

I. Introduction

Never have working people been so abused, so misrepresented, defamed and suppressed as they are today. And they are abused the most by those who pretend to represent their interests, the liberals, reformists, opportunists, Trotskyites, and political reactionaries who attempt to turn the working class movement to their own ends. It's not enough that the working class creates all social wealth and receives a bare subsistence in return. This self-evident fact is denied altogether. With the nerve of thieves caught red-handed, the free-loaders of the capitalist system --the bourgeoisie and their social props, the professors, professionals, bureaucrats and bribed upper stratum of the working class-- tell us there is no such thing as wage-slavery, workers are not oppressed, if they strike it is only out of contrariness. We were even told there is no working class at all. Or, if there must be workers, then everyone, even students, are workers. In one or another way the hangers-on try to convince us that there is no such thing as a separate working class, with its own interests; that this class has no interests separate from capitalism; that it is not revolutionary after all; that it is bribed, complacent, satisfied; and that the most the workers can expect is a string of petty reforms. It is the aim of all apologists of the capitalist system, however "radical", to sabotage the independent movement of the working class and bring it under the control and leadership of the bourgeoisie.

But in fact there is no life for working people under capitalism. There is only wage-slavery, bare subsistence, insecurity, the threat of unemployment, continual inflation, political suppression and constant efforts to break the workers organized resistance. This is not the fulfillment of life, but its complete denial. Workers live only to be worked, to create fantastic wealth for the capitalists, and create poverty and worry for themselves. This system offers nothing to the working class except its continued exploitation, insecurity and want.

Workers in every capitalist country face the same conditions. The more they organize to advance their own interests, the fiercer the repression they meet. Imperialism, the highest and most decadent stage of capitalism, is reaction all along the line. Its sole aim is to perpetuate the wage-slave system, to control and oppress other nations, increase its profit, and crush the workers movement. It cannot exist without squeezing profits from the working class. The working class cannot continue to exist while it is being bled dry; it must overthrow imperialism wherever it exists. Our struggle is international, our goal is the same: the abolition of imperialism worldwide, and the creation of a world for the international working class.

To achieve this the working class of every country must have the leadership of its most advanced elements, those who are guided by a clear understanding of the nature of the capitalist system, who have analysed the role of the various social classes and how they defend and advance their narrow interests at the workers' expense, those who have studied the history of the international workers movement, who have mastered the strategy and tactics of working class organization, who can wage a consistent political and economic struggle against the ruling class and its social props. In short, the working class needs a political party, an advanced detachment, a vanguard, that fully defends the workers' immediate and long-term interests, that fights for socialism.

The creation of this party demands the greatest clarity on the aims, methods and organization of the revolutionary working class movement. Without clarity on our tasks, those tasks cannot be fulfilled.

II. Imperialism

Capitalism rests on the exploitation of wage-labor. The bourgeoisie has taken the means of production, the raw materials, factories, mines, mills, transportation, all the fruits of labor as its own private property. The working class owns nothing but its ability to labor, which it must sell off, week by week, in order to buy back from the capitalist the means of living the workers themselves have produced. Under this system, the worker is nothing but a slave, bound by wages. Further, since labor produces both wages and profits, profits can be increased only by lowering wages. The interests of the capitalist class and the working class are directly opposed. The capitalists can live well only when the masses of workers live poorly. By one or another means the bourgeoisie, through the use of its political power, through use of the state, through inflation, lay-offs, over-time, speed-ups, court injunctions against strikes, bribed trade union bureaucrats, and

so on, by one or another means the ruling class attempts to lower the standard of living of the workers and thus raise its own.

This is particularly evident during the era of imperialism. Competition between capitalists for higher profits results in monopoly, the domination of finance capital, the banks, over the whole of capitalist society. Since the turn of the century, monopolies have concentrated vast wealth and social power under their control, have driven out their competitors, and geared the entire political and economic apparatus to their own ends. The development of monopolies marks the most intense exploitation of labor by capital, the worsening of the conditions of millions of working people, the most desperate attempts by the monopoly bourgeoisie to crush the workers movement. It is political reaction, suppression, and ruthless domination all along the line. The bourgeoisie resorts to every device to maintain itself in power. But while imperialism worsens the conditions of the working class, it also brings about the most favorable conditions for the working class to overthrow it. Imperialism is the highest and final stage of capitalism; it carries the contradictions of capitalism to their final bounds, to the limit, beyond which socialist revolution must begin. The system cannot avoid all-round political and economic crisis, no matter how much its apologists attempt to reform, stabilize and prettify it. The conditions are ripe for the masses of working people to see the utter and complete bankruptcy of capitalism and the absolute necessity of its overthrow.

The working class of the imperialist countries has allies the world over. The competition between the imperialists for world markets, raw materials and labor-power has resulted in the subjugation of the oppressed nations, and this in turn has sparked anti-imperialist movements throughout the Third World. The movements of the oppressed nations for self-determination, for the overthrow of imperialism and the establishment of socialism, are the natural and revolutionary allies of the working class movements in the imperialist countries and socialist countries.

The struggle between the revolutionary alliance of the working class and oppressed nations on the one hand, and the camp of imperialists, reactionaries and their props, on the other, is being waged in the transition between two great epochs in the history of mankind. The epoch of class society, of the exploitation of man by man, of subjugation, oppression, chauvinism, and social antagonism is coming to an end. Before us lies the epoch of classless society, the end to all oppression, the era of the unbreakable unity of all working people. Communism, which the ruling class viciously attacks and subverts, which the bourgeois propagandists endlessly slander, distort and deny, which the bourgeoisie attempts to blow off the face of the earth -- communism, the simple, common sense notion that since working people produce everything they should also control and direct what they produce, should satisfy their own needs, and build a society run by and for workers-- communism, and the socialist revolution that brings it forth, is an irresistible historical tendency. The bourgeoisie does all it can to stop it, but the world's working and oppressed people will go on and over the bourgeoisie, will smash the bourgeoisie's political power, and create the political power of the proletariat.

This will occur despite the temporary setbacks for the working class, the momentary reversals and defeats. The restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union has transformed the leading workers' state into an imperialist, social-fascist country. Where once the Russian workers wielded state power, constructed a socialist system to meet the needs of working people, and were the guiding light for the world's working class, they are now under the heel of a social-imperialist bourgeoisie, are exploited, suppressed, and as miserable as the workers of any imperialist country. The Soviet Union has emerged as one of the two leading imperialist powers, and under the mask of "socialism" attempts to pull oppressed nations under its sway. But even the rise of social-imperialism, the defeat of once-socialist countries, and the hypocritical use of "socialist" words to cover imperialist deeds, cannot stop the forward march of the international working class movement. The social-imperialists, like any bourgeoisie, cannot avoid the contradictions and crisis peculiar to capitalism, cannot avoid the resistance and growing political organization of the working class, cannot avoid the class struggle and the persistent efforts by the working class to overthrow them through socialist revolution. Fascism and social-imperialism are only the last-ditch efforts by the ruling class to preserve a system that is already in a terminal state of decadence and degeneration. The continued resistance and organization of the workers of Russia and Eastern Europe will show that the invincible power of the proletariat is stronger than any revisionism, and that the desperate steps taken by the social-imperialists to save themselves are really only steps towards the grave.

In the socialist countries --China, Albania, North Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos-- the workers and peasants are laying the foundation of a new social order free from exploitation. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the 1960's and the present two-line struggle in China are proof that the workers' state can combat and defeat attempts to revive capitalism and the wage-slave system. The finest representatives of the working class in these countries are our guiding light in the struggle for a principled, consistent, and united international working class movement. The apologists of imperialism, the revisionists, those who attempt to sabotage the workers' movement by denying its fundamental principles, the opportunists, those who attempt to retard the movement and restrict it to reformism, try by every means to deprive the working class of its political leadership, and substitute instead the leadership of the bourgeoisie. The Communist Parties of the socialist countries must wage a constant struggle against these attempts, and continually educate the masses of workers to the dangers of revisionism, opportunism, social-chauvinism and reformism. The Communist Party of China under the leadership of Mao Tse Tung and the Party of Labor of Albania under the leadership of Enver Hoxha have been leading the struggle against the modern revisionism of the Soviet Union since the early 1960's. But the struggle against the new strains of international revisionism, against social-chauvinism and "left" revisionism has yet to be taken up from the standpoint of principled and open struggle. It is the task of everyone who wishes to advance the working class movement to expose every attempt to divert the workers into the control and direction of imperialism.

The competition between the imperialist powers, and particularly between the super-powers of the U.S. and U.S.S.R., for control of world markets is bound to lead to open world war. War is only the continuation of politics by other means. The goal of imperialist war is the redivision of the world between the imperialists, each trying to put a larger profit-rich area under its control. The imperialists cannot avoid war anymore than they can avoid competing amongst themselves, even when it means plunging the world into chaos. As the past two World Wars have shown, either socialist revolution will prevent world war, or world war will give rise to socialist revolution. The working class must oppose the bourgeois slogan of 'Defend your country' with the revolutionary slogan of Turn the imperialist war into class war, turn your weapons against the bourgeoisie, and defend your own country only if it is oppressed or a workers' state. Workers have no stake in fighting one another; they have every stake in joining a common fight against the imperialist bourgeoisie and their system.

III. The Spontaneous Workers' Movement

The workers' spontaneous opposition to capitalism is as old as the capitalist system itself. Without political power and the collective ownership of the means of production, the only weapon of the working class is its organization. The first, most immediate form of organization available to workers, the trade unions, are an arm the workers instinctively raise against the blows of capital. But even when the trade unions are under rank and file control, they cannot on their own protect and advance the long-term interests of the working class, cannot touch the foundations of the capitalist system, cannot put an end to capitalist exploitation. The trade unions can bargain with the capitalists over wages, but they cannot bargain away the wages-system. They can negotiate with the capitalists to improve the workers' immediate conditions, but they cannot negotiate the overthrow of capitalism and thus fulfill the workers' real interests. On its own, any trade union struggle, no matter how militant, no matter how violently the bourgeoisie may oppose it, is still completely within the bounds of bourgeois respectability since such economic struggles do not question the existence of capitalism or the political power of the bourgeoisie. That is the limit of trade unionism in general, and is the reason why a truly revolutionary struggle must go beyond trade unionism, must combine the economic and political struggles into one consistently waged class struggle, and must have the leadership of a political working class party.

Modern trade unionism, with its hierarchy of trade union bureaucrats and total lack of rank and file control, is the logical outcome of the workers' spontaneous struggle. The trade unions are meant to fulfill only the workers' most immediate needs: the amount of wages, hours, benefits, and working conditions. Further, trade unions cover only a quarter of the working class as a whole, and so are incapable of conducting a class-wide struggle. All workers need the benefits that the trade unions provide, need to guarantee their wages and conditions, but the working class also needs to put an end to the wage-slave system, needs to fight a class-wide battle for the political power needed to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to establish socialism. From this it follows that the working class must bring the trade unions under rank and file control and be directed by the political party of the working class movement. The trade union bureaucrats must be isolated

and driven out. The reformism and narrowness of the economic struggle must be subordinate to and guided by a broad political struggle for fundamental, revolutionary change. This line opposes both the opportunists, who would have the working class struggle only for reforms, and the neo-Trotskyites and syndicalists who oppose work in the trade unions altogether. Both tendencies accomplish the same thing.

Stalin cites three general strata within the working class that are the social basis for conflicting political lines. The solid core of the working class, its most stable and principled element, is composed of the industrial proletariat, the factory workers, the workers in the largest branches of industry, who are in the best position to see the common interests of all workers. The industrial workers are traditionally the most highly organized, most concentrated in numbers, and the most active in the trade union movement. They constitute the secure base for the class-wide political struggle, the main basis of support for the workers communist party. The second strata is the labor aristocracy, the trade union bureaucrats and the top craft unions. These workers and bureaucrats are the bribed portion of the working class, paid out of the super-profits of imperialism, enjoying exceptional standards of living, and are the main social basis for opportunism, revisionism, social-chauvinism, jingoism and sabotage of the workers' movement. They pose as representatives of the working class, its spokesmen and defenders, but in fact exist only to mislead the workers on behalf of the capitalists. They are in fact the workers' class enemies, the social props of imperialism, of reaction and chauvinism in the working class movement. Politically they are represented by the left wing of the Democratic Party, the Social-Democrats like Michael Harrington, the revisionist Communist Party U.S.A., and the small groupings of opportunist tendencies, the Revolutionary Union (RCP), the October League, and half a dozen other economist tendencies in our movement. By one or another means, the political representatives of the labor aristocracy attempt to bind labor to capital and thus preserve their own comfortable positions above the masses of workers. The third general strata is composed of the new arrivals to the working class, the bankrupted farmers and small businessmen, unsuccessful salesmen, the ex-students, the ex-self-employed and so on, all the petty bourgeois, middle-class elements who are driven down by the monopolies into proletarian existence. This strata is the least stable, since it includes elements who continually aspire to "independent", parasitical means of life, who are completely bourgeois in their outlook and aspirations, who would like to become capitalists themselves, who oppose the monopolies only out of jealousy, and who are hostile to the workers they feel they are superior to. These new arrivals, half-workers, half-bourgeois, continually vacillate between the working class and the bourgeoisie. Politically, they tend to adventurism and anarchism when times are hard, and to compromise and reformism when times are good. Lacking a solid proletarian outlook, this petty bourgeois element has no consistency, no patience with organization, no sense of proletarian unity and thus no stable political line. It is every bit as opportunistic as the labor aristocracy, only it is less successful. Political instability, vacillation, frantic desperation, and inconsistency are its main characteristics. Only when the working class movement is strong can these elements be brought under truly proletarian leadership. When the working class movement is weak, as today, the petty bourgeois new arrivals attempt to exert their own leadership over the masses of workers.

These three strata account for the diversity of political tendencies struggling for leadership over the workers' movement.

There are also varying degrees of advancement within the working class, depending on the experience and political understanding of various workers within the class. The most backward workers are those who are caught up in the daily routine of factory life, who are preoccupied with themselves and their families, and who at the most engage in the economic, trade union struggle for their immediate needs. The great mass of average workers can see the limits of the trade union struggle, can see that the struggle for better wages does not meet the workers' real needs, can see that the bourgeoisie controls the government, that the trade union bureaucrats need to be kicked out, that the press and official society is geared solidly against the workers, and that fundamental, socialist change is needed. The average workers can understand bits and pieces of capitalist society, but lack an integral, harmonious and consistent class-conscious outlook. A numerically smaller portion, the advanced workers, strive constantly for such an outlook, and may independently develop a socialist understanding. The advanced workers are the finest representatives of the entire working class: the most dedicated to the workers' cause, the most principled, consistent, selfless and wholly committed to the struggle against capital. They have seen by their own experience and the experience of their class that what is needed is a persistent political struggle against the bourgeoisie, that the struggle for reforms must be a by-product of the struggle for revolution, and that workers cannot end exploitation without putting an end to the whole of the capitalist system.

Lenin states that the advanced workers are a natural product of the development of capitalism, are its conscious grave-diggers, and the means by which the working class as a whole becomes politically educated. These workers constantly seek answers to the tasks before the workers' movement, gravitate to scientific socialism, to Marxism-Leninism. It is the role of the communist intelligensia to provide them the answers.

IV. The Communist Movement

Workers cannot on their own develop a truly scientific understanding of class society and the role of the working class within it. Such scientific understanding requires a thorough study of history, of social and productive relations, of the basic laws that guide social development. Such scientific knowledge is the fruit of the intelligensia, of the petty bourgeois and bourgeois intellectuals, who have, at the expense of the working class, the necessary leisure time and academic background to pursue an all-round study. Only a very small portion of the intelligensia is able to overcome their upper-class bias and prejudice and see the historical inevitability of the socialist revolution. Of that small portion, only a tiny number actually cross class lines and wholly adopt a scientific, class conscious outlook. The founders of scientific socialism --Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin -- were revolutionary intellectuals who completely rejected their bourgeois and petty bourgeois backgrounds, and gave themselves fully to the advancement of the revolutionary workers' movement. The contemporary leaders of the international movement, Mao Tse Tung and Enver Hoxha, have taken the same route.

Scientific political knowledge is brought to the working class from without, from the revolutionary intelligensia, but not all the intellectuals, ex-students and professionals who attempt to take political knowledge to the workers have a truly scientific understanding themselves. Thus while consistent and scientific outlook is brought in by the most conscientious and dedicated elements of the socialist intelligensia, the working class is also exposed to a wide variety of non-socialist and opportunist political lines. The opportunists in the communist movement are those petty bourgeois intellectuals who have not thoroughly transformed their world outlooks, have not adopted a scientific and true understanding, have tended towards the working class movement but have got stuck along the way. Usually with the best of intentions, they bring to the working class only their own narrowness, one-sidedness, and frustration, all embellished in the finest "Marxist" phrasing. The opportunist, petty bourgeois political lines they develop, however high-sounding, have the objective effect of attempting to exert petty bourgeois or bourgeois control over the workers movement. The opportunists are not usually conscious of what they're doing, are not aware that they're stuck, and are insistent that their lines are exactly what the working class needs. From the working class standpoint we are less concerned with whether the opportunists are conscious or not than with the reactionary influence they exert within the working class movement. The struggles within the communist movement, which from the outside appear to be sectarian squabbling over shades of differences, are in fact decisive struggles over whether opportunist or principled lines will lead the workers' movement. The most consistent, scientific and disciplined elements of the communist movement must continually combat the efforts of the opportunists to introduce bankrupt and misleading political lines into the working class. Political knowledge is brought to the working class from without, and we must insure that that knowledge is truly scientific, that it accurately assesses objective conditions, that it marks a consistent line of march for the working class movement and fully protects and advances its interests.

The communist movement in the U.S. has not reached the point where it can consistently fulfill the tasks before it. The social base for opportunism, for vacillation and compromise with the bourgeoisie is much larger in the U.S. than anywhere else, and this has had its effect on the communist movement in the form of ideological confusion and the dominance of opportunist tendencies. The vast majority of active Marxist-Leninists emerged from the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960's. These movements were petty bourgeois in their class basis, were reformist in their political lines, and rejected the leading role of the working class. Only when these movements had run their course did groups and individuals begin to look to the proletariat, the only truly revolutionary class in modern society. The process of tending towards the working class gave rise to a new communist movement in the early 1970's. Our movement as a whole has not yet sufficiently broken with the petty bourgeois heritage of the 1960's, has not yet broken with opportunism, reformism and compromise. Our movement as a whole still lacks the ideological and theoretical clarity, discipline and organization necessary to provide political leadership for the working class. Instead, it has been dominated by one or another opportunist tendency, has been encouraged to neglect our theoretical tasks, has been reared in reformism and catch-phrases, and so has lacked the guiding light it is supposed to give to the workers' movement.

This is self-evident when we look at the major tendencies that have passed through our movement. The Communist League has declared itself the only truly revolutionary political party of the working class, basing itself on the narrowest reformism and conciliation with imperialism, and sliding finally into Trotskyism. The Revolutionary Union, the largest organization to visit the movement, has declared itself the only truly revolutionary party of the working class, basing itself on a program that objectively defends the interests of the labor aristocracy and petty bourgeoisie, and elevates incompetence and vacillation to the level of principle. The second largest organization, the October League, will shortly declare its own precious self "the only truly revolutionary party of the working class", based on a program of outright compromise with imperialism, on the excuse of opposing social-imperialism. These Trotskyite, Right opportunist and "left" Revisionist tendencies appeal to and reflect the narrow interests of the reactionary and backward elements within the working class, the labor aristocracy and petty bourgeois new arrivals. They attempt in fact to rally the masses of oppressed workers around the interests of the workers' class enemies, around the interests of the bourgeoisie and their social props. They have pulled large sections of the communist movement under opportunist leadership, retarded the political development of cadre under their control, fostered reformist and anarchistic tendencies and have thus deprived the working class movement of potentially consistent communist organizers. In short, these opportunist organizations who pretend to speak in the workers' interests have in fact become social props of the bourgeoisie within the working class. By their actions they have placed themselves outside the communist movement and stand, however much they may deny it, on the side of the ruling class.

No other major tendency or group within our movement has proven that it has sufficient grasp on the tasks before the working class to become a model and leading center. The Workers Viewpoint Organization set out with the best of intentions, but has consolidated around its own peculiar form of academic opportunism. The Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization is presently reclaiming the 1960's petty bourgeois rebellion as its own proud heritage, is directly appealing to narrow nationalist tendencies within the movement, and has shown complete confusion over the tasks and stages of party-building. The Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee continues to advance and defend refined forms of black nationalism, and has failed to assume the theoretical tasks it admits need to be fulfilled. The August Twenty-Ninth Movement and Revolutionary Workers League are still relatively unformulated and so have been unable to make substantial contributions to the development of the movement nationally. These organizations, taken collectively, along with rank and file members of the leading opportunist groups, and many smaller communist groups and individuals, are the potential basis for a viable, strong and consistent communist movement. Our weaknesses can be overcome providing there is sufficient commitment, discipline and determination. Opportunist tendencies can be isolated and defeated, providing we wage a ruthless struggle against opportunism and steel ourselves against its effects, provided we consistently protect and advance the interests of the working class and oppose every attempt to reduce the workers movement to reformism. The movement can be put on a firm footing, can fuse with the workers' movement and create a steadfast communist party, providing that errors are openly admitted, understood and corrected, providing we put aside all narrowness, all presumptuousness, all pretense, and direct every effort at raising ourselves to the level of the revolutionary tasks before the working class.

Political struggle within the communist movement is the absolute precondition for its principled unity and organization. Without an open and comprehensive discussion, reflecting the wide range of views within the movement on the major questions before it, it will be impossible to determine which views are correct and which are incorrect, and thus which political lines should lead the workers' movement. Without a correct resolution of the proper method to build the Party, of the principled stand on the national question in the U.S., of the correct tactics in the trade union movement, of relations to other classes and strata, of the international situation, of the movement of working and oppressed women, and so on, there cannot be a principled program around which to unite the movement and insure that it consistently represents the highest interests of the working class. The failure of our movement to date has been that political struggle has been inconsistent and rarely based on principle, that relations between communist groups have been for the most part based on narrow self-interest, and that polemics have not led to greater clarity, but to confusion. This is bound to occur until our movement is grounded on a firm and unshakable foundation of revolutionary theory, clearly sees what lies before it, and has mastered the forms of struggle necessary to lead a nation-wide working class movement. This foundation is laid through the struggle for correct political lines, through the struggle against opportunism and betrayal of the workers' movement, through the struggle against the representatives of the bourgeoisie within the working class.

The new communist movement as a whole is tending towards the working class, but is not yet bound up with it, has not yet earned the respect and trust of the workers, has not yet proven itself the most capable defender of the interests of working people, has not yet mastered the outlook and forms of organization essential to lead the working class against the bourgeoisie. It still lacks the stability of firm and deep roots within the working class, still suffers from petty bourgeois vacillation and confusion. This sad state of affairs can be overcome only when the movement has been organized around a principled and tested line, only when its most competent, able and dedicated elements come to the forefront as its leading force, only when the finest elements of the communist movement fuse with the finest elements of the working class and thus lay the basis for a principled and steadfast Marxist-Leninist party.

V. Fusion with the Working Class and Creation of the Party

The Party we must create must be the most highly organized, most advanced detachment of the working class. Its aims are simple and clear: to organize the masses of workers for their emancipation from wage-slavery, to lead the political and economic struggle of the entire working class against the entire capitalist class, to throw off the social props of the bourgeoisie within the workers' movement who attempt to retard its development and drag it back, to smash the political power of the capitalists, the bourgeois state, and create in its place a state that fully advances and defends the interests of the millions of working people, to construct a socialist system that fulfills their needs. The Party is the highest form of organization of the working class, its leading light, its champion and defender.

The Party is created by the fusion of two movements. On the one hand, the communist movement, composed of revolutionary intellectuals, of those who have wholly rejected their petty bourgeois and bourgeois backgrounds and have put their intellectual skills at the service of the working class, strive to unite with the workers movement and bring it the light of political knowledge. On the other hand, the most conscious elements of the workers' movement, the advanced workers, those who have developed a general understanding of capitalist society and the tasks before the working class, those who seek the most scientific understanding, the guidelines and principles that will lead the working class to victory, strive to unite with the communist movement for a clearer understanding of the class struggle. The fusion of scientific socialism with the working class movement, the fusion of the most advanced elements of the communist movement with the most advanced elements of the workers' movement, is the precondition for a consistent, revolutionary struggle against capitalism. The Party is the embodiment of that fusion. Without it the communist movement remains fragmented, isolated and eventually degenerates, while the workers' movement remains trapped in trade unionism, reformism, and subject to the perpetual attacks of the bourgeoisie.

It goes without saying that the political party of the working class must be at all times capable of continuing under any conditions, no matter how severe. Imperialism is reaction all along the line; the capitalist class will use every means at its disposal to subvert the workers' movement and crush its political leadership. The Party must therefore be highly disciplined, organized, professional, and operate under the strictest centralization and unity of will. It must be prepared to use legal forms of struggle when they are available, and illegal forms when they are not. It must combine both open and secretive measures so as to withstand the attempts by the bourgeoisie to destroy it.

It was precisely the failure of the revisionist Communist Party U.S.A. to meet these standards, its failure to base itself on the outlook of the working class, its failure to meet the theoretical and practical tasks before the workers' movement, its failure to defend the workers' interests and instead betray those interests to the bourgeoisie, its failure to root itself in the working class and instead become rooted amongst the liberals and petty bourgeoisie, its failure to oppose imperialism and instead compromise with it, that led it to become a leading force of counter-revolution within the working class. The C.P.U.S.A. has never been a truly Marxist-Leninist party, has never consistently led the workers' movement beyond reformism. Today, along with the major "Communist" Parties in Europe, Latin American, and Canada, the C.P.U.S.A. represents a fifth column of Soviet social-imperialism, an agent of imperialism, attempting to bind the working class to the capitalist system. A new, truly Marxist-Leninist communist party cannot become the vanguard of the workers' movement without a consistent struggle against modern revisionism, the C.P.U.S.A., and any other attempt by opportunists to mislead the working class. Unless the masses of workers come to understand the role of modern revisionism, with its preaching of "detente" and "peaceful transition to socialism", with its open compromise with capitalism, its catering to liberals and trade union bureaucrats, the working class itself will be compromised and subjected to real wage-slavery under a false "socialism". We must avoid repeating the same error that millions of Russian workers have had to learn of by their own bitter experience.

We must also ruthlessly oppose every attempt by false "friends" of the working class to degrade the role of the workers' Party. These opportunists have the "best" of intentions, but in fact, consciously or unconsciously, mean to deprive the working class of the discipline, organization and unity of will necessary to overthrow capitalism. Those who say that the Party must be open, broad and democratic, so loose in fact that any penny-ante liberal could take part, would create a "workers" party full of professors and students, liberals and do-gooders, a party that would not be able to withstand the least repression put against it and that therefore would be always open to compromise. Those who claim they have already fused with the working class, when in fact they have only fused with the petty bourgeois new arrivals, labor aristocracy and opportunist elements in the working class, those who have created parties based on these backward strata, have in fact created rearguard parties, parties which trail after the working class movement and attempt to drag it back. Such parties, the Communist Labor Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party, the Progressive Labor Party, the October League's future party, and a slough of tiny Trotskyite parties and groups, are parties of the petty bourgeoisie disguised as workers' parties. They take the form of workers' parties only to divert the working class to petty reformism, that is, to what the petty bourgeoisie itself has interests in.

To create a workers' party for the working class, a party that fully reflects the workers' interests and wages a relentless struggle against attempts to mislead the class, it is necessary to understand the phases of its development and our primary tasks within each phase. The history of the world working class movement has proven out Stalin's thesis that every consistent and principled workers' party develops through three main periods: the period of the Party's formation, in which the primary task is to win the advanced workers to scientific socialism; the period of the Party's active mass work, in which the primary task is to rally the millions of working people to the political leadership of the Party and open a comprehensive class struggle against the bourgeoisie; and the period of socialist revolution, the victory of working people over capitalism, in which the primary task is to consolidate the political power of the working class and the construction of socialism.

Within the first period there are in turn three general stages that together lay a granite foundation for the Party's creation. Up to this point the communist movement has developed spontaneously, a wide variety of circles and groups spring up throughout the country, each develops its own understanding of the tasks before the workers' movement and begins practical work to fulfill them. The movement has developed throughout the country, but still lacks clarity, cohesion and unity around a principled line. It is during this phase of scattered and spontaneous growth of the movement that opportunist tendencies are able to take advantage of the lack of principled leadership and to impose their own. In our movement this phase covers the period between 1970 and the present, the phase in our development marked by the domination of opportunist and revisionist tendencies. The main task in the first stage of party-building must therefore be to oppose the leading centers of opportunism in our movement and create a real leading center, a leading core of the finest and most principled elements, a leading center capable of organizing the most consistent and dedicated communists in the movement and creating the means to draw the most advanced workers into active political struggle. Once this principled tendency has been established in the movement, once the most honest and committed communists begin to gravitate towards it and put their local work on a comprehensive footing, once they have begun to actively win the advanced workers to the task of creating the Party apparatus, the foundation is laid for the formation of conscious Party cadre. In this second stage, all distinctions between revolutionary intellectuals and advanced workers disappear. The revolutionary intellectuals begin to learn the concrete means to bring class consciousness to the workers, begin to master the different forms of struggle essential for a unified and disciplined movement, and gain the stability of fusion with the workers. The advanced workers become fully conscious of their tasks, have the means to fulfill them, and gain the stability of scientific understanding of the historical mission of the working class. Once the theoretical and organizational foundation for the Party has been built, once the foremost workers and foremost communists have joined for the common effort, once the conscious Party cadre have forged a real apparatus to lead the masses of workers, the Party becomes an accomplished fact. The Party is guided by its program, the product of scientific investigation and struggle for clarity on the conditions facing the working class. The Party defines the basic strategy of the proletarian movement, and the range of tactics it must use. All that is necessary for this third stage of party-building is the expansion of the Party cadres into a real workers' Party, the fleshing out of the Party through recruitment of new Party workers during the course of the workers' struggle.

It should be self-evident to anyone who has kept track of the development of our movement that we have barely entered the first stage of party-building. No tendency within our movement has proven that it has the wherewithall to become a leading center. In fact, the leading centers that have put themselves into the forefront have only proven themselves to be vanguards of opportunism, reformism and compromise of the movement. Many of the movement's active practical workers have not yet broken with petty bourgeois outlook, with narrowness, and one-sidedness. Many have not yet taken up, or have only partly taken up, the theoretical work essential to resolve the major questions before us. Many are content with catch-phrases and slogans, and haven't the least idea of how to carry these slogans into practice. Our movement is rife with opportunism and vacillation. Once we have understood this, once we have understood the depths of opportunist tendencies in all sections of the movement, it will be possible to root out those tendencies and forge a consistent and principled leading center to guide our work.

VI. Our Present Tasks

Given this state of affairs, what are the essential tasks for those who wish to organize a revolutionary workers' movement, who wish to overthrow the capitalist system and establish the invincible political power of the working class? It is necessary first of all to take up the mass of theoretical work that has been neglected in this country for more than 50 years, to study and analyse the wealth of experience of the world revolutionary movement, and to resolve the fundamental questions necessary for a sound and principled Party program. Without a thorough understanding of revolutionary theory it is impossible to know how and in what direction to move. Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.

Secondly we must wage a ruthless struggle against every attempt to revise the fundamental principles of the working class outlook, against opportunism and compromise in theory that threatens to divert the movement into opportunism and compromise in practice. The influx of petty-bourgeois outlook into the movement is the main source of ideological wavering, confusion and vacillation. Only a consistent struggle against these deviations will enable our movement to stand squarely on the side of the working class. The struggle against imperialism is inseparable from the struggle against opportunism. In Lenin's words: "Opportunism is our principal enemy. Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working-class movement is bourgeois socialism, not proletarian socialism. It has been shown in practice that working-class activists who follow the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeoisie themselves. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not remain in power."

Thirdly, we must begin to lay a real foundation of revolutionary practice and organization. Our practical work must not follow at the tail of the workers' movement, must not become an excuse to glorify the trade union and economic struggle, but must stand at its head, to lead the working class movement in a comprehensive class struggle. We will remain wretched amateurs until we learn to gear our practical work towards winning the advanced workers, until we learn to draw them into active political struggle, until we begin to lay the basis for systematic propaganda and agitation, until we find the means to safeguard our work, and make the most of every cadre's talents and capabilities.

Without these necessary steps it will be impossible to forge the discipline, unity of will and professional competence essential for the Party. Without such a Party there can be no independent workers' movement, no unity of the working class, and no decisive struggle against the imperialist system. With such a Party the working class will become an invincible force.

COMMUNIST WORKERS GROUP [MARXIST-LENINIST]

WORKERS LEAGUE OF STRUGGLE