

**Guardian**

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT  
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# On building the new communist party



**We are the power**

Firm in our commitment to the fundamental principles of scientific socialism, staunch in our opposition to revisionism and opportunism, confident in the revolutionary capacity of the U.S. working class and oppressed nationalities, united in our hatred of the U.S. monopoly bourgeoisie and its imperialist system, we call on all U.S. Marxist-Leninists to help move the party-building process forward by deepening the necessary ideological discussions and starting to solve the problems of organization — *the Guardian*

# The act of founding a communist party is, in effect, a declaration of war against the imperialist system.

## The time has come for a new beginning

Almost five years ago, the Guardian called upon the U.S. left "to learn the lessons of the past decades of opportunism and begin to build a new communist party capable of leading the class struggles of the future" to the building of a socialist society.

In 1973, as sponsors of a forum attended by some 1200 people in New York City on the question "What Road To Building a New Communist Party?", we stated: "In organizing this meeting, the Guardian has consciously committed itself not only to writing about a new communist party, but to playing an active role its formation."

Now the time has come to sum up the intervening period and to put forward our views on the key party-building tasks confronting Marxist-Leninists in the U.S. today. That is the purpose of this Guardian Party-Building Supplement.

Were these our first comments on party-building, we would devote some space here to laying out the main features of the U.S. imperialist system that provide the objective preconditions for a revolutionary party of the U.S. working class. A thorough, scientific assessment of monopoly capitalism, its main contradictions, its strengths and weaknesses, its path of development—this is an essential task for a communist party in developing its strategy for revolution.

Suffice it to say that in the more than seven decades during which monopoly capitalism has been consolidated in the U.S., it has deepened the contradictions of capitalism on every front, bringing ever larger sectors of the population into objective opposition to the imperialist system. Two world wars and two major colonial wars—as well as hundreds of smaller military encounters—have amply demonstrated that imperialism inexorably breeds wars of profit and aggression, and that the workers and the nationally oppressed always bear the brunt of these wars. The latest recession, the most severe since the 1930s, is graphic evidence that the boom-and-bust capitalist economic cycle goes on and has intensified. The growth of monopoly has made U.S. capitalism ever more chaotic and antisocial, intensifying the process of extracting surplus value from the labor of the working class, curtailing the development of productive forces, extending racism and national oppression, promoting sexism, wreaking untold destruction on the environment and debasing the human sensibilities of the people through the furthering of a culture of decadence and alienation.

### WEAKNESS OF IMPERIALISM

Today the system of U.S. imperialism, despite enormous power on a world and domestic scale, is characterized by fundamental structural weaknesses. New and unprecedentedly high levels of unemployment and inflation have become permanent features of the economy. Political instability has become endemic to the state apparatus where the executive branch has been plagued by assassination, resignation, scandal and a widespread erosion of authority. The "urban crisis"—decaying cities, growth of slums, abandonment of essential social services, deepening ghettoization, financial paralysis—is a fact of life that will not go away. Military defeat in Indochina has destroyed the myth of U.S. "invincibility" on a world scale and inspired in other peoples and nations the confidence to wage their liberation struggles even more intensely.

Mass struggle and class struggle have likewise intensified. The working class, under the hegemony of a labor bureaucracy whose own class position is linked to that of the bourgeoisie, nevertheless contains a militancy and level of class consciousness

that provide a firm objective foundation for development of a revolutionary workers' movement. The democratic struggles of minority nationalities in the U.S. have demonstrated a power and influence capable of shaking the very pillars of the bourgeois state apparatus. The broad, democratic women's movement and, in particular, the struggles of working-class and third world women, have opened a front of struggle attacking the imperialist system at one of its most vulnerable points. The 1960s amply demonstrated the powerful political potential of the masses of students and youth in struggle against the state at particular historical moments.

What has prevented all of these movements from developing further—what has kept them inevitably at a stage of "protest" leading to either reformism or blind flailing at the class enemy—is the lack of communist leadership. The conditions cry out for communist leadership and organization. The spontaneous movements of the oppressed and exploited are daily producing the cadre for the revolutionary tasks of tomorrow.

### SUBJECTIVE FACTOR

In these pages, therefore, we will concentrate on the subjective factors in party-building, that is, on matters which involve efforts of the party-building forces themselves.

To pose the question of building a new communist party as the central task for U.S. Marxist-Leninists is to make certain fundamental assumptions. First, that an organized political force—a party—is required to lead the working-class movement and the revolutionary process. Second, that this party must be communist—it must be based on the principles of scientific socialism as developed principally by Marx, Engels and Lenin, further developed in the modern era by Mao Tsetung, amplified by the contributions of Stalin, Ho Chi Minh, Kim Il Sung, Enver Hoxha, Amilcar Cabral, among others, and the concrete experiences of the international working-class movement. Third, that all of those existing parties which claim the mantle of "communist" have proven themselves politically bankrupt beyond the point of redemption and that therefore Marxist-Leninists must bring a new organization into being. And finally, that this party must be built, that is, Marxist-Leninists must develop a conscious plan, strategy and set of political principles, with accompanying organizational forms, to bring the new communist party into being.

It has been said that the act of founding a communist party is, in effect, a declaration of war against the imperialist system. This must be repeated. It serves to differentiate the communists from those, well-intentioned and otherwise, who address themselves primarily to the manifestations and injustices of the prevailing system with a view toward ameliorating and correcting them. The communists do not ignore the day-in and day-out cruelties of this system of monopoly capital which aggrandizes the wealth produced by socialized labor to a handful of capitalist parasites and which props itself up by racism, national oppression and sexism. To the contrary, the communists understand that the daily manifestations of class struggle, of the struggle for democratic rights, for an end to national oppression and racism, for formal "bourgeois" equality within the confines of the existing property relations and against imperialist war are the concrete arenas within which the revolutionary consciousness of the working class is molded. As the Communist Manifesto said 125 years ago, "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they represent and take care of the future of that movement."

The "future of that movement" can be nothing less than the preparation for proletarian revolution whose goal is the smashing of the bourgeois state power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the indispensable precondition for building a socialist society.

Just as the building of a communist party is a declaration of war against imperialism, so too the building of a new communist party

is a declaration of war against revisionism. This point cannot be emphasized strongly enough. Modern revisionism, particularly because it has come to state power in the Soviet Union, operates as a negative material force with profound impact on the struggles of the working class and oppressed peoples throughout the world. From Chile to Italy to India, revisionist communist parties have pursued a course of action which has led to tragic defeats and class collaboration.

Historically, revisionism, which is the ideological expression of opportunism and class conciliation within the working-class movement, draws its sustenance from the labor aristocracy and the trade union bureaucracy. This labor aristocracy, only a small minority of the working class as a whole, has an influence far beyond its size. Its representatives comprise the bulk of the trade union leadership and are actively courted by the bourgeois state and monopoly capital. They are offered both economic advantages and a voice in the system's political affairs so as to enhance their control over the masses of workers.

At various times the labor aristocracy will confront monopoly capital in struggle around immediate workers' demands. But in general, their domination of the trade union movement serves to build up their own privileged status within the working class at the expense of the majority of the workers—particularly those sectors which are most exploited. More significantly, the economic and political status of the labor aristocracy becomes bound up with the continued rule of monopoly capital. That leads this sector, therefore, to the abandonment of an active opposition to the long-term interests of the proletariat as a whole for the overthrow of capital's rule.

As a result, the labor aristocracy becomes a supporter of the bourgeois state and places itself in opposition to the democratic and special demands of the nationally oppressed and women workers.

In its most blatant reactionary form, this opportunism is expressed in the policies of monopoly's "labor lieutenants" in the top leadership of the AFL-CIO. They combine

their betrayal of the workers at home with active support for the aims of U.S. imperialism throughout the world.

Revisionism presents itself as a "progressive" force within the labor aristocracy. Making occasional nods in the direction of "socialism," revisionism attempts to pass itself off as an "alternative" to these reactionary labor leaders. But in the long run, it plays the same role—diverting the working class from its historical mission to overthrow capitalism.

Who can deny that this is precisely the role of the U.S. Communist Party (CPUSA)? Pursuing the narrowest of economist visions, it has worked assiduously to transform the deep-seated revolutionary potential of the multinational U.S. working class into the struggle for limited immediate gains and constricted organizational forms. Further, it has developed a political line which, without a decibel of variation, is based on the perceived interests of the revisionist group holding state power in the Soviet Union. To justify this opportunism, the CPUSA has abandoned virtually every fundamental principle of scientific socialism. It has become a party whose very success would have the most disastrous consequences for the working class.

But modern revisionism is not merely a "local" phenomenon. Internationally it has scored its greatest success with its rise to power in the world's first socialist country, the Soviet Union. For the past two decades, revisionism has held state power in the USSR where, by its own admission, it has abandoned the dictatorship of the proletariat. It has substituted in its place the rule of a bureaucratic elite that has embarked on the road to a full restoration of capitalism.

Revisionism within the working-class movement inherits and extends the role of classic social democracy as a betrayer of proletarian revolution. But revisionism holding state power becomes a material force with reactionary consequences that qualitatively transcend the role it plays in parties not holding state power. In the Soviet Union, revisionism has transformed the USSR into a superpower operating on a



Party-building forces must join together to deal the death-blow to U.S. imperialism.

global scale with the full force of the economic, political and military power of a modern industrialized state at its disposal. Placing the narrowly defined "national" interest of this revisionist ruling group ahead of the genuine international concerns of the Soviet working class and the revolutionary aspirations of the working class and oppressed peoples throughout the world, revisionism pursues a policy of great nation chauvinism and world hegemonism: in short, social imperialism.

It is this development, therefore—the triumph and consolidation of revisionism in the Soviet Union and in the CPUSA—which has placed the task of building a new communist party before Marxist-Leninists in the U.S.

The consolidation of revisionism in the CPUSA has created a political vacuum which has not yet been filled. Left forces in the U.S. remain dangerously divided along organizational, ideological and national lines. In the wake of the mass struggles of the 1960s, tens of thousands consider themselves part of the "left". But there is no leading political line for the movement as a whole.

In the past few years, the ideas of Marxism-Leninism have increasingly taken hold among those who have come to recognize that a basic revolutionary change is required to end the exploitation and oppression of the monopoly capitalist system. Today, although those who describe themselves as Marxist-Leninists represent a wide divergence of political views, the prestige of Marxism-Leninism in our movement has never been higher. Anarchism, social democracy, revisionism and Trotskyism—despite numerous ideological face-liftings—have nothing to offer the working class, the oppressed nationalities, the masses of women or the politically conscious would-be revolutionaries.

Nevertheless, these tendencies continue to influence and play a backward role in the left. While only a shadow of its former self, the CPUSA has an influence that extends beyond its size. A larger percentage of its members function within the trade union movement than that of any other "left" group. It has a significant number of Black cadre. It is experienced in organization and has access to international levers of authority and prestige. It has a daily newspaper. It enjoys the use of the title "communist," making it a focus of attention it could not otherwise command. By comparison, it makes many other groups look hopelessly amateurish and is adept at converting dogmatist and ultra-"left" errors among Marxist-Leninists into justifications for its revisionist line.

All of this helps to underscore the tragedy which befell the working-class movement in the U.S. when the CPUSA embarked upon and later consolidated its revisionist direction.

Nor will the CPUSA simply fold up and steal away into oblivion when a Marxist-Leninist communist party is finally reconstituted in our country. It will battle this party tooth and nail, slander it before the masses and exploit its weaknesses in every way it can. Because of its relative strength and influence, some Marxist-Leninists will tend to conciliate the CPUSA or foster illusions as to its future political role.

#### 'RESPECTABLE' SOCIALISM

Revisionism is much more than an ideological error or a series of ideological errors. It is, in essence, class collaborationist and counterrevolutionary. Its brand of "respectable" socialism is designed to win it a place in the administration of bourgeois government where inevitably it will play a leading role in suppressing the revolutionary struggle of the masses on behalf of the bourgeoisie—although it will do this, as it has wherever it has had the opportunity, in a "left" guise.

There can be no equivocation in the struggle against revisionism, a struggle which can and must be conducted in full view of the masses. But communists conduct this struggle not in a sectarian fashion, not by simply substituting their own critique of revisionism for the level of consciousness of the masses at any given moment and certainly not by catering to the anticommunism which the bourgeoisie has already implanted in the masses. Revisionism must be exposed concretely in a way that develops the ideological level of the masses and wins more and more workers to Marxism-Leninism.

Therefore, the Marxist-Leninists are do-

Atelier Populaire



ing more than building a communist party; they are reconstituting a communist party in the U.S. because the existing party of reformists and social pacifists has abandoned Marxism-Leninism and is not a communist party any longer, no matter that it clings to the name.

The critique of revisionism and the demands of the mass movements of the 1960s both at home and abroad gave rise to the "new communist movement." Increasingly from the late 1960s on, thousands of veterans of the militant mass struggles of the period and a number of antirevisionist individuals who had left the CPUSA began to form organizations whose main focus was the ultimate creation of a new, antirevisionist communist party. This newspaper and many of its readers were proud to be part of that movement.

But even in its early stages, certain retrograde and deviationist tendencies began to characterize the leading forces in this movement. These errors were not of a kind and they affected different groups in different ways. The chief deviations were opportunism (both left and right), left dogmatism, sectarianism and flunkeyism. Ultimately, two main national organizational formations emerged—the Revolutionary Union (RU), subsequently the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), and the October League (OL), which is now on the verge of also declaring itself a party. Perhaps a dozen other groups, some of them based primarily in one or another oppressed nationality (Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Asian), have allied and split at various times from these two polar organizations, but none have succeeded in offering a viable alternative to RCP and OL.

The principal errors of the RCP have been right opportunist, invariably articulated with an abundance of "left" rhetoric. This was expressed most graphically in their stand on the struggle against racism in Boston where they lined up in an objective alliance with archreactionaries and backward elements among the workers. Their capitulation to racism reflected a willingness to tail behind the level of consciousness that exists in sections of the working class and an abandonment of the struggle for working-class unity.

This position was foreshadowed by the RCP's theoretical work on the Afro-American national question. They invented "a nation of a new type" in order to justify

upholding the slogan of "self-determination" while effectively abandoning the struggle against racism and national oppression.

The RCP's opportunism was also reflected in its general stand on the woman question and the struggle for democratic rights for women. Their opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment is based on the narrowest of economist arguments and reflects a failure to understand the historic significance of the struggle in defense of democratic rights while the working class is under the rule of the bourgeoisie.

The RCP's original party-building plan—a "secret" alliance between themselves and three other organizations of Marxist-Leninists among the oppressed nationalities—also reflected an opportunist political line in practice. It sought hegemony within the party-building movement rather than an attempt to build unity on the basis of struggle for ideological clarity.

In the international arena, the RCP has repeated and publicized slanders against socialist Cuba and the liberation forces in Angola and Zaire. Its opportunism has come to the fore in an attempt to prettify the international line that, in practice, sees the Soviet Union as the primary enemy of the peoples of the world. While disassociating itself from certain of the excesses of the proponents of this class-collaborationist line, the RCP clings to its essence.

The OL, on the other hand, doesn't bother to disguise its class collaboration. On every major international question of recent years—from Angola to Puerto Rico to Zaire to superpower contention—the OL has taken the lead in providing U.S. imperialism with a "left" cover. In Angola, the OL today continues to openly support counterrevolution and willingly places itself in the camp of South Africa. In Puerto Rico, it slanders leading independence organizations and has put forward the class-collaborationist slogan of "Superpowers Out of Puerto Rico"—a slogan which objectively provides justification for continued national oppression of Puerto Rico by U.S. imperialism and is in no way related to reality.

In Zaire, the OL has thrown in its lot with Western imperialism and echoed all of the fabrications about the popular forces. Internationally, it calls for "striking the main blow at Soviet social imperialism," a position which has thrust them into the midst of the "hardliners" in the U.S. ruling

class.

The OL has also brought this backward political line "home." Attempting to split and wreck in classical fashion, the OL has been so consumed by its "main blow" thesis that it has libeled every movement and organization in which the revisionist CPUSA has had the slightest measure of influence. While taking this stand in the name of the struggle against revisionism, the OL has actually strengthened revisionism by discrediting the antirevisionist forces before the masses.

The OL's dogmatism is reflected chiefly in its flunkeyist position toward the Communist Party of China. Forswearing any independent analysis of its own, the OL merely parrots the stand of the CPC on all questions and then strains credulity by attempting to build a theoretical justification for their views. The results are frequently both ludicrous and serious.

The OL has become so possessed with "striking the main blow at Soviet social imperialism" that it has destroyed the unity of many struggles whose main target was the U.S. ruling class. It has attempted to sow confusion and suspicion within the Black liberation movement and tried to sabotage the struggles for union democracy—all in the name of "directing the main blow at Soviet social imperialism."

For these reasons—and for many others Marxist-Leninists are familiar with from their own experience—a definite break has taken place in the antirevisionist movement. This split is a good thing—not because splits are good in themselves—but because the questions involved are too fundamental and go so directly to the purpose of the revolutionary party of the U.S. working class.

Nevertheless, there is much that is positive to be learned in the experiences of both the RCP and the OL. Both understood from the beginning the necessity for building a national organization rather than a federation of autonomous local groups. Both understood the necessity for making the ideological critique of revisionism the indispensable starting point for uniting Marxist-Leninists. Both saw the need to deepen their ties to the working-class movement (at different times) and both took major initiatives in mass action as well as in the ideological struggle.

Today, as Marxist-Leninists are contemplating with a new level of seriousness their tasks in building a new communist party, it is necessary to sum up the errors of the "new communist movement" accurately. Especially important, Marxist-Leninists must guard against any weakening of the struggle against revisionism because of the grievous errors made by RCP and OL in the name of the struggle against revisionism.

#### POLITICAL LINE

Similarly, we must guard against the tendency to ascribe the errors of OL and RCP to some undue concern on their part for Marxist-Leninist theory or political line. The problem with these organizations was not that they emphasized political line but the political line that they emphasized.

Nor can we make a mechanical analysis of these errors which ascribes them primarily to the "isolation" of the RCP and OL cadre from the working class. That "isolation" is a major problem, but it doesn't "explain" these errors of political line. For example, the revisionist CPUSA undoubtedly has closer ties with the working-class movement than most Marxist-Leninist organizations, yet this has not produced any visible improvement in its political line.

New forms of economist are beginning to emerge as the debacle of RCP and OL becomes clearer. Mechanical materialism is being given new life. Seeing the economic base of society as dominant at all times and in all circumstances, this view tends to liquidate the primacy of the subjective factor in party-building and in the vanguard role played by the party in mass movements.

These economist tendencies are, to some extent, to be expected as a result of the collapse into opportunism and dogmatism of most organized forces of the "new communist movement." But they represent the danger of an extreme swing to the right within the Marxist-Leninist forces and must be countered by principled and comradely ideological struggle.

Various forms of petty bourgeois ideology—Trotskyism, anarchism, "left" adventurism and neo-social democracy—continue to have an influence in the left. In one form or another, all liquidate the leading role of the working class in the struggle against imperialism.

Some use the discredited "new working class" thesis which had currency in certain "New Left" circles for a while. Others, while posing as the most militant champions of the struggles of nationally oppressed peoples in the U.S., view the industrial proletariat not as the leading force for making revolution, but as a politically "backward" force. Some attempt to place the radicalized intelligentsia at the head of the revolutionary struggle. Others assert that the majority of the working class are really "accomplices" of the imperialist system.

Most of these tendencies have an influence that extends beyond their actual numbers. Some seize upon the errors of some Marxist-Leninists who have tended to liquidate the struggle against racism, sexism and national oppression. These forces then pose the just demands of the nationally oppressed and women against the overall class interests of the multinational U.S. working class—both women and men. To do so, they thoroughly distort or depart from fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism. In practice, they effect alliances with both bourgeois feminism and the most backward and narrowly nationalist forces in the movements of the nationally oppressed.

In order to build a new communist party, U.S. Marxist-Leninists must now differentiate themselves from all of these incorrect tendencies. It is not a bad thing to proceed in what some might describe as a "negative" fashion. Mao Tsetung points out that "the correct line emerges out of struggle against the incorrect line."

A political line that can unite U.S. Marxist-Leninists and provide the firm foundations for building the working-class vanguard party is now beginning to emerge. It is coming out of the ideological struggle against revisionism, against dogmatism, against a great variety of pseudo-Marxist ideas. It is also coming out of the practice of communists over the past period in the mass movements for democratic rights, against the war in Vietnam, against racism and sexism. It is emerging from and being tested—concededly in a small way so far—in the immediate struggles of the working class and trade unions.

In our view, the time has come to spell out a set of firm ideological principles which can provide the basis for U.S. Marxist-Leninists to take the first organizational steps that can lead to the founding of a new communist party.

What follows, then, are these principles. They do not represent the full extent of the Guardian's views on all political questions, nor do they represent a set of principles which can immediately be translated into political line or into a draft program for a new communist party.

They are, rather, a set of ideological principles that correspond to the present level of consciousness and organizational development among U.S. Marxist-Leninists and which attempt to move that level forward. They are, in other words, principles which can enable us to answer the question: "Where To Begin?"

## Principles of unity for a new party

**1. The science of Marxism-Leninism is the concentrated expression of the world outlook of the international proletariat and the fundamental theoretical base of communist organization.** In the present period, the struggle for Marxist-Leninist theory assumes a particular importance. Abandoned by revisionism and distorted by dogmatism, Marxist-Leninist theory is the imperative starting point for building a new communist party. We are the inheritors of a theoretical legacy dating back more than 125 years. The emergence of scientific socialism as the theoretical foundation for a new trend in the international workers' movement represented the coming to political maturity of the modern proletariat. Today, when political charlatans of every stripe have taken to describing themselves as "Marxists" because they use certain Marxist concepts to develop what is essentially a bourgeois view of society, it is especially important to emphasize that there can be no separation between Marxism and Leninism; for Leninism is Marxism in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

**2. The fundamental objective of the working class is the overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of socialism.** The fundamental economic distinction between capitalism and socialism is this: in a capitalist society, a handful of people—the bourgeoisie—own the means of production and organize the economic activity of society in accordance with their own accumulation of profit; in a socialist society, the working class, in alliance with and at the head of other laboring classes and sectors, owns the means of production and organizes the economic activity of society in accordance with the social needs of the masses of people.

**3. The present stage of capitalism in the U.S. and the other major capitalist countries is monopoly capitalism or, what is the worldwide expression of the same thing, imperialism. The U.S. is the chief imperialist country in the world and the most powerful.**

**4. The contradiction between U.S. imperialism and its imperialist allies on the one hand, and the oppressed and exploited peoples and nations on the other, is the principal contradiction in the world at the present time.**

The determination of this as the principal contradiction of the present time is based upon an analysis of the situation in the world

today in which virtually all questions confronting the working class and the oppressed peoples are bound up with the struggle against U.S. imperialism, neo-colonialism, and the major imperialist allies of the U.S.

After its defeat in Indochina and the setbacks in Africa, U.S. imperialism is weaker than it was a decade ago. Yet it remains the single most powerful and predatory force holding down the world's peoples. If anything, its reverses have made it all the more desperate. It would be a tragic error, particularly for U.S. communists, to underestimate the role of U.S. imperialism on a world scale. The failure to recognize the principal contradiction of our time in a scientifically correct fashion leads inevitably to revisionist errors on the one hand and ultra-"left" class collaborationist errors on the other.

**5. Imperialism is a system which operates on the basis of certain inexorable laws of economic development. This system is the inevitable outgrowth of the earlier stage of "competitive" capitalism.** It is in the essential nature of the "free enterprise" system that it turn into its opposite and become an economic system characterized by monopoly and the tyranny of finance capital. Imperialism is one system at home and abroad.

Contrary to the theses of the revisionist CPUSA, it is not "possible under capitalism for the U.S. to pursue a democratic foreign policy based on detente, respect for other countries, noninterference in other countries' internal affairs and conduct of relations on the basis of mutual benefit." With this one statement alone, the CPUSA demonstrates its revisionist essence. It upholds the Kautskyite thesis that imperialism is not a system but actually a policy of the monopoly capitalists, a policy which they can change while maintaining the capitalist system.

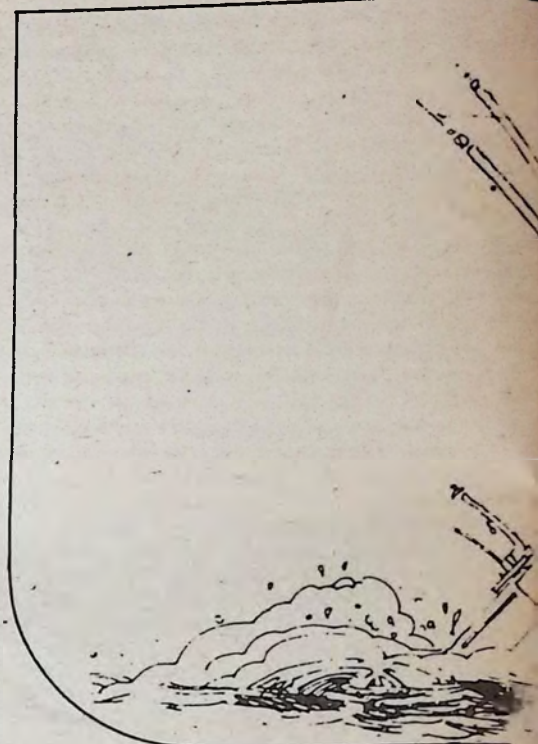
Such a view leads to an alliance with and a reliance on the "nonimperialist" sector of the bourgeoisie or even the "enlightened" wing of the monopoly capitalists themselves. How can imperialism "pursue a democratic foreign policy" when the very essence of imperialism rests in a world system of exploitation and superexploitation requiring an elaborate structure of national oppression, colonialism and neocolonialism? To assert that U.S. monopoly capitalism can "pursue a democratic foreign policy" is to propose a strategy of reforming capitalism to rid itself of its imperialist and monopoly essence and return it to the bygone days of "competitive" capitalism.

**6. Class struggle is the motor force of history.** The fundamental antagonism between social classes, each one determined by its relation to the means of production, is the real and ultimate source of all the other political and social conflicts which characterize social development. In our time, the two great classes are the bourgeoisie and the working class, with all other classes and sectors ultimately having to line up on the side of one or the other.

**7. The working class is the only revolutionary class in U.S. society.** It is the producer of surplus value (capitalism's profits) and of all classes under capitalism, it stands in the most direct contradiction to the bourgeoisie. Mobilized into ever more developed forms of socialized production by the capitalist system, the working class forges its underlying unity precisely in the great factories, on the assembly lines, in the mines, in the workshops and offices where it has been brought by the capitalists in their pursuit of profit. Only the working class, with the industrial proletariat as its core, can overthrow capitalism and reorganize society for the benefit of all oppressed classes and sectors. The principal contradiction in the U.S. is between the monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie and the multinational working class.

**8. The chief political instrument of the monopoly capitalists is the bourgeois state, most particularly its military and police apparatus.** The institutions of the state—the courts, the executive, the congress, the administrative agencies as well as the military and police apparatus—constitute the political superstructure by which monopoly capitalism maintains its power and authority. Whether as a fascist dictatorship or a bourgeois democratic republic, the capitalist state is the form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

**9. The seizure of state power is the central**



strategic task of the working class. It is only by seizing state power, destroying the bourgeois state apparatus and establishing its own, backed up by its own military power, that the working class can abolish capitalism and establish socialism.

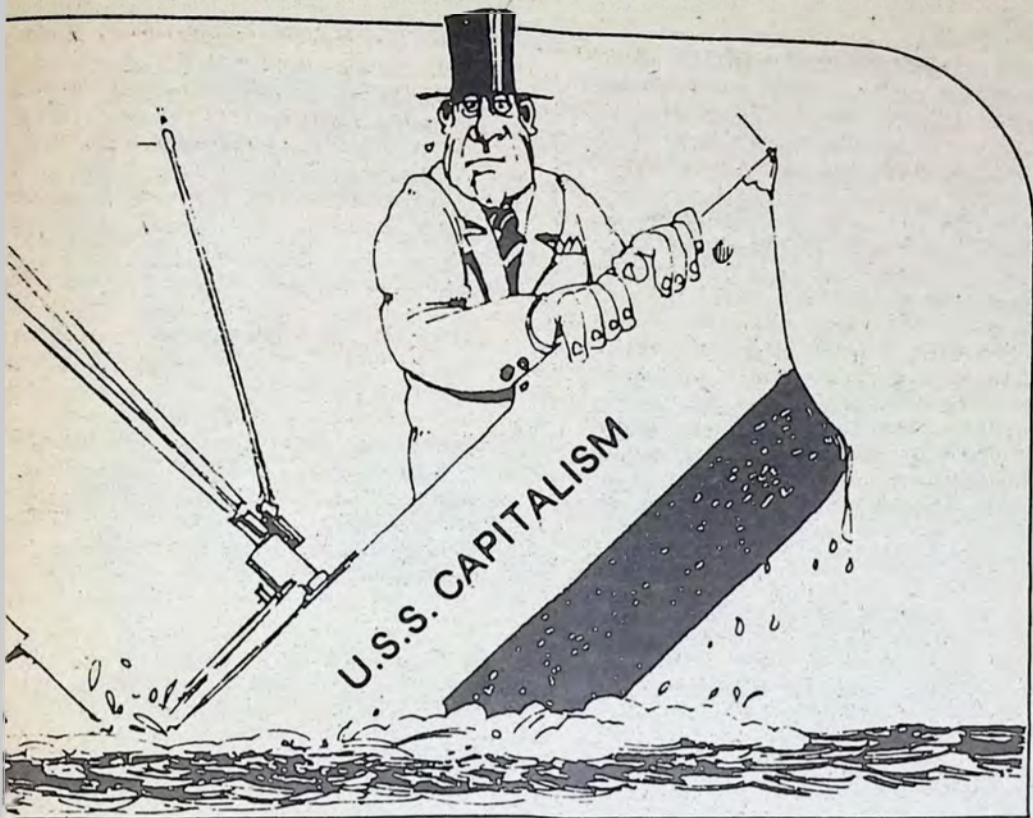
**10. The form of working-class political power is the dictatorship of the proletariat.** This dictatorship is based on an alliance between the working class and other anticapitalist classes and sectors. It is the decisive instrument for gaining power and consolidating that power over the deposed class. Because it is, for the first time in history, a dictatorship of the majority over the minority, it is a democratic dictatorship prepared to defend the workers' power against the inevitable attempts at counter-revolution by the overthrown bourgeoisie. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the form of political power throughout the entire period of socialism since classes and class struggle continue to exist in socialist society.

**11. Without predicting its precise form or timing, mass armed struggle is ultimately the deciding factor in the struggle for power.** Particularly in the U.S., with its powerful class of monopoly capitalists and entrenched state bureaucracy, and with imperialism's powerful military machine, it would be foolhardy to plan for a "peaceful transition" from capitalism to socialism. In this regard, the task of the communists is to help educate and prepare the working class to the necessity for mass armed struggle and to dispel all illusions about the possibility of a "peaceful" seizure of power, particularly through the electoral process.

**12. The strategic political instrument for the struggle against monopoly capital is the united front against imperialism.** This front is an alliance under working-class leadership of all classes and sectors who stand in varying degrees in contradiction with the imperialist system. The cornerstone of the united front is the alliance between the multinational working class and the nationally oppressed peoples of the U.S., particularly the Afro-American and Latino peoples. In addition, the working class aims at building alliances with the broad democratic women's movement, the small farmers, youth and students and sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. It aims to take advantage of contradictions within the ruling class to neutralize wherever possible the nonmonopoly sector of the bourgeoisie and those sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia who cannot be won to working-class leadership.

**13. The second most urgent political task facing communists—second only to forming their party on the basis of a firm set of ideological principles—is to make Marxist-Leninist theory into a material force in the class and political struggles of the present period.** The key to this rests in the party's ties to the working class—the one class in contemporary society capable of making the revolutionary ideas of communism into the revolutionary practice that will destroy monopoly capitalism. In the early stages of its development, the party will rest heavily on and have a disproportionate number of revolutionary intellectuals in its ranks. This is only natural since party-forming and party-building periods are characterized





especially by the struggle for Marxist-Leninist theory and the development of a concrete application of that theory to concrete conditions in each country.

But from the beginning, Marxist-Leninists must set as their priority the need themselves to accumulate direct experience in the working-class movement at the point of production, to make a communist current felt within the spontaneous workers' movement and to develop the ways to win the most advanced workers to Marxist-Leninist theory and the communist party. The communists see work in the trade unions as the primary arena for political struggle in the working-class movement. They seek to strengthen the unions as the principal defense organizations of the working class and, within the trade union movement, they direct the main blow at the reactionary trade union bureaucrats who are, in Lenin's classic phrase, "the lieutenants of the bourgeoisie within the working class."

The communists support and play a leading role in every struggle of the working class to win a larger share of the wealth created by their labor and to ameliorate the oppressive conditions of the wage system. At the same time, within the immediate economic struggles, the particular role of the communists is to introduce the more fundamental political questions that will help train the working class for its ultimate task of seizing state power.

The communists also address themselves to certain particular questions within the working-class movement at this time. These are:

- The struggle against racism, national chauvinism and white supremacy. This includes the struggle for equality both in law and in social practice, the support of affirmative action programs advancing the special demands of nationally oppressed workers as a means of redressing past discrimination and striving for genuine equality within the working class. The particular task of combatting white supremacist ideology in the working class and the trade unions particularly is the task of all communists, but especially white communists. The task of fighting narrow nationalism—which is, principally, a reaction to the prevailing white supremacy in the working class—is the particular task of communists of the nationally oppressed.

- The struggle against sexism, male supremacy and for equality both in law and in social practice between men and women workers. Within the working-class movement, the communists struggle to realize the Marxist objective of "bringing the entire female sex into public industry," through political programs that end all forms of discrimination in hiring, demand equal pay for equal work, fight for 24-hour community-controlled child care, support programs for the socialization of household tasks, promote "affirmative action" programs and support passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. The communists also undertake to educate the male workers to oppose male chauvinist ideology within the working class and in the working-class family and devote their efforts to building the class unity of the workers, male and female.

- The struggle for union democracy; the spontaneous rank-and-file stirring against the entrenched union bureaucracy is a significant political development within the union movement. The communists do not

expect the unions, in their present form at least, to become "revolutionary" organizations of the working class. But they can become—and the communists can make them into—battlegrounds for the clash between proletarian and bourgeois ideology in the working class. They can become the training ground for political struggle. And many of the unions are capable of becoming objectively anti-imperialist organizations.

- The struggle to organize the unorganized; the communists devote their efforts to forcing the existing unions to undertake organizing drives aimed at bringing large sectors of the working class—particularly women and third world workers—into the union movement. And the communists must find the ways to take initiatives themselves in helping the workers organize into unions.

**14. The strongest, most reliable and most revolutionary allies of the multinational U.S. working class are the oppressed nationalities and national minorities in the U.S., most particularly the Afro-American people as well as the Chicano and Puerto Rican peoples.**

Historically, U.S. capitalism was built on the exploitation of immigrant labor and the appropriation of the lands and resources of the indigenous peoples. Utilizing historic differences of race, religion and nationality, the developing U.S. bourgeoisie constructed an elaborate system of white supremacy, national chauvinism and religious discrimination in order to insure the maximization of their profits and to create divisions within the working class. The chattel slavery of millions of Africans provided capitalism with one of its crucial economic foundations for further expansion and exploitation.

While European immigrants from Ireland, southern and eastern Europe were also the victims of national oppression, in time the principal form of national chauvinism developed along the color line. National oppression today, directed primarily against Afro-Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans and Asian-Americans, provides monopoly capitalism with a sizable industrial reserve army of labor. It supplies the human cadre for a segregated work force which most readily lends itself to superexploitation of the most impoverished sector of the working class. These factors, along with the need on the part of the bourgeoisie to promote and intensify divisions within the working class and among the oppressed, are the material foundation for white racism and national chauvinism.

While the overwhelming majority of Black people in the U.S. are part of the multinational working class, Black people as a whole are the victims of national oppression. This is the political basis for the Black united front which unites all classes among the Afro-American people in the struggle against national oppression. The communists have the strategic objective of bringing the Black workers into the leadership of the Black united front.

The struggle for Black liberation in the U.S. is a revolutionary struggle because the just demands of the Black masses—for full democratic rights, against all the institutions of white supremacy and racism and for those special demands that arise out of national oppression—cannot be realized without proletarian revolution.

It is essential for communists to win the white workers to support the struggles of the

Black masses around the questions that arise in all of these three areas. The basis for Black-white unity within the working class is the commitment by the white workers to take up the struggle for democratic rights, against white supremacy and for the special demands of Blacks and other oppressed nationalities and national minorities.

**15. The emancipation of women from the superexploitation of capitalism and the institutionalized system of male supremacy is completely bound up with the cause of proletarian revolution; the working class will not be able to defeat monopoly capitalism unless it becomes the foremost champion of women's emancipation.**

Our strategic objective is to unite women and men of the working class in the struggle against imperialism—a goal that can be achieved only to the extent that working-class men and the working-class movement take up and make as their own the democratic and special demands of women today.

The oppression of women is bound up historically with the development of class society and, in particular, private property. Male supremacy has been characteristic of all class societies dominated by the few. Capitalism intensifies the oppression of women—but it also brings into being the material conditions for both an end to class society as a whole and the emancipation of women. By revolutionizing the productive forces and, most especially, bringing into existence the modern proletariat, the bourgeoisie has made itself into an anachronism and produced its own gravediggers.

Today in the U.S. women constitute more than 40% of the total labor force. They are a superexploited sector of the working class, segregated by sex into unskilled and low-paying jobs and making up a vast industrial reserve for the bourgeoisie. Women's role in the family as reproducer and maintainer of the work force is utilized by the bourgeoisie to perpetuate and deepen the male supremacist ideology and intensify women's oppression. For all these reasons, capitalism can never end the system of male supremacy and will only perpetuate it.

The struggle for the emancipation of women is one that is democratic in form and revolutionary in content. It is one of the most important questions confronting the working class and the task of communists is to win the workers—most especially the men workers—to take up the democratic and special demands of women, to combat male supremacy and male chauvinist ideology. Likewise, the communists defend the working-class family from the attacks on it by the monopoly capitalists.

The principal contradiction on the woman question today is between U.S. monopoly capitalism and its elaborate structure of institutionalized male supremacy, on the one hand, and the masses of women, on the other. The contradiction between women and men is fundamentally a nonantagonistic contradiction among the people. It can and must be resolved through the process of working-class unity and the construction of a socialist society. Within the working-class movement, the principal form of backwardness and opportunism is male supremacy. Within the women's movement, the principal form of opportunism is bourgeois feminism.

Of the two—male supremacy and bourgeois feminism—the main target of the working class and its vanguard must be male supremacy. Within the women's movement, the communists work to build the leadership of working-class women and women of the oppressed nationalities—and to make the demands of these women the principal focus of the movement as a whole.

**16. The starting point for uniting Marxist-Leninists today is the critique of revisionism and the struggle against it.** Through the CPUSA primarily—but not exclusively—revisionism attempts to divert the workers from the path of revolution and make them "partners" of the bourgeoisie in the movement to "reform" capitalism. The class base of revisionism is in the labor aristocracy and the more privileged sectors of the working class who are constantly trying to accommodate to the capitalists in order to maintain their special status. Having lost the will for revolution, because they fear its uncertainty and are afraid to risk their own petty positions, the revisionists are particularly insidious because they utilize the language of Marxism-Leninism to betray it. They attempt to divert from the revolutionary path the very workers who are most

responsive to Marxist-Leninist ideas.

Internationally, the seat of revisionism is in the Soviet Union, whose leaders 20 years ago legitimized various theories—peaceful transition to socialism, peaceful coexistence as the chief path to socialism, a world without war, the dictatorship of "the whole people" in place of the dictatorship of the proletariat and many others—which have become the hallmarks of modern revisionism.

Revisionism is the principal danger within the working-class movement as a whole and within the left in particular.

**17. Among the Marxist-Leninist forces who, over the past five years, have played the leading role in the party-building process, class collaboration around the question of international line has emerged as the principal opportunist tendency to be opposed.** Dogmatically developing the widespread feelings of solidarity of communists with the People's Republic of China, these forces have uncritically and mechanically adopted every aspect of China's foreign policy as the international line of U.S. communists. The results have been disastrous. They have led these groups into objective unity with the most reactionary sectors of the U.S. bourgeoisie around such questions as Angola, Zaire, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Oman and other points of contention with U.S. imperialism.

Stemming from this flunkeyist view of internationalism, some of these groups have actively fostered anticommunism within the working-class movement and among the U.S. masses by undertaking to "direct the main blow at Soviet social imperialism."

Among these forces, ultra-"left" pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric has all too often masked a political line which is essentially right opportunist in content. Some organizations have surrendered to white chauvinism in their refusal to support the struggles for democratic rights of the nationally oppressed. Some have abandoned the struggle for women's emancipation, characterizing it as merely a "petty-bourgeois" concern or opposing the Equal Rights Amendment for the narrowest of "economist" reasons.

Others have abandoned or actively opposed the struggle for trade union democracy, failing to differentiate between different sectors of the labor bureaucracy and refusing to support the workers in their attempts to expand the arena of political struggle within the working-class movement.

Most of these same groups have been characterized by a sectarian style of work, petty factionalism and a mechanical application of Marxist-Leninist theory. Their efforts have generally done more to promote revisionism than to expose it.

With this polarization of forces in the Marxist-Leninist movement, yet another party-building trend has begun to emerge in opposition to the dogmatism, sectarianism and flunkeyism described above. Among these forces, the principal opportunist dangers to guard against are pragmatism, economism and conciliation with revisionism.

**18. The guiding principle for the party's world outlook is proletarian internationalism.** In the age of imperialism, this is expressed in the amendment made by the Third International in 1920 to the original slogan of the Communist Manifesto calling on the workers of the world to unite against



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the bourgeoisie. The Comintern changed this to say "workers of the world and oppressed peoples unite." This is the foundation for the international united front against imperialism, an alliance between the working classes of the imperialist countries, the socialist countries and the oppressed peoples and nations subjugated by imperialism. The democratic demand for the self-determination of oppressed nations thus becomes a cornerstone of the proletariat's revolutionary program within the imperialist countries.

**19. Countries want independence, nations want liberation, peoples want revolution.** The linking of these three related processes is the main political trend on a world scale of this period. The struggle of countries for genuine political independence, national sovereignty, control over their natural resources—and the unity of these countries in defense of their sovereignty—is a movement objectively in alignment with the world struggle against imperialism and social imperialism. The most telling blows against imperialism have been struck by the national liberation movements—as in southeast Asia and southern Africa. These mass armed struggles against U.S. imperialism have produced a qualitative weakening in U.S. imperialist hegemony. Today the communists particularly turn their attention to southern Africa. The revolutionary struggles of the peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa for majority rule and against colonialism, neocolonialism and apartheid represent the international proletariat's first line of struggle against imperialism.

**20. While U.S. imperialism remains the primary and most powerful enemy of the world's peoples, the coming to power of revisionism in the Soviet Union has transformed the USSR into a social-imperialist superpower which practices hegemonism and national chauvinism in its relation to other countries.** Using such doctrines as "limited sovereignty" and "international division of labor," the Soviet regime arrogates to itself the right to intervene in the internal affairs of other nations (such as the invasion of Czechoslovakia) and conducts its relations with other countries on the basis of narrow, national self-interest. In the Soviet Union itself, revisionism has curbed and eliminated many of the socialist norms of production and disenfranchised the Soviet working class. It has set the USSR down a capitalist road and liquidated the proletarian dictatorship.

(A full scientific analysis of class relations in the USSR and the fundamental characteristics of its economic system has yet to be made by Marxist-Leninists. This remains an important theoretical question for our movement. The Guardian is continuing to study this question in the light of the changing world situation and in the near future hopes to put forward a further expression of its views on the Soviet Union.)

**21. While directing the main blow at U.S. imperialism, peoples struggling for independence and national liberation must help build a united front against both superpowers.** They must strengthen their self-reliance individually and collectively, opposing all forms of hegemonism and superpower domination. They must make the struggle against revisionism and opportunism an

indispensable aspect of the struggle against imperialism.

**22. The relations between the U.S. and the USSR are characterized by both collusion and contention.** The two superpowers collude in asserting the primacy of their respective hegemonies in all world affairs. They acknowledge respective spheres of influence and attempt to keep the most advanced nuclear weaponry their exclusive property. In those areas of the world where they may be able temporarily to reach mutual accommodations, they expect that other countries and political movements will accept the terms that they impose by mutual agreement.

In the long run, however, contention between the two superpowers remains the principal aspect of their relationship. While speaking of "detente" and "disarmament," the two superpowers have escalated the arms race to unprecedented heights. As U.S. imperialism suffers defeats in different parts of the world, Soviet strategy is based on the hegemonic concept of "filling the vacuum."

How shall the communists view the contention between the two superpowers, particularly as it manifests itself in the anti-imperialist struggles of the oppressed nations and peoples? We base ourselves on Lenin's principled analysis of this phenomenon: "The struggle for national liberation against one imperialist power may, under certain conditions, be utilized by another 'great' power for its own equally imperialist aims." But, he added, this cannot lead the communists to falter in their support of the oppressed nation's right to self-determination.

In Angola, as in other portions of southern Africa, Communists saw the precise working of this thesis. As the struggle against Portuguese colonialism, U.S. imperialism and white racism developed and spread, the Soviet Union played an increasingly active role. Its arms and other material support undoubtedly were of great assistance to the liberation forces. At the same time, Soviet intentions have clearly been aimed at strengthening its own strategic position in Africa at the expense of Western imperialism. It also hopes to overcome the revolutionary influence exercised by the People's Republic of China during the previous decade.

**23. U.S. imperialism's reliance on military power and war to achieve its global objectives remains the system's ultimate alternative. Today the danger of war is becoming greater.** Despite defeat in Indochina, Washington has not abandoned the strategy of counterrevolutionary war and aggression as its ultimate weapon in opposition to struggles for independence and national liberation. The most immediate threat of war is from this source.

At the same time, contention between the U.S. and the Soviet Union is intensifying. Detente has become little more than an armed truce. Disarmament talks accomplish little while the armed forces and strategic weaponry of both superpowers continue to build up. While imperialism's drive for war is inexorable, communists do not take a fatalistic view of its coming and know that it is possible in today's world to transform the liberation struggles of oppressed peoples and the peace sentiments of the masses into a powerful material force capable of preventing war.

U.S. communists must organize to mobilize the peace sentiment of the U.S. people. The experience and lessons of the antiwar movement of the 1960s must be utilized to connect the antiwar sentiment with an understanding of the nature of imperialist wars. In no event can U.S. communists falter in their responsibility to target their "own" bourgeoisie as the principal enemy of the working class, oppressed nationalities and other democratic strata in our country.

**24. The crisis of capitalism manifests itself on a world scale.** Economic and political instability characterizes all of the capitalist countries and interimperialist rivalry casts a deepening shadow over all their efforts at a unified "solution." Every major capitalist power—the U.S., West Germany, Japan, France, England, Italy, Canada and South Africa—has been adversely affected by the drastic economic downturn of the recent period. And each has gone through some major political crisis in recent years. The weakest links in the capitalist chain are Italy, England and Spain; the first two because the economic crisis has been most severely felt in those countries, and Spain because the political crisis provoked in the wake of Franco's death has opened up new opportunities for transforming the struggle for bourgeois democracy into a revolutionary struggle that can link the militancy of the Spanish working class with the patriotic movements of the Basques and Catalans.

Nevertheless, while the objective conditions for proletarian revolution are developing rapidly in these countries, the subjective conditions are not yet maturing in a significant way. The chief cause of this is the continued hegemony of revisionist communist parties and traditional social democratic parties in the working-class movement. In the experience of these countries today—as it was in Chile—the international working-class movement has an opportunity to see how revisionism is much more than an ideological error. It is, in fact, a material force that actively delivers the working class up to the bourgeoisie.

Unfortunately, many of the "antirevisionist" forces in these countries have been characterized by dogmatism that has led them to an equally reprehensible form of class collaboration, as evidenced by those western European sects who advocate support of NATO, increased military expenditures and the restoration of compulsory military service in their countries ostensibly in order to help their bourgeois governments "direct the main blow" against Soviet social imperialism. Actually, they are strengthening the hand of their own bourgeoisies against the working classes of these countries.

**25. Proletarian internationalism for U.S. communists also means solidarity with socialist countries in their efforts to guard against the threats of imperialism, social imperialism, counterrevolution and revisionism and for socialist construction.**

We support the just demands of the People's Republic of China for an end to U.S. interference in its internal affairs and demand an end to U.S. relations with Taiwan, including the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. military bases and personnel and abolition of the mutual defense treaty. We support normalization of diplomatic relations between China and the U.S. on the basis of the five principles of coexistence. We



V.I. Lenin

support the People's Republic of China in defense of its national sovereignty from the threat of Soviet social imperialism.

We support the just demands of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for reparations from the U.S. to help pay for the destruction caused by the genocidal war of aggression, for the seating of Vietnam in the UN and for the normalization of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and the U.S.

We support the just demands of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the reunification of Korea and an end to U.S. military intervention in the South. We call for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. military forces and nuclear weapons from South Korea.

We support the just demands of Cuba for an end to the U.S. economic blockade and demand of the U.S. that it end its campaign of counterrevolution and support of terrorist "exile" groups. We call for the normalization of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

We stand with the People's Republic of Albania in its resistance to the hegemonism of both superpowers and support its efforts in the construction of socialism.

And we stand with all those newly liberated countries—Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Cambodia, Laos—who have started down the socialist road under the guidance of a Marxist-Leninist leadership.

**26. A particular international responsibility for U.S. communists is solidarity with the movement for independence in Puerto Rico.** The outright colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S., as well as the presence in the U.S. of some 2 million Puerto Ricans who have become a part of the multinational U.S. working class, give this struggle a special significance for U.S. communists who must translate their support into concrete forms of political practice.

**27. No center exists in the world communist movement today; nor is that movement "polycentric," as some have claimed.** In the present period, and for the foreseeable future, the various communist parties will function completely on the basis of their own autonomy in all matters, each guiding itself on the concrete application of Marxism-Leninism to the actual prevailing conditions in the respective countries.

**28. Without a vanguard working-class party, firmly united on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, organized as a disciplined democratic-centralist organization, there can be no successful proletarian revolution.** The U.S. communist party must be the single, unified party of the multinational working class. It must reflect in both leadership and membership the multinational character of the U.S. working class. Within the party, there can be only one political line. The party does not permit factions or caucuses of any kind. The party practices centralism through a strong leadership, through a structure whereby lower bodies are responsible to higher bodies, through conditions for membership based on adherence to political line and membership in an organized party unit, and through centralized financing, publishing and coordination. The party practices democracy through internal party debate, criticism and self-criticism, the study of revolutionary theory and the election of party leadership at each level by the body immediately below it.

**29. The central task of U.S. Marxist-Leninists today is the building of the new communist party.**



The people's struggle is at the heart of the party-building movement. Above, Wisconsin National Guardsmen threaten welfare demonstrators during late 1960s.

# Organizing for the new party

Organization is the political expression of ideology and the practical expression of political line.

Without organization, Marxism-Leninism cannot become a material force capable of gripping the masses and moving the revolutionary process forward.

Today, the Marxist-Leninist forces in the U.S. are characterized by a chaos of organizational forms, significantly different levels of political development and the absence of an organizational center. Localism and small circle mentality dominate. Mass work of communists is considerably circumscribed and, except on a local level in a few instances, does not proceed on the basis of a strategic plan—or even a tactical plan.

The present backward state of the movement will prevail unless an ideological and organizational breakthrough can be achieved.

The 29 principles listed above—along with our critique of the “new communist movement”—represent an attempt by the Guardian to concentrate and consolidate the experience of the Marxist-Leninist forces in the U.S. over the past five years. The need to do this today has become pressing with the separation of the antirevisionist forces into two definite trends primarily as the result of the struggle around international line.

Today, the Marxist-Leninists must demonstrate on the basis of their principles of unity the fundamental differences that exist between them and revisionism, Trotskyism, anarchism, social democracy and the profound political disorientation of the leading groups of the “new communist movement.”

It is obvious that the 29 principles listed above not only make this distinction but demonstrate the necessity for Marxist-Leninists to organize independently of these other forces, most of whom also describe themselves as “Marxist-Leninist.”

Naturally, we don't expect everyone to agree with every point we have put forward, or with its precise formulation or the amplification we have made on it. At the same time, we urge Marxist-Leninists not to reject any one of them lightly. In our opinion, each principle has far-reaching ramifications that will ultimately determine whether we hew to a Marxist-Leninist, antirevisionist course or not.

## UNITING MARXIST-LENINISTS

We put these principles forward at this time not simply to lay the foundations for developing a political program for a new communist party—but as the necessary ideological preconditions for uniting Marxist-Leninists at their present stage of organizational development and moving on to a higher stage.

We do not propose, at this time, to spell out an organizational plan for party-building. A variety of Marxist-Leninist organizational forms already exist having come into being more or less spontaneously. There are local Marxist-Leninist organizing committees, groups whose base is predominantly with a particular minority nationality, ideological “affinity” groups with connections in different localities, groups of Marxist-Leninists who work together around particular projects or mass organizations, study groups and a large number of individuals who consider themselves Marxist-Leninists but who are not part of any organizational structure at the present time.

All of these efforts reflect the felt need for organization among Marxist-Leninists. As such they are commendable initiatives. But they are also extremely limited initiatives. The groups themselves vary considerably in both political development and political line. Beyond this, if these groups continue to develop more or less in the same fashion in the period ahead, they are bound to become mired in localism and the narrowest of practical work at the expense of the movement's key ideological tasks. Already we have seen some groups develop views towards party-building which belittle theory and glorify the spontaneous workers' strug-



Party-building forces must support the progressive union struggles.

gle as the key to party-building.

A serious party-building effort today must take on two characteristics. One, it must in fairly rapid order take on a national character, linking up Marxist-Leninists throughout the country on the basis of ideological unity and common organizational form. Two, it must deepen and expand the struggle for ideological clarity and begin to develop a common political outlook based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and the rich experiences our movement already possesses.

Such an effort must guard against a tendency toward federationism—which is nothing but the raising of localism and small circle mentality to a higher level. Within the party-building movement, the doors of ideological debate must swing open. The political line of one or another local organization cannot be permitted to take precedence over the ideological struggle among Marxist-Leninists as a whole. To proceed otherwise is to build factionalism and a political caucus mentality into the party-building process.

The struggle for a clear set of starting principles is far from complete. In many respects it is just under way. The 29 principles offered by the Guardian in this supplement is an attempt both to codify such a set of principles and to advance a particular political trend within the party-building movement. We believe that the debate around these principles—and this, of course, includes debate around other “points of unity” people will think are essential to our development at this time—will determine whether or not the basis for organizational unity exists among a variety of disparate elements.

We believe that the principles we have enunciated in these pages come very close to representing the views of a significant number of Marxist-Leninists in the U.S. at the present time. We say this on the basis of discussions with many comrades in different parts of the country, letters we receive and a remarkable outpouring of support—particularly the growth of our Sustainer program—

over recent months.

While this newspaper comes closer to being a national voice for Marxism-Leninism than any other group in our movement, our own organizational base is not very firm. Guardian bureaus in five major cities outside New York help broaden the scope of our activity and mean that an actual political presence representing our views exists on some level in these areas. Our Sustainer program is extensive, but as presently constituted does not offer its participants an opportunity to do much more than contribute much-needed financial support to the paper.

Believing that unity among Marxist-Leninists on the basis of political line is the principal precondition for party-building—and that such unity is meaningful only when it assumes organizational form—the Guardian is now seriously discussing a plan which, we believe, would make a substantial contribution to party-building forces.

That plan calls for the establishment of a national network of Guardian Clubs organized on the basis of the 29 principles of unity enunciated in this document. Such clubs—and the very fact of their being linked together in a network with a national political newspaper as their focus—would offer Guardian readers, Sustainers, supporters, friends and all Marxist-Leninists who agree with these principles an opportunity to put their politics into practice in a meaningful and concrete way.

Guardian Clubs would have three basic areas of activity: party-building, local political action and work directly connected to building support for and expanding the effectiveness of the Guardian. From the beginning they would strive to become multinational organizations.

Party-building: The clubs would be an organizational vehicle for helping to develop a distinct political trend within the Marxist-Leninist movement, a trend based on the 29 principles of unity. The clubs would engage in discussions, debates and forums with other Marxist-Leninists. They would, in some cases, help initiate local Marxist-Leninist organizing committees or other appro-



Bosses work hard to divide Black and white workers.

priate organizational forms. The clubs would engage in organized study of Marxist-Leninist theory and also set up study groups to which workers and local activists could come in order to take up the study of Marxism-Leninism in a serious and systematic fashion.

Local political action: The clubs would join in and initiate political work in trade unions, community organizations, local coalitions and demonstrations on a broad range of urgent questions from strike support to solidarity work around South Africa or Puerto Rico. They would bring to these activities the Guardian's general political perspective which would be applied to the concrete conditions in each locality.

Circulation, promotion, fund-raising, news-gathering and public events for the Guardian: This would include such activities as placing bundles in local bookstores and newsstands, distribution at work places and demonstrations, obtaining subscriptions, sending in news reports on local and regional developments, organizing fund-raising parties and other events, appearing on local radio or television to discuss stories from the Guardian, and constantly evaluating the paper itself and sharing criticisms with the Guardian staff in New York. Guardian clubs would sponsor local speaking engagements of Marxist-Leninists, representatives of national liberation movements and Guardian staff members.

For its part, the Guardian will appoint a national Clubs coordinator to be the main person responsible, under instructions from the Guardian's leadership and Coordinating Committee, for chartering local groups, internal communications, distributing informational packets and study group materials and personally visiting the clubs on a regular basis.

In its initial stages, Guardian Clubs would grow in a relatively modest fashion. Our goal would be the establishment of roughly 10 clubs—with a limited number of members—in different cities.

## Independence, self-reliance in party-building

Building a new communist party in the U.S. is a largely uncharted task. The experiences of those parties which came into being in the first two decades of the 20th century are, of course, helpful in our understanding of the dimensions of the task. But the conditions prevailing within the communist movement at the time were so vastly different that it would be self-defeating to mechanically follow in their precise footsteps.

At the same time, it is necessary to affirm the fundamental Leninist principles of organization which have been the indispensable hallmark of all genuine Marxist-Leninist revolutionary parties in the 20th century.

Much more study must be made of the experiences of the antirevisionist parties which came into being as the result of the consolidation of revisionism in the Soviet Union and the various communist parties in its orbit. Much of this experience is obviously negative since very few of these parties have managed to build a genuine working-class vanguard organization in their respective countries and many of them have collapsed into forms of class collaboration even more reprehensible than those of some of the U.S. antirevisionist groups.

But not all of these experiences have been negative and we must be able to learn from their accomplishments as well as their errors.

In the final analysis, however, the task is our own. For in no area is the spirit of independence and self-reliance more critical than in party-building.

Firm in our commitment to the fundamental principles of scientific socialism, staunch in our opposition to revisionism and opportunism, confident in the revolutionary capacity of the U.S. working class and oppressed nationalities, united in our hatred of the U.S. monopoly bourgeoisie and its imperialist system, we call on all U.S. Marxist-Leninists to help move the party-building process forward by deepening the necessary ideological discussions and starting to solve the problems of organization.

# Overcoming the Guardian

The Guardian is North America's largest and most influential independent radical weekly, serving the broad progressive forces and the revolutionary movement with serious news and analysis about the struggles of the peoples throughout the world.

It is also the key publication serving the interests of those in the U.S. who understand the need to begin to organize an antirevisionist, antidogmatist communist party.

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