



Revolutionary Cause

POLITICAL ORGAN OF THE AUGUST 29th MOVEMENT

VOL 1. No.3
FEB.76 25¢
sección en español

COUNTRIES WANT INDEPENDENCE, NATIONS WANT LIBERATION, PEOPLE WANT REVOLUTION

OCTOBER LEAGUE

RIGHT OPPORTUNISM IS THE MAIN DANGER

"Opportunism can be expressed in the terms of any kind of doctrine, including that of Marxism" (Lenin)

Comrades, the August Twenty-Ninth Movement is now a little more than a year and a half old. In that time we have been able to develop a correct general line on questions facing the revolutionary movement in the United States. We have developed that line further by studying hard and assimilating and applying the theory of Marxism-Leninism through its integration with the concrete conditions of the class struggle. In the course of our development we were bound to make mistakes. However, the test of any Communist organization is its attitude towards its own errors.

Perhaps one of the most fundamental errors we have committed has been our (objectively) conciliatorist stand towards the October League (M-L). The political line and practice of the OL has revealed them to be a thoroughly right opportunist organization, whose danger to our revolution cannot be underestimated.

Comrades the roots of our error lie in:

1. Not fully understanding the historical development, danger, persistence and pervasiveness of opportunism in the United States,
2. The development of imperialism, with its vast superprofits, has created a huge material basis for the bribery of sections of the working class and the petty-bourgeoisie. This is the social basis of opportunism in the United States -- we did not fully grasp this.
3. We incorrectly made a qualitative distinction between revisionism (RCP) and right opportunism (OL).

"Fight, fail, fight again. . ."

Comrades, we should not find it hard to understand the strength and "resiliency" of opportunism and revisionism. Defeated in one form it is bound to assume another shape and dimension. It has assumed the form of the old line revisionism of the Second International. With the defeat of that "brand" of opportunism, it assumed the shape of modern revisionism (CPUSA and CPUSA). When the bankruptcy of the CPUSA was revealed, opportunism inevitably had to don another mask -- it had to assume another masquerade (RCP, CLP, OL).

The entire history of the development of Marxism-Leninism confirms

that, along with its birth, development and growth, (and as an essential component in that growth) was the birth, development and growth of distortions of Marxism-- opportunism. The struggle between these two world outlooks has been the main factor in the evolution of Marxism-Leninism. The ideological soil upon which right opportunism flourishes is the soil of reformism (we refer here to the advanced capitalist countries in particular). The material basis for its growth is, of course, the vast superprofits stolen by imperialism from the oppressed nations of the world, some of which goes to bribing sections of the population to take the side of the bourgeoisie and to keep the masses "in line". The modern capitalist ruling classes long ago realized that reformism, in addition to crude force, is a more efficient method of conducting class combat. Along with their military prop the bourgeoisie reinforces their rule with social props who infect the masses with reformism (the essence of right opportunism and revisionism).

With the development of capitalism into dying and moribund imperialism came the development of democracy from a liberating mechanism into a rotting fetter upon the development of society. Whereas democracy was a necessary and progressive political weapon against the feudal monarchy -- it has now turned into its opposite, a weapon for the complete subjugation of the working class, a chain which ties down the working class by a thousand links.

What this means is that reformism, or the philosophy that the fundamental contradictions of capitalism can be resolved WITHIN the confines of capitalist society, is the most dangerous enemy of the socialist revolution. (This should not give rise to the belief that capitalism relies only on reformism -- they use it in extremely effective combination with violence). If we do not defeat this poisonous ideology we will not be able to convince the workers that it is only by breaking through the boundaries of bourgeois democracy that they can receive a revolutionary education -- can learn to make revolution.

This means that we educate the masses through street actions, strikes, political demonstrations, etc -- actions which are illegal, i.e., violate bourgeois legality. Ultimately we will be leading the workers in the highest "illegal" act -- the armed seizure of power -- training and preparation must

take place well before hand

As long as the workers retain their faith in reformism they cannot make revolution. The bourgeoisie is well aware of the value of reformism and every day, in a million and one insidious ways, tries to imbue the workers with this bourgeois spirit, to corrupt their revolutionary marrow, to sap their initiative, to channel it along the line of least resistance.

U.S. - Cradle of Reformism

The historical development of capitalism in the United States has been almost "classical" according to Marx and Lenin. This means that the economic growth of the base worked smoothly and efficiently in inter-action with the political superstructure. Whereas in other countries, capitalism had to accommodate and supercede or compromise with a monarchical political system, here there was little of this to stand in the way of capitalist expansion.

In addition the United States has for some time been among the "great powers" which dominate and exploit vast sections of the globe. With their vast superprofits they have historically been able to respond to the working class struggle with reforms as a primary weapon in their arsenal. This is not to deny the long and bloody history of the U.S. bourgeoisie, who unhesitatingly resort to violence when they deem it necessary (especially against the oppressed nationalities of this country). However, as the representative of the vanguard of

CONT'D. ON PAGE 7

INSIDE

Afro-American Nation	2
Communists in Trade Unions	4
C.L.P. vs. China	10
Chou En Lai	11

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

the imperialist capitalists of this country have "perfected" the use of reformism.

What this means for communists is that (1) we must understand the economic and political development of reformism as an international phenomena and in its national particularities, (2) we must grasp the relationship between the historical development of reformism and the degeneration of the CPUSA into a revisionist party. The CPUSA, even when it was a Marxist-Leninist party never completely broke with reformism, often leading valiant struggles for reforms but failing to link them with the ultimate aim, and HOW this aim was to be achieved (by breaking with bourgeois legality, and ultimately armed struggle); (3) we have to understand that this poison is always permeating our ranks and is bound to assume many different forms in order to corrupt us, (4) reformism is not a "type" of socialism, or a step towards socialism, but is an ideology hostile to socialist ideology -- its opposite, (5) we will have no socialist revolution in this country unless and until we win the working class and oppressed masses away from reformism

"Not liberalism versus socialism, but reformism versus socialist revolution -- is the formula of the modern, 'advanced' educated bourgeoisie. And the higher the development of capitalism in a given country, the more unadulterated the rule of the bourgeoisie, and the greater the political liberty, the more extensive is the application of the 'most up-to-date' bourgeois slogan: reform versus revolution, the partial patching up of the doomed regime with the object of dividing and weakening the working class, and of maintaining the rule of the bourgeoisie, versus the revolutionary overthrow of that rule."

("Reformism in the Social-Democratic Movement, LCW, Vol 17, p 229)

As Lenin repeatedly stressed, opportunism is not an accidental phenomenon, chance occurrence, or merely the question of evil or misguided individuals. Opportunism is closely bound up with the whole development of capitalism itself --

next ISSUE

1 — O L'S PARTY BUILDING PLAN

2 — ALAMOSA CONFERENCE:
CHICANO MOVEMENT

3 — INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

it is a "protective mechanism" which helps it to maintain itself as a system. Communists who fail to understand that the combination of reformism and coercive violence is the concrete reality that we must solve if we are to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat are bound to fall into opportunism. It is our duty to win the masses away from the dominance of reformism, and it is to the extent that we are able to do this that we will be able to lead the masses in armed insurrection against the capitalist class. We must stress that the process of winning the masses away from the influence of reformism can only be done through the revolutionary struggle for reforms

No Marxist rejects the struggle for reforms, but they realize (1) reforms are a by-product of revolutionary struggle, and (2) it is their duty to link the concrete struggle with the ultimate socialist aim. Moreover we must educate the masses to carry out their struggle in a revolutionary way, that is, by breaking beyond the boundaries of bourgeois legality as we have said. To carry out these tasks it is necessary to recognize the extent and depth of illusions about bourgeois democracy within the working class. Reformism, trade unionism, economism all have a long and involved history in the United States and it is inevitable that they will make themselves felt as ideological tendencies within the communist movement. So it is not a question of nasty Bob Avakian, or misguided Michel Klonsky but of definite tendencies that capitalism is bound to breed. This is not a small point comrades.

At this very moment in history the forces of revolution and counter-revolution are contending most sharply. The danger of a world war between the two superpowers is gaining on a daily basis. It is just such a "turn" in the revolutionary process that brings opportunism to full maturity, that reveals all of its rottenness and corruption and social chauvenism. We must realize that if we do not wage an unrelenting, consistent and ruthless struggle (to the dismay of those bleeding heart "friends of the people" who blanch at the thought of open and honest ideological conflict), we shall be defaulting the leadership of the working class to opportunism.

War has the distinct advantage of bringing out the best and the worst in mankind

"(Wars) ruthlessly reveal, unmask and destroy much that is corrupt, outworn and dead in human institutions" (Lenin)

War will bring even more to the fore the question of practical leadership of the struggle -- the forces of Marxism-Leninism and the forces of opportunism will reveal all of their strengths and weaknesses in the case of war. We cannot wait for war to wage battle with the mealy-mouthed liberals who couch their cowardice with Marxist phrases and pithy homilies about "ties with the masses" (which translates into fear of giving the masses a revolutionary education, of helping them to break with reformism)

What is the Main Danger?

We want to address ourselves to the question of what is the main danger to revolution in this country

(In late 1975 the OL changed its position that "Ultra-leftism" is the main danger. They claim that, with the formation of the RCP ultra-leftism had isolated itself and that centrism had become the "main roadblock" to party building. We will deal with this new position in future articles, and show how in practice their position has not changed) There are some comrades who hold that "left" sectarianism is the main danger to our movement. There are also opportunists like the OL who pushed this position. We make a dis



The OL calls for the National Guard and police to "protect" the Afro-American masses, negating that they are part of the bourgeois state apparatus and have a history of fascist attacks on the Afro-American masses.

inction between those who hold to this position out of confusion; those who cling to it because of a lack of revolutionary spine and who would conciliate opportunism and Marxism-Leninism; and those, like the October League, whose position flowed from, and served, their opportunism. In any case the absolute incorrectness and danger of the position is the same

One Line Covers Another

The October League pointed to "ultra-leftism" (or "neo-trotskyism") not in order to wage a struggle against it, but to call attention away from their own right opportunism. As friends of ATM have rightly pointed out, opportunism inevitably had to take the form of the October League.

With the defeat of modern revisionism did not come the death of opportunism. It was forced to assume a new mask, to cover itself ever more cleverly and insidiously with the cloak (but not the essence) of Marxism. Opportunists who talk about "peaceful transition" and "party of the whole people", etc., etc., were obviously not going to be able to get over as easily with the advanced elements who were receiving their baptism in the rebellions and mass movements of the '60's and '70's

No, to succeed in their task opportunism had to wave the flag of Marxism, to shout about "armed struggle", and "building a new communist party", and attacking the CPUSA. But attacking revisionism does not make one anti-revisionist.

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CONT'D FROM PAGE 7

We need only look at the trotskyst Communist Labor Party to see the truth of this as they continue their shameful grovelling at the feet of Soviet social-imperialism and attack the correct leadership of the Communist Party of China. In our Unity Statement we refer to this latest brand of opportunism as the "new revisionists" (We are referring here to a tendency, not necessarily the out-front revisionism of Marxist-Leninist principles)

We do not doubt that this is an international phenomenon which is likely to coalesce at some point in the future. It is no accident that in many countries we have a variety of "M-L" groups -- undoubtedly some of these represent the same retrograde trend as the RCP and the OL. This is not surprising -- both Trotskyism, old revisionism and modern revisionism are international trends, the same is bound to hold true for the "new revisionism". Understanding that the old tactics were no longer sufficient, opportunism had to do everything it could do to prevent a close examination of its program, line and practice.

The easiest and best way was to focus the attention of revolutionaries on "ultra-leftism". And the neatest (and most opportunist) way to do this was by seizing on questions of style of work, of form, and to ignore the question of the general content of the line of the movement. So the OL attacks the RU for being dual unionist, but ignores completely the fact of the political content of RU's "intermediate workers organizations". If they did they would see that whether or not the RU worked within the trade union structure they would only bring the workers economism. And THAT is the main problem, the main danger that we refer to.

To have brought up this unpleasant fact would have raised the inevitable comparison to OL's "workers unity" and "Fight-Back" committees which reek with the same reformism and economism as the "mass" organizations of the RU(RCP). To point the finger at RU's right opportunism would also have been to point the finger at OL's opportunism on Watergate, where they said that

the task facing the revolutionary proletariat was to "unparalyze Congress". Or perhaps it would have pointed the finger at their position that federal troops would protect the black masses in Boston. Or it would have revealed the basic chauvenism of their position on Boston, where the OL continually refers to the forced busing of Black children, but ignores the question of the forced busing of whites.

"Even" the liberals support forced busing of Blacks, but it is another question when it comes to busing white children. ATM stands in favor of forced busing in Boston, (although we believe the Blacks have the right to choose whether they wish to be bused or not), but its starting point is not simply the question of getting Black children a better education but a question of breaking the historically developed segregation pattern with all of its attendant political, economic and social ramifications. However, the October League wants the Black masses to get the STATE to defend their interests.

It is up to communists to sum-up the historical role the state has played in this country, or point to the experience of the '60's, where the state has revealed its ugliest features, to educate the masses, based on their own experience (it need not always be direct -- or must everyone get clubbed or shot?). Of course, like the devious opportunists that they are, the OL now puts forward "boldly" that the Black masses should protect themselves by "any means necessary". Avoiding the issue of breaking through the chains of bourgeois legality and calling for the armed self-defense of Blacks, the OL contents itself with vague and wishy-washy calls, while neglecting to carry out any systematic revolutionary work among the masses of Boston.

To show the extent of their disgusting liberalism, we can point to the march on Carson Beach in Boston. The OL correctly lays out that it was the task of communists to participate in this anti-segregation march. It was a mass undertaking initiated by the NAACP. The task of communists was to participate in this event, and in the course of it to expose reformists such as the leaders of the NAACP. The issue around which this exposure could have been done was around the self-defense of the demonstrators against police or white mob attack.

How did the OL develop its tactics? By asking Atkins of the NAACP if he had any contingency plan in case of physical confrontation. He said that he expected no trouble, but in any did occur he expected the police to protect them. The OL SAID NOTHING. Why? Because they thought that Atkins had a contingency plan to meet with the possibility of violence, but that he just wasn't revealing it. Talk about your faith in reformism. They actually believed that the mass organization which has built itself through its service to reformism was going to go beyond it. When the confrontation did occur, the OL was totally unprepared to provide revolutionary leadership (if they had wanted to). And these are the communists who are now strutting around as a "vanguard" organization. We can see it is no accident that the OL wants us to look only at "ultra-leftism".

Why did we make our conciliationist error regarding the OL? We made it because we were taken in by the fact that they did not crudely revise Marxist-Leninist principles. They were not so gross as the RU to come up with a theory of "nation of a new type". They were not so cloddish as to say that the central task was to build the "revolutionary unity, consciousness and organization" of the working class instead of party building. No, they said that party building was the central task, they claimed to uphold the Comintern position on the Afro-American national question. So, we were taken in.

We knew that they were economist and reformist. We knew that by coming out against secession of the Afro-American nation that they were chauvenist (or perhaps it is preferable for Blacks to remain "attached" to the oppressor nation under present conditions). Yet, since they were not blatant in revising Marxism-Leninism we said that they were still Marxist-Leninist.

Yes comrades, we said that they were right opportunist, economist and chauvenist but still Marxist-Leninists! Now this is a neat trick if you can do it, and we're sure that most opportunists would like to do it, but it cannot be done.



Marxism-Leninism and opportunism are irreconcilable -- they co-exist only in struggle. Failing to understand this created the following dangers:

1. We helped to give the October League credibility among some forces where we had influence,
2. We confused many revolutionary forces;
3. It weakened the solidarity of the revolutionary wing in the struggle against right opportunism;
4. This gave the OL the opportunity to zero its fire in on Workers Viewpoint, while pretending that it had a "close" relationship with ATM,
5. We confused our own cadre who consistently ran into the right opportunism of the OL in the course of their practice with them.

(We understand that when different organizations work together there are bound to be errors and conflicts -- this is true of even revolutionary organizations. However with the OL it was not a question of mistakes, but of an opportunist political line).

Opportunism "On the Line"

To see this opportunism most clearly we refer comrades to the section of OL's paper, the CALL, entitled "On the Line" which pur-

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ORGANIZATION



Party building is the central task of all genuine Marxist-Leninists. The two main tactical tasks which must be conducted simultaneously to achieve material unity in the form of a new party are:

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ports to be a summary of workers struggles from around the country

What do we find here? We find that, according to the OL, Arnold Miller, the head of the United Mineworkers, is leading the mineworkers against the Ku Klux Klan (October, 1975). Rather than exposing to the workers that THEY must deal with the Klan, and that Miller is bound to, at best, wage a half-hearted struggle against the Klan -- the OL article creates the idea that the mineworkers should rely on Miller to crush the Klan. The OL "conveniently" forgot to mention to the workers that they must develop their own independent and revolutionary struggle, (in spite of reformists such as Miller). We also find facts such as this:

"If fighting this system is communism," one striker said emphatically, "then I want to be a communist!"

("Capital Strike Enters Fourth Month" -- CALL, Nov 1975)

It is exactly the duty of communists to explain to the workers that striking for the better sale of their labor power is not communism, but trade unionism, and that it is only by going beyond trade unionism, that they can end their wage-slavery. But the October League, by their own words, is content "to have brought home some of these lessons about working class unity and solidarity." (ibid)

We remind the leadership of the OL that it is the task of communists to link the immediate struggles of the class to the ultimate aim. For those who do not know, or care to know, that aim is the dictatorship of the proletariat. But when an organization is shot through with reformism and illusions about bourgeois democracy it is no wonder that they are content with keeping the workers under the hegemony of trade unionist (bourgeois) ideology.

As one of the Capital strikers said (quoted in the CALL) -- "They call anyone who fights back a communist." This striker could have been referring to the October League who seem to think that anyone who "Fights Back" (it is so bold to put it in capital letters) is a communist.

Another interesting article in "On the Line" (CALL, Nov, 1975) is entitled "UFW Hits New Labor Relations Board". This article echos the demand of the leadership of the United Farmworkers that the general counsel of the new California Agricultural Labor Relations Board be fired, or that he resign. The UFW leadership doesn't think that the general counsel is acting vigorously enough on their unfair labor practices complaints.

We understand very well that it was only the militancy and struggle of the farmworkers themselves which forced the new California Farm Labor Law from the bourgeoisie.

However, we always thought that it was the task of communists to expose and explain to the proletariat that the state serves the interest of the bourgeoisie, and that they must smash this state and set up their own state -- the dictatorship of the proletariat. One thing that we know for sure (maybe the OL will say that it comes from reading too many books), is that only opportunists preach reliance on the state.

In the entire article the October

League never once mentions a thing about the class character of the state, or about any possible alternative to this state. They polemicize with the CPUSA about WHO will implement the new Farm Labor Law -- the leadership of the UFW or the "politicians and big labor leaders". Only the most craven opportunists would want the farmworkers to believe that the state is going to resolve their problems for them.

It is our task to reveal this state in the face of all the reformists who would obscure its class nature -- Cesar Chavez included. But the OL sees no problem with echoing the line of a garden-variety liberal. "Oh no, we're not opportunists, you must be talking about someone else."

Undoubtedly, the OL will respond to this by claiming to have written other articles on the ALRB which expose its class nature. But what kind of communist organization prints any articles of opportunist nature, or devoid of revolutionary political content?

As well as the pablum to which we have referred, one will find in the pages of the CALL articles of a propaganda nature, or good articles like "The 1931 Strike of the Readers" which told the story of a strike which was linked up to the struggle against capitalism. But we must judge a communist organ by its general content, and how they explain to the workers the processes involved in their own struggles. And it is in doing this that we show the workers that their only salvation (from a historical and practical and not a moral standpoint) is socialist revolution. Examining the OL from this perspective we see their opportunism clearly, or at least only barely disguised by the thin veil of Marxism which they attempt to cover themselves in.

One other point we want to make is that the OL seems to have succeeded in confusing some honest elements to some extent, with their chatter that "ultra-leftism" as the main danger. To some of these comrades even the OL is "left" because they have put forward a hegemonic scheme for party building (build the CALL, our Fight Back Organization, Our Communist Youth League and you can join the "party").

Don't be confused comrades, the OL is uniting only with comrades who will accept their right opportunist political line. They have no intention of "struggling out differences" within the party, anymore than the CL intended to struggle out differences with their "left" opportunist-trotskyist line "within the ranks of the party".

We must not focus attention only on the scheme put forward, but must look closely at the content of the line which an organization represents. Otherwise we will confuse form with content and lose our bearings in the struggle against opportunism.

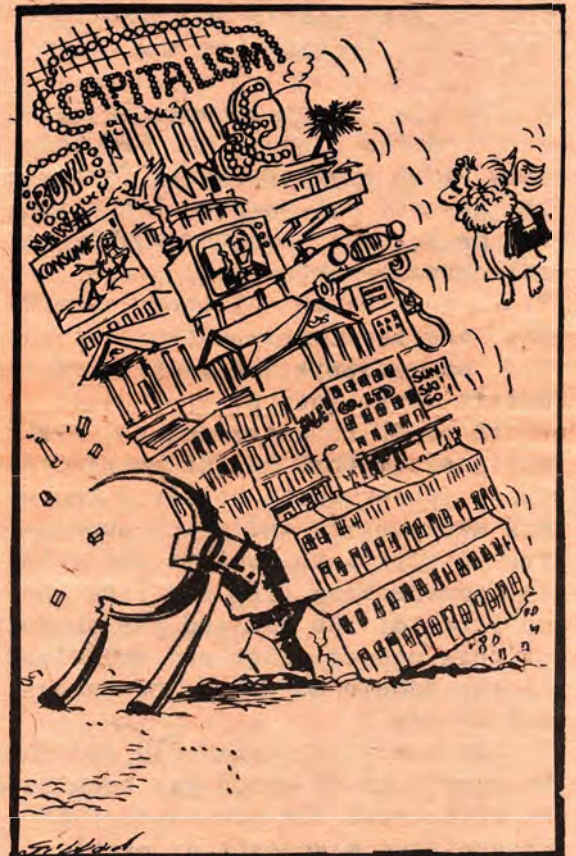
The October League, as an explanation for their line that "ultra-leftism" is the main danger, is always referring to the petty-bourgeois social base of the anti-revisionist communist movement.

"In part, it ("leftism") reflects the social base of the communist movement at the present time. The fact that a great deal of the present day communists come from the ranks of the mid-

dle classes or the intelligentsia is only natural." ("Party building in the U.S.", OL, page 8)

The only thing "natural" about this statement is the opportunism. When the OL refers to organizations with a petty-bourgeois social base they are referring only to themselves and the RU. Their chauvenism and paternalism leads them to neglect those communist organizations which developed from the movement of the oppressed nationalities, and which have a working class social base. Or maybe it would surprise the OL to learn that workers and oppressed nationalities are also capable of assimilating Marxism-Leninism.

Secondly, in advanced capitalist countries like the U.S. (which has advanced to superpower status), not only a section of the working class is bribed and corrupted with reformism, but also a section of the petty-bourgeoisie, its upper strata -- who also do not lag in assimilating and propagating reformist illusion.



It is not only ultra-leftism which the petty-bourgeoisie breeds, but also the spirit of "getting on", of becoming junior partners to the bourgeoisie -- of right opportunism. But of course the OL would not want to refer to this, someone just might draw the logical conclusion. Nothing reflects their social base better than OL's own history.

In the beginning, the October League carried out a truly ultra-"left" sectarian and dogmatic line. For years in the Los Angeles area they would shake WHAT IS TO BE DONE at us for participating in strikes. They use to tell us that even to participate in strikes was economist, that we should be studying so that we could build the party. They NEVER told us to bring Marxism-Leninism to the advanced workers in the course of strikes or struggle. No. -- they told us to lock ourselves in closets and to study, completely divorced from the struggles of the working class.

But this "left" opportunist line was only covering the strong right opportunist tendency which existed in the OL from the beginning, and which finally "defeated" their left opportunism. This change should not surprise us, it is quite characteristic for the petty bourgeoisie to jump this way and that, to go

O.L. . . .

CONT'D FROM PAGE 9

from one extreme to another. But in this case what we have is not only flip-flopping, but pragmatism to boot.

The OL's change in line was not motivated by principle, otherwise we would have seen some analysis and repudiation of their former line. It was simply a case of their "leftism" not working, of keeping them isolated. They had to find something which would "work" -- and it was not Marxism-Leninism which they found, but economism. In either case the name of the game is opportunism -- it was born, went through its adolescence, and now struts across the stage of history as a full blown adult.

In the course of this development other events were occurring. Other organizations were being born -- particularly out of the struggles of the oppressed nationalities. These organizations have had to fight every inch of the way for Marxism-Leninism. They have grown up (and grown strong) in the struggle against opportunism and revisionism. Out of this struggle was born and developed the two wings in the communist movement. An opportunist wing made up of OL, Guardian, RCP and others; and a revolutionary wing consisting of a number of groups and collectives throughout the country among which are ATM and PRRWO. Moreover the revolutionary wing has developed in the face of attack of MARXIST-LENINIST principles by the crude hucksters of the RU and CL type, and the nickelslick con men of the OL type.

These two wings of our movement are no accidental product of history, but are a natural occurrence of the class struggle. The dying and decadent bourgeoisie is bound to try and prettify its stinking flesh with fresh make-up and new clothes. It is the task of the revolutionary class to pull the mask off, to reveal to all the oppressed masses the true face of the enemy, in order that we may more quickly place the body in its coffin and nail on the lid.

Finally, we challenge the October League to answer our arguments on their merits. We fully expect the OL to resort to the same type of name-calling, slander and invective that they did when responding to WVO's polemic against them. Rather than dealing with the principles that we raise we anticipate that the OL will isolate in on mistakes we have made, or personalities, or errors in our line -- anything to avoid confronting the issue of their opportunism.

Well, we say to our erstwhile comrades from the OL "Pongale!! Fire your best shot", you will only further reveal yourself to all the honest, selfless and dedicated revolutionaries of the United States.

[In future issues we will go into some of our history with the OL, the roots and development of our conciliationism, their party building plan, and the national question.]

