin made to the development of communism- contributions which provided the only guiding rudder in the turbulent development of Marxism in the early part of the 20th century. On at least two occasions, in 1915 in response to a Manifesto of the Socialist Propaganda League, and the second time in 1918, in the famous A LETTER TO AMERICAN WORKERS, Lenin offered direct and concrete guidance to the U.S. communist movement. The "American question" was always a question close to Lenin's attention, as his ALAYSIS OF AGRICULTURE IN THE U.S. indicates.

On numerous questions, the theoretical blows by Lenin were decisive in guiding the U.S. communist movement, regarding trade union policy, partial demands, the role of the farmers, the nature of the party of a new type. And most important, the nature of imperialism itself.

The formation of the Third International by Lenin was a powerful impetus toward unity in the U.S. communist movement, in that it opened up the U.S. movement to contact with communists from all over the world. The "21" points of affiliation to the Third International outlined by Lenin were guiding lights in the formation of the U.S. communist party - even through these "21" points were never officially endorsed by the U.S. communist movement. Both the CP and the CLP formed in 1919 were in fraternal relation to the Third International, though the Communist International in 1919 was still investigat-

ing the situation in the U.S., and had not assumed that either the CP or CLP were genuine parties of the proletariat.

In guiding the peasantry and working class of old Russia to the seizure of state power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin and the Bolsheviks correctly understood that, in the final stage of capitalist development, only a vanguard party of a new type could give the guidance and direction needed to defeat imperialism. In order to go into battle against the bourgeoisie - when it knows it is facing extinction - requires that the proletariat elect and consolidate its general staff, to direct the class in unity of will, discipline and action. Only with the highest form of class organization of the proletariat could there be the successful smashing of "reaction all down the line".

It was this task, to form a party of a new type, that faced the communists in the United States in 1919. With the external impetus of the October Revolution and the Third International, together with the internal struggles which had been developing in the Socialist Party of America, the conditions were ripe for a political and organizational advance in the U.S. communist movement.

A party of a new type must be the vanguard of the working class, its organized detachment, formed into the highest level of proletarian organization in order to be the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat, expressing the class's unity of will, which is completely incompatible with the existence of factions, and which fears no sacrifice in purging itself of opportunist elements in order to strengthen its fighting capabilities. These are the requirements of any communist party which will lead the working class to power against imperialism.

In the formation of a party of a new type, U.S. communists were faced with the task of throwing off the social democratic baggage of the past which still burdened the socialist movement. The nature of the elements which formed the early party demanded that they pay especially close attention to fulfilling these requirements by consciously striving to overcome the past. In 1919, the situation was:

- The Socialist Labor Party had been on the decline since 1904, having consolidated its sectarian dogmatic line toward socialism and failed completely to grasp the new stage of capitalist development, the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. It remained wholly a reformist party of the petty bourgeoisie.

- The IWW had all but disintegrated due to the internal lack of organization resulting from its anarcho-syndicalist leadership.

- The Socialist Party of America had become affiliated with the opportunist Second International. Hillquit, the leader of the SPA, had moved from a centrist to an open social chauvinist position on World War I, not unlike that of Kautsky.

- At the same time a left-wing had been developing within the SPA. It was this left-wing which began to take note of the lessons of the Bolshevik revolution and move towards establishing a proletarian party in the U.S. The struggle within the SPA revolved around three questions:

**First**, was whether to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Lenin advanced, or to trust in bourgeois democracy, as the Second International and Hillquit counseled;

**Second**, was the struggle to defend proletarian internationalism and to represent working class interests on the question of World War I, or to take up a social chauvinist line as did the SPA;

**Third**, was whether to support the decadent Second International or the new Third International.

It was over these questions that the left-wing split from the SPA in 1919, having laid out their views in the MANIFESTO AND PROGRAM OF THE LEFT-

WING SOCIALIST PARTY, LOCAL GREATER NEW YORK, in 1918.

The composition of party membership, the process of party formation and the federated nature of party unity at the outset were all to prove grave obstacles to the development of a genuine party of a new type in the U.S. The course of party development was:

- 1918 - publication of the MANIFESTO AND PROGRAM OF THE LEFT WING SOCIALIST PARTY, LOCAL GREATER NEW YORK, in which began to free itself from vacillation between reformism and "ultra-left" radicalism by means of an ever closer approach to the positions of Marxism-Leninism, by bring to the forefront the basic question of the present epoch - the question of the attitude of the proletariat to the capitalist state and the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

However, within the left-wing itself, two tendencies emerged, each leading to the formation of separate parties in 1919. One was the Communist Party, publishing the journal THE COMMUNIST, with an estimated 58,000 members. The other was the Communist Labor Party, publishing THE TOILERS, with an estimated membership of perhaps 12,000.

- 1919 - formation of the Communist Party of America, by the majority group from the SPA, who refused any contact with the old party, and the formation of the Communist Labor Party by the minority of the left-wing who convened after having been expelled from the SPA convention. These early parties were formed primarily on the basis of factions - which are nothing more than ideological centers within the party - a foundation which was to plague the party for more than a decade.

- 1921 - formation of the United Communist Party by a union of the CLP and a splinter from the CPA, already torn asunder by factionalism.

- 1921 - In May, under the guidance of the Communist International to which both Communist Parties had pledged their undivided allegiance, and forced by the conditions of the movement and the repression of the Palmer raids, unity between the two parties was achieved. Communist forces were, however, still very weak, even after the unification of both parties.

- 1921 - Later that same year, in the face of continued repression, the Worker's Party of America was formed in order to unite further the forces which were rapidly deserting the SPA and allow the Communist Party to function legally while the leading body of the party moved underground.

- 1923 - a convention of the Party decided definitely to dissolve the underground section of the Party and to allow the WPA the right, when conditions warranted it, to declare itself openly as the American section of the Communist International. From that time on, the WPA became the only communist party in the U.S. and the only U.S. section of the Comintern.

- 1925 - the fourth convention of the Worker's Party changed the name of the organization to Worker's (Communist) Party of America, and officially declared the party the U.S. section of the Comintern, and for the first time called for the re-organization of the party on the basis of shop nuclei. This was one of the first breaks with the methods of work inherited from the SPA.

All through this formative period, Lenin and the Third International provided the real guidance, the solutions to the problems which allowed the party to advance. It was the world experience and prestige of the Bolshevik party which cut through the then dominant outlook, which focused on the "specific" features of the U.S. labor movement and U.S. capitalism. If it is possible to imagine those years without a Communist International (which, of course, is impossible), the strug-

# BRIEF CHRONOLOGY\* OF THE Workers' & Communist Movement

\*International events are in italics.  
U.S. events are in scribe.

## ★(1780-1800)

1786- First known strike by printers in Philadelphia.  
1790- Population: 4,000,000(201,655, urban).  
1792- First known labor union, that of Philadelphia shoemakers.

## ★(1800-1820)

1800-1847- *Utopian Socialists (Saint Simon, Fourier, Owen, etc.)-voiced disillusionment of the masses with the "bitterly disillusioning caricatures" of bourgeois "Liberty, equality, and fraternity". Immature stage of capitalist production was reflected in immature theories. Utopian thinkers made great contribution to thinking of modern proletariat, but were inevitably unscientific (idealist).*

1800- Population: 5,300,000(322,370, urban).  
1802- First use of state militia (NY) to break sailors' strike.  
1806- Trial against same union for conspiring to raise wages.  
1819- Crisis of capitalism

## ★(1820-1840)

1820- Population: 9,638,000(693,255, urban).  
1827- First central labor body, the Mechanics Union of Trade Associations, founded in Philadelphia as a result of a strike for the ten hour day.  
1829- New York Workingmen's Party formed; one of its leaders, Francis Wright, wrote of its aims, "What distinguished the present form from every other struggle in which the human race has been engaged, is that the present is, evidently, openly and acknowledgedly, a war of class and that this war is universal."  
1831- Nat Turner led rebellion of Black slaves.

1834- *League of Outlaws founded in Paris; secret organization of about 200 German handicraftsmen aimed at the overthrow of princely rule in Germany.*

First national trade union center formed, the National Trades Union.  
1836- 300,000 workers in unions.  
1837- Crisis of capitalism.

## ★(1840-1860)

2/7/1840- *German Workers' Educational Society founded in London, attracts other European refugees (thus becoming an international communist society); motto on membership cards printed in 20 languages: "All men are brothers".*

English law on prison for debtors abolished.

Population: 17,069,000 (1,845,055, urban).

President Van Buren, yielding to working class pressure, ordered the ten-hour day in U.S. Navy Yards. Various states followed with ten-hour laws, which were not very effective except where workers struck.  
1845- First industrial congress of workers, capitalists and the church called by the utopians.

1847- *First congress of League of Communists in Brussels.*

## Dec.1847-Jan.1848 The Communist Manifesto

*published by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, gave the first detailed and theoretical programme of the modern communist movement. THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO: This scientific formulation marks a great leap in human thought by transforming history, through scientific analysis, into a weapon of the modern proletariat. It is a culmination of the most advanced currents of 19th century European thought.*

2/24/1848- *French revolution, which triggered bourgeois revolutions in Italy, Germany, Hungary, and many other European countries.*  
June 1948- *First great battle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in Paris, where the bourgeoisie ruthlessly crushed the proletarian insurrection.*

★1852- The Proletarian League founded in New York by Joseph Wedemeyer, Frederick Sorge and Adolph Douai, among others, to develop a class-conscious outlook among the militant American working class and to struggle against American exceptionalism, which held that conditions in the U.S. made Marxism invalid, and against sectarianism, which held that the political inferiority of the working class made for the revolution to be led by and based on the needs of other classes.

In the spring of 1852, Joseph Wedemeyer published a monthly, DIE REVOLUTION, the second number of which consists of Marx's EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE.

1857- Crisis of capitalism.

## ★(1860-1880)

1860- U.S. is second largest manufacturer in the world.

Population: 31,443,000(6,216,518, urban) of whom 1,311,000 were factory workers.

1861-1865- Civil War marked end of expansion of territory for slavocracy, stimulated growth in heavy industry and transports.

## 9-28-1864 International Workingmen's Association

*the first International formed by Marx and Engels in London. Marx drew up its programme "broad enough to be acceptable to the English Trades' Unions, to the followers of Proudhon in France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain, and to the Lassalleans in Germany" trusting, as a result of combined effort, the intellectual development of the working class.*

11/29/1864- *Central Council of IWA adopted Marx's "Address of the International Workingmen's Association to Abraham Lincoln", congratulating him on his reelection and demanding that he prosecute the war with all speed, that the matter of emancipation might be settled. Marx urged Wedemeyer to organize a group of German-Americans to fight in the Civil War.*

*Marx delivers his lecture,*

*WAGES, PRICE AND PROFIT, laying the groundwork for an analysis of capitalist economy.*

KKK formed.

1866-1877- Reconstruction; its defeat marked the formation of the Black nation.

★1866 Eight-hour day first put forward.

National Labor Union formed, led by William Sylvis.

## Sept. 14, 1867 Publication of Capital

*Vol.1, in German in Hamburg, the first scientific elaboration of the nature of capitalism.*

1867-1875- Many strikes of Black workers.

1868- *Tsarist agent, Bakunin, joined IWA to undermine it from within.*

*Swiss miners win a strike with the support of an international solidarity movement organized by the IWA in Belgium, England, France, and Germany.*

7/3-4/1869- *Bavarian Social-Democratic Party organized along principles of the International.*

9/7-11/1869- *Bakunists and Proudhonists defeated at Basel Congress.*

National Colored Labor Union formed by Blacks out of frustration with NLU's neglect of their interests.

Knights of Labor founded organized skilled and unskilled, white and Black workers with high level of militancy despite conservative leader Terence Powderly.

1870- *Marx's address on the Franco-Prussian war calls on workers to take an international rather than a national position and for German workers to protest Prussian annexation of Alsace-Lorraine.*

## Mar. 18 - May 28, 1871

### Paris Commune

*The communist movement in a period of development with struggle between the classes at a high level.*

*Marx gave every possible assistance, including the mobilisation of the First International toward supporting the workers' insurrection in Paris, the total effect being the scientific formulation of the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

Nov. 18/1- In a letter to F. Bolte, Marx urged Americans to put an end to sectarian and amateur groups, stating: "the development of socialist sectarianism and that of the real working class movement always stand in inverse ratio to each other."

1872- *The sectarians attempted a takeover of the First International after the defeat of the Paris Commune and at a time when the First International was already troubled by the harassment of reactionary European officials. Marx relocated and organized the headquarters in New York, and dissolved it in Philadelphia in 1876.*

★ 1873 Most profound crisis of capitalism in 19th century. Wages were cut in half, union membership was greatly reduced. Of thirty national or international craft unions, only nine remained fully effective.  
1874-1875- Seven-months coal miners strike gave rise to "Molly Maguires", secret workers' defense organization against mine owners' terror and use of Pinkerton as detectives and provocateurs against strikers.

1875- CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHA PROGRAMME written by Marx to combat opportunist tendencies in the German Social-Democratic Party and provide correct methods to write communists. Opportunists included Hochberg and Bernstein, who wanted to compromise their principles to the Lassalleans and turn scientific socialism into moral earnestness, and struggle continued against anarchists, Bakunin and Most.  
1877- ANTI-DUHRING, published by Frederick Engels, is another polemical work which grew out of these ideological struggles.

Socialist Labor Party founded in a merger between the Social Democratic Workingmen's Association, last remnant of the First International, and the Illinois Labor Party. Marx and Engels continually urged the SLP to break out of their isolation and bring revolutionary theory into the mass movement of the American working class. As late as the 1880's, SLP meetings were conducted entirely in German, both locally and nationally.

First big railroad strike (Baltimore and Ohio) attacked by Pennsylvania militia and federal troops, killing dozens of workers. Strikers seized and ruled St. Louis for two weeks.  
1879- Standard Oil is formed.

★(1880-1900)

1880- Population: 50,155,783 (14,129,735, urban) of whom 2,733,000 were factory workers.

1881- Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions which became in 1886 the American Federation of Labor.

1883- Death of Karl Marx.

Total union membership is 200,000.

1884- Cotton-oil trust formed.  
1885- Crisis of capitalism.  
1886- Union membership nearly one million.  
General strike for the eight-hour day. Provocateur throws bomb at Haymarket Square demonstration. Anarchists framed.  
1887- Whisky-sugar-lead trusts.

1889 Second International founded

and adopted May 1st as the international May Day festival of the working class. Grew in struggle against French "possibilists" (who said it is possible to reform capitalism from inside parliament without destroying it) and Liebknecht, Bebel, etc., who were ready to compromise with opportunism.

Daniel DeLeon forged unity in SLP with dogmatic approach to Marxism and a purely ballot box socialism. Dual unionism begun with founding of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance  
1890- United Mine Workers formed.  
1892- Homestead strike of Carnegie Company steel workers broken by militia. Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers largest union with 24,068 members.  
1893- Crisis of capitalism.  
American Railway Union formed, led by Eugene Debs, in less than one year had 465 branches with over 150,000 members. Organized Pullman(general) strike in 1894, squashed by the

crass opportunism of Gompers and the AFL.  
1894- U.S. #1 in world industrial output.  
1898- Socialist Party of America formed by dissidents in SLP opposed to dual unionism, for work within AFL but also for peaceful transition to socialism and electoral politics.

First congress of Russian Social Democratic Labor Party.

10/3-8/1898- At Stuttgart Congress of German Social Democratic party Eduard Bernstein began to expound his revisionist programme crystallized in the catch-phrases, "freedom to criticize Marxism" and "the movement is everything".

1898-1915- Struggle within Second International against revisionism (Bernstein, Millerand, etc.) and the conciliators (Kautsky, Luxembourg, Liebknecht, Bebel, etc.).

1898- Spanish-American War marks beginning of U.S. imperialist expansion.

★ (1900-1920)

1900- Crisis of capitalism in Europe.

Population: 75,995,000 (30,159,921, urban).

★ 1901 - Lenin writes WHAT IS TO BE DONE to combat economism and unite Russian Marxists,

U.S. Steel Co. formed.

The Socialist Party of America was formed of dissidents from the SLP opposing the dogmatism of DeLeon, of the old Western Social Democratic Party and of radical elements in the populist movement, headed by Eugene Debs, Morris Hillquit, and Victor Berger. By 1912 it had nearly 135,000 members and was dominated by a Fabian socialist outlook of peaceful transition to socialism, with electoral politics as its main thrust.

1903- Second Congress of Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party.

Beginning of era of Leninism.

1905- Bourgeois democratic revolution against autocracy in Russia.

With founding of IWW "left" opportunism temporarily won out in the face of open right opportunism in the vanguard of the movement. Basis: There are two classes in society and the working class must band together and bring down the capitalist system but like AFL and others, IWW rejected political struggle in any form and rejected proletarian theory. Pragmatic approach that trade union organization is enough dominated but was still the most revolutionary and active force at the time.

1907- Crisis of capitalism.

1910- Population: 91,000,000(41,998,932, urban).

Clayton Act passed stating Sherman Act cannot be used against labor, but did not settle the issue.

1911- Sun Yat Sen leading Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution.

1912- IWW led Lawrence woolen mill strike.

1913-14- Crisis of capitalism.

1914- Collapse of Second International.  
1914-1918- World War I.  
1915- Zimmerwald Conference was a meeting of pacifist and revolutionary socialists at which Lenin organized the revolutionary elements into a line to struggle against the opportunist majority which took a centrist line on the question of imperialist war. Centrists: Kautsky, Trotsky. Revolutionary elements: Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxembourg.

4/20/1916- Ludlow Massacre in which eleven children and two women killed Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (Rockefeller) during strike by UMWA. Miners were evicted and living in tent colony which was machine-gunned and burned.

Lenin, while leading the revolutionary movement in Russia, wrote

1916

Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism

the first scientific analysis of imperialism and exposure of the nature of imperialist wars.

Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings framed for bombing. They were labor organizers on United Railroads (later Market Street Railroad) of San Francisco, and their framing led to a world-wide campaign for their vindication and release. Due to public pressure, their death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. They were released in 1939 and Mooney died in 1942.

1917 February and October Revolutions USSR

"The world significance of the October Revolution lies not only in the fact that it constitutes a great beginning made by one country in causing a breach in the system of imperialism and that it is the first centre of socialism in the ocean of imperialist countries, but also in that it constitutes the first stage of the world revolution and a mighty base for its further development", Stalin.



MARXIST-LENINIST

Frame-up and execution of Joe Hill.

12/31/1918-1/1/1919- Formation of German Communist Party after victory of bourgeois revolution in Germany.  
 2/14/1919- League of Nations formed.  
 1917-1923- Revolutionary struggles in Germany, Hungary, Turkey, Bulgaria, China, India, Korea, etc.

**Mar 2-6, 1919**  
**Founding Congress of Third International**

Cost of living up 104% from 1914.

DuPont de Nemours Company cleared \$255,000,000. clear profits in five years.

Wilson Palmer raids (up to 20 years) for saying it was not a war for democracy.

Seattle General Strike began with walkout of shipyard workers. Unions held city. Surrendered to threat of martial law.

★ **1919** - CLP formed with views similar to those of the CP (see 9/1/1919) and a similar line on dual unionism, rejection of alliances and partial demands and failure to grasp the oppression of Blacks as a national question. Membership: 12,000

★ **1919** - CP formed by left wing of SPA led by Charles Ruthenberg opposed to opportunist view of state as mediator, of war as patriotic, and of allegiance to the social-chauvanist Second International over the Third International. Membership: 58,000.  
 9/22/1919- Great Steel Strike of 365,000 workers, demanding eight-hour day, abolition of 24-hour shift, and abolition of company unions, among others. Strike called off on 1/8/1920.

John Reed is U.S. representative to Third International.

Open shop drive and "Criminal Syndicalism" laws in most states.

★ (1920-1940)

1920- Red International of Labor Unions.  
 7/17-8/7/1920- Second congress of Third International.

Population: 105,700,000(54,157,973, urban), predominantly urban for the first time.

C.P. and C.L.P. merged to form the United Communist Party.

Sacco and Vanzetti arrested and framed for a \$15,000. payroll robbery in which a guard died. After seven years of mass international protest, the two anarchists and foreign-born workers(a shoemaker and a fisherman) were executed in August 1927.

Trade Union Educational League organized in opposition to conservative policies of AFL leaders.

1921- CPC formed.  
 6/22-7/12/1921- Third congress of Third International.

Workers Party of America formed as above-ground form of CP.

Crisis of capitalism.  
 IWW is thoroughly anarchist.

1922- Mussolini seizes power in Italy.  
 11/5-12/5/1922- Fourth Congress of CI.

Railroad strike of 400,000. Crushed by federal injunctions and special police.

National strike of UMW. Over 600,000 miners out for four months and over 150,000 out for another month.

Open confrontation with mine "detectives" and federal troops.  
 6/7/1923- Underground section of CP dissolved.

Company union drive. AFL leaders try to convince employers they can do better job for them. Period of labor banking and insurance companies and "B and O Plan" for union participation in speedup.

1/21/1924-Death of Lenin.

LaFollette campaign. Factional struggles going on.

6/17-7/8/1924- Fifth congress of CI calling for factory nuclei.

FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM written to combat opposition.

3/21-4/6/1925- Fifth Enlarged Plenum of ECCI adopted resolutions on Bolshevization.

★ **1925** CP emerged openly as Workers (Communist) Party of America with 16,000 members and called for organization on the basis of shop nuclei.

1926- Alliance of Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev to wreck CPSU and socialist construction.

Charles Ruthenberg died, Chairman CPUSA.

1927- Fifth convention of CPUSA- move to start working in basic and trustified industries and establish shop groups.

1928- Trial of Trotsky and Co.  
 ★ **1928** -Sixth congress of CI. Forum for militant struggle between Marxism-Leninism and various revisionist trends. Stalin makes correct prediction about world crisis and new wave of workers' struggles. Bukharin opposed line of sharpening of class struggle to cover his own collaboration with kulak class.

10/27/1928- James Cannon and his Trotskyite followers expelled (about 100) from CPUSA.

June 1929- Jay Lovestone and Benjamin Gitlow expelled.

CP membership: 9,642.  
 Autumn 1929- Beginning great crisis. 1929-1934- Iron and steel production down 85%; 30% unemployed (16,000,000) by November 1933; farm product prices down 66%, monopoly prices remained relatively high.

1929- Trade Union Educational League becomes Trade Union Unity League.

Comintern action to resolve factionalism- Browder takes over as only element able to mediate the two right opportunist factions.

1930- Comintern Resolution on the Black National Question in the U.S.  
 Viet Nam Workers Party formed.

7th Party Convention of CPUSA formulates concentration policy.

3/6/1930- National Unemployed Marches led by communists: In New York 110,000 people demonstrate; across the country one quarter million.

1931- CP has 18,000 members.  
 Defense of Scottsboro boys, nine Black youths framed for rape in the South. International protest eventually resulted in their release, the last in 1950.

1932- National Veterans' Bonus March CP has 14,000 members.

7/11/1932- Angelo Herndon, Black communist, jailed for organizing Black and white unemployed workers in the South.

June 1933- N.R.A. theoretically gave labor right to organize in Section 7(a).

July 1933- Open Letter of CPUSA to all members issued by the Extraordinary Conference.

August 1933- Social Security Act.

1933- Hitler seizes power in Germany.

1934- Period of strikes: 10,000 Alabama coal miners, 475,000 textile workers, 25,000 New Jersey silk dye workers, 1000 Akron tire and rubber workers, 30,000 New York taxi drivers.

1934-36- Recognition of locals of Dining Car Employees Union(Black and white) affiliated to Hotel and Restaurant Employees by Railway Unions.

1934-San Francisco General Strike.

★ **1934** Eighth Convention of CPUSA in Cleveland. Browder says, "Communism is 20th century Americanism."  
 CP has 24,500 members.

1934-1939- Liquidation of CP Control Commission, of fractions in mass organizations and of organizations such as the Tenants Leagues, the Unemployed Councils and of the Negro Congress.

★ **1939** - Seventh Congress of the CI. Georgi Dimitroff smashed line that fascism is revolt of middle



**COMMUNISTS UNITE!**

classes and proposed general line of organising a workers united front which could mobilise around itself a people's front of intellectuals, farmers and other democratic sections of the masses under the leadership of the proletariat to isolate the main enemy and combat fascism and war.

1935- N.R.A. declared unconstitutional.

Wagner Act passed: Right to collective bargaining through labor unions.

CIO formed; Trade Union Unity League dissolved.

1936- Spanish Civil War.

Mussolini invades Ethiopia.

West Coast Maritime Strike.

First sit-down strike of United Rubber Workers at Goodyear Tire.

Ninth Convention of the CPUSA surrendered leadership in the united front. Party membership: 41,000.

1937- U.A.W. formed (44 day sit-down strike).

CPUSA has 40,000 members.

1938- Crisis of capitalism.

Hitler invades Austria.

Dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

1939- Soviet-German non-aggression pact.

CPUSA liquidates its shop nuclei. Party membership: 80,000.

Franco to power in Spain.

★(1940-1960)

1940- Population: 131,669,000 (74,423,000 urban).

Smith act regarding advocating violence and registration of non-citizens. CPUSA expelled all non-citizens (4000 members).

Voorhis Act deprived the CPUSA of the right of international affiliation.

CPUSA leaves the CI in response to the Voorhis Act.

6/22/1941- Fascists invade U.S.S.R.

12/7/1941- Attack on Pearl Harbor.

1941- F.D. Roosevelt announces a no-strike pledge by the AFL and CIO for the duration of the war.

1942- United Steel Workers organized.

1942-43- Stalingrad.

1943- Party of Labor of Albania formed.

★ 1943 CI dissolved to maximize the unity and growth of the communist movement.

10/16/1943- Young Communist League dissolved.

Dec. 1943- Teheran agreement on the opening of the western front.

Bridgeport speech in which Browder presented his revisionist Teheran policy.

1944- Browder publishes, Teheran, Our Path in War and Peace, an open declaration of modern revisionism and liquidationism.

★ 1944 CPUSA dissolved at its Twelfth Convention.

6/6/1944- Opening of the western front.

1944- Sam Darcy expelled for opposing the dissolution of the CPUSA.

5/20/1945- Duclos letter received.

★ 1945 Restoration of the CPUSA under W.Z. Foster.

8/15/1945- End of W.W.II

Beginning of rise of wave of national liberation struggles. World basically split into two camps: anti-imperialist democratic camp vs. anti-democratic imperialist camp.

U.S. emerges from W.W.II as number one imperialist power.

1946- CPUSA has 52,824 members.

Earl Browder expelled.

G.M. strike of 3½ months.

9/29/1946- Ruth McKenney, William Dunne, Vern Smith and Bruce Minton expelled for firm Marxist-Leninist stand against right opportunism. Later in 1946- Burt Sutta expelled for so-called "leftism".

★ 1947 - Rise of Titoist revisionism  
In November, Yugoslav revisionists under Tito attempt to reduce Albania to a colony. Enver Hoxha leads the resistance.

June 1947- Taft-Hartley Act: abolished closed shops, required 60-day strike notice, outlawed mass picketing and secondary boycotts, re-established use of injunctions and suits for "unfair" labor practices of unions, denied use of union funds for political purposes and forced union officials to sign affidavits declaring they weren't communists.

Bi-annual Convention of CPUSA abolished.

Harrison George expelled from the party.

★ 1947 - Warsaw Conference of nine communist parties in Europe important in charting the course of class struggle against U.S. imperialism after W.W.II.  
Formation of the Communist Information Bureau.

Rise of the socialist camp.  
Marshall Plan begun.

May 1948-State of Israel carved out of Palestinian territory.

5/4/1948- Letter of CC of CPSU(B) to CC of CP of Yugoslavia criticizing anti-Sovietism, the line leading to restoration of capitalism and the violations of Leninist norms in inner party life.

June 1948- The Communist Information Bureau (representing the Communist Parties of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Poland, France, Italy and Czechoslovakia) wrote "Concerning the situation in the CP Yugoslavia". It criticized the theory that small scale agriculture does not give rise to capitalism and the line of buying and selling land and wage labor and that the peasantry constitutes the leading force, etc.

1948- Twelve members of the National Board of the CPUSA indicted under the Smith Act.

**Oct 1, 1949 Chinese Revolution.**

liberates a third of the world's people.

1949- Child labor was directly prohibited for the first time in the U.S.

CIO anti-communist drive culminated in expulsion of two unions in 1949 and nine others in 1950. The International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (IUE) was created to replace the expelled United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE).

1950- U.S. perpetrates war of aggression against the Korean people.

A.F. of L. declared a yearlong series of observances 100 years after the birth of Samuel Gompers.  
9/23/1950- McCarren Act passed requiring registration of members of communist organizations. It also provided that in case of "declaration of war" or "insurrection" the government could detain "subversives" without previous trial.

1951- Ethel and Julius Rosenberg framed for alleged atomic espionage

and executed in 1953 marked the period of the "red scare" and McCarthy hearings.

1952- In *ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF SOCIALISM IN THE USSR* Stalin correctly analyzed that there are contradictions between relations of production and productive forces under socialism and opposed line of revisionist theoreticians who deny decisive role of relations of production.

1952- Steelworkers strike for 8 weeks. Government seizes steel industry, but when Supreme Court held the President had exceeded his constitutional powers, the strike resumed.

1953- Korean armistice.  
Death of Stalin; Krushchov comes to power in U.S.S.R. and begins to restore capitalism.

1953- George Meany succeeded the defunct William Green as President of the A.F. of L. and Walter Reuther was named President of the CIO after Philip Murray's death.

1954- Dien Bien Phu.

Supreme Court decision on school desegregation and Little Rock.

1955- Krushchov rejects decision of Communist Information Bureau and travels to Belgrade, opposes socialist collectivization of countryside and democratic centralism in the Party.

Bandung Conference of Afro-Asiatic countries recently liberated.

Montgomery bus boycott (Rosa Parks).

A.F. of L. and C.I.O. merge, representing 16,000,000 workers or over 85% of the union membership in the U.S.

1956- Suez invasion.

★ 1956 20th Party Congress of CPSU(B) presents fierce attack on fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, calls for "peaceful competition between the two systems", "peaceful transition to socialism" and declared Yugoslavia a socialist country.

Counter-revolution in Hungary not completely destroyed by Soviet troops sent only under great pressure from below.

1957- Mao Tsetung wrote *ON THE CORRECT HANDLING OF CONTRADICTIONS* in response to modern revisionism.

★ 1957 - Moscow Conference marked a victory for the Marxist-Leninist forces in the struggle against revisionism which it identified as the principle danger to the international communist movement, summed up experience of international communist movement and universal laws of socialist revolution and socialist construction and defined common tasks of the communist and workers parties.

16th Party Convention of the CPUSA united three different factions and included, on invitation, a wide range from Musteites to Trotskyites. Touched off a mass exodus from the party.

Provisional Organizing Committee to reconstitute a Marxist-Leninist Party formed from an ex-party caucus as was the Progressive Labor Movement.

1958- Great Leap Forward in People's Republic of China, anticipating the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

1959- W.Z. Foster sick and to Soviet Union where he died. Gus Hall took over for Gene Dennis as General Secretary.

Beginning of voter registration drive for Blacks (Fayette County, Tennessee).

★(1960-1975)

1960- Cuban Revolution. Soviet Union accepts "international" control over Soviet ships and Cuban territory in so-called "missile crisis" in 1962.

U.N. into Congo with Soviet support.



- ★ 1960 - Bucharest Meeting - CPSU attempts to have CPC expelled with no success.
- ★ 1960 - Moscow Meeting of 81 Parties at which the CPC and the PLA severely criticized the revisionist line and were able to win a number of communist parties to their position, forcing the revisionists to retreat again.

1960- Student sit-ins and freedom rides in South; SNCC and SDS founded.

October 1961- Krushchov publicly attacks PLA. Enver Hoxha analyzes deterioration in Albanian-Soviet relations as due to the anti-Marxist and great state chauvinist policy pursued by Krushchov and his revisionist group and called on the CC of the CPSU to rectify the situation. The answer was a rupture of diplomatic relations with Albania.

1961- Robert Williams calls for armed self-defense for Blacks.

October 1962- PLA launched a big campaign to bring the truth about revisionism to the international communist movement.

- ★ 1963- A PROPOSAL CONCERNING THE GENERAL LINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, drawn up under the supervision of Mao Tsetung, marked the dissolution of the socialist camp and the split of many genuine communists from the revolutionary parties (Australia, Brazil, England, Italy, Peru, Spain, among others).
- 5/25/1963- Founding of the Organization of African Unity and adoption of May 25 as African Liberation Day.
- August 1963- Krushchov signed treaty on partial banning of nuclear weapons.
- 1964- Krushchov removed from power in order to prevent total defeat for the anti-Marxist line and Brezhnev and Kossygin installed.
- U.S. bombs D.R.V.

Harlem revolt, Berkeley Free Speech movement, Mississippi Summer

- ★ 1965 Malcolm X murdered on February 21
- First National Anti-War March.

## 1966 Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

in which millions of workers, peasants and youths, led by Chairman Mao and the CPC seized power from the handful of revisionists who were taking the capitalist road. Solved many problems of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

1968- Soviet revisionists further exposed by invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Tet offensive.

1968 on- Founding of "anti-revisionist" communist organizations.

- ★ 1970 - Mao Tsetung's May 20th Statement on a "weak nation can defeat a big."
- 6/10/1969- Formation of Provisional Revolutionary Government.
- Oct. 21, 1971- China admitted to United Nations
- 1971- U.S. forced to return to gold standard, first trade deficit since 1893.
- 1973- Beginning of current depression.
- 9/10/1974- Independence for Guinea Bissau.
- 4/18/1975- Victory in Cambodia against U.S. and Soviet Social Imperialism.
- 4/30/1975- Total victory won by the people of VietNam after 30 years national liberation struggle.
- 6/25/1975- Independence for Mozambique.
- 7/5/1975- Independence for Republic of Cape Verde, for the Republic of the Comoro Islands, and for the Democratic Republic of SaoTome and Principe.

Cont. from p. 14

gles for communist unity would have been infinitely more protracted, wasteful and harmful than was actually the case. Consequently a unified and single communist party was materialized in the United States in shorter time, less painfully, than would have been the case without the assistance of Lenin and the Comintern.

However, many of the weaknesses of the left wing of the SPA were carried into the party. While the syndicalist line had been defeated, many of the party's top leaders, Foster, Cannon, Haywood, and others had their roots in the anarcho-syndicalism of the earlier period, with its corresponding blind faith in the spontaneous struggle of the masses. The position of the Party on the Black question remained chauvinist, being essentially based on a bourgeois "racial" understanding of the questions facing the Black masses, and were in no way different than the view put forward by Debs and Hillquit of the SPA. Up until the late 1920's there were less than fifty Black members of the CP.

The party had lost some 7,000 members between 1925 and 1929, falling to a membership of 9,000. The party tended to focus on abstract political agitation and was concerned almost completely with propaganda. It was not until 1927, that the party moved to begin to work in basic industry and establish shop organization - even though the Comintern had counseled this as early as 1924. There existed no formal, trade union secretaries in the party at the time.

The early left socialism had laid a fertile field for all kinds of reformist tendencies to sow seed. There remained the tendency to focus attention on parliamentary reform, as evidenced by the work of the Party in the LaFollette campaign in 1924.

The life of the party was dominated from 1925 through 1929, when the Comintern intervened, with brewing factional dispute between the Ruthenberg-Pepper-Lovestone and the Bittelmann-Cannon-Foster factions.

There was no basis of Party unity until a struggle against factionalism had been launched. On October 27, 1928 the Trotskyites led by James P. Cannon, Max Schachtman, and M. Abern. along with about 100 Cannon followers, were expelled from the Party. They followed exactly the position of Trotsky, presented at the Sixth Comintern.

But beneath the "left" danger lurked the basis for rightism, the American exceptionalism advanced by Jay Lovestone (who had come into the CPUSA from the SPA). The theory of American exceptionalism stated, in essence, - just months before the financial crisis - that, while there might be a crisis looming internationally, in the U.S. there would be no crisis. Therefore, concluded Lovestone, capitalism was solving man's problems and there would be no need for class struggle in the U.S. Lovestone held that the industrialization of the South would automatically solve the Black National Question by making proletarians of the Blacks (a line the Revolutionary Union, now the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, was to take up forty years later).

In 1929, a letter from the Comintern to the DAILY WORKER of May 20, summed up the views of Lovestone vividly, "A CRISIS OF CAPITALISM, BUT NOT OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM; A SWING OF THE MASSES TO THE LEFT, BUT NOT IN AMERICA; A NECESSITY OF STRUGGLING AGAINST THE RIGHT DANGER, BUT NOT IN THE AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTY."

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FACTIONALISM

In 1929, the Communist International conducted a commission of the Presidium of the ECCI on the CPUSA as part of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International.

The Sixth CI reflected on the rapid-

the growing right danger in the capitalist countries, based upon the decay of capitalist stabilization.

Comrade Stalin pointed out in these proceedings that the CPUSA was "guilty of the fundamental error of exaggerating the specific features of American capitalism," and pointed to the "evil of factionalism" which dominated the Party. In this classic statement, Comrade Stalin offered the advice of the ECCI to the CPUSA to Bolshevize itself, and root out the deep-seated factionalism, which he identified as the "fundamental evil of the American Communist Party".

The guidance offered by the Comintern proved to be the turning point for the Party. Together with the rapidly sharpening conditions of class struggle, the Party took up the advance of the CI and began to move the Party toward being a party of the masses.

Of particular importance to our study of the struggle between Marxism and opportunism is Comrade Stalin's view that the CPUSA "lives and will continue to live, in spite of the prophecies of the comrades of the American delegation". In other words, that Comrade Stalin considered both factions to be equally at fault. In fact, Comrade Stalin says of Foster's alliance with the Cannon group, "Did not Comrade Foster know that he should have held aloof from the concealed Trotskyites that were in his group? Why, in spite of repeated warnings, did he not repudiate them at that time? Because in the factional fight against the Lovestone group, even the concealed Trotskyites might be useful to him..." (Stalin, J.V., STALIN'S SPEECHES ON THE AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTY, Proletarian Publishers, S.F., U.S.A., p.28).

As this passage might suggest, the struggle between Marxism and opportunism was hardly purged with the expulsion of Lovestone. Though Lovestone was purged from the Party-it would be mistaken for us to assume that factionalism was purged from the Party. In fact, it was to develop, and re-emerge in the mid-1940's along very similar lines, as was the method of dealing with the rectification of the Party.

The opportunist trend in the Party was glossed over by the over-identification of revisionism with Lovestone. To use personification as an attack against opportunism is a conciliation with opportunism. This amounts to belittling the need to carry out a thorough going rectification of the party and reflects the lack of an objective analysis of the material source of this trend. The CPUSA historically has used this ruse in order to gloss over mistakes and the deep opportunist basis of Party errors. In this way the historical idealists of the CPUSA have traditionally maintained the safety of their position by guarding the interests of the bourgeoisie.

The FOURTH major two-line struggle in the U.S., the struggle of Marxism-Leninism against reformism and Social Democracy, had given birth to the Party.

The FIFTH major two-line struggle of Marxism-Leninism against Trotskyism and "American exceptionalism", was merely a continuation of the earlier fight in a new form, as a struggle against the factions which had become consolidated around the old socialist circles.

- 1930 - the seventh convention of the party marked the beginning of the party's second stage. By mid-1929, the factionalism which plagued the party and had stifled the genuine work of a communist party had been somewhat suppressed with the defeat of Lovestone's revisionism and the purging of the Trotskyites. This next period in the party's history was to be the test of whether the newly named Communist Party of the U.S.A. would Bolshevize itself, and lay the foundation for the revolutionary advance of the proletariat, by building the revolutionary movement in the United States for the

victory of the world revolution, or would merge back into the stream of Social-Democracy.

It is at this point, that the leadership of Earl Browder appears. Browder was promoted to party leadership as a bridge between the two factions in the party, as a compromise. His task was not to smash the existing factions - nor was any rectification campaign launched - but simply to take the reins of the party to alleviate the strife.

This compromise did not eliminate the federated nature of the party, nor establish a center of will, action and discipline which the whole membership could follow. As we have noted, the party grew out of several heterogeneous, theoretically weak groups: Intellectuals from the SPA and SLP and workers from the IWW. Most of the workers in the party were from the light industries with narrow craft outlooks. Almost the full membership from the earlier socialist parties were from the confederated foreign-born sections.

The party had a long struggle ahead in dealing with these left-overs from the past. Without a marked change in the nature of the party's composition, which reflected its small influence among the masses, the possibility of forging the vanguard of the proletariat into a truly Bolshevized weapon for victory was impossible.

Given direction by the Comintern and pushed by the rising militancy of the working class, the communist party began to move towards mass action and toward playing a role in the Black liberation struggle. However, the party leadership with its social-democratic outlook, continued to underestimate the revolutionary character of the working class and the revolutionary potential of the Black liberation struggle.

One example of this underestimation came out clearly when, in the early thirties, the CP sponsored several Lenin Memorial services throughout the major cities of the U.S. In nearly every city, four or five times the number of workers as the CP planned for arrived to commemorate the great leader of the proletariat. Where the party had rented halls capable of holding 1,500, upwards of eight or ten thousand workers jammed the aisles and even paid their respect to Comrade Lenin while waiting in the streets.

Another example of underestimating the revolutionary character of the working class is the way in which the all in the early thirties were street demonstrations, primarily spontaneous in nature, and very weakly organized, with the turnout of workers far exceeding the expectations of the organizers. Nearly one and a quarter million workers came out for the first unemployment march on March 6, 1930, catching the CP leadership completely by surprise.

Both of these events reflect the party's lack of roots in the class. SIXTH CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL (July 17-September 1, 1928)

The C.I. performed a valuable service to the U.S. working class with its analysis of the Black National Question contained in the 1928 and 1930 Resolutions on the Negro National Question. These Resolutions - which were drafted with the participation of Black communists from the U.S. - provided the theoretical basis for correct Marxist-Leninist work in the U.S. for the first time.

Secondly, the C.I. established clarity on the impending economic crisis and the tasks of the communist parties in that period.

At the Sixth Congress the Comintern adopted its first fully developed program; at the Fifth Congress in 1924, the draft of the program had been put forward and the next years were spent in thorough discussion and working out of the programmes' details by all national sections. The programme laid out the nature of the world system of

capitalism and the general crisis; put forward the ultimate aim - World Communism; outlined the economic and social transitional aims during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, with an outline of the transitional form of the State; a statement of national and colonial policy; described the stages of development in the Soviet Union; and from this stated the strategy and tactics of the Communist International: The struggle against distortions of Marxism and the work of the Party in each country to win the most important sections of the proletariat to the revolution. Clearly, without this guiding line the communist movement in the U.S. would have been unable to rise to meet the needs of the working class during the greatest economic crisis of U.S. imperialism.

#### SCOTTSBORO AND THE BLACK NATIONAL QUESTION

In 1931, based upon its correct line on the national question, the CPUSA was able to make its first breakthrough in the Black liberation struggle in the U.S., when the Party took up the struggle around the Scottsboro frame-up, of nine Black youths accused of raping two white women. Scottsboro was but a single expression of the whole system of national oppression of Black people. Taking place in the midst of the crisis and the deepening ferment of the masses, this case dramatized in all its harshness, the brutal character of the imperialist offensive against the Black masses. Scottsboro raised in the most acute manner fundamental questions affecting the lives of all of the Black nation; lynching, peonage, Jim-Crowism, denial of human rights - the whole system of national oppression, which, as a result of the crisis, had been intensified.

The Communist Party proceeded from the basic understanding of the Scottsboro case as a part of the national oppression of the Black masses - not merely a case of nine boys but a case of nine Black boys, persecuted as members of an oppressed nation. Hence the struggle for the complete freedom of the Scottsboro boys could be effective only if linked up with the struggle against the whole system which breeds similar Scottsboros, and by involving in this struggle the broadest masses of Black and white toilers. To make Scottsboro a decisive battle on the whole front of Black liberation: This was the aim of the Party.

The tactics of the Communist Party were: No reliance on the capitalist courts, the instruments of class and national oppression; on the contrary, it carried on the sharpest fight against all democratic and legalistic illusions among the masses. While utilizing all legal and parliamentary possibilities, adequate legal aid to the victims, petitions, etc., it subordinated these to the organization and development of revolutionary mass action outside of courts and bourgeois legislative bodies.

Only on the basis of such revolutionary tactics, which flowed from the guidance of the line of the Comintern, could the Communist Party develop a mass movement around Scottsboro. This was just one of the successful campaigns of this period when the CPUSA advanced the revolutionary struggle in the U.S.

While the struggle around Scottsboro marked a beginning influence for the party, this important advance could not in itself Bolshevize the party or deepen its roots in the decisive sectors of the working class. And it was this problem, the lack of a strong proletarian base, that was the source of the party's limitations.

The heritage of the past weighed heavily upon the shoulders of the Party in that the membership of the Party was essentially of the same character, and unfortunately still approached work in much the same way, as in the past. The intellectuals proceeded from a narrow sectarian attitude in approaching mass work, stemming from a

right opportunist underestimation of the revolutionary potential of the working class; the immigrant elements were in the main isolated from the masses and still maintained a national integrity through special language publications within the party; and most important was the fact that in the Party, and especially among the leading cadres, there was a fatal lack of political understanding of the necessity of strengthening the basis of the Party in the decisive sections of the native-born workers.

A full fourteen years after its formation, the party composition was roughly as follows: over 70% of the party membership was still foreign-born (while the proportion should have been just the opposite), the great majority of the party members were unemployed (and therefore could not build factory nuclei), party membership had declined since the year before, and the turnover in membership was tremendous (often as high as 100% per year and up to 300% in some sections), meaning that, while the party could easily get new members, it could not keep them.

In July 1933, however, the Central Committee had issued the famous Open Letter to the membership of the CP, after an extraordinary conference attended by over three hundred leading party members. The Open Letter was put forward as a self-criticism in order to deal with the serious problems facing the party.

The Open Letter dealt with the same problems that had been outlined in the Twelfth, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Plenum Resolutions of the Central Committee: insufficient work among the basic sections of the U.S. proletariat, lack of political understanding of the necessity of same, absence of a fixed plan of action and of efforts toward rectification of errors, consolidation and implementation of party decisions by party cadre and checking up on execution. The Letter did have one important addition, however: THE WARNING THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY WAS IN DANGER OF LOSING ITS PROLETARIAN BASE ALTOGETHER, IF THE BUILDING OF FACTORY NUCLEI WAS NOT TAKEN UP SUCCESSFULLY! This was to be accomplished by the breaking down of bureaucratic methods of leadership in the party through the development of the political life in the units and the concentration of work in the basic industrial key areas - Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago. This merely repeated a call that had originally gone out in 1930.

Fundamentally, the thrust of the resolution was to demand a change in the party, from a party for the workers into a party of the workers, meaning that the membership of the party needed to be more proletarian and less petty-bourgeois in character.

The Open Letter was to be much too little too late. While it pointed correctly to the problems which the Party faced, and to solutions which were in the main correct, its appearance was not accompanied by any basic rectification program and the direction given from the Extraordinary Conference was certainly not taken up to eliminate the opportunist tendencies which had never been thoroughly routed from the Party.

This represented a marked shift in the direction of the CPUSA, away from the revolutionary course it had charted. This shift was revealed starkly one year later when Earl Browder stated at the Eighth Party Convention that "Communism is 20th Century Americanism! Just two years after the issuance of the Open Letter the revisionist leadership was to liquidate the Trade Union Unity League, the Party's revolutionary union organization and its strongest foothold in the working class, in order to facilitate the formation of the CIO. This was the Party's peak influence in industry with only 9% of the Party membership in factory nuclei.

This signals the further development of revisionism within the Party. Earl Browder had come to power in the CPUSA as a bridge between the two right opportunist factions of Love Stone and Foster, after the ECCI directives. By 1934 his line had achieved considerable influence. From 1934 onward, with the Open Letter, we can begin to trace the degeneration of the Party, and the rise of opportunism.

We date the turning point in the development of the party as beginning with the Open Letter of 1933, when opportunism begins to rise in the Party, probably taking the upper hand by 1938, at the 10th Party Convention. From that point on, in the struggle between Marxism-Leninism in the party, opportunism is the rising aspect. By 1944, with the actual liquidation of the party - an unprecedented step for any communist movement of any country to take - revisionism had been consolidated within the party, never to be repudiated.

#### THE SEVENTH COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AND THE UNITED FRONT

In 1935 the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern took place, with 65 parties present. The Congress defined two major tasks: (1) The main task, which was to move all sections to stand at the head of the masses in the fight for peace against the instigators of war, prepare the proletariat for the struggle to convert the imperialist war into civil war, assist to the utmost in bringing about the defeat of their own bourgeoisie, and to fight with all forces available against fascism and for the victory of the RED ARMY; (2) To prevent the revival of social-democracy in those countries where it is disintegrating. As such the Congress devoted most of its efforts to the development of united front movements in the respective capitalist countries, as the foundation of the whole struggle against fascism and war.

In contrast, the CPUSA's response was to move away from following the directives of the Seventh Congress towards the full elaboration of a revisionist position of the United Front, the major task of the World Communist movement. The steps down the path to the liquidation of the party were essentially the steps of gradually giving up the strategy and tactics of the people's front.

November, 1935, following Dimitrov's formulation, the CP placed the Farmer-Labor Party as the form of the People's Front, which correctly called for no alliance with the bourgeoisie;

December, 1936, the CP analyzes the Republican election defeat as a vote along class lines, the beginnings of flirtation with the Democratic Party and the Roosevelt administration;

June, 1937, The CP begins to deny the ability of the Farmer-Labor Party to serve the needs of the proletariat, with the formulation "Democratic Camp" already replacing that of the Farmer-Labor Party as the correct form of the People's Front;

1938, and the formulation has now evolved to "democratic front", spelling the drift into the leadership of the bourgeoisie;

May, 1939, the words, "People's Front" and "Farmer-Labor Party", have been entirely discarded by the CP, and the new formulation is expressed in the following quote from the 1939 CC plenum, "The progressive and democratic majority is a coalition between the Democratic Party and the independent radical one-third of the electorate. President Roosevelt has embodied that coalition, and by his leadership has consolidated and strengthened it."

(THE WORKER, July 15, 1939)

So we see that the CPUSA had moved into the classic position of social-democracy, trailing after the big-bourgeoisie. Instead of basing their policies on the existence of exploiter and exploited, the CPUSA had urged class-cooperation (read, collaboration). Instead of working to build the movement on the guidelines supplied by the

CI, the Party had revived social-democracy, the very force it was to work to eliminate, and had once again retied the proletariat to the chariot of the bourgeoisie with the chains of opportunism, precisely on the eve of the second imperialist war.

The Comintern had provided guidance to the CPUSA on several occasions, from the earliest struggles to unify the communist movement in the early 1920's, through the struggle against factionalism just before the crisis of the 1930's the clarity provided on the Black National question, the correct tactical form for the United Front for the U.S. sections' participation in the defeat of fascism, the long standing line on the need to ground the Party in the decisive sectors of the working class, and the overall experience, integrity and authority of the World Communist Movement which established a solid basis for the advancement of the proletarian revolution in the United States.

However, the line laid down by the CPUSA during this period was one which did not reflect a grasp of this basis, or a consciousness of the historic interests of the proletariat, internationally or in the U.S. The Spanish Civil War was to be a harbinger of what was to come.

The Spanish Civil War was the first prolonged clash between a strong people's front movement led by the proletariat and the fascist forces of monopoly capitalism. The assistance provided by the proletariat internationally, materially and militarily, made it one of the greatest expressions of proletarian internationalism and one of the most glorious struggles in world labor history. But the loss of the war was a heavy defeat and opened the door for World War II.



Here, the leadership of the CPUSA did not muster any better than the opportunists of the Second International during the first imperialist war. Madrid fell in March of 1939 after three years of valiant struggle. The Roosevelt government, which the leadership of the CPUSA had called the "embodiment" of the united front, rushed in immediately to recognize the Franco regime and lifted the arms embargo to the fascists just four days after the defeat of the Spanish Republic. The Party's view was that of sabotaging the militant internationalist stand with the hushing of criticism by stating, "We must not embarrass the President," while at the same time using the efforts of the true internationalists to feather their own nests.

#### TOWARDS LIQUIDATION

Between 1930 and 1938 the major opportunist deviation, and the SIXTH major struggle in the history of the U.S. Communist movement, was against right opportunism. However, in 1938, with the Tenth Party Convention, this trend crystallized into the clear form of liquidationism. From 1938 until 1945, the SEVENTH major struggle in the Party takes the form of Marxism-Leninism against liquidationism.

By this time the control commission in the Party had been liquidated, as had the following organizations and united front movements:

- 1935- the Trade Union Unity League dissolved to facilitate CIO;
- 1939- liquidation of all factory nuclei and shop papers;
- 1940- American League for Peace and Democracy dissolved;
- 1941- League of American Writers dissolved;
- 1942- American Youth Congress died out;
- 1943- Young Communist League dis-

solved;

Early 1940's- the Worker's Alliance, and unemployed body dissolved. The National Negro Congress, Southern Negro Youth Congress, and Southern Conference for Human Welfare went on into the post-war period but only in skeleton form. In 1940 the Party expelled all foreign-born members who were non-citizens in order to comply with the reactionary Smith Act, nearly 4,000 members!

#### RIGHT OPPORTUNISM RUNS ROUGHSHOD

In 1940, three years before the dissolution of the Comintern, the CPUSA withdrew, on the grounds that the passage of the Voorhis Act, which required the "registration of foreign agents", made it difficult to carry out communist work. The Voorhis Act was interpreted as an attempt to isolate the communist movement, the U.S. working class, its organizations and all progressive movements from similar organizations and movements in other countries. The class-collaborationist policies of the CPUSA leadership provided the subjective basis for this ruling class tactic to succeed.

The Second World War proved to be the decisive test for the party. On December 12, 1943, Earl Browder delivered his infamous Bridgeport speech, in which the Teheran policy of the party was presented. Starting from the Teheran Agreement signed by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin - a maneuver on the part of the capitalist leaders to combat rising Soviet power as the USSR advanced toward defeating fascism - Browder drew conclusions regarding the international situation and the domestic U.S. situation that completely contradicted every fundamental tenet of Marxism-Leninism

Internationally, Browder speaks of "a Europe minimizing, and to a great extent eliminating altogether, the threat of civil war after international war."

In the U.S. Browder calls for "a period of expanded production and employment and the strengthening of democracy within the framework of the present system - and not a perspective of the transition to socialism."

Then, Browder proceeds not only to assert the peaceful transition to socialism, but the elimination of classes. "We must be prepared to give the hand of cooperation to everyone who fights for the realization of this coalition (Anglo-Soviet-American Coalition). If J.P. Morgan supports this coalition and goes down the line for it, I, as a Communist, am prepared to clasp his hand on that and join with him to realize it. Class divisions or political groupings have no significance now except as they reflect one side or the other of this issue."

With this view, the party leadership concluded that there no longer existed the need for an independent political party of the proletariat, and the CPUSA was liquidated on May 20, 1944, and the Communist Political Association was formed.

#### AGAINST THE LIQUIDATION

William Z. Foster attacked some of Browder's theses privately but publicly supported the liquidation of the party. Foster agreed with Browder's fundamental view that socialism was not the order of the day.

As we know now, there were hundreds, if not thousands of loyal Marxist-Leninists within the Party who were expelled at this time for their protests to Browder's line. In fact, Foster took a leading role in expelling many, including Sam Darcy, William Dunne, Burt Sutta and Harrison George, among others.

In April 1945, Jacques Duclos, a leading member of the Communist Party of France, published in France an article entitled "On the Dissolution of the CPUSA". In this famous attack against the modern revisionist line which had been consolidated in the CPA, Duclos concludes that (1) a genuine

party had been liquidated, (2) the Party line was not a Marxist-Leninist line but a revisionist line which preached class peace, the suppression of class struggle and harmony between labor and capital, (3) the revisionism of Browder completely distorts the genuine meaning of Teheran, and (4) there is revulsion by other communist parties at the course the CPA has taken (Reprinted in COMMUNIST LINE, No. 2, October 1, 1975, pp. 4-6). The CPA refused to publish the letter, until it was published in the New York Times.

The Duclos letter unleashed a storm of protest within the CPA and from every genuine Marxist-Leninist at that time, leading to the reconstitution of the CPUSA in July 1945.

During this entire period, from 1944 when the party was liquidated through 1948 after the party was "reconstituted", comrades within the party continued to struggle against the revisionism and liquidationism that permeated the Party. Major two line struggles occurred - each resulting in the expulsion from the Party of the genuine Marxist-Leninists. By studying these struggles, we can understand why the Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee states that the Party was never reconstituted as a genuine Marxist-Leninist party.

- In 1944, Sam Darcy raised his voice against the liquidation of the party. Unlike Foster, who criticized secretly Browder's line and never took a stand against the liquidation of the party, Darcy openly opposed the liquidation of the party - taking the correct proletarian stand. Foster then headed the commission in the Party which expelled Darcy in 1944.

The Party was reconstituted in July 1945. By September 29, 1946, the National Board of the CPUSA stated that the main danger was no longer right opportunism, but "leftism", Right opportunism, which the party saw only as "Browderism," had been "decisively defeated," the Board stated.

- On September 29, 1946, Ruth McKenny, William Dunne, Vern Smith and Bruce Minton were indicted as "semi-Trotskyites" by the party and expelled on the charge that these comrades "tolerated" "left"-sectarianism. Their crime? They persisted in holding that right opportunism had not been purged from the party with the expulsion of Browder, and that right opportunism remained the main danger in the party.

Both Dunne and Smith had been founding and charter members of the Party, with long records of service to the proletariat.

- Later in 1946, Burt Sutta was expelled for "leftism".

- Then, in late 1947, Harrison George was expelled from the Party.

#### REVISIONISM RECONSTITUTED

Although the party was officially reconstituted in 1945, it produced not a single major analysis of revisionism nor initiated anything like a rectification program. Within a year, the entire episode was behind the party and Foster was stating that the party had purged itself of revisionism.

In the course of the struggle against right opportunism - the right opportunism that had actually liquidated the party - only three people were expelled - Browder, his wife and his brother. Contrast this with the fact that, when it came to expulsions for those who opposed the persistent right opportunism within the party and were, thus, accused of ultra-"leftism" scores were expelled - and we have only brought to light some of the most blatant cases. Nothing speaks clearer to the character of the so-called "reconstitution" of the party than this.

No, comrades, there has not been a Marxist-Leninist Party in this country since 1944. And from that time until

this day, the central task for every communist has been the reconstitution of a genuine party of the proletariat, a party built on the traditions of Marxism-Leninism developed in the twenties in this country and most clearly carried into practice in the early thirties.

What conclusions must Marxist-Leninists draw from this traitorous chapter in the history of the U.S. revolutionary movement?

Perhaps most important is that it is impossible to attribute what happened in the CPUSA simply to "Browderism," as the CPUSA has done since 1945.

The revisionist line of Earl Browder had much deeper roots than the Teheran Agreement or Browder, the individual, and must be seen as a product of a party which had failed, in the most fundamental ways, to defeat opportunism within its own ranks, failed to Bolshevize itself, and failed to correctly steer its course in accord with Leninism. The CPUSA did not turn into a revisionist party over night, but turned out, over a protracted period of class struggle within the party, to be revisionist.

And not least of all we must pay close attention to the material conditions which gave rise to this development - the bribery of a certain stratum of the working class with the superprofits of imperialism; the social composition of the Party as mostly petty bourgeois; and the deep influence of bourgeois ideology.

#### MATERIAL BASE OF OPPORTUNISM

The source of this bribery are the superprofits from imperialism, from the global system of domination and plunder, from colonialism and neo colonialism. This bribery takes many forms, through out and out pay offs, to privileged members of the working class and academia, through government appointments, government subsidy, private subsidy, exorbitant wages, red circling, promotion, graft, etc.

The labor aristocracy, which V.I. Lenin described in OPPORTUNISM AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL, as well as OPPORTUNISM AND THE SPLIT IN SOCIALISM, is the social expression of the material conditions of the uneven development of capital, and particularly of the monopoly or imperialist stage of capitalist development. The labor aristocracy "is that section of the working class, which, thanks to its particular position in production and thanks to the particular situation of capitalism in its country, can at the expense of the whole working class of the country, or at the expense of colonial and all other super-profits, win for itself a favorable position" (Smolyansky, G., "The Revolutionary Trade Union Movement and the Problems of the Labour Aristocracy," THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, 1930, p. 181).

The steady decay of monopoly capitalism creates a labor aristocracy based upon at least three social factors; distinctions in regard to wages, distinctions in regard to the relationship to production, and distinctions in regard to a favored social position or privilege.

It is from this labor aristocracy, which is principally concentrated in the craft unions and intellectual/academic community, that the labor bureaucracy is recruited.

Because this social stratum arises out of the development of the monopoly stage of capitalism, it is exactly in those countries where the monopoly stage is most moribund that the labor aristocracy is the most divisive in its affect on the unity of the working class. Lenin realized that "we have in America, England, and France immeasurably stronger obstinacy on the part of the opportunist leaders, the upper stratum of the working class and aristocracy of labour: They show greater opposition to the Communist movement. And, therefore, we must be prepared to find that the liberation of the European and American Parties from this illness, will proceed

with more difficulty, than with us." (Smolyansky, Ibid, p.186.)

In addition to the actual bribery of a small stratum of the working class, the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie holding the reins of state power exerts a powerful impact on the outlook of large sections of the proletariat.

In summary, we suggest that the revisionist character of the CPUSA, in the period leading up to its liquidation organizationally, and through its "reconstitution", which in effect liquidated the Party ideologically, can be determined by considering the line of the CPUSA on five fundamental questions:

- (1) the dictatorship of the proletariat;
- (2) the nature and role of the party;
- (3) the Black national question;
- (4) trade union work;
- (5) the united front.

Considering each, we see that:

(1) Dictatorship of the proletariat was never taken up as an attainable goal even though it was put forward in various formulations in party programs. A vulgar revisionist formulation, clearly the logical outcome of the whole revisionist leadership, was put forward by Eugene Dennis, the new general secretary of the Party after Browder's ouster. True to revisionist form, Dennis hangs on to such concepts as "vanguard party" and the "ultimate goal of socialism" in order to cover his alliance with bourgeois interest, by declaring:

*"each of our 'visionary dreams of yesteryear was rooted in the needs and aspirations of the working class and the people - that is why many of them have already become the realities of today. Our ultimate goal of Socialism, which we keep ever bright before us, is but an extension of this (bourgeois) democratic process."*

(2) Denial of vanguard party: Failure to break decisively with the social democratic party of the old type inherited from the SPA and SLP, the CP only was capable of continuing on the path laid out by social-democracy. Through a crass distortion of democratic centralism, the CP leadership set up a bureaucratic regime, formalizing the Party apparatus. By institutionalizing the suppression of criticism-self-criticism, the Bolshevization of the Party and its cadre became untenable without a rectification program.

J. Tsurul, in 1932, commenting on the CPUSA, stated that "self-criticism is very frequently unaccompanied by the preparation and realization of those concrete measures necessary to eliminate defects", ("How the American Communist Party Carries out Self Criticism and Controls Fulfilment of Decisions", COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, Aug. 15, 1932.)

(3) Black National question: The CP's position had fairly well eliminated any Leninist character on this question, with the revisionist line essentially blurring the distinction between equal rights and the right of self-determination in the South. This was combined with:

- the tendency to view the Black question as a racial rather than a national question.
- the view that Blacks would not have the right to rule over whites in the Black Belt when the Black Nation emerged.

These aspects all combined to amount to open unity with the liberal reformist petty-bourgeois and bourgeois leaders of the NAACP and the National Urban League, and the liquidation of the right of self-determination for Black people in the Black Belt South. The Party's attitude toward Black people in the U.S. was tied to the fate of the Party itself. The Black National Question was one of the main pillars upon which the Party's integrity was built. When the Black nation was defended and protected, the Party stood firm, and when the Black nation was attacked and shattered by the line of the Party, the destruction of the Party became a certainty.

**(4) Trade Union Question:**

There never was developed a set of policies which enabled a correct application of the building of factory nuclei as the basic unit of the Party. The Party never had more than 9% in 1934, the high point, of the Party membership in factory nuclei. A consistent right opportunist position on work in the shops, and towards fractions, was held leading to Foster's typical bowing to trade unionism in his statement of October, 1940 over the role of the CP in the war, "Inasmuch as in the U.S. neither the CP nor the Farmer-Labor Party is strong enough to secure the allegiance of the decisive sections of the working class, the chief burden of mass leadership in this crisis devolves upon the trade unions. The trade unions bear the great responsibility of leading the fight of the masses to keep the U.S. out of the war, to help establish a democratic peace, and so to organize society on socialist foundations." (emphasis added. THE COMMUNIST, 10/1940, p.890).

**(5) Trade Unions:** The CP substituted class collaboration for class alliance by distorting the nature of the united front. This was primarily accomplished through an enchantment with the liberal bourgeoisie in the person of Franklin Roosevelt. Objectively this policy flowed from the class nature of the CP leadership, subjectively it came from being "dizzy" with a little success by the fact that as the liberal nature of the Party's line became more consolidated, it won over larger sectors of the labor aristocracy and academic intellectuals.

**HISTORICAL SUMMARY: TWO LINE STRUGGLE**

In summing up the historical struggle between Marxism and opportunism from 1850's to 1945 in the U.S. communist movement, we see seven major ideological struggles:

1850's to 1870 s- Marxism against sectarian socialism.

1870's to 1900's- Marxism against reformism.

1900's to 1919- Marxism against sectarian socialism, anarcho syndicalism and right opportunism.

1919-1926- Marxism-Leninism against social democracy and reformism.

1925-1929- Marxism-Leninism against Trotskyism and American exceptionalism.

1930-1938- Marxism-Leninism against American exceptionalism.

1938-1945- Marxism-Leninism against liquidationism.

In assessing these struggles, there are a number of conclusions that must be drawn.

First, as we have already pointed out, it took a considerably long time for Marxism to take any real roots in the U.S., and a still longer time until an attempt to form a vanguard party was taken up- until roughly 1925.

Second, even then, the Party did not achieve any real influence among the masses of workers until the 1930's, and then only for a relatively brief period of time. Infatuated with a few successes, the Party veered away from developing and consolidating its mostly correct line, relied instead upon organizational consolidation and increasing its numbers for the sake of appearance. In short, the Party ceased to strive to be a vanguard party of the proletariat, and instead of establishing its ties with the masses, it became a mass party, sacrificing its leading role.

Third, that although there were numerous struggles within the Party, the two most notable being the 1928-29 factional struggles which drove Lovestone and Cannon out, and then in 1944-45 which drove Browder out- that these internal two line struggles were more occasioned by the external influence of the international communist movement than the internal pressure of Marxism-Leninism bringing these struggles to the fore front. In both cases, the existing leadership of the Party declared that the trouble was over within a year, and no real rectification occurred. This marks every single major two line struggle in the CPUSA. Not only was there no rectification from above, there was no mass democracy from below, to cleanse the Party.

Fourth, that the CPUSA was never a genuine Bolshevik party, i.e., it never really attempted, let alone succeeded in Bolshevizing itself.

Fifth, that at almost every turning point, the influence of bourgeois ideology within the Party, prevented placing the question of party building on

an ideological plane. Instead, narrow pragmatic concerns dominated party life. Theoretical training in the Party was consistently neglected. No effort was made to compensate for the historical theoretical backwardness of the communist and workers' movement.

Sixth, on looking at the social composition of the Party, we find that at no time in the Party history can it be confidently said that the majority of Party cadre are organized into shop nuclei, or even that the work of the Party is focused on the shop floor.

Seven, that the genuine leaders of the American working class, those men and women who consistently and bravely upheld the doctrine of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, are still, for the most part unknown to the American communist movement, buried in a pile of subjectivism by Foster and others. The contributions of Comrades such as Vern Smith, William Dunne, Harrison George, Sam Darcy, and no doubt countless others must be rediscovered by the American communist movement and studied. This is the historical trend of Marxism-Leninism in this country, not Foster or Browder.

Eight, that there exists today no definitive or authoritative study of the history of Marxism-Leninism in this country. This is a serious hindrance to the emergence of a genuine party today, for our party must be built upon the firmest Marxist-Leninist foundations in this country, not upon the castles of sand built by the Browders and Fosters.

Nine, that the history of two line struggle in this country has consistently distorted, since 1919, the nature of "left"-sectarianism, and used this red herring to cover the fundamental right opportunist nature of deviations over the last fifty years or more.

Ten, underlying both right and left deviations, there has been a consistent pattern which denied, at decisive points, the revolutionary character and potential of the working class. In essence, to deny this, in a country with the largest and most modern proletariat in the history of the world, is to stand in support of the maintenance of capitalism. This has been the basis for economism over the last several decades.

**FIGHT FOR THE****DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT**

With the liquidation of the CPUSA in 1944 and its revisionist reconstitution in 1945 - the central task for all genuine Marxist-Leninists became the reconstitution of a genuine vanguard communist party of a new type - a party forged in the Leninist mold and capable of carrying through the struggle against opportunism and imperialism to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The CPUSA was built on a foundation of social democratic and anarcho-syndicalist ideology. While it did participate in and lead many militant trade union struggles, it never did accept the 21 Points of Affiliation to the Third International. It never did achieve the criteria for a Leninist party advanced by Comrade Stalin in the FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM. The CPUSA failed, in short, to consolidate the break with social democracy, it failed to Bolshevize itself and, therefore, it failed to meet the historic task laid before it.

The purpose of this presentation has been to conduct a preliminary investigation of the struggle against opportunism internationally, and through the liquidation of the CPUSA in 1944 and its revisionist reconstitution in 1945. The second part of this study will sum up the period from 1945 through the present in the U.S. This study will be made available to comrades and friends when it is completed.

We can see now that the social-demo-

cratic heritage the CPUSA was unable to cast off did not die with the CPUSA. In the last thirty years, this heritage has continued to plague our revolution and spawn modern day ghosts to haunt the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

During the period from 1945 through the present, great changes have occurred in the workers' and communist movement. In an important measure, the stand and outlook of U.S. Marxist-Leninists must be measured against their attitude toward certain important international events including the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU, the attack against Comrade Stalin, the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and Soviet social imperialism, the 1957 and 1960 Moscow meetings of Workers and Communist Parties, the 1963 PROPOSAL CONCERNING THE GENERAL LINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, national liberation struggles and their attitude toward Mao Tsetung Thought.

In the last 30 years in the U.S., there have been four attempts made to reconstitute a communist party: (1) the revisionist reconstitution led by Foster in 1945; (2) the Progressive Labor Party; (3) the Communist Labor Party; and (4) the Revolutionary Communist Party USA (formerly the RU). In each case, these attempts at reconstitution fell short of learning the lessons of the history of the U.S. communist and international communist movement, and wound up repeating,

rather than breaking with, the heritage of social democracy and modern revisionism. Each attempt at reconstitution, neglected a thorough repudiation of revisionism, and therefore failed to consolidate the break with revisionism.

Each of these four attempts at reconstitution represent the same historical trend that led to the liquidation of the party itself. The name has changed, but the content remains the same.

We have already reviewed the revisionist reconstitution in 1945. The PLP and the CLP grew directly out of factions within the CPUSA, which split and formed themselves into parties. Both have been identified as bourgeois centers by the large numbers of honest Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers. While they changed the form, their essence remained the same as the old revisionist party they sought to break with.

The RCP-USA was spawned by the Revolutionary Union in September 1975. Its line remains that of the Revolutionary Union. It has developed from an economist shade in 1968 to a tendency, a trend and emerged full blown as a bourgeois center in 1975.

The RCP-USA has followed the course charted by its predecessors, the PLP and the CLP. Each made an attempt, at the outset, to break ideologically with modern revisionism and promote the study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and dialectical historical materialism. This, however, represented only the first step that had to be

taken to break with modern revisionism. The second step was to break on the basis of a correct political line. In the cases of PLP and CPL - this is where one step forward, led to two steps back. The same has held for the RCP-USA.

The RU was formed originally and consolidated on the basis of opposition to party building as the central task. While party building was advanced by some communists at that time, the RU saw "building the mass movement" as the central task. On vital questions of political line, particularly on the Black National Question, the RU followed a classic national chauvinist line first laid out by Jay Lovestone and more recently by Claude Lightfoot of the CPUSA. The RU took the course of American Exceptionalism because it, like its opportunist predecessors, failed to take up a genuine repudiation of modern revisionism, failed to apply Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to the concrete conditions of the U.S., failed to train its cadre theoretically, failed to Bolshevize its cadre, failed to transform its student-petty bourgeois base into a working class organization, and failed to study the history of opportunism in the U.S. and international communist movement - and, therefore, wound up repeating that history.

As the RU sought to give its chauvinist "leadership" to the emerging revolutionary organizations among national minorities, its oppressor nation chauvinism was exposed, and most of its non-white working class cadre left in bitter struggles. The social and class composition of the RU isolated it from the working class.

The consolidation of the RU into a "communist party" is an important lesson by negative example which must be taken seriously. Today the RCP-USA stands out together with the CPUSA, PLP and CLP as the ideological enemies of the revolution, though wearing the veil of revolution.

Our criteria for this conclusion is that the RCP-USA, like their three predecessors, the CPUSA, the PLP and the CLP, have First, advanced an opportunist political line on party building, the Black National Question, the Chicano National Question, the significance of Mao Tsetung Thought. Second, this line has been put into practice, and sown its counter-revolutionary fruit, such as the Boston busing struggle. Third, an elaborate theoretical justification has been concocted in order to justify the national exceptionalism of the RCP-USA's positions.

And what compounds this reactionary stand, is that the RU on principle refuses to admit errors or conduct criticism and self-criticism before the masses - even though privately it admits to "errors." Those that refuse to recognize and conduct criticism and self-criticism seek to split and not to unite.

By its own practice, the RCP-USA is approaching a point at which its actions will place it outside the camp of the people and inside the camp of the enemy. When one falls into the swamp, only a fool would confuse the swamp with the high plain and start to dig a stronghold. If one continues to dig long enough, one will find that the body, and finally the head, will be lost beneath the surface, lost forever in the muck.

The reactionary role of the RCP-USA must not be under-estimated. Unlike the CPUSA, the PLP and the CLP - the line of the RCP-USA has yet to be thoroughly exposed and repudiated by many honest revolutionaries. Lenin pointed out, and we state again, that "practice has shown that persons active in the working class movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeoisie itself."

Through its counter-revolutionary work in the Boston busing struggle, the RCP-USA is laying the social basis for fascism. Dimitroff pointed out that in Germany, "social-democratic leaders

*glossed over and concealed from the masses the true class nature of fascism, and did not call them to the struggle against the increasingly reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie. They bear great historical responsibility for the fact that, at the decisive moment of the fascist offensive, a large section of the toiling masses of Germany and a number of other fascist countries failed to recognize in fascism the most bloodthirsty monster of finance, their most vicious enemy, and that these masses were not prepared to resist"* (George Dimitroff, THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST WAR AND FASCISM, Gamma Publishing, p. 8).

Can any less responsibility fall on the shoulders of the RCP-USA today?

In each case, the underlying connection beneath all opportunist lines today is that they reject the lessons that have been learned historically, in this country and internationally, by the workers' and communist movements. Instead of historical materialism, they follow historical idealism. In so doing, they reject the road set out by the Great Socialist October Revolutions. They reject the authority and applicability of international communism.

The form that American Exceptionalism takes today may vary, but its content is all too familiar. It babbles that:

(1) while in the world communist movement modern revisionism is the main danger, here in the U.S. it is "left"-sectarianism;

(2) while the world communist movement has required an advanced theory, a revolutionary theory for a revolutionary movement, here in the U.S. we must go back to the masses, and the party will be built out of the spontaneous struggles of the masses;

(3) while the world communist movement - including Lenin, Stalin and the Communist International - recognized the existence of an oppressed nation in the Black Belt South with the right to self-determination up to and including secession, that now the conditions of capitalism in the U.S. no longer conform to the laws of capitalism explained by the international communist movement;

(4) while every single proletarian revolution in history has absolutely required adherence to Stalin's five criteria for the existence of a nation as the theoretical guide to uniting nationalities, that here in the U.S. Stalin's five criteria for a nation are not required as a basis for unity of the party;

(5) while the Chinese Communist Party and the Party of Labor of Albania have state and demonstrated conclusively that capitalism has been restored in the USSR, the opportunists state that this is not the case, and the restoration of capitalism remains to be completed;

(6) though Mao Tsetung has laid down the general line for the entire historical period of socialism, that Mao Tsetung's "contributions" to Marxism-Leninism are not of an international character, but are mostly important for the Chinese Revolution and developing nations ... and so on and so forth.

What is the common thread to all these lines? It was stated long ago by Comrade Stalin, speaking to the factional groups in the CPUSA in 1929:

*"The error of both groups is that they exaggerate the significance of the specific features of American capitalism and thereby overlook the basic features of American capitalism which are characteristic of world capitalism as a whole."*

(STALIN'S SPEECHES ON THE AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTY, Proletarian Publishers, p. 11).

Comrades, the "exceptional" feature of U.S. capitalism is that it conforms more closely to the basic contours of world capitalist development than any other country. For

this reason the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung are all the more applicable to our revolution, not less so.

Our immediate task is to break with all forms of American exceptionalism and national chauvinism - while paying careful attention to the concrete conditions of capitalist development in the U.S. This break must be made ideologically, politically and organizationally. On the ideological front, we have made important beginnings, firm lines are now being drawn, as the movement polarized into a revolutionary and a retrograde trend.

Our task at hand is to unite on the basis of correct political line.

In the HISTORY OF THE CPSU(B), comrades point out the "ORGANIZING, MOBILIZING AND TRANSFORMING" role of revolutionary theory,

*"THE STRENGTH AND VITALITY OF MARXISM-LENINISM IS DERIVED FROM THE FACT THAT IT RELIES UPON ADVANCED THEORY WHICH CORRECTLY REFLECTS THE NEEDS OF DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIAL LIFE OF SOCIETY, THAT IT ELEVATES THEORY TO A PROPER LEVEL, AND THAT IT DEEMS IT ITS DUTY TO UTILIZE EVERY OUNCE OF MOBILIZING, ORGANIZING AND TRANSFORMING POWER OF THIS THEORY"* (HISTORY OF THE CPSU(B), International Publishers, 1939, p. 117).

It is exactly for this reason that Marx recognized that "CAPITAL was the greatest shell ever fired at the head of the bourgeoisie".

Theory is a weapon and as such, it is not sufficient to look at and admire it. It is necessary to use it against the enemies of the working class. Theory is important only in so far as it is useful in the war against the bourgeoisie. In fighting on all fronts of the class war, theory provided us with an understanding of the movement, composition, strengths and weaknesses of the contending forces, so that we may establish our battle plan, our general line on the prosecution of the war and concentrate a superior force to thoroughly defeat the enemy on every front.

In periods when there have been major shifts in the progress of the war or when major changes have occurred in the camps of our enemies and our allies, the main task has become to re-evaluate the significance of these changes and to establish the general line for our army which can lead it to victory. What army would march into battle without an understanding of the basic principles of warfare? What general staff would lead its troops into the struggle without a careful evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of both sides and a general plan of attack? Such an army is doomed to defeat and such a general staff would certainly lose the loyalty and confidence of its troops. And yet, there are opportunists in our ranks who say that a clear understanding of the battle fronts is unnecessary, that it is sufficient that we have some people who "declare" themselves the general staff. These opportunists do not understand that class struggle is a deadly, protracted fight to the death and not just some social club. They lose sight of the goal and thereby lose all understanding of the importance of our immediate tasks.

The greatest of all theoretical weapons launched by the proletariat was the publication of THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO and CAPITAL, which together set out the general line for the entire historic mission of the proletariat, which has for some 128 years shed a brilliant light upon the road ahead. They are the granite foundation of the international communist movement.

In combating various opportunists in the struggle to apply Marxism, both Marx and Engels wrote numerous works which illuminated the path ahead, including the CRITIQUE OF THE GOtha PROGRAM (Marx) and ANTI DURHING (Engels).

Lenin, on numerous occasions, brought a penetrating theoretical analysis to

bear on the tasks ahead, and combatted opportunist lines in such classic Marxist-Leninist theoretical works as WHAT IS TO BE DONE, THE STATE AND REVOLUTION, IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM, and others.

When Comrade Stalin faced the counter-revolutionary attacks against Marxism-Leninism launched by Trotsky and his cohorts, Comrade Stalin unleashed the devastating power of revolutionary theory on these obstructors, in such works as THE FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM, PROBLEMS OF LENINISM, etc. These brilliant theoretical works provided a clear and decisive orientation to the international communist movement of the time; mobilized, organized and raised the communist movement to a higher level for its struggle against Trotskyism.

In learning from the victories of the Chinese Communist Party lead by Comrade Mao Tsetung, there have been numerous examples where, based upon the summation of practice, Mao Tsetung advanced a correct theory to guide correct practice.

In 1937, Mao Tsetung advanced ON CONTRADICTION and ON PRACTICE to overcome serious dogmatist deviations in the Party. In 1947, THE CURRENT SITUATION AND OUR TASKS dug beneath the appearance of strength U.S. imperialism created with the atom bomb, and pointed out that in essence, U.S. imperialism was a paper tiger. In 1957, a year after the 20th Party Congress in the USSR, with a state of great confusion in the world, Mao Tsetung wrote ON THE CORRECT HANDLING OF CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE PEOPLE, as a guide to struggle in the troubled times. Later, in 1963, Mao Tsetung guided the writing of A PROPOSAL CONCERNING THE GENERAL LINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, which clearly set out the guiding plan and policy for the period.

In 1970, when the situation appeared dark and gloomy, when the U.S. had invaded Cambodia and the prophets of doom and despair everywhere surfaced, Mao Tsetung issued his historic MAY 20TH STATEMENT, a profound theoretical document with clearly elucidated the essence of the situation - that U.S. imperialism was a paper tiger, and that a small nation can defeat a large nation - as has been completely proven in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Africa, and elsewhere.

There remains now, for us to draw some connections between the history of the U.S. communist movement and the present situation. In studying the history of the CPUSA, it should be clear that we have yet to break, in a fundamental and thorough manner with the same fatal flaws which led, in time, to the liquidation of the CPUSA. Though we have started, it is only a beginning. In the next year or two the revolutionary movement in the U.S. must recognize and break - as has never been done in this country to date - with all the baggage and rotten traditions of social democracy which enslave the workers struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Unless this struggle is waged, genuine Marxist-Leninists today will wind up, tomorrow, in the pit dug by the Progressive Labor Party, the Communist Labor Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

First - and most important at this time - is that we must train large contingents of theoretical workers, to raise the theoretical level of our entire movement, to combat the historic theoretical backwardness of the workers and communist movement in this country, to promote the concrete unity of the objective and subjective, of theory and practice. Our fighting capacity will be determined, in important measure, by the extent to which our forces, and particularly our leading cadre, master and apply Marxist-Leninist theory. This is the basis for a granite unity on political line.

Second - Communism in the U.S. must become an entirely working class movement, it must truly go lower and deeper than it has ever done in this country - not as trade unionists, but as communists, "disdaining to conceal their views and aims" as stated in THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO. The social basis of the

communist movement must reflect the political leadership it is destined to provide - toward the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Third - The stinking vestiges of national chauvinism - most promoted by the revisionist RCPUSA (RU) - must be purged at all costs. The large national form of organization of the communist movement today must be seen, in important measure, as a reaction to the white chauvinism and oppressor nation chauvinism of the RCPUSA (RU). At the same time, all narrowness and bourgeois nationalism must be combatted. U.S. communists must take their stand along side of the workers and communists of all countries, and nations, as equals.

Fourth - Communists and advanced workers must bolshevize themselves, fortify their ranks, discipline their action and prepare themselves for the fierce class warfare which lies ahead. Our failure to conduct this bolshevization in the past is directly a result of the social composition of the communist movement to date - as it has been historically in the CPUSA. Failure to heed this call will inevitably lead to disaster and class collaboration. It will lead down the path of the RCPUSA.

Fifth - The vulgarization of left sectarianism must be exposed, and a battle launched against right opportunism in its varied forms. In particular this must focus upon the narrowness and small circle outlook which neglects the needs and interests of the entire working class for the convenience of any organization or group. Comrades must establish a firm, clear guiding line, plan and policy to unite Marxist-Leninists - this is the heart of the battle to combat the right danger today.

Marxism has been planted in the U.S. for over 127 years - yet today the U.S. working class remains without its vanguard communist party.

Comrades, consider the irony. We live today in the heartland of imperialism and the home of the largest, most modern proletariat that the world has ever known. Nowhere in the world has the proletariats material development prepared it so thoroughly for seizing the leading role in history. Yet, it is precisely here that the proletariat remains without a political party capable of developing its consciousness of its role.

The HISTORY OF THE CPSU(B) pointed out that "the history of the Party teaches us that to leave the proletariat without such a party means to leave it without revolutionary leadership; and to leave it without revolutionary leadership means to ruin the cause of the proletariat," (Intl. Publishers, 1939, p. 353).

The first condition for proletarian revolution and for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be established in the U.S., is the creation of the political party of the working class, the communist party. Without a Bolshevized communist party, it is not possible to overthrow the bourgeoisie by violence and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This lesson stands out crystal clear in the history of the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat around the world - and here in the U.S. The strength and correctness of the communist party is the principle factor, in the era of proletarian revolution, which determines the progress of the working class toward its historic mission.

The advance of the working class toward proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S. has been protracted and at times, fraught with both great victories and very bitter defeats. These victories can be explained by the extent to which U.S. communists adhered to the fundamental teachings of Marxism-Leninism as applied to the concrete conditions in this country. These defeats can be explained by the extent to which revolutionaries denied the universal character of Marxism-Leninism, charted a course different from that of the October Revolutions, and raised the exceptional character of capitalist development in

the U.S.

Throughout the history of the communist movement in the United States there has, as in everything else, been two opposing trends, pulling in different directions, working toward different ends. Marxism and opportunism. In the United States, Marxism has yet to fully blossom. By fully blossom we mean that while a genuine communist party did exist in the United States from 1919-1925 through 1944, that it can not be said that this party was ever truly rooted in the industrial proletariat, nor did it ever bolshevize itself. At the peak of its industrial work, no more than 9% of its cadre were organized in factory nuclei. Criticism and self-criticism, democratic centralism, rectification of errors, remained, for the most part, convenient slogans not material reality.

When the CPUSA did succeed in leading large militant demonstrations and campaigns in the 1930's, that leadership - for the most part - was trade union leadership, not communist leadership. When efforts within the Party were made to rectify errors - the initiative for these efforts, for the most part - came from the international communist movement, not from the internal motion of the Party itself. And it is precisely this which explains the failure to carry our rectification.

Comrades and Friends, communists and advanced workers are now carrying out that task of rectification. We are determined to unite into a vanguard communist party on the basis of a correct ideological, political and organizational line. We are determined to avoid the right error of building unity that is half baked, unity not firmly rooted in principle; and the "left" error of demanding over baked unity, requiring unity on absolutely everything before uniting. Both must be guarded against today. In our movement as a whole, the right error of uniting on the basis of convenience, not principle, has been and continues to be the greatest danger. At the same time, within the revolutionary trend of our movement, the tendency to require unity on everything before uniting must be guarded against.

All across this country communists and advanced workers are stepping forward, demanding that a party be built, crying out for leadership. Our comrades in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, in Europe and in the Middle East - staunch fighters in developing countries and in capitalist countries - are rising to strike blow upon blow against U.S. imperialism and Soviet social imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

As the Great Marx foretold, "not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons - the modern working class - the proletarians."

In this presentation we have attempted to draw some conclusions from this history of the workers and communist movements in this country. Our aim has been to better equip our cadre, our comrades and our friends with the correct basis to determine the strategy and tactics required to carry out our proletarian internationalist responsibility.

TO SMASH, ONCE AND FOR ALL, THE GREATEST BOURGEOISE IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD, AND REPLACE IT WITH A NEW SOCIALIST STATE IN THE UNITED STATES - A STATE IN WHICH THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE BOURGEOISE HAS BEEN SMASHED AND REPLACED BY A DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT.

A STATE BASED UPON THE FULL, COMPLETE AND TOTAL EQUALITY OF NATIONS AND PEOPLE. A STATE IN WHICH THE FREE DEVELOPMENT OF EACH IS THE CONDITION FOR THE FREE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL. A STATE THAT TAKES ITS PLACE IN THE FAMILY OF NATIONS THAT MARCH TOGETHER TOWARD THE BRIGHT FUTURE OF COMMUNISM.



# CPUSA - UNITED

The United Front is the alliance of all those who can be united against the common enemy - the imperialist bourgeoisie - under the leadership of the proletariat and its vanguard party in order to overthrow bourgeois rule and establish the proletarian dictatorship.

Until the October Revolution the working class went through three stages in its development: 1) its economic consolidation as a class; 2) the creation of its political independence as a class; and 3) with the consolidation of imperialism, the forging of its political vanguard, the communist party of a new type.

In the second half of the 19th century, during the phase of economic consolidation of the working class, Marx and Engels urged the U.S. Marxists to attempt to play a leading role in the rising mass movement.

*"As soon as there was a national American working class movement independent of the Germans, my standpoint was clearly indicated by the facts of the case. The great national movement, no matter what its first form, is the real starting point of American working class development; if the Germans join it in order to help it or hasten its development in the right direction, they may do a deal of good and play a decisive part in it; if they stand aloof, they will dwindle down into a dogmatic sect, and will be brushed aside as people who do not understand their own principles."*(1)

As soon as attempts were made to form an independent political party of the working class, Marx and Engels again urged their comrades in the U.S. to struggle to provide leadership to this vital movement, and this is the essence of the Farmer Labor Party under rising capitalism.

The objective conditions of imperialism created the need for the communist party of a new type, which, alone, could consistently unite, not only the workers, but all classes which were antagonistic to capital for the final offensive through the strategy of the United Front against imperialism.

The Farmer Labor Party became a tactic within the United Front *"to drive a wedge between the exploited farmers and workers and the capitalist parties"*(2) and, like the tactic of "the united front from below", a means of exposing and combatting opportunist elements eager to hand the working class over to the bourgeoisie.

From its foundation in 1919, the Communist International struggled with the U.S. communists to correctly apply the united front tactics in order to advance the overall strategy for proletarian revolution.

By the early thirties the CPUSA was laying a firm basis for the United Front through its work in the trade unions, the unemployed councils, and mass campaigns, such as the campaign to save the Scottsboro boys. The rise of fascism, however, and the approach of World War II provided the conditions for right opportunist tendencies, which had never been thoroughly routed from the party, to come to the fore and turn the People's Front against Fascism - called for by the CI - into an appendage of one of the old bourgeois parties.

After World War II the reconstituted CPUSA continued to misinterpret the objective conditions in the U.S. and called for a united front against the most reactionary financial capitalists, a united front to include even sections of the bourgeoisie - as if these could still be progressive in the age of imperialism. This revisionist "united front policy" is continued to this day in the CPUSA's "anti-monopoly coalition".

## THE UNITED FRONT IS THE STRATEGY FOR PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

This was the strategy employed by the

Bolsheviks in the 1905 and 1917 revolutions and was expressed by Lenin, *"The socialist revolution... cannot be anything else than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry of the oppressed and discontented elements. Sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will inevitably participate in it - without such participation, mass struggle is impossible, without it no revolution is possible - and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But, objectively they will attack capital and the class conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat expressing this objective truth of*

*heterogeneous and discordant, motley and outwardly incohesive mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it."* (3)

The formation of the Communist Party in the United States created the prerequisite under imperialism for united front actions based on the leadership of the working class and its vanguard party. The links to the international communist movement provided by the Third Communist International armed the Americans theoretically to be able to correctly carry out these important tasks. In 1920, Lenin wrote of the correct way to enter into alliances: *"Between 1903 and 1912 there were periods of several years in which we were formally united with the Mensheviks in one Social-Democratic Party; but we never ceased our ideological and political struggle against them as opportunists and vehicles of bourgeois influence among the proletariat."*(4)

## THE TACTIC OF "THE UNITED FRONT FROM BELOW"

The Communist International further elaborated this "united front from below" tactic, a vital weapon for combatting the opportunism of trade union bureaucrats and social-democratic and liberal politicians. It consists of a temporary union for the purpose of carrying out a particular struggle. The CP unites with other parties or groups around a program of which the main thrust is acceptable to the communists and is not anti-communist in nature, which permits the communists to maintain their independence and raise the broader issues of struggle against bourgeois rule. Communists are to proceed by providing leadership, striving to bring the masses to an understanding of the correctness of communist leadership through their concrete practice, uniting the masses "from below" rather than through their leadership, on the basis of broad proletarian democracy and exposing to the masses the bankruptcy of the Social-Democratic and petty bourgeois (liberal) leadership in the past and the present. That many members of the CPUSA genuinely attempted to implement these criteria in their practice is evident from the writings and polemics of the period.(5)

In spite of the best intentions, however, the correct application of the united front tactic is impossible without a strong communist party firmly based in the industrial proletariat and capable of applying Marxist-Leninist principles to the conditions of the particular country. Incorrect application of the united front tactic - even in the early thirties when the CPUSA led gigantic strikes and demonstrations - largely stems from a right opportunist failure to place the heart of the party's life in the factory cells, animating cadre with inner-Party democracy and theoretically prepare cadre for class warfare. The CP failed to bring the fight against opportunism into each party cell, to generate discussions of

each political resolution, in sum, to provide communist cadre with the theoretical orientation and bolshevik methods of work that will arm them to assume leadership.

Failing to take up this task seriously, Browder, Foster, and the other revisionist leaders reverted, instead, raising the pre-imperialism specter of sectarianism from the mass movements as the greatest danger, which by the mid 1930s, they will further distort to mean *"a failure to co-operate with, form alliances and united fronts with, and subordinate the working class to, the petty bourgeoisie and the big bourgeoisie and their political parties"*.(6)

## THE FARMER LABOR PARTY

Under rising capitalism, the call for a Farmer Labor Party was a step towards political consolidation of the working class. *"The organization of the workers as an independent party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party, is always the first great step of importance for every country newly entering the movement."*(Engels)(7) Under imperialism, the Farmer Labor Party is another form of the "united front from below". In this communists must play an independent role, provide consistent leadership, expose opportunism and win the intermediate and wavering elements away from bourgeois influence. The masses must come to accept communist leadership on the basis of their own practice in the class struggle. The united front becomes doubly imperative under rising fascism. The betrayal of social democracy paves the way for fascist leaders to attempt to capitalize on the growing discontent of the masses and lead them astray from their only defense, the *"broad people's anti-fascist front on the basis of the proletarian united front"*.

During the 1920's the CPUSA wavered on whether it was even important to take up the Farmer Labor Party as anything more than a slogan, and, when they did, they frequently surrendered leadership to the petty bourgeoisie. During the 1924 presidential election campaign, the CP found itself isolated from the FLP movement by the maneuvers of union bureaucrats and Socialist Party leaders despite strong rank and file leanings towards the CP. The communists policy was to form no active new camp, for fear of splitting the local and state labor parties then in process of formation. Soon their allies, including the Minnesota Farmer Labor Party and the Federated Farmer Labor Party, threw themselves fully behind La Follette for president, thus liquidating the Farmer Labor Party movement for the time.

After the 1924 elections, the majority of the Workers (Communist) Party of America was opposed to the labor party and appealed to the Comintern to speak on the question. The CI said a labor party was still needed and, consequently, the WCPA expelled the Lore or anti-labor party group as opportunist, dealing with the question in a mechanical fashion, rather than through a campaign of rectification.

By 1931 the CPUSA was laying the foundation for an alliance of classes under communist leadership: They stood at the head of a demonstration of a quarter of a million people across the country during the Unemployed March of 1930, led the National Miners' Union strike of over 50,000 in 1931, and the campaign to save the Scottsboro boys with mass protest around the world, to name a few examples. By 1934 membership in the Trade Union Unity League unions was 125,000 and there were 150,000 in the affiliated National Unemployed Council. However, in June of 1934, the Communist International could



# FRONT

still point out that "One of the weakest points of the work of the revolutionary unions is the insufficient work among Negroes, ... there is as yet no decisive improvement in the Party's work in the factories... the Convention paid too little attention to agrarian work".(8)

By the late 1930's the right opportunist tendencies which had held back the bolshevization and consolidation of the Party "on the eve of the second round of revolutions and wars, the round in which the Communist Parties have to play an incomparably more important and decisive part than in the first round"(9) were being consolidated into a revisionist trend.

Like their earlier counterparts, the first modern revisionists, led by Browder, seized on one aspect of the capitalist system- the fact that certain sectors of the American bourgeoisie had an interest in opposing fascism- and from that proposition created an elaborate theory. This line of American exceptionalism put forward that American capitalism was still progressive, was capable of leading the world to peace and providing the masses with a secure and democratic life.

In its logical conclusion, this analysis negates the need for class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the vanguard communist party. This is precisely the proposition advanced in 1944 by the modern revisionists. It will suffice to compare Georgi Dimitroff's formulation of the United Front Against Fascism with that of Earl Browder to clearly see the distortion of the CI's line.

Georgi Dimitroff in his Report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, in 1935, defined the United Front against Fascism and how it differs from the United Front against Imperialism: "Whether the victory of fascism can be prevented depends in the first place on the militant activity displayed by the working class itself, on whether its forces are welded into a single militant army combating the offensive of capitalism and fascism. Having established its fighting unity, the proletariat would paralyze the influence of fascism over the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie of the towns, the youth and the intelligentsia, and would be able to neutralize one section and win over another section (p.12).

"In the mobilization of the toiling masses for the struggle against fascism, the formation of a broad people's anti-fascist front on the basis of the proletarian united front is a particularly important task... a fighting alliance between the proletariat on the one hand and the toiling peasantry and the basic mass of the urban petty bourgeoisie constituting a majority in the population of even industrially developed countries, on the other"(p. 17). Dimitroff recommends for the United States the creation of a "Workers' and Farmers' Party" with an anti-fascist, anti-monopoly, anti-finance capital program in defense of the interests of workers, farmers, Blacks, veterans and lower petty bourgeoisie.(10) The broad people's front is a tactic for the working class and its allies on the defensive against fascism. Dimitroff warned against collaboration with bourgeois parties and states that with the people's front "the class struggle between exploited and exploiters thus receives an immeasurably wider base and a mighty scope" paving the way for the working class to pass over to the offensive at the head of the United Front against imperialist rule.

In August 1936, the CP still viewed building the Farmer-Labor Party as its central task. (11) By December 1936 the CP analyzed the Republican defeat as a vote along class lines and by July 1937, Earl Browder had totally liquidated the Farmer-Labor Party: "The Far-

mer-Labor Party...is taking shape and growing within the womb of the disintegrating two old parties [Democratic and Republican-ed.]. It will be born as a national party at a moment when it already replaces in the main one of the old traditional parties, contesting and possibly winning control of the federal government from the hour of its birth. What particular name the caprice of history may baptize it with is immaterial to us. This new party that is...involving a majority of the population, is what we communists have in mind when we speak of a national Farmer-Labor Party, the American expression of the People's Front."(12)

The revisionists had begun dismantling the Communist Party itself in 1935-36 when the party press and cadre organizers were handed over to John L. Lewis of the C.I.O. "without a single guarantee as to program or the political rights of Communists".(13)

From there, it was just a step to abdicate leadership to the bourgeois politicians: After Roosevelt's speech in late 1937 praising collective security among capitalist countries, Browder wrote that, while this was done mainly in defense of American imperialist policies in the Far East, i.e. open door territorial "integrity" in China, "At the present time, (this) demands a struggle for collective security, for curbing the fascist aggressors, for the maintenance of world peace - a struggle which the camp of labor and progress must and can carry on as a struggle against fascism and war and for peace and democracy..."(p.979). "These pronouncements of Roosevelt when taken together...provide a rounded out people's front program"(p. 1093).(14)

After the dissolution and subsequent revisionist reconstitution of the CPUSA in 1944 and 1945, the new Foster leadership failed to break with the revisionist line on the united front. William F. Dunne, one of the communist party members expelled in 1946 for so-called "left" sectarianism, criticized the new leaders' right opportunism as follows: "The new phase of crass opportunism consists in the attempt to make the Communist Party a 'pure and simple progressive' middle class, reformist party and to justify this by false and defeatist estimates of class relationships and the stage of the anti-fascist struggle. The following quotation presents the position with rare clarity: 'The unfolding postwar period in the U.S. reveals that, notwithstanding the military defeat of the Axis, we are still in the historic period of the struggle against fascism' (Jerome: Political Affairs, January, 1946)" and the National Board of the CPUSA in the official statement to THE WORKER, November 10, 1946, speaks of "welding an all inclusive unity from FDR Democrats to Communists". (15)

The anti-monopoly coalition of the present-day CPUSA continues this tradition of surrendering to bourgeois leadership. Its basis is the incorrect assessment of objective conditions that says there are still progressive elements among the bourgeoisie who will agree to oppose the handful of reactionary monopolists and throw off their own so-called "policy" of imperialism, fascism, and war. (16)

This theory, like Browder's, "denies Lenin's basic thesis that imperialism is parasitic, decaying and moribund capitalism, and denies that U.S. capitalism is imperialist in its nature". (17)

It denies the Marxist-Leninist theory that the state is a tool of monopoly capital for class rule, it springs from great power chauvinism- "that every matter under the sky can be settled if the two 'great men' sit down together"(18) and denies that the masses are the makers of history. The proponents of the "anti-monopoly co-

alition" "do their utmost not only to prettify U.S. imperialism, but also to stop others from unmasking it... What then is the purpose of these persons in opposing the exposure of imperialism and in opposing revolutionary propaganda of any kind? It can only be to prevent the people from waging a revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Clearly, such a stand is completely contrary to Marxism-Leninism." (19)

The foundation for the United Front under the leadership of the proletariat was begun in 1919 with the formation of the Communist Party and with the struggle against factionalism in 1929. It was extended with the leadership of mass struggles in the early thirties and it was liquidated in the late 30's and early 40's with the surrender to bourgeois ideology and the liquidation of the Party. The single most important factor in the distortion of the United Front was the failure to take up the struggle against opportunism both inside and outside the CPUSA.

## FOOTNOTES

- (1) Engels letter to Mrs. Wischnewsky of February 9, 1887.
- (2) McKean, Fergus, "Communism versus Opportunism", PEOPLES CANADA DAILY NEWS, 8/17/74, p. 10.
- (3) Lenin, SW, vol. V, p. 304.
- (4) "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder," FLP, 1970, p. 69.
- (5) For further reference, "Overcoming Looseness in our Mass Work", pp.324-329, THE COMMUNIST, April, 1931; "United Front Tactics in the Lawrence Strike" pp.9-16, THE COMMUNIST, January, 1932.
- (6) McKean, Fergus, Op. cit., p. 13.
- (7) McKean, Fergus, Op. cit., p. 10.
- (8) Sherman, B., "The Eighth Congress of the CPUSA and Some Conclusions", THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, Vol. XI, No. 12, June 20, 1934, pp.393-394.
- (9) Mingulin, F.I., "The Eve of the Seventh Comintern Congress", THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, Vol. XII, No.6, March 20, 1935, p.309.
- (10) THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST WAR AND FASCISM, Gamma Publishing Co., 1974.
- (11) Childs, Morris, "Forging Unity Against Reaction in Illinois", THE COMMUNIST, August 1936, p.779.
- (12) Browder, Earl, "The Communist in the People's Front", THE COMMUNIST, July 1937, p.599.
- (13) Dunne, William, "The Struggle Against Opportunism in the Labor Movement- For a Socialist U.S.", p.32.
- (14) Browder, Earl, "The People's Front Moves Forward", THE COMMUNIST, November 1937, p. 1093.
- (15) Dunne, William, Op. cit., p. 36.
- (16) For further reference, "New Program of the CPUSA", Political Affairs Publishers, N.Y., 1966.
- (17) "A Comment on the Statement of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.", WHENCE THE DIFFERENCES, New Era, Bath, 1963, p. 369.
- (18) Ibid, p.373.
- (19) Ibid, p.370.

## SUGGESTED READINGS

### THE MARXIST TREND IN THE U.S.

Dunne, William F., "The Struggle against Opportunism in the Labor movement - for a Socialist United States" (selections reprinted in COMMUNIST LINE No. 2, October 1, 1975 - entire xerox available for cost plus mailing from M.L.O.C. Box 26457, San Francisco, Cal. 94126).

George, Harrison, "The Crisis in the C.P.U.S.A." (see note above to William Dunne's publication).

### THE OPPORTUNIST TREND IN THE U.S.

Browder, Earl, "The People's Front Moves Forward!" THE COMMUNIST, December 1937.

Foster, W.Z. "American Origins of the People's Front," THE COMMUNIST, December 1937.

Bittelman, A., "Essence of the Democratic Front," THE COMMUNIST, May 1938.

Foster, W.Z., "Special Organizational Features of the Democratic Front in the US", THE COMMUNIST, October 1939.

The Marxist-Leninist line on the Black National Question in the U.S. did not come to the fore until the Comintern in 1930 - with the participation of Black Americans - fully elaborated Lenin's thesis on the Black Question as a national question.

Until the 10th Party Convention in 1938, genuine elements within the CPUSA struggled to uphold the right of self-determination for the Black nation in the Black Belt South and the right of equality for Blacks throughout the oppressor nation in their propaganda and their daily work. They made great advances toward the revolutionary alliance of the Black National Struggle and the workers' struggle in the U.S. After 1938, the opportunist elements within the party succeeded in liquidating the question - a prelude to the liquidation of the party itself in 1944. It is clear that the Black National Question was one of the main pillars upon which the party's integrity was built. When it was defended and protected, the Party stood firm, and when it was attacked and shattered, the destruction of the party itself became a certainty.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLACK NATION IN THE BLACK BELT SOUTH

Up until the 1850's when U.S. industry was able to consolidate its own market and accumulation process, it was dependent on slavery to supply this capital base. Once, however, this was done, the tendency of capitalism to destroy more primitive forms of economic organization became the dominant factor in U.S. capitalism's relationship to chattel slavery. Marx says that without slavery the U.S. would have developed along patriarchal lines (POVERTY OF PHILOSOPHY).

It was not until the middle of the 19th century that slavery as an economic system became a liability to Northern Capital. It was then that capital began to wage its attack on the slavocracy of the South. Its goal was the consolidation of the U.S. bourgeois democratic revolution and the establishment of all-round bourgeois dictatorship. This, of course, meant the destruction of the economic basis of slave-holding society: slavery itself.

Following the Civil War, the Northern capitalists established a bourgeois dictatorship in the South to consolidate the gains of the revolution (Reconstruction). In order to strengthen its social base, Black people were granted full democratic rights (13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution).

The Northern (now read monopoly) bourgeoisie was incapable of carrying a revolution through to the end. The bourgeoisie was incapable (owing to its economic needs) of accomplishing the full expropriation of the plantations and giving the land to its tillers, the Black people. The Northern bourgeoisie was, therefore, forced to ally itself with the reactionary former slave-holders. Having been cheated of the land, the basis for bourgeois-democratic rights, the Black people were soon disenfranchised of all the rights granted in the Constitution.

If the land had been expropriated, and if thereby Black people in the South had won bourgeois democratic rights, then the eventual integration of Black people in the South, on an equal basis with whites, would have been a historical certainty. It is precisely because the agrarian question was never resolved for Black people in the South that the question still exists. And it is precisely because the question was never resolved that Blacks were forced to migrate North to escape the lynch terror and the economic exploitation and oppression caused by the failure of the agrarian revolution and reflected in the absence of bourgeois rights.

Thus, it is precisely the failure of the agrarian revolution that molded the Black question into the Black National Question.

## ROOTS OF THE COMMUNIST LINE ON THE BLACK NATIONAL QUESTION

Marx and Engels laid the foundation for the revolutionary workers' movement in the U.S. through the guidance and advice which they provided to their followers in this country. Marx and Engels had constant correspondence with their comrades in the States - Wedemeyer, Sorge and others. It was Marx who encouraged his old colleague Wedemeyer to organize a group of German-American communists to fight in the Civil War for the liberation of the slaves; it was Marx who drafted a letter to Lincoln on behalf of the First International Workingmen's Association, demanding that Lincoln prosecute the war with all speed that the matter might be settled. It was Marx who led the entire working class of Great Britain and greater Europe in refusing to follow the lead of their capitalist classes in aiding the Southern slave-owners in obtaining war loans and markets for their slave-harvested cotton. Indeed, if it had not been for the international solidarity of the working class, the war would have dragged on for years or would not have been resolved in favor of slave emancipation at all.

With the development of competitive capitalism into monopoly capitalism the world is completely divided up. The struggle of oppressed nations to achieve their political and economic independence strikes a blow directly at the imperialist aggressors and becomes a component part of the world proletarian revolution. For the communist of an oppressor nation, the true mark of loyalty to the international working class movement is that communist's attitude toward the national liberation movement which would most seriously affect the stability of his or her own bourgeoisie.

A willingness to support national liberation movements "in general" while failing to support those national liberation movements which would undermine the stability of one's own "fatherland" reflects the rankest treason to the working class movement and the surest mark of revisionism, and social-imperialism of the worst kind.

The Marxist-Leninist line on the question of the Black Liberation Struggle in the U.S. is that communists must demand equal rights for Blacks in the North and the right of self-determination in the South. These two slogans are not antagonistic to each other, but are rather preconditions for each other's fulfillment. The lack of equal rights in the states outside the Black Belt is conditioned by the failure of the agrarian revolution in the South. Black people fled the South because of the failure of the agrarian revolution and suffer oppression of a distinctly national character in the Northern states primarily because of the continued oppression in the South. They are, in fact, a minority. Black people in the Northern states can permanently secure equal rights with other working people where they live and work only by the winning of the right of self-determination in the Black Belt by the Black nation there, and conversely the victory of the Black nation hinges upon unity with the Northern Black proletariat and its white counterpart.

What constitutes "self-determination?" In the South, not only are certain democratic rights denied but

access to all key governmental, legislative and judicial authority is denied. This authority is concentrated in the hands of the white bourgeoisie and land-owners. "Therefore, the overthrow of this class rule in the Black Belt is unconditionally necessary in the struggle for Negroes' right to self-determination," (C.I. Resolution). Moreover, it must be made clear that the right of self-determination of the Black people in the Black Belt cannot be realized without the fulfillment of the two basic demands, confiscation of the land and state unity of the Black Belt. Social equality for Blacks in the North is dependent on the achievement of social equality of Blacks in the South and that is dependent on the Black population in the Southern Black Belt winning the right of self-determination.

The Comintern laid out the democratic reforms which should be demanded by Black people in the South before self-determination is achieved. Such reforms as:

- 1) The withdrawal of American forces and the police from the Black Belt.
- 2) The dismissal of all white officers and their replacement by elected Negro officers.
- 3) The granting of the right to the Negroes to change the old and pass new laws.
- 4) The granting of the right of the Negroes to organize their self-defense detachments against lynching, supplying them with arms at governmental expense.
- 5) That all expenditures in the Black Belt should be decided upon by the Negroes themselves, and the same also with regard to taxes.
- 6) That all land in these districts belonging to the capitalists, banks and other exploiters be transferred to the Negroes. ("Against Liberalism in the American Negro Question," N. Nasonov, THE COMMUNIST, April 1930).

It is important to emphasize that these demands were considered essentially reformist demands by the Comintern and the Marxist-Leninist trend in the C.P.U.S.A.

From there, it is possible to get a better picture of the nature and importance of the deviations from Marxism-Leninism which occurred. THE EMERGENCE OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST LINE (1919-1929)

As early as 1916, Lenin (CW, vol. 23, p. 275) - basing himself on the most thorough investigation of U.S. agricultural development ever done - formulated the question of Black people in the U.S. as a national question. With Lenin's death in 1924 and due to the opportunist influence of the Zinoviev-Kamenev group in the Communist International and factionalism within the U.S. communist party, the Marxist-Leninist position on the Black National Question did not immediately come forward.

After the death in 1926 of the Party Chairman, Charles Ruthenberg, Jay Lovestone, leader of one of the factions, assumed leadership of the CPUSA. When in 1928, the Comintern, with the participation of U.S. communists, formulated the correct position on the Black National Question contained in the famous "Resolution on the Negro Question in the United States," the Lovestonites tried to smuggle in their opportunist line under different forms. The first was the already discredited line of the old Socialist Party that the oppression of Black people was racial in nature and that the struggle of Blacks was only important to the extent that it was a workers' struggle.

Then changed conditions forced the Lovestonites to modify their tactics to those of "left"-liquidationism: They

subsequently put forward the "left"-sounding slogan of "Negro Soviets," thus liquidating the Black National Question by making the party's support of the struggle conditional on the Blacks' acceptance of the soviet form of organization. This line negated the right of the Black nation to determine its own methods of struggle and liquidated the internationalist duty of the party of unconditional support for the Black liberation struggle.

As soon as this "left" opportunism had been rejected, the Lovestone-Pepper group came back with their now famous contribution to opportunism: American exceptionalism. The essence of this theory was that the U.S. had not exhausted all possible markets and that, therefore, it had not yet entered the stage of imperialism. Where were these untapped markets? In the South, of course. Lovestone held that "the industrial revolution in the South" would solve the problems of Black people peacefully by sweeping away the remnants of slavery in southern agriculture, by proletarianizing the Black peasantry and by thus automatically disentangling the complicated problem of national antagonism in the South.

The whole opportunist theory of American exceptionalism was shattered in the address of the Communist International to the CPUSA (May 1929). In the Resolution of the Communist International of October 1930, the CPUSA was called upon to recognize the national character of Black oppression in the U.S. and to liquidate all opportunist lines on this question.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR THE MARXIST-LENINIST LINE (1930-1938)

The second period extended, roughly, from the time of the adoption of the Comintern line until the 10th National Convention of the Party in 1938. This period was characterized in practice by a refusal on the part of opportunist elements to consistently defend the right of self-determination in the Black Belt, and in theory this trend was reflected in a tendency to muddle the concepts of equal rights and self-determination, and to introduce the bourgeois concept of racism.

The first struggle in this period was waged against the opportunist theories of Huiswood and Shick. These theories attempted to defend the thesis that the problems of Black people emanated from pigmentation, facial features and texture of hair. These theories were concepts of race as a social category, something upheld by bourgeois reactionaries and liberals and denied by working class revolutionaries. Although these theories were short-lived in the CPUSA, they gave way not to Marxism-Leninism, but rather to even more refined shades of opportunism, the essence of which lay in the theoretical blurring of the distinction between equal rights and the right of self-determination in the South. Its essence in practice was to avoid mention of the right of self-determination in the South. They both amounted to the same thing: unity with the liberals and liquidation of the right of self-determination for Black people in the Black Belt South. The main supporters of this opportunist line were James Allen, James W. Ford, Robert Minor and Earl Browder.

As early as 1930, Comrade Harry Haywood recognized the tendency to confuse the issue of Black liberation and condemned the Browder-Minor group for consolidating a revisionist line on this question. However, due to the immaturity of the Leninist forces at that time, Browder was able to appeal (successfully) to the need for party unity to prevent this line from being exposed.

The next great "developer" of revisionist tendencies was James A. Allen. This opportunist was exposed by B.D. Amis' article in THE COMMUNIST, October 1932. In this polemic against Allen's errors, Amis recognized three distinct mistakes:

- 1) The tendency to view the Black question as a racial rather than a national question.
- 2) the tendency to equate equal rights with self-determination.
- 3) The view that Negroes did not have the right to rule over whites in the Black Belt.

Allen was the main theoretical of this opportunist trend; it was he who laid the foundation; it was he who was called upon to liquidate the Black National Question in the '50's and, to this day, the CPUSA feels safe in publishing his writings on the Black question without revising them.

Of secondary importance were Earl Browder and Robert Minor.

The practice of the party at this time tended toward economism, underestimation of the revolutionary potential of the Black people and tailing after the reformist petty-bourgeois and bourgeois leaders of the NAACP and the National Urban League, although important breakthroughs were made in the development of sharecroppers defense, the fight to save the Scottsboro boys, the campaign against white chauvinism culminating in the Yokinen trial and expulsion, the organizing among Black workers, etc.

At this time the pages of the theoretical journal of the CP were still open enough to wage polemics against errors and the reformist illusions of the opportunists did not go unchallenged.

## LIQUIDATION OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST LINE (1938-1944)

In the third period, dating roughly from the 10th National Convention of the Party in 1938 to the destruction of the party by opportunism in 1944, the revisionist trend consolidated into a consistent line. This line might be characterized as "Marxism-Leninism-Jeffersonianism." During this period Earl Browder's view that "communism is 20th century Americanism" became the official line of the party. The revisionist leadership developed a whole set of opportunist view as to the "democratic" and "progressive" nature of U.S. imperialism, and as to the role of the capitalist state machinery. This, in order to justify the complete sell-out of the party to the Roosevelt New Deal administration and its supporters. By the time of the dissolving of the party in 1944, Browder and his whole trend in the party had effectively silenced all opposition by expulsion, intimidation and reassignment and had liquidated the party's work in the South in favor of "national unity" with the New Deal administration. In 1944, in an article in the January issue of THE COMMUNIST, Browder expounds the liquidation of the Black National Question, claiming that the Black people, by their attitude at the close of the Civil War, had exercised their right of self-determination and given up all perspectives of being a distinct nation. This was a repudiation of the Black National Question. This same month, the party leadership sent out a letter to all districts, recommending that the party be dissolved.

After the revisionist reconstitution of the CPUSA in 1945, which resulted primarily from the pressure exerted by the international communist movement, the party essentially returned to its position of the late 1930's, which was to betray the Black Nation.

Taking advantage of the international communist movement's campaign against modern revisionism (Browderism and Titoism), remnants of the Marxist-Leninist trend within the party put forward an attempt to reassert the rights of the Black Nation, e.g. NEGRO LIBERATION, by Harry Haywood, but these efforts were frustrated by the revisionist domination of Foster, Allen and James Jackson on the Black National Question, all of whom supposedly defended the right to self-determination but did so from an anti-Leninist perspective, holding up the need for a Black majority in the Black Belt and defending the possibility of peaceful liquidation of the Black National Question. By the 20th Congress of the CPSU, revisionism was on the offensive internationally and this was true for the national question as well as on other fronts. James Jackson and J.S. Allen openly called once more for the liquidation of the Black National Question, right at the point when the Black National Liberation Movement was coming into its own after Little Rock. By 1960, the party officially returned to its 1944 liquidationist position, which it has held ever since.

All of the major forms of opportunism on the Black National Question which are current in the communist movement are nothing more than mediocre replays of opportunist lines to be found within the CPUSA. The Communist Labor Party's slogan "independence for the Negro nation" is a thinly veiled version of the "left"-liquidationist slogan of Jay Lovestone "Negro Soviets;" New Voice's "racism" line is a rather poor reproduction of the race theory of Huiswood and Shick; and the RCP,USA's "nation of a new type" has its roots in Lovestone's theories, revived in 1969 by Claude Lightfoot of the CPUSA.

All are clearly aimed at cutting the revolutionary heart out of the Black National Struggle, liquidating it into the general class struggle and sabotaging the revolution's foundation in the alliance between the national and workers' movements.

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# CPUSA- TRADE

## MARXISM-LENINISM vs.

In the trade union work of the CPUSA the contradiction historically has been that, in the main, communists have not linked the day to day spontaneous demands of workers to the revolutionary question of state power, linking economic to political struggles; but instead, have concentrated on gaining economic reforms and temporary gains within the confines of the trade union itself- the most obvious example being the work in the CIO.

As we shall see, there is a big difference between militant trade union leadership, which honestly advances the struggle of the workers to gain economic demands- and communist leadership, which combines economic with political struggles on a conscious basis in order that the working class can act consciously, as a class for itself.

The work of the CPUSA has been- with few exceptions, trade union work, not communist work. This has taken two main forms: "left" anarcho-syndicalist work of the IWW type that continued through the dual unionism period of 1919-1920, and the right opportunist reliance upon reforms and economic struggles. This was based on the belief that these, in and of themselves, will lead automatically, and peacefully, to socialism. In essence, both deny the revolutionary potential of the working class and its world historic mission as the bearer of a classless society.

Certainly since the 1920's, it has been the right opportunist tendency to concentrate upon reforms rather than revolution which has been the main danger - and is today in our movement. Already in 1915, Lenin wrote to the Socialist Propaganda League of America, one of the forerunners of the Communist Party, that "the most active participation of all Party members in the economic struggle and in all trade unions and cooperative organizations of the workers" is urged- sounding the call to American workers that his predecessors, Marx and Engels, had advanced. (1) 1919-1921 In this early period, the vital "task of establishing active contact with the masses and of organizing the communists and militant workers within the AFL for the struggle against the Gompers' policies and leadership- this fundamental task of the first period was left almost untouched", (2) noted Bittelman.

This is illustrated by the fact that the Manifesto of the Left Wing of 1919 (which had broken with the Socialist Party to form one of the constituent parts of the future CPUSA) stated that "The party must teach, propagate and agitate exclusively for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism through a proletarian dictatorship." (3)

Beginning in 1920, the Communist International urged the building of a left wing within the reformist unions. The program of dual unionism was not disavowed by communists in America until the May 1921 Woodstock convention uniting the CLP and the CP. The convention document stated that, "The policy of the IWW and similar organizations of artificially creating new industrial unions has been shown by experience to be mistaken" and "the CP condemns the policy of the revolutionary elements leaving the existing unions". (4)

1922-1927 The CP was still largely a propagandist organization. Work was concentrated in the AFL mainly through the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) born in November 1920 and consisting of groups of communists and progressives.

The TUEL program attacked the trade union bureaucracy and proposed a fighting policy instead of class collaboration, amalgamation of the craft unions into industrial unions, organization of the unorganized, independent political action, affiliation to the Red International of Labor Unions, recognition of the Soviet Union and the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' republic. (5)

During this period other communist parties were building factory nuclei (1924 CI Resolution) and beginning to bolshevize themselves (Stalin, 1924). But the CPUSA was just moving out of its language federation structure to set up some shop, but mostly street nuclei. The party was torn with factionalism. In 1927 Stalin said to the American delegation to the CI: "I would like to ask the delegation whether it regards this small percentage of organized workers as a good thing: Does not the delegation think that this small percentage is an indication of the weakness of the American proletariat and of the weakness of its weapon in the struggle against the capitalists in the economic field?" (6)

The thrust of the CI's guidance for the period was to urge 1) organizing the unorganized 2) liberating the existing mass trade unions from the stranglehold of the reformists and 3) uniting the trade union movement.

The CI's summation of the CPUSA's work for the period was: "In spite of enormous difficulties, the Workers (Communist) Party of America has achieved considerable successes in the sphere of mass work. It has led a number of strikes, has made first attempts to organize the unorganized. It has penetrated into the Miner's Union. The weak sides of the Party still remain its inadequate influence among the real American workers and its organizational defects. The work of the Party in various spheres- for example, work among the Negroes, among women, etc. is still not well organized and the carrying out of the decisions of previous enlarged Plenums with regard to the establishment of a broad left wing in the trade unions has also been inadequate". (7)

1928-1934 After the smashing of the UMWA (1927-28)- through the betrayal of the union leaders who ordered each district to settle separately, and fierce government repression, CP trade union work took a turn. This was exemplified in the formation of the CP-led Trade Union Unity League on September 1, 1929, with the aim primarily of organizing the masses of unorganized workers that the AFL refused to touch.

The TUUL slogans were 1) amalgamation of the trade union movement, 2) support for the Labor Party, and 3) defense of the Soviet Union. Work in this period by communists consisted first of organizing in the AFL-though this was most often around pure economic reforms and not focusing on the historic role of the working class (which often meant that this work was neglected or under-estimated in importance), and second of efforts made to organize the unorganized into the revolutionary trade unions of the TUUL.

Except in rare cases - such as some of the miner organizing - this work differed from the "dual unionism" of the earlier period because the AFL, by this time, had pulled out of steel, meat packing, auto, lumber, marine, and transport; the AFL refused to organize the unorganized; the AFL had expelled communists and their supporters; and had paralyzed union activity with the "B and O no strike plan", "union-management cooperation", etc.

The CPUSA understood the importance of organizing the "reserve army of labor"- the unemployed- especially during the Great Depression when unemployment rose as high as 30%. The Party led over a quarter of a million unemployed in the Hunger Marches of 1930, organized the unemployed into the Party (62% of those recruited during the 1933 recruiting drive were unemployed) and even, at times, concentrated more on organizing the unemployed during a strike than the employed workers them-

selves (e.g. the National Miners' Union strike in Kentucky in 1932). Here, as among the employed, the Party often failed to develop the rank and file political understanding, develop proletarian democracy and discipline on the basis of a correct relationship between the leadership and the masses, combat opportunism through the united front from below and create solid organizations that would live on after the heat of the battle

1930 marked the formulation of the famous "concentration policy": Concentrate our forces in the basic industries of the key areas of Cleveland, Chicago, Pittsburgh and Detroit. There did follow a move into the basic industries, but the concentration was weak. The CP led the National Miners Union Strike in Western Pennsylvania (42,000) and Kentucky (10,000) in 1931, and the Ambridge steel strike of 5000 in 1933. Recruitment into the TUUL unions progressed to a high of 125,000 in 1934 plus 150,000 in the affiliated National Unemployed Council. But, whereas unemployed organizing reached a new high in Detroit, work among auto-workers dropped off; miners were organized in Utah and neglected in the concentration area of Pittsburgh. Each year resolutions were passed urging the rooting of the party in factory nuclei in the basic industries and each year it was recognized that little progress had been made along these lines. In 1933, the editor of THE COMMUNIST could still write "the work of the lower party organizations must be basically changed. Nine-tenths of all the work of the lower organizations must be concentrated directly on the work among the masses and not, as at present, in countless inner meetings...and the main basis of work must be in the factory". (In 1933, only 4% of party members were in factory nuclei, THE COMMUNIST, August 1933). The editorial goes on to state that mistakes in the fight against the imperialist wars, on the Black National Question, the bonus marches, the United Front policy, etc. are also a result of the low theoretical level of our party and the failure to popularize Marxism-Leninism and the teachings of Comrade Stalin. "Propaganda must be carried on for the principles of Communism, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Soviet State." (8)

During this period the CI continued to struggle with the U.S. party urging it to become a true and bolshevized party. The CI noted in 1933 that the Open Letter issued by the Extraordinary Conference of the CPUSA in July was correct in warning the CPUSA "of the possibility of going off its proletarian base if it does not strengthen it among the decisive strata of the American workers (especially in the big factories and the most important industries) much more rapidly than hitherto". (9) And, Comrade Piatnitsky in the May 15, 1932 issue of THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL sharply condemned the social-democratic heritage in the Party's ranks of separating party work and trade union work. (10)

Many American writers of the period, with the trade unionist W.Z. Foster in the lead, continually call forth from an earlier period the specter of "left" sectarianism as the greatest danger to communist work. This amounts in effect to a cover for their opportunist refusal to take a leadership role beyond "union building" and to take up the difficult task of bolshevizing the CP and all of its cadre. T. Gusev of the CI points out that "the real nature of this sectarianism consists in a right opportunist lagging behind the mass movement," (11) and results in the concept of "our workers" and "their workers" (the united

# UNION LINE

## OPPORTUNISM

front American-style), the "basis for deeply opportunist gentlemen's agreements with the reformists for the division of spheres of influence." Gusev reminds the Americans of the Marxist-Leninist principle which they had not yet consistently taken up, that "the main blow is aimed at the conciliatory parties because they are the most dangerous social bulwark of the enemy" in the labor movement as elsewhere. This principle is further comprised in the next period with the CP's call for unity at any cost.

This period also brought forth scattered examples of communists in the trade unions correctly raising the question of the bourgeois state, how its power is used to crush the workers movement and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. (12)

During this period of a high tide of the workers struggle, minority workers often took a leading role in the intense class struggle. The work of the Party among minority workers reflected the failure of the party to bolshevize itself and to carry out what was, for the most part, a correct line on the national question prompted by the 1928-1930 CI Resolutions.

In the South, the work of the Party among Black workers never concentrated on the heavy urban industrial Black proletariat, such as in Birmingham, but rather more on the task of planting the Party in the South and uniting it with the Black petty bourgeoisie. The Party did not link the struggle for self-determination with the struggle for socialism. (13)

In the North, because the Party had not armed its cadre theoretically with the positions of the CI in 1928 and 1930 the work among Black workers remained almost unchanged from the earlier period of the 20's in that the Party promoted the viewpoint that there was no important difference between white and Black workers, and therefore, that the Party had no special responsibility.

Though the Party conducted large campaigns such as the Scottsboro Boys, this had little impact in terms of recruiting Black proletarians, and certainly the Party was not able to keep those that it did recruit.

Amongst other minorities, the Party has historically concentrated its attention on the petty bourgeoisie, and not the proletarian stratum of Chicano, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino workers.

The chief error of the Party in this period was to simply equate the struggle for self-determination as one of many struggles for equal rights of Black workers, and not to grasp the genuine revolutionary character of the call for self-determination.

1934-1944 Beginning in 1933 a vast rank-and-file-pushed strike wave brought more members into the AFL unions and with it an element of democracy (e.g., auto strikes of 1933 on). The AFL bureaucrats also figured they would capitalize on the great move of the unorganized towards unionization and the AFL unions again became the place to reach the masses of workers. The CPUSA's policy reflected this turn: work in the reformist unions was stepped up; unity was actively sought; and amalgamation of TUUL unions with ALF unions took place to such an extent that on March 17, 1935, the TUUL was liquidated.

Following the 1933 Open Letter another move was made toward building factory nuclei in the basic industries but the fundamental failure to consolidate cadre around a correct Marxist-Leninist line on trade union work and arm them with revolutionary theory could not be

rectified through improved methods of work and stepped up organizing alone. The San Francisco General Strike of July 1934 marks the high point of CP trade union work and had been prepared since 1932. It also provides, however, an example of the strong tendency inherent in the CP, since its inception, to view trade union work as an end in itself, or the first step to socialism, leaving communist work to a later stage and consistently belittling party building.

The militancy of the CIO was part of a nationwide labor movement against the capitalist attack through the open shop and forced company unions, new refinements in speed-up policies and wage cutbacks. 1936 and 1937 brought the first sit-down strike which organized the Goodyear employees into the United Rubber Workers, the UE strike at R.C.A. in Camden, New Jersey of 6,000 workers, the sit-down at Flint, Michigan and other plants which broke the G.M. empire, and many others. By 1940 the CIO had 4,000,000 members and by 1945 had grown to 6,000,000.

Repression was fierce and communists brought their long experience in organizing and tactics such as the flying squadron and the mass picket line, and proved indefatigable fighters. However, in 1935-36 the Party leadership, in an unprincipled abdication of their independent role, handed over the entire party apparatus, including cadres of organizers and party press to John L. Lewis.

By October 1940 W.Z. Foster could state, "Inasmuch as in the U.S. neither the CP nor the Farmer-Labor Party is strong enough to secure the allegiance of the decisive sections of the working class, the chief burden of mass leadership in this crisis devolves upon the trade unions. The trade unions bear the great responsibility of leading the fight of the masses to keep the U.S. out of the war, to help establish a democratic peace, and so to reorganize society, on socialist foundations." (14)

The opportunist reconstitution of the CPUSA in 1945 brought no great changes and trade union work continued to be viewed largely as educational and aiming to build trade union unity (i.e. AFL-CIO unity) which can play a role in "organizing all the democratic, anti-fascist people's forces of America into a great coalition (later called the anti-monopoly coalition) against Wall Street and its program of building a new American empire." (15) "A united trade union movement would be a tremendous force for independent political action by all those committed to the FDR program of Big Three unity, collaboration with the S.U. and the Roosevelt Economic Bill of Rights." (16)

In conclusion, the tendency to separate trade union work and political work has its roots in the historical development of the workers and communist movement in the U.S. Although genuine elements made advances in the 20's and 30's, the party leadership did not rise to the task of providing and implementing a proletarian line on trade union work, then sunk to the revisionist liquidation of the party trade union apparatus after 1935 and the subsequent liquidation of the party itself.

The reconstituted CPUSA continued to build its revisionist forces in the trade unions, straining to bind the workers' movement with the shackles of economism and ballot-box socialism, justified through its class collaborationist theories of the "progressive nature" of U.S. capitalism. The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (Revolutionary Union) is the most ob-

vious stream which can be traced back to its fountainhead in the CPUSA.

The Committee for Industrial Organization (later the Congress of Industrial Organizations) was formed on November 9, 1935 on the basis of industrial unions built by the communists (e.g. 75,000 workers had been organized into the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers and were then expelled by AFL President Green and became part of the CIO). Within six months, the CIO had 2,000,000 members, 1,000,000 having just joined, the other half coming in with the eight founding unions. The CIO was suspended from the AFL in August 1936 and soon expelled.

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- (4) Foster, William Z., HISTORY OF THE CPUSA, p. 181.
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- (8) THE COMMUNIST, January 1933, p.16.
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- (12) For further reference, Dunne, William, "The Seal of the N.R.A. (National Recovery Act) on the AF of L Convention", THE COMMUNIST, November 1933.
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