

# AMERICAN MAOISM: A HUNDRED FLOWERS



**A United Front in the U.S.?  
PARTY BUILDING  
AND THE MASS LINE**

**ULTRA-"LEFTS" SAY NO**

**Paper Party or  
Class Vanguard?**

(M-L)

**to the BWC**

**Sham Party-Builders to  
Expel Majority**

(Marxist-Leninist)

(Marxist-Leninist)

**the COMMUNIST LEAGUE**

October League (Marxist-Leninist)

**RU Reply**

**Guardian**

**REPLY TO OCTOBER LEAGUE (M.L.)  
THE CALL**

# AT WAR

**by beth cady & joe fine**

International Socialists

The following is based on a forum given to the Detroit branch in December of 1973. It was composed of two parts--one on the emergence of the Maoist movement and their analysis of the national question and the second part was on the United Front against Imperialism and Maoist regroupment. This is the reason for their somewhat disjointed nature. While some of this is dated I have tried to update it in a postscript at the end which takes into account the latest developments in the Maoist milieu. May, 1974

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#### SEARCH FOR IDEOLOGY

When the New Left arose in the 60's it was convinced that it had transcended the dogmatic insistence on ideology for which it had condemned the old Left. Racism and war were obviously bad; if the movement could only point these evils out forcefully enough wrong would surely be righted. It became increasingly apparent however, that calling attention to injustice was insufficient, and that the Left needed a strategy based on powerful social forces.

The quest for the holy grail, the "agency of social change" followed. Students, black voters in the south, poor people, rural and urban, black and white, were organized. With each succeeding failure the Left drew certain lessons. Community organizing was necessarily limited by the horizons of the community, electoral organizing was easily coopted, students were capable of extremely militant actions but incapable of enforcing their demands on society and that the lumpen proletariat in the ghetto was incapable of stable organization. With each failure the Left became more radical, more convinced of the need for total systematic change, and more cynical as it despaired of any hope of ever defeating the system. In the late sixties, the bulk of the most radical and theoretical white New Lefters were in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The SDS leadership declared "the principal contradiction in the world today is between the oppressed nations and the oppressor nation. The defeat of the civil rights and early black power movement, the seeming hopelessness of overcoming white racism in the U.S., and a natural identification with non-white peoples throughout the world had already led the bulk of the black power leadership to the same conclusion. By 1969 virtually the entire New Left looked to the underdeveloped nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America as the revolutionary vanguard and to Mao's China as the guiding star of the third world.

And so a source for ideology had been found. Why was Maoism which looked to the third world seized upon in stead of Marxism which looked to the working class. It is first necessary to see that disclaiming ideology did not mean that the New Left had no view of society, it simply meant that lacking any alternative they were forced to operate within the framework of bourgeois ideology. They revolted against the contradictions between the prevalent values of peace and equality and the stark social realities.

But the combination of their middle class backgrounds and bourgeois ideology led them to accept the idea that ordinary people are incapable of ruling themselves. The political conservatism and quiescence of the working class in the 50's and 60's lent credence to their beliefs that American workers were hopelessly bought off and satisfied with their lot.

The classless character of third worldism was therefore appealing. In addition, after a decade of struggle and failure this was a perspective that did not depend upon the New Left's ability to carry it out and so could not be immediately tested.

The ferment in the underdeveloped nations (Vietnam, Cuba, African liberation movements and the cultural revolution in China) and the state power held by Mao gave Maoism an aura of success badly needed by a weak and defeated movement.

But a source for ideology was not ideology. SDS and the New Left splintered over political and strategical questions still left hanging in the air--insurrectionism, white skin privilege and black nationalism, etc.

Many leftists disappeared into the woodwork, while what remained mostly were Maoist or Maoist leaning collectives throughout the country. Thus the formation of hard Maoist groupings to provide ideology to this milieu was inevitable.

Besides the New Left looking for answers, we must add to our equation groups of people who had spent years in the Communist Party who had broken with the CP over one or another thing since 1956 and who wanted to rebuild the party as it was in the "good old" days under Stalin. Thus it was with the disoriented New Lefters providing the vitality and the older hardened Stalinist cadre providing the theory that explicit Stalinism was reborn in the U.S. Left, a plague which it would be noted has not been visited on the Left of any other advanced country in recent times. While there are Maoist groups in Italy and France they do not consider themselves in the tradition of Stalinism.

For the past two years these Stalinist-Maoist groups have grown rapidly, picking up many individual activists and small collectives. The Communist League (CL), the October League (OL), the Revolutionary Union (RU) are the largest and most cohesive of these groups. The Guardian newspaper is also important as the voice of Maoism in this country and the Black Workers Congress (BWC) is of interest as a black Maoist group.

The Revolutionary Union had its origins in a group of Berkeley New Lefters who, inside the California Peace and Freedom Party in 1968, came together with ex-members of the Communist Party who were part of the same 1962 expulsion out of which the Progressive Labor Party was formed. These people had broken from the Progressive Labor movement in the mid-60's because of PL's ultra-leftism. Their picture of Stalin in the front of Red Papers #1 was perhaps the first clarion call from within the new Left for the revival of Stalinism.

Into the RU followed a number of old CP trade unionists who as time passed won this New Left group to the same suck up to the left trade union bureaucracy method of functioning that they had learned in the CP.

When the RU showed up in the SDS as it was splitting in 1969 they immediately won hegemony over a whole wing of the Revolutionary Youth Movement majority in SDS (RYM II). But by the fall of '69, at a Thanksgiving Day conference, RYM II split three ways on the question of whether blacks were a nation. The three resultant groups were: Avakians RU, a group led by Mike Klonsky, former head of SDS, and a group led by Lynn Wells, a leader of the Southern Student Organi-

zing Committee. The Lynn Wells group, which stood for self-determination for the black belt nation in the south, called itself the Georgia Communist League. In 1972 they merged with Klonsky's October League, keeping the name OL.

The RU is substantially the larger of the two, but the October League is growing rapidly. Although the RU did not originally accept blacks as members of their organization (believing that it was incorrect for them to be organizing blacks--blacks should be in their own organizations and there should be working alliances) that policy has changed and both R.U. and the OL have some significant black membership.

#### BLACK MAOIST GROUPS

The Communist League and the Black Workers Congress have been more influential among blacks. The Communist League which claims at present 200 members, traces its roots back to the split in the Communist Party in 1956. As Krushchev revealed the extent of Stalin's butchery and Russia denounced Stalin a whole world view fell apart for many. Yet there were those who clung tenaciously to its past and the heritage of Stalin and in the face of all this, they announced the revelations as "bourgeois lies". When these people were expelled from the CP they formed the Provisional Organizing Committee for a Reconstituted Communist Party-Marxist Leninist (POC). This was based on a group of Puerto Rican workers in New York and Chicago and a group of black workers in L.A. That group split and eventually the black workers based group led by a longshoreman named Nelson Perry formed the California Communist League.

The big step towards a national organization for the CCL was the affiliation of one of the factions of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers around the beginning of 1972. The League of Revolutionary Black Workers had grown to a real mass movement of young blacks in Detroit during 1968 but by the end of 1969 their mass base had withered away. The remains of the League had struggled to learn the lessons of the League's growth and defeat.

In 1970, the League, which was by then only a small sect, split. John Watson, Ken Cockrel and Mike Hamlin left to form the Black Workers Congress with James Forman of SNCC. They had been the original publishers of InnerCity Voice and had their base on the League's membership outside of the plant. They had a sizeable number of young students around them from Wayne State University.

In many ways the BWC was an attempt to reproduce the LRBW, without the heavy emphasis on plant work. They pushed themselves into 20 or more cities throughout the country. The BWC was composed of many distinct elements. There were some people who joined from the Black Panther Party, United Black Brothers of Newark, the United Front of Cairo and the Third World Women's Alliance.

Early in its existence the BWC ran into several problems. The ideological and political basis of the organization was at best unclear and there was a great deal of internal discussion. There were great differences on the black question, the white left and generally Maoism. Basically the BWC never decided whether it was to be a cadre organization or a mass organization and as a result

it tried to be both at the same time. There were several major fights within the BWC over which direction the organization would follow and each of these fights led to various people breaking with the BWC, including Watson, Cockrel and Forman.

The workers in what was left of the League tended to follow the leadership of Chuck Wooten and General Baker, both founding members of DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement). Their grouping went into a period of intensive study and finally emerged by joining the California Communist League which became the Communist League.

The key to the lessons that the CL grouping drew from their experiences in DRUM led them to the CL was the idea that the League's failing had been to engage in mass struggle before a revolutionary party built around soled cadre had been formed. The CL, which was based on a distortion of Lenin's What is to Be Done provided the theoretical justification for their view.

Thus in Proletariat, CL's theoretical journal, the idea that a revolutionary Party will take its form out of a mass movement is derided as follows: "as this spontaneous revisionist process starts to snowball and the snowball gets big enough then and then can we build a Communist Party." They go on to say "without a communist party the working class can not even take a step forward". To try and build mass struggles is "facist since it hurls the theoryless and leaderless proletariat into more Watts, Atticas and Detroit. " For the CL the primary task for this period is party building.

The outcome of their taking this position seriously was seen at Detroit's Jefferson plant last year (February, 1973), when CL members supported a back-to-work movement led by UAW officials against rank and file who had wildcatted in defense of a worker fired for fighting speed-up in the plant.

The IS believes that the revolutionary party will be forged out of the struggles of the working class to defend and advance its position in society. This view comes from a very different conception of the revolutionary party than any of the Stalinist groups. The party the IS seeks to build is the organization of the rank and file leadership of the working class controlled by that class which seeks to lead the whole working class to state power.

Thus the party we seek to build can only be built out of the struggles of workers and must stand for workers councils, trade unions before and after the revolution, and full freedom of discussion within the party, including the right to organize minority opinions. The CL says on the other hand, that the party is incompatible with the existence of factions. For the CL the party is the central organization which aids and directs the entire struggle of the working class and its organizations, 2.) the party is the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat and 3.) the party is the embodiment of unity of will and therefore is incompatible with the existence of factions.

### THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The cornerstone of CL theory is the national question. For CL the central slogan which puts forward the Communist answer to the oppression of blacks in this country is "Independence for the Negro Nation", "Equal Rights for the Negro National Minority".

This is based on their analysis in the document "Negro National Colonial Question". For CL the black belt in the deep south (so called because of the dark color of the soil) is a national territory based on the freed slaves. The oppression of Afro-Americans in this country is not fundamentally racial, but rather is national chauvinism linked to the suppression of the Negro colony. The position of blacks both in the north and the south is tied to the position of blacks in the black belt. From this it follows that anyone, even a revolutionary struggling to eradicate racism, who refuses to raise the demand, "Independence for the Negro Nation", is a national chauvinist and in their final analysis is implicated in the oppression of black people as the most flagrant racist.

CL's position is the historic position of the CPUSA. The CPUSA was reluctantly pressured into such a position by the Stalin Comintern during the "radicalism" of the Third Period, which was during the late 20's and early 30's. When Stalin changed the line and ordered the CPUSA to support Roosevelt in 1936 he also ordered the dropping of the black belt nation theory. When the CP took its turn to the left in 1949, Foster was put back in the leadership in place of Browder,, and the black belt nation theory, associated with Foster, was reinstated.

There are many problems with CL's analysis of the position of blacks in American society. While blacks are in fact concentrated in the black belt (primarily Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina) up until 1916, WWI saw the beginning of a massive exodus from the black belt to northern cities as jobs were increasingly open for blacks. Thus the percentages of blacks in the black belt states dropped as follows:

	1860	1970
Georgia	44	25
Alabama	45	26
Mississippi	55	36
Louisiana	44	30
S. Carolina	58	30

At this time in the United States do not constitute a majority of the population of the Negro Nation (black belt.) Thus what CL refers to as the Anglo-American minority of the Negro nation is in fact a majority in 1974.

Even more important is that the demand "Independence for the Negro Nation" etc. places the central role in the black liberation struggles on the peasantry-- the anchor of the nation according to CL. By 1969 the total black farm population was less than one million, only 4.1 per cent of the total black population. The black population today is overwhelmingly working class, and located in large urban centers both in the north and the south. Any strategy for black liberation

which does not take this into account cannot provide any leadership for the black liberation struggle.

q Out of all the Maoist groups to date the RU has provided the most complex and sophisticated analysis of the black liberation struggle in the U.S. Red Papers # 5 is solely concerned with their analysis of the national question. The RU correctly makes many criticisms of the CL document and approach particularly showing that the base of the black population is in the northern cities rather than based on the rural south. The RU begins its analysis of blacks in the US with an analysis of slavery as a feudal system counterposing itself to CL's analysis which viewed slavery only as a form of extreme capitalist exploitation. For the CL slaves were only super-exploited proletarians. The RU goes on to state that after reconstruction blacks were forged into a semi-colonized nation and were held in semi-feudal bondage in the plantation areas of the south. Through the years the historical and material base of this nation has been transformed but it has not been eliminated. There is still enough internal cohesion within the black community, according to the RU, to form a nation although it is dispersed geographically.

Understanding that in order to form a nation there has to be the formation of a bourgeoisie capable of laying the base for nationhood, the RU does not see such a bourgeoisie existing in complete form today. It is their attempt to conjure up such a bourgeoisie that leads them into confusion.

The RU never discusses adequately what the economic basis for this new nation would be. They see the activities of ghetto merchants and professionals within the community as the basis for a separate economy. This merchant capital could be gathered up and reinvested once the question of a territory functioning as a national market had been solved. For the RU this merchant capital would at some point be magically transformed into industrial capital and would provide the economic basis for a new nation.

The RU calls for the right of the black nation for self-determination, although they believe that the struggle will never come to that end. They uphold the right as a genuine democratic right. They have engaged in fighting for the national rights of black people and at various times have defended the democratic rights of groups such as the Muslims and the Republic of New Africa.

The Black Workers Congress provides a somewhat similar analysis of the national question although there are some significant differences. They agree with the RU in saying that the basis of nationhood still exists. Not only are blacks not assimilated into American society and do not enjoy the basic democratic rights but they do have a common economic life which according to the BWC is stronger than it has ever been in the past. Their analysis of the black bourgeoisie is somewhat more sophisticated than the RU's. They understand the distorted historical growth the black bourgeoisie has had in this country and how at times the black bourgeoisie has wanted to fight the interests of the main capitalists but they also understand that overall the black bourgeoisie has been reformist and accommodationist. They characterize the role of the black bourgeoisie as that of a comprador class. It is here that their analysis differs sharply with that of the RU's. The RU has a much friendlier attitude of the national bourgeoisie of the black community (more on their analysis of the national bour-

geoisie in the part on the United Front Against Imperialism.) The BWC has constantly raised and emphasized the reactionary nature of the national bourgeoisie.

In recent months (March and April) there has been a running debate between the RU, the BWC and the OL, on the national question. The debate as it has taken form put to important differences in each group's analysis of the national question in the US. The two key questions are the role of the national bourgeoisie, and an analysis of nationalism and its dynamic. While the RU and the BWC share a similar analysis of the new nation, the OL firmly believes in self-determination for the black belt nation. Unfortunately, they have not issued a document with their analysis of the national question, although they have participated in the debate in the Guardian. The OL has criticized both the RU and the BWC for being too hard on the national bourgeoisie. In fact, at one point Carl Davidson, (an echo of the OL on the Guardian staff) accused both the RU and the BWC for being Trotskyites, since they were both too critical of the role of the national bourgeoisie and did not understand its progressive nature.

#### THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST IMPERIALISM

When we turn to the Revolutionary Union (RU) we have to look at the strategy of the United Front Against Imperialism. It is the united front that the RU proscribes as the strategy for international revolution. To understand this we must first examine what the united front meant in China for it is the experience of China on which the RU models itself.

It was the disastrous policy of the Comintern under the direction of Stalin in which the CP subordinated itself to the interests of the bourgeoisie. This was the same policy that led to the defeats suffered by the working class in France and Spain in the thirties. In China it took the particular form of the "bloc of four classes", which in effect meant the subordination of the interests of the working class to those of the national bourgeoisie (KMT--Kuomintang). This was the very policy that led to the slaughter of thousands of workers and peasants in 1927.

After 1927 the Chinese Communist Party retrenched itself in the countryside and built its base in the peasantry. While the party consolidated itself and grew steadily it was divorced from the working class. In the struggle for the eviction of the imperialists from China the Communist Party did not allow for any real social transformation from below. The Chinese Communist Party controlled class conflict and in its actions led the base for the development of a new ruling class--the Chinese Communist Party.

The Party had opposed demands for radical land reform since Mao felt it might alienate the landlords and rich peasants who were part of the bloc of four classes. Promises were made to the capitalists of China that it would still be safe to make profits in China. Mao promised that the "task of the new democratic system is to promote development of a private capitalist economy that benefits instead of controlling people's livelihood and to protect all honestly acquired property."

Workers were told by the party to refrain from seizing factories and not to raise the demand of workers control. The party suppressed the formation of soviets.



In this period the party had been criticized internally for ignoring the trade union movement, and for the general lack of control of the party by the proletariat. Yet Mao's response was that it was a proletarian party because it represented the needs of the proletariat and the peasantry. This was very easy for Mao to say because for him the dictatorship of the proletariat and the general control of the party by the proletariat were two separate, distinct and unrelated ideas. For Mao it was possible to have the "dictatorship of the proletariat" despite the fact that the proletariat was not the base of the party. The Chinese Communist Party had never attempted to organize the working class independently so that it could fulfill its historic mission--the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class.

What existed in China was not a movement that was training the working class to attain power but a movement to evict the imperialists in which the Communist Party was only one part of a popular front that called for support of the government of Chiang-Kai-shek. This policy meant that the Communist Party of China was not going to lead the workers toward the path of revolution but rather to class collaboration.

It was this strategy thirty years later under the direction of The Chinese Communist Party that led to the slaughter of one half million oppositionists, including most of the Maoist Indonesian Communist Party in 1965.

This is the RU's strategy and theory for revolution in the third world and for the United States. Their support for the building of a "united front against imperialism" in Chile eventually led them to the right of the Communist Party of Chile. In an article in Revolution, (the official newspaper of the RU) they analyzed the coup by stating that a socialist revolution was not on the agenda. What was required, according to the RU, was a democratic revolution. They went on to say that what Chile needed was,

"A democratic revolution that would be aimed primarily at the imperialists, big bourgeoisie and landlords. It would include the nationalization of all the big business and capital of the imperialists and other domestic allies and distribution among the peasants of all the big landlord holdings."

(October, Revolution)

At the time their line was to win over the national bourgeoisie and then as in China proceed with a democratic revolution.

When they thought about it a little more they added in the November 1973 issue of Revolution:

- \* "The Allende government had placed the national bourgeoisie in an impossible position. The laws passed by the government controlling their profit making had pushed them into a position where they came into conflict with the masses and felt threatened by the government. The nationalization of the mines had only made this sharper. The Allende government had failed to bring that national bourgeoisie into an alliance under working class leadership. The Communist Party had made the mistake of cutting off the workers from their

potential allies and did not lead the working class to their necessary allies--the national bourgeoisie."

When the workers in Chile seized the factories and were prepared to take the offensive and the question of which class would rule, the RU has made its position very clear. The RU has clearly shown us what it stands for--support to the middle class and the capitalists. The RU has exposed itself as the counter-revolutionary union.

As good Maoists, the RU is forced to defend Chinese foreign policy. For example, contained in an RU pamphlet on Chinese foreign policy is a discussion of the situation in Ceylon where there was an uprising against the Bandaranaike government. China had continued to give aid to help suppress the rebellion on the grounds that had the rebellion succeeded it would have opened the way for the right wing to return to power. The RU writes:

"Ceylon is a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country. The correct strategy for such a country is protracted people's war, to surround the countryside; not urban rebellions that can't succeed and can only aid counter-revolution."

In attempting to justify China's foreign policy the RU is forced to support the suppression of a rebellion of workers and students.

And what does the RU have to say about the United States? In 1969 the RU printed Red Papers # 1 which included the initial explanation of the United Front Against Imperialism. This was later expanded and refined in Red Papers # 2 and is still the core of their politics.

"Our united front strategy in the United States is a united front against the monopoly capitalist class but

- 1) The proletariat cannot either win or hold power without basic allies, secondary weaker allies and neutralized elements.
- 2) The Proletariat can not be the leader of the united front nor take power tomorrow, unless its white section is aroused to political consciousness and united with more advanced black proletariat in common struggle and unless the communist party is built from the united proletariat. This united front against monopoly capitalism will remain because some non-proletarian classes will support the proletariat's drive for power. The United Front has to be aimed at by creating black and white unity and by bringing political, anti-imperialist consciousness to the workers."

The RU sees this united front as the strategy for revolution in the United States. It supports the belief that the petty bourgeoisie can be brought into a united front and that the working class cannot come to power without support from other class interests. Certainly this is true but nowhere in the conception of the united front do they talk about who is to be the leadership of the united front. According to the RU the united front will be under the leadership and direction of the party rather than under the leadership of the working class. As in China this policy meant class collaboration and the subordination of the interests of the working class to that of other classes, so it will be in the U.S.

The RU says that the proletariat has certain allies. Who are these allies? "Workers whose function is to enable the capitalist class to realize the profit from the surplus value created by the labor of the proletariat, whose wages are derived from the labor of the proletariat--waitresses, sales people, small farmers, small shopkeepers, teachers, lower level civil service employees, many social workers and the remaining proletariat can be won over as allies as can a number of intellectuals. Petty bourgeois housewives who through the struggle for women's liberation realize their interests lie on the side of the proletariat can be won over as allies, often more easily than their husbands" is the answer given by the RU. This is quite a mixed bag.

In the united front there are also secondary anti-imperialist allies who can be won over from the petty bourgeoisie. This includes independent professionals, doctors and lawyers in large firms, small scale capitalists and small contractors. In other words, the allies of the proletariat and thus the composition of the united front includes everyone except the monopoly capitalists themselves. As in Chile the allies of the proletariat included everyone except the interests of foreign capital, so the same holds true for the United States.

Here we can see how far the RU has come from the conception of the united front put forth by Lenin, which was to be a united front of working class organizations whose main slogan was class against class. It was not, as Stalin and Mao later confused it, a popular front with the bourgeoisie and a tactic of class collaboration as the RU makes it out to be.

Yet the RU does not choose its allies on the basis of class. It does so on political consciousness or on the ability to accept the minimum anti-imperialist program. Those members of the working class who can not be won over to anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-imperialist politics are considered the enemy. Since political ideas are primary, and class struggle secondary, then it follows that it is correct to unite the progressive elements from all classes above the question of organizing the class into a conscious revolutionary force capable of seizing power.

To build the united front in this country, it is necessary to unite the five spearheads of struggle together. These are:

1. National liberation of black and Mexican-American people and support for the democratic demands of all oppressed minorities.
2. Against imperialist aggression
3. Against fascism, the open terroristic dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.
4. Against the oppression and exploitation of women under imperialism.
5. Unite the proletariat to resist the attack on living standards by the monopoly capitalists.

In all of this the working class is only one element of a broad reform program that sounds similar to that put forward by the CPUSA or the new left.

To get a sense of what the politics of the RU mean concretely it is necessary to examine their work. It is in the labor movement that the RU's work is most developed. The RU has always understood the necessity of working in the unions and has concentrated their efforts there. In trying to build the united

front against imperialism, it has often put itself in the position of supporting and defending various left bureaucrats.

The RU has been very active in attempting to build a caucus at the General Motors Fremont plant in California. In the past they have helped to build the Brotherhood Caucus and actively supported it when it ran for office last spring. The RU is well known as the left wing of this caucus which has been overwhelmingly elected to control of the local. This seems to be along their general line of supporting out-of-office left bureaucrats. Yet the Brotherhood Caucus did not even wage any opposition to the latest GM contract (which was a clear sell-out), at the national GM council meeting in December. A true reformist caucus would have done that much.

And what is the line of the RU on the democratic rights of workers to read what they please? We understand that the RU acted as a goon squad at the same plant earlier this year when they beat up several people from other left newspapers which had been critical of the Brotherhood Caucus.

The RU has been very active in the United Farmworkers and has defended Chavez uncritically. They have defended every twist and turn in his policy and tactics and had even supported his turn to pacifism and civil disobedience.

In many places the RU has enforced the Chavez line banning newspapers critical of the union at various UFW functions. In the Seattle grape boycott the RU introduced a motion that literature would not be allowed to be given to picketers on the boycott line.

In general the RU has attempted to build intermediate organizations--organizations that put forth the RU line but that are broader and include many non-RU-ers. In many places they have done this through building various working class oriented newspapers. Peoples Voice, Bay Area Workers Movin On Up and For the People are some of these papers. These papers usually carry articles on the atrocities of the factories and the hospitals in the area. While there is significant coverage of various opposition movements in several unions there is no idea of how to build a rank and file movement in the trade unions and how to connect the various struggles. In many ways this is a cover for their strategy of support for left bureaucrats. They try to win over the local progressive bureaucrats to their united front rather than class struggle unionism. The idea of building a broad rank and file movement that puts forward the idea of building ~~the~~ class struggle unions that prepare the working class for power is totally foreign to them.

Nowhere in the RU's discussion of the United Front is there any idea of how this united front is going to shift from an anti-monopoly coalition to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. The RU even admits that it has no idea of how this is going to happen:

"No one can predict exactly when or how the dictatorship of the proletariat will come to the fore in the mass movement but we can say that it will develop dialectically through the struggles led by the proletariat around the united front line and program."

This certainly sounds like a two stage theory of change. First build the united front, which means opposition to foreign domination, or in this country to the monopoly capitalists, and then at another time in the future the dictatorship of the proletariat will emerge magically.

Denying that this is a two stage theory they reply with, "One strategy, one stage". The RU admits it has a long way to go to even build the united front. It must, "1. Develop the united front, 2. Foster revolutionary working class unity 3. Build a communist party based on Marxism-Leninism- Mao Thought."

In the Red Papers there is little clue to how this party will be built or what its relationship to the mass struggle s will be. In attacking this problem they write,

"While the building of a Communist Party at the earliest time is key to the building of a united front, work to begin building the united front should not wait for the formation of a Communist Party; in fact, building the united front is dialectically related to building a real vanguard party of the proletariat."

While this might sound somewhat confusing the RU has now tried to clear up this confusion by writing,

"The party is built and forged from the mass struggle. Out of the three tasks ahead the principal one is building the unity of the class. Unless we can get the proletarian forces together, unless we build mass struggles in the workers movement, we can not build a party. The RU is not the party or even the core of a party.

The RU wants to help the working class to rise in struggle to become part of the united front and then subordinate themselves to the bourgeoisie. For the RU the key task is building the unity of the class.

Much of the discussion on the Maoist left has been concerned with the relationship of the party to the united front. While the position of the RU is relatively clear and has been consistent, that of the October League (OL) has constantly changed.

Three years ago the Georgia Communist League which merged with the October League to become the October League (ML), wrote a position paper entitled, "The Proletarian Party, Invincible Weapon of the Working Class." In this they wrote:

"Building a party is not a task for another time but the immediate task for those of us who recognize the degeneracy of the CPUSA and at the same time understand the necessity to have a party which can lead the working class.

"At a time when the proletarian revolution is on the agenda we feel the organization of the party is lead the working class in the struggle is the principal task to be done, not the organization of a united front group.

"The main aspect of our practice should be towards establishing links with the most advanced sectors of the working class. These advanced proletarians are open to grasping Marxism-Leninism and becoming Communist Vanguard fighters. Our objective is to learn from them about communism, the development of the revolution and the need for a party.

"This essential aspect must be carried out if a new party is to be built on sound proletarian foundations.

"The secondary aspect of practical activity is the task of communists to lead the masses in struggle and to educate the masses of workers. This can not be our main work and when we do engage in it can not be allowed to be our main focus because it leads to forgetting the main task of party building.

So for a while the OL counterposed itself to the RU, on the question of the united front. But in the last year the OL has moved closer to the united front position of the RU. This is typified by the change in their newspaper the Call's masthead from "Workers of the World Unite" to "People of the World Unite".

By November 1972 the OL was apologising for its earlier position. They wrote, "We wanted to build a party and we thought we were building a party but we saw party building in isolation from mass struggles and in isolation from the united front. You can't build a party without taking part in the United Front Against Imperialism". They then go on to say, "The united front is based on the objective conditions in the world today. Its purpose is to unite all who can be united to oppose imperialism. . ." (p. 10, Party Building in the US--OL).

By spring 1973 there is little difference in the two groups' positions. In contrast to the RU's United Front, the OL's will be built by the party. According to Carl Davidson, the OL's echo on the Guardian, there are three magic weapons of the people; the party, the army, and the United front of all revolutionary classes and groups under the leadership of the party. For Carl Davidson the party is the most magic and so the task for all Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries is to practice magic and conjure up the party.

The OL's support for the united front is a retreat from their earlier position. This retreat has led them to attack the CL for their emphasis on party building. In the December issue of The Call the editorial reads:

"Within the ranks of the anti-revisionist forces there are "left opportunists" who are trying to provide a cover for the revisionists while in essence accomplishing the same thing. From the "left" they attack Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung thought and all that it stands for. At a time when the communist movement has begun to deepen its ties among the masses while forging unity within its own ranks, these super revolutionaries are doing everything possible to isolate the movement and spread disunity and splits.

These forces are exemplified by the Communist League and their recently issued "Call for a Congress". In its call, CL presents a neat formula for party building--call a congress and proclaim yourself the party. It is a formula that in fact exposes CL's isolation and petty bourgeois class character. . . .

Of primary importance is their rejection of the anti-imperialist united front, as the general line of the communist movement, both internationally and here in the U.S."

This attack on CL is really a housecleaning for the October League since it is the position that they held a year earlier.

For all their posturing, the similarities between the two groups are many. For all their posturing, the practical work of the two groups is quite similar. In some senses the OL is even more conservative than the RU.

While the work of the OL is not as developed as that of the RU and consequently not as well known, it is possible to make some observations. The OL is very strong in the South since many of the people involved had been active in SCEF and as a result the OL has many contacts in the South. The most famous work of the OL was that of the Mead strike which occurred in 1972 in Atlanta. Throughout the strike (a wildcat at a packing warehouse), the OL was in the forefront and was actively known as the leadership. During the strike OL tried to build a united front with Hosea Williams of the SCLC and the two groups worked very closely for the duration of the strike. A year and a half later, Sherman Miller, a leading spokesman for the OL, criticized the work of SCLC and the decision of the OL to work in a united front with him. What had happened was that Williams had been able to channel much of the discontent of the workers away from the strike into other ends. Yet during the strike itself they never tried to build any kind of opposition group or caucus that could sustain itself afterwards.

The Call also criticized the RU last year for giving Miller only critical support in UMW elections. They endorsed him without any criticism and placed no demands on him.

Although there is lots of posturing between the two groups because they are competing for membership, they have many similarities. There is one question on which they have several disagreements--that is the question of women.

They both share a determination to win the complete emancipation of women, the belief that Marxism Leninism provides a scientific understanding of the oppression of women, and the conviction that socialism can bring about women's liberation. They both agree that the women's movement will be part of the united front against imperialism. The differences, although not clear, stem from the question of which groups will be part of the united front. There have been several debates over how far the united front extends and which groups will be involved in the united front. The RU opposes working with any petty bourgeois groups, while the OL would support working with bourgeois feminists like NOW.

The two groups share a similar analysis of the nuclear family. For them the nuclear family is the fighting force for socialism. This is the same line that the Communist Party holds on the nuclear family. For the RU and the OL, as well as for the CP, there is nothing inherently oppressive about the nuclear family--it is only under capitalism that it is an oppressive institution.

They also share similar positions on gay liberation and homosexuality. They again echo the line that Stalin held on homosexuality. For them it is the sign of a sick and decadent society rather than a means of sexual expression.

Whatever differences exist between the RU and the OL are only minor when we examine their similarities. They both stand for the united front--a policy that has meant the subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. We have

Many examples to learn from. China, Indonesia, Chile are among them. Both groups stand for the substitution of other classes for the proletariat. Remember what the RU had to say about Ceylon.

The united front which begins in the subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie seeks to culminate in the subordination of all classes to the elite of the party as a new ruling class.

#### MAOIST REGROUPMENT--OR WHO IS THE REAL PARTY BUILDER?

Since 1970 there has been a general increase in Maoist groups and as a result there have been several attempts to pull them together. One such attempt which occurred in the fall of 1971 included the BWC, CL, OL, the Georgia Communist League and some independents. A short-lived journal, Proletarian Cause, emerged from this venture. It soon fell apart, publishing only a couple of issues.

From time to time various Maoist groups have participated in joint projects. Last year several of these groups came together for a series of anti-imperialist demonstrations under the umbrella of the "November 4th Coalition."

At this point the main force behind a major regroupment has been the Guardian newspaper. The Guardian has changed considerably in the past few years. In the late 60's it reflected the mass movement and its general eclecticism. coverage included all the main events on the Left and was generally non-sectarian, with the exception of attacks against the Progressive Labor Party. In 1969 several people split off from the Guardian to form the Liberated Guardian, which had a Weatherman orientation.

As the student movement came to an end and a period of retrenchment began the Guardian began to shed its non-sectarian outlook and orient more to Maoism. Beginning with extensive criticism of the Soviet Union in early 1971, (which meant a large loss in circulation for them since many of their strong supporters had been in the CP), by early 1972 they were defending many aspects of Chinese foreign policy. The Guardian finds itself in much the same position that the CP newspapers found themselves in the thirties when they were forced to defend every twist and turn in Comintern policy.

In the last three years the Guardian has been forced to defend:

1. China's aid to the Pakistan government
2. China's help in crushing the rebellion of students and peasants in Ceylon against the Bandaranaike government in 1971. China defended her actions by stating that to not crush the rebellion would bring the right wing into power.
3. Mao's support to Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, who has recently suppressed a rebellion in Eritrea.
4. Mao's support of the government of the Sudan while the government was massacring Communist party leaders in 1971.
5. China's position on a strong NATO
6. China's position on diplomatic relations with Chile after the coup.
7. Every aspect of U.S.-China relations.



As the Guardian plays the role of the voice of hard-core Maoism in the United States it has tried to create an anti-Trotsky hysteria. To accomplish this, the Guardian published a series last spring by Carl Davidson which "discussed" Trotsky. Included in this series were Davidson's misreadings of Trotsky on China, the National Question, and the Popular Front. In running Davidson's hatchet job on Trotsky, the Guardian was creating the closed atmosphere which has always characterized the Stalinist Left. For many Guardian readers this was their first exposure to Trotsky. By creating this anti-Trotsky hysteria they can toughen up and harden their own cadre. No Maoist ideology is possible without physical attacks and slander of Trotskyists.

In early 1973 the Guardian brought together several groups to begin unity discussion. Out of this came a decision to sponsor six forums that spring. These groups formed a united front themselves on the following points :

1. joint support for the forums
2. joint support for the independence of the Guardian
3. no attacks on each other in their respective presses
4. for respect of the neutrality of the third world groups

The forums included in the series were: Roads to Building the Workers Movement, Building the New Communist Party, the National Question, and the Woman Question. At various points the following groups were involved: OL, RU, BWC, Puerto Rican Socialist Party, Puerto Rican Workers Organization, and some independent collectives, including Harpers Ferry in New York.

Through these forums and ensuing discussions these groups have found out that they do not have as much in common as they thought they did. At the present time there is little joint activity and the RU and the OL are often at one another's throats. The Guardian itself is split. Some people side with the RU, and others with OL. Several people have resigned over what has been termed a cult of Maoism on the paper. At last contact the RU-ers were kicked off the paper.

The RU and the OL each seem headed their own way. They have severe differences on the national question. October League supports a black belt nation while the RU calls for support of a new proletarian nation. They have differences over who the national bourgeoisie is in the United States. They have differences on the Equal Rights Amendment. The OL supports it on the basis that it was a concession from the ruling class won by the women's movement, while the RU opposed it since it would wipe out existing protective legislation.

At this point the October League is expanding into a national organization, although it is still strongest in the south. Recently they held a conference in New York City to discuss trade union work which attracted 250 people. A west coast conference on imperialism similarly attracted a large group. The OL will probably experience a steady growth. For many people it will be seen as the new organization, and so far it has managed to attract many of the remnants of the New Left.

The RU is moving in a more and more sectarian direction. Evolution, the newspaper of the RU, is nothing more than a sectarian rag. While they still have many people in the shops, they seem to be moving away from this orientation and putting more emphasis on their work in the UFW boycott and the Farah

strike. They have also been involved in building the Attiwa Brigade--an anti-imperialist student organization.

Outside of the RU-OL nexus there is another set of groups which are attempting their own regroupment. The Communist League, Communist Party of Canada (ML), Communist Party of Quebec (ML) and the American Communist Workers Movement (ML) have all been flirting with one another.<sup>m</sup> In Detroit the Communist League has been working with a group called the Motor City Labor League and will probably manage to recruit some people from there.

While Maoism as a force is experiencing a steady growth, there does not seem to be a major regroupment in the near future. The RU, which is the biggest, represents probably not more than a thousand people. This is certainly not a mass party. The growth of Maoism still has an effect on the Left in general, and many of the independent collectives have particularly felt the effects of it. Many collectives have been forced to confront the questions that the debates within the Maoist Left have brought to the surface--party and class, analysis of China and the Soviet Union. While the development of these independent groups is a separate discussion, we should look at the impact of this regroupment. For example there has been a recent development in Sojourner Truth, a collective in Chicago in which several people called for the building of a Maoist party in the United States now. While this is the first such development, this will not be an isolated phenomenon, but something that many of these groups will find themselves confronted with.

#### UPDATE, JUNE 1974

The year 1974 is an important one for the various Maoist groups in the U.S. It is in 1974 that the numerous groups will shift around and when the dust finally settles there will be at least two major groupings--one around the CL nexus and another around the politics of the united front.

What has developed over the past six months has been a consolidation of the CL nexus and this has produced a general panic and crisis among the remaining groups--OL, BWC, and the RU.

To get a sense of the dynamic created, it is important to examine the shifting positions of the various groups. To begin with, the CL has been developing rapidly and has now taken an external turn.

The CL has aggressively gone after the Motor City Labor League (the old New Left white grouping that had been the support group for the League and then the BWC.) Beginning last fall, following the summer upsurge in auto, the CL and the MCLL have engaged in serious political study. By December the MCLL had internalized most of the CL's rhetoric and analysis and was constantly stressing the need to build a multi-national communist party. As April rolled around, the MCLL split, most of its ranks related to the party-building faction, and a smaller number loosely party-builders.

This spring the MCLL issued a large document, "The Political Line of the MCLL". This document is the history of the group and their position on party-building. "The political line of the MCLL" has received national distribution.

While MCLL is a local group, it does represent the transition of a small group of New Lefters with some sort of working class orientation to hard-core Stalinism, and is thus important.

Quoting extensively from Stalin's description of the party, they firmly align themselves with the CL nexus. Included in their documents is a critique of the RU's and the OL's attitude toward party-building. For the MCLL, "factional disputes and the differentiation between shades of opinion is the most important work to be done." The MCLL adds, "we must not now engage in ora attempt to extend the mass movement when we have yet to consolidate ourselves ideologically." So the CL and the MCLL are consolidating themselves for their upcoming Congress to be held in September. It is at this congress that they hope to declare the new communist party (ML).

Their strategy for building the party is to bring the science of Marxism-Leninism to the advanced workers in the plants. To accomplish this they will set up study circles in the plants, as CL claims to already have done, in some plants. From there they will attempt to recruit these people to the continuations committee (the CL's pre-party formation.)

To build these study groups the CL has attempted to build a presence for itself in the plants of Detroit. The CL has tried to recreate the RUM's (revolutionary union movements) that existed in Detroit in the late '60's. JARUM, (Jefferson Avenue Revolutionary Union Movement), which emerged in January, now has two sister publications, DTRUM (Dodge Truck) and MERUM (Mound Engine).

The publications differ somewhat. At Jefferson it was on one occasion friendly to our comrades' work in the local, but generally has been very hostile to us. During the delegate elections they viciously attacked the Dump Woodcock Slate without ever mentioning a word about the other slates which were composed entirely of bureaucrats. The final straw came when JARUM issued a leaflet criticizing The Dump Woodcock Slate's position of retiree voting, which had called for an end to retirees voting for in-plant officers. JARUM claimed that the Dump Woodcock slate was trying to deprive retirees of their democratic rights.

At Dodge Truck (DTRUM), CL ran a candidate for delegate to the Convention. The campaign was run on one major issue--elimination of the clause in the UAW constitution that prohibits communists, fascists and Nazis from holding office in the union. The candidate received only 30 votes.

And at Mound Road Engine (MERUM), the CL has taken a different tack. Leaflets there have been particularly friendly to the United Coalition (a broad reform caucus) and has singled it out as a progressive force. In fact, MERUM praised it for its ability to fight some of the conditions in the plant.

Prior to the UAW Convention, the CL published and distributed a broadside to most of the plants in the Detroit area. Included in it were most of the resolutions that the CL wished to submit to the constitutional convention. Yet nowhere in the four pages was there any notion of how these resolutions were to be implemented or how the CL viewed building opposition to the policies of Woodcock. The CL has shied away from building any kind of group within the UAW. In fact, last summer they blocked all attempts to build any kind of organization to respond to the repression following the summer upsurge.

Over the past year the CL has been in the forefront of the anti-Trotsky crusade in Detroit. While such a campaign has existed nationally, its form in Detroit has been particularly virulent. CL's large, black factory-based cadre provides them with a great deal more legitimacy on the Left. The CL has excluded the IS from several coalitions in the city. The group for exclusion? "Trotskyite wreckers"! In reality, it has been the CL that has wrecked several attempts to pull the Left together around various programs.

Yet all is not rosy for the CL and their buddies. The national continuations committee to form a new Marxist-Leninist Communist Party, of which CL is part, has just expelled one part of the local Detroit Continuations committee.

Little is known of the expulsion other than that those purged were a collective and a number of individuals who had joined last summer. They supposedly were workers and members of national minorities.

In a statement written by the expelled group (Democratic majority of the Detroit Continuations Committee) they explain that they were expelled for disagreeing with the high-handedness of the national leadership. They continue by saying,

"From our experience it is apparent that the N.C.C. intends to declare itself the 'Party of a new type' along with a few slavish syncopants. Independent communists holding views differing with these of the N.C.C. must either toe the line laid down by them (the majority of whom are Communist League members) or be purged as we were. Such an approach to party-building is doomed to failure. It should be openly examined for what it really is in order that genuine Marxist-Leninists can learn by negative example from what is obviously a commandist trend in the U.S. Communist movement."

During the past six months, sharp differences have emerged among the RU, the OL and the BWC. Although there had been attempts at regroupment last spring, ('73), the differences that had simmered beneath the surface have now erupted. By early winter each group took to running long polemic on the rival groups in their respective presses. At the time, many of the differences were unclear, but by spring they have begun to crystallize. Each group has had awhile to develop on its own and develop its own theory, so that now there are distinct differences among all the groups. At this point the differences are in three major areas: the national question, the united front, and party-building.

Yet with the development and consolidation of the CL nexus, these groups have had to take a hard look at where they've been and in what direction they are going since they are being pressured by the rapid growth of the CL and Company. Last year each of these groups was optimistic and confident that they were the party and that all the other groups would consolidate around them. Yet one year later none of these groups can claim to be the official Communist Party USA-ML, and the Maoist left remains in many splinters.

This has obviously produced a certain sense of demoralization and pessimism within the Maoist milieu. In the May issue of REvolution (the newspaper of the RU) there is a discussion of the state of the Maoist movement which acknowledged the demoralization and pessimism that has taken hold. They go on to criticize

themselves for their previous lack of concern with party building. The RU's position on party building in the past was that it is necessary, but something that was done after the consciousness of the working class had been raised to a certain point. The RU writes:

"It is true that in raising the correct line (party building not in isolation from the masses) the RU had a tendency in the past to carry it too far, almost to put the formation of the party into the distant future and not to pay enough attention to party building linked with the mass movement.

But this was an excess made in opposing an incorrect line that isolated communists from the masses, and this excess does not at all change the fact that under the concrete conditions in the past few years, communists had to sink roots in the working class and gain some experience in applying communism to the mass movement, before forming the party, could be the central task."

The RU then goes on to state that conditions in the world are now excellent for making an important breakthrough in mass work and that the new communist movement has reached the end of an era. That era had been characterized by several groups and collectives working in isolation from one another. The RU sees us now entering a period in which these various groups will successfully consolidate themselves around a Marxist-Leninist program. Crucial, according to the RU, is the need for the various revolutionary forces to come together and sum up their experiences and unite.

For the RU now, the creation of the party is the central task for communists. In explaining that this is not a retreat from mass struggle, they add that party building must be done by building on the advances that are made through the mass struggle. The RU calls for ideological struggle with the various groups so that all who can be united around a Marxist-Leninist program can be united. Such a program would include a "statement of the ultimate goals and tactics-- a fleshing out the united front strategy, indicating key forces of struggle and deciding which are the key areas that the new movement will make breakthroughs."

So after several years of trying to unite the working class and bring it to a higher level of consciousness so that it might be part of the united front, the RU has determined that it has succeeded in doing so and is now galloping off to build the party.

Nowhere in the article do we get a clue about why they shifted their position so drastically. They talk about changes in the world situation but nowhere do they provide us with an analysis of what has produced this change in their theory. Also, while they have criticized their past position on the relationship of the party to mass work, they have given us no clue as to what they now see as that relationship.

Nonetheless, the position taken by the RU is a significant one and important to the development of these groups. Irwin Sliber, in his column "Fan the Flames" in the Guardian of May 22 recognized its significance when he commends the RU for their initiative. He writes, "This statement is heartening to communists. The Guardian, the OL, and other groups have held for some time that

party building is the central task for communists today. The new position of the RU means that a high level of unity has been achieved on this question in the new communist movement."

While these groups have taken certain steps toward heading off the CL snowball, there are still important differences between the OL and the RU on the United Front. As Silber writes, "the principal ideological shortcoming of the RU has been its narrow definition of the united front. It has often seen middle forces as the enemy and even treated potential allies as foes." Such differences on the united front have emerged lately in their practice. For example, the October League has been sucking up to the bureaucracy within the CLUW. At various meetings they have handed out leaflets which talk about isolating the Trotskyites and have in general been totally uncritical of the leadership of CLUW. Obviously CLUW's entire leadership is part of their united front. In the May issue of the Call, the OL describes CLUW as having "tremendous potential to act as a force that can strengthen the left wing of the labor movement." The OL's strategy to make CLUW a fighting organization is to unite with the local and staff women who wish to see CLUW take up the struggle of working women. Nowhere in their coverage is there any conception of what CLUW should be or how it can take up the struggle of working women.

The RU, on the other hand, has a very different estimation of CLUW. They say the "real purpose of CLUW is to keep the demands for equality of rank and file women within the political and legislative processes of the unions." For the RU, CLUW has been created to "keep working women from linking their demands and struggle with the growing revolutionary workers' movement and united front, and from building their understanding in the course of struggle that the only way to really end the oppression and exploitation of women and all workers is to overthrow the imperialist system and establish socialism."

The RU sees their role in CLUW as one of uniting with the progressive minded women which could possibly include union stewards and other union officials (note: they lump stewards and all other union officials together). Criticizing those who put forth the belief that more rank and file and minority women be brought into CLUW so that it could be more rank and file oriented, the RU feels that it should concentrate primarily on building mass struggle, political consciousness and mass organizations as well as the new communist party, and in the process expose the role the bureaucrats are playing in CLUW. If this sounds confusing, it is because it is. This is a paraphrase of their own description of communists in CLUW.

Differences between the RU and the OL extend generally into their trade union work. The OL's conception of the united front is broad (very broad!) and it leads them to support opportunistic elements whether in CLUW or its total uncritical support for Arnold Miller. The RU on the other hand, seems to be moving away from labor work in general in its latest attempt to build a party. In criticizing Left groups that concentrate on unions the RU writes,

"But it is wrong to make work in the trade unions and moving the unions to the left the basic strategy of our movement. Our strategy must be the united front against imperialism, under the leadership of the proletariat and its party. And this means developing our own political organizations to carry out the offensive, revolutionary struggle against the imperialists.

"This idea of making union work and moving the unions to the left the strategy of our movement in practice means reducing the revolutionary united front strategy into a reformist, militant trade union strategy where the major thing becomes passing resolutions, trying to replace bad leaders with good leaders, etc. These things must be done, but in order to help build the revolutionary movement and our own organizations, not to substitute for them."

While the RU has never really said much about what their labor perspective is, this latest shift leaves one mystified.

With the various shifts and turns in the numerous groups, there has been one very significant development. The alliance that existed between the RU and the BWC and the Puerto Rican REvolutionary Workers Organization (PRRWO) has been shattered. Not only did the various groups differ on the question of party building, but severe differences have exploded on the national question.

The BWC had existed as the black arm of the RU. Even Mike Hamlin (a heavy in the BWC) saw it as a place which would train blacks in the science of Marxism-Leninism and when they were ready they could join the others in the RU. The past year has seen the BWC emerge as a full-fledged organization making their own theoretical contributions.

Differences emerged over the relationship of party-building to the united front. The BWC had stressed the need to build the communist party long before the RU adopted this position. In their position papers the BWC lists several key tasks for party-building. They are:

1. Building a genuine communist party
2. Building a revolutionary united front, uniting all who can be united against the common enemy.
3. Building the mass revolutionary struggle of the working class and its leadership in the united front.

Although the BWC believes that all these tasks must be carried out simultaneously, they single out the building of a genuine communist party for this particular period.

The other major difference that has emerged between the two groups is the national question. As stated earlier, the two groups differed on the role of the national bourgeoisie. The BWC clarifies their disagreements in an article they wrote for the Guardian. The BWC criticizes the RU for failing to make a distinction between nationalism as an ideology and nationalism as a political phenomenon. For the RU all nationalism is nationalism and thus the nationalism of the bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation is progressive, as the RU and the OL have contended at various times. The BWC further writes, "the bourgeois nationalism of the oppressed nation's bourgeoisie is not progressive because it is against the interests of the vast masses--the workers and peasants--of the oppressed nation and therefore detrimental to the interest of developing unity between workers of different nationalities."

The BWC further separates itself from the RU and also the OL in its discussion of revolutionary nationalism. The BWC stresses that "the national aspirations

of the oppressed peoples are in themselves revolutionary because of the class content of their national struggle." (For the BWC, the role of the national bourgeoisie is an unreliable one--they cite Chile as an example. Contrast this to the RU's analysis of the national bourgeoisie in Chile.) The BWC differs with the two other groups on the role of the black bourgeoisie in the black liberation struggle in the U.S. While both the RU and the OL give the black bourgeoisie a prominent role in the united front, the BWC only describes its past sell outs of the black community, and its reactionary nature.

In attacking the RU's position on the national question, they write,

"The fundamental demands of the Black liberation movement are objectively bound up with the fundamental demands of the whole U.S. proletariat. The liberation of the Afro-American people is inseparable from their emancipation from the power of monopoly capital. On the other hand, it is impossible for the U.S. proletariat to be successful in its revolutionary struggle for proletarian dictatorship and socialism if it does not struggle for the full freedom of the Afro-American nation and all other countries oppressed by U.S. imperialism. The RU plays down this fact by suggesting that the struggle of black people is mainly a struggle for democratic rights and not a struggle for self-determination and the right of political secession. This is not the first time in this country where so-called communists counterpose the national question to the class struggle with the aim of liquidating the former and ultimately both. White chauvinism has appeared many times before under the guise of proletarian internationalism and putting the niggers in their place. This is what we oppose and will resolutely struggle against."

At this writing the BWC and the PRRWO represent their own pole of attraction in this circus. They have begun to differentiate themselves significantly from the OL and the RU. Recently they have shown considerable interest in a pamphlet on Party building by Charles Loren. Loren, an ex-PLer, has written a pamphlet which puts forth the CL line on party building. Within the ranks of the RU there have developed severe differences on the national question. In fact several RU cadre have recently resigned from the organization because they had views incompatible to the majority of the RU. This group published a column in a recent issue of the Guardian explaining their differences on the national question. Their statement revealed that they were very close to the CL's analysis of the national question.

The situation is changing rapidly in the Maoist groupings. The hope of regroupment and the promise of a new communist party that existed a year ago have led to splits and splintering. The differences between these groups are real and come out of important questions facing a revolutionary movement in the United States. Differences on labor, the revolutionary party and the black liberation struggle are all fundamental questions facing revolutionaries today. Unfortunately these groups think they have the correct answers and will try to convince others of their correctness. While the Maoist movement has suffered setbacks and has not grown at a rapid pace their gains have been steady.



These groups will continue to have modest successes--recruiting some collectives and small but significant numbers of minority workers. But they will not be able to give their members a perspective for their work in the mass movement. They will not be able to solve their differences on the national question, party building, and the united front in the near future, so that they can unite to build a new communist party.

It is in the coming year which will be decisive for many of these groups and for the future of the Maoist party in the U.S. It is also in this period that the I.S. must begin to combat the growing tide of Stalinism-Maoism in the U.S. revolutionary movement or else another generation of revolutionaries will be lost to Stalinism.