

Conciliation to Opportunism – “Two Wings” or One Pro-Chinese Revisionist Movement?

We have discussed the ideological causes in some detail. We find it extremely important to delve into the social basis of opportunism with great emphasis, in order to find the element of corruption in the “movement”, with a particular examination of the “revolutionary wing”. The main causes are found in the wavering intellectuals and petty-bourgeois elements, those who are radicalized by the general crisis of imperialism, who are ruined or threatened by ruin and join the movement with hopes of regaining their positions of class privilege, the bribes and comfortable life they have enjoyed. These elements make a fad of revolution, they make it a temporary phenomenon, a legal event. They are elements who, together with the labor aristocrats in the working class introduce a social club atmosphere and a corruptive influence into the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat. The influence of these wavering intellectual and petty-bourgeois elements, who introduce waverings, hesitation and ideological confusion, prevents decisive steps toward a complete repute with all forms of opportunism. In fact, this is the social basis which serves as the soil in which opportunism flourishes inside the Party of the proletariat. And it has been this social basis which has held back the development of the Marxist-Leninist line and the organization of communist activity towards the implementation of the plan to build the Party.

The instability of the wavering intellectual and petty-bourgeois elements is

revealed both in theory and in tactics. In theory, these propagators of the theory of spontaneity are of the rotten opinion that capitalism will disintegrate peacefully, through reformist concessions made by the bourgeoisie, who can then be "transformed". In tactics, they reduce the necessity of an organization of professional revolutionaries (i.e., the Party) to organizations of the "masses", which are broad in composition and whose aim is to pressure the concessions out of the bourgeoisie.

It goes without saying, that the class-conscious proletarians must rid themselves of these elements in order to take a qualitative leap forward, consolidate ideologically and politically, working out tactics-as-a-plan to carry forward the formation of a truly disciplined communist Party.

Bitter Lessons Which Stress the Importance of the Struggle to Purge the Opportunist Elements

The tragedy of not repulsing these elements in due time, is what lies at the essence of why a hard core of Leninists is yet to be welded, who can rise above the present level of ideological instability, and resolutely take the tasks of building the Party in their own hands.

The fact that the class-conscious workers have been unable to take a qualitative leap is due not only to the fact that the task is a great and difficult one, but also that there is a certain indifference toward the building of the Party, created by the wide-ranging influence of the anti-Leninist line of the Maoists, and all other Mensheviks, which has had its detrimental imprint. To the Maoist, questions pertaining to Party Building are unimportant. One is tested not in how Leninism is defended, applied and developed, by building the Party in the course of drawing lines of demarcation, charting out the program, strategy and tactics of the proletarian revolution, but in relation to how one is able to tail the spontaneous movement. One is tested by how many "mass" organizations are built, or infiltrated and taken over, with the purpose of making some gains in the struggle for reforms and *only* in this struggle. It is this reform struggle which reaps crumbs for the opportunists, by maintaining the proletariat confined to legality and narrow demands.

The Maoists glorify this struggle, and by limiting the struggle to reformist gains, strengthen the influence of the bourgeoisie over the masses of proletarians and all other working people. To the Maoists, revolution is then a by-product of the spontaneous struggle for reforms. The implication of this trend of thought is that by increasing the amount of concessions given by the bourgeoisie, the "rich will pay" and the bourgeoisie and the proletariat can live in harmony along-side each other. The Maoists thus liquidate the task of the revolution, i.e., to smash the bourgeois state apparatus, expropriate the bourgeoisie, and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to build socialism.

Very revealing is Mao's prescription for the U.S. revolution (rhetoric about "paper tigers" and "running dogs" notwithstanding). "The countries of West-

ern Europe and the United States have a very high level of capitalist development, and the controlling positions are held by a minority of monopoly capitalists. But there are a great number of small and middle capitalists as well. Thus it is said that American capital is concentrated but also widely distributed. After a successful revolution in those countries monopoly capital will undoubtedly have to be expropriated, but will the small and middle capitalists likewise be uniformly expropriated? It may well be the case that some form of state capitalism will have to be adopted to transform them."

(*A Critique of Soviet Economics*, Monthly Review, 1977, p.43)

It is, therefore, clear why the reform struggle is glorified by the Maoists, whose intention is to live in "eternal harmony" with the "transformed" bourgeoisie, in a slightly re-fashioned capitalism.

The bitter experience of not being at all clear of these implications, and the shameful state of amateurishness and primitiveness which has plagued the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists in the U.S., has resulted in a clinging to ideological backwardness which has created a "heaven on earth" for the opportunist elements, with disastrous consequences as a result.

These causes, both in their ideological and social character, have been the basis upon which conciliation to opportunism flourished, fostering the centrist current.

Stalin in his work "The Right Danger in the CPSU(B)", has this to say of the conciliatory tendency— **"There are people in our Party who, to soothe their conscience, are quite willing to proclaim a fight against the right danger in the same way as priests sometimes cry, 'Hallelujah, Hallelujah'! But they will not undertake any practical measures at all to *organize* (our italics—Ed.) the fight against the Right deviation on a firm basis, and to overcome this deviation in actual fact. We call this tendency a conciliatory tendency towards the right, frankly opportunist, deviation. It is not difficult to understand that the fight against this conciliatory tendency is an integral part of a general fight against the Right deviation, against the Right danger. For it is impossible to overcome the Right, opportunist deviation without waging a systematic fight against the conciliatory tendency, which brings the opportunists under its wing."** (SCW, Vol. 8, pg. 244, Red Star Press, English Edition)

Due to the lack of a thorough rupture with revisionism, the fact is that a conciliatory tendency began to develop among those forces calling for lines of demarcation to be drawn. There were and are, as Stalin pointed out, people who to soothe their consciences, quite energetically proclaimed their willingness to fight the rightists (e.g., RU), yet this became empty talk. There was no organized fight, the fight was a superficial paper fight which resulted in greater confusion and had the effect of putting the brakes on the split which was developing. This gave ammunition to the RU who screamed "dogmatism"!

We have pointed out how the struggle for Leninism has been sabotaged, how the classics of Marxism-Leninism and the Comintern have been shoved into the background, and how the centrist trend internationally (at one time represent-

ed in the first place by the "CPC") served as the arsenal in the hands of all the opportunists against Leninism. The Mensheviks sabotaged the struggle for Leninism, openly opposing Lenin's teachings in regard to all questions and particularly that of developing the Party along the Bolshevik model.

A conciliatory attitude towards the anti-Leninist assaults made by the Mensheviks (including both social chauvinists and centrists) began to develop. The analysis that there had developed a Sham wing and "Revolutionary Wing" in the movement flowed from this conciliatory attitude toward opportunism, which brought the centrists under its wing. This analysis saw the rise of a most deplorable situation. To have in any way imagined that this realignment represented a split with opportunism, was a gross conciliation to opportunism. We burn with shame to know that in fact it was precisely this analysis which covered up for the opportunists in all the organizations in the so-called revolutionary wing, some of which were in their entirety guided by clearly defined opportunist lines. In fact we can say with all certainty, as time has shown, that the "Anti-Revisionist Communist Movement" was riddled by opportunist elements, composed of the social basis which we earlier discussed. Yet rather than split from this "movement", consolidate a core of professional revolutionaries who were ideologically and politically solidified and capable of implementing that political line into actual fact, an "internal" struggle against the opportunists developed. This "internal" struggle was a tremendous and unfortunate waste of time and effort on the part of the Left forces, who were bound to err while tied up with this "internal" fight, and who proved to be incapable, therefore, of fighting from a position of strength against the entire marsh of opportunism. The Left forces slipped into a defensive posture and manifested a conciliatory tendency toward Menshevism.

Purges of opportunist elements began to intensify, and the "Revolutionary Wing" was indeed a clear expression of how in fact ideological unity was an empty wish. Both trends, analyzed as "wings", *i.e.*, the social chauvinist and centrist trends, were preventing a decisive step toward the rupture so necessary to gather the genuine forces capable of carrying out an organized fight against right opportunism. The fact is that the general characterization of "right opportunism is the main danger" without the necessary analysis of the trends which make up the right danger, served to foster centrism and the conciliatory attitude toward it. The main blow was directed at the open social chauvinists, *i.e.*, Krushchevite revisionist "CPUSA" or RU, not at the centrists, and this was a terrible mistake. The centrists, who were camouflaging their social chauvinism by every means were off scot free, making new alliances and taking on new deceptive covers. The centrists, represented by OL, WC, (not in the "Wing") and WVO, ATM, PRRWO and RWL, were able to consolidate their attacks on the Lefts, and succeeded in subordinating the Lefts to the rights. The Lefts received a heavy blow, were scattered and made the target for an all-out offensive of slander, gossip and physical abuse.

Pursuing an incorrect policy of purging the opportunist elements one by one or by entire factions, rather than pursuing the correct policy of a split

with *all* the opportunists in order to gather the genuine Marxist-Leninists, the "Revolutionary Wing" became a fertile ground for political police infiltration. Utilizing the different factions, the political police were able to establish an atmosphere of unprincipled struggle, and created conditions favorable for spreading anti-communist hysteria. In many cases the police, working together with the opportunists, purged other opportunist factions. In many cases they purged some honest persons who were made a special target in order to give legitimacy to the slanders they had been spreading since before the rise of the infamous "Revolutionary Wing". In the period prior to the consolidation of centrism in the "Wing", these very opportunists had been quite indifferent to the preparatory activities of the political police. This was only natural on their part. Many of the people chosen for slander, outside pressure and intimidation were the very forces struggling against their opportunist lines of collaborating first with RU, then with OL, then with CL, later with LPR"ML", CORES and MLOC. The ground which was prepared by the political police* was very open, and very calculated. Things such as anonymous letters, making threats on comrades' lives, slander of certain people on leadership, beatings and constant harrassment were ongoing. These actions were not denounced in good time, which gave an open door to the political police, who had tested the waters long before they struck their deadly blow, while operating inside the centrist "Revolutionary Wing".

The pressure exercised on the Left forces had the intended effect. Isolation of the Lefts in struggle, which in some cases wound up in capitulation to enemy pressure, conciliation to the claim of "isolation from the masses", were added conditions which led to an incorrect assesment and the decision to stay and fight it out in this rotten-to-the-core "Revolutionary Wing", rather than split. This hesitation proved to be disastrous. On more than one occasion Lenin had said: **"The Bolsheviks have to lead the Party. To do so they must know their course, they must stop hesitating, they must stop wasting time on persuading waverers, and fighting dissentients in their own ranks"**. (*Liquidation of Liquidationism*, pg. 42, Progress Publishers)

Purges, not all grounded in Leninism, became the main form of activity, leaving very little time for ideological and political consolidation, and needless to say, there could be *no organizational consolidation*.

Much too much time was wasted trying to convince waverers and fighting dissentients became so dominant, that some people who could have had the potential to develop into good revolutionaries either left or themselves degenerated into opportunists.

While inside this stinking marsh of opportunism, the Lefts were lumped together with the opportunists and the agent provocateurs. In fact actions carried out by the opportunists were often blamed on the Lefts. For example, WVO

provoked a fight at Brooklyn College in the Spring of 1976. Yet this fight was ascribed to the Lefts who were *not* even there. The instigators became the "victims". By staying in the so-called "Revolutionary Wing" the Left forces left themselves open for this type of attack.

The fact that those who, rather than split, stayed to "cleanse" these ranks, gave the opportunists and agent provocateurs ammunition against the Leninist positions being fought for. This was indicative of how serious a mistake it was not to have pursued a policy to split. This is indicative of how deep-rooted was the Maoist theory of "cure the illness to save the patient," the theory of overcoming opportunism from within. It was indicative of the madness which had begun to take hold that elements like Robert Johnson, leader of RWL, were able to conduct physical abuse and torture (a degenerate form of "struggle" propagated by the "Gang of Four"—one of the factions in the "Communist" Party of China), without him being denounced until November, 1976. It is also an indication of how deep the ideological crisis has gone, and of how dispersed the left forces have been, that it has taken this long to openly and publicly denounce, the activities of the opportunists and the political police, and draw the correct conclusions in regard to the centrist wing.

While being associated with the rancid activity going on within the "Revolutionary Wing," it was impossible to expose to any meaningful degree the activities carried on jointly between the opportunists and the political police, and to establish communication with other genuine Communists in the U.S. Denunciations which were made had a sporadic and unscientific character, indicative of hesitation, and were lost in a barrage of confusion which reflected a conciliation to opportunism rather than a determined fight in defense of Leninism.

The justifications given were as criminal as the decision to stay and "cleanse" the ranks. Fears of being "isolated" led to a conciliatory attitude, towards the right, and underlined how in fact a rupture with the ideological root of all opportunism, i.e., the worship of spontaneity, economism, reformism, and opportunism, in essence did not take place. Leninism was *not* reaffirmed.

Centrism poses such a great danger precisely because it assumes the mask of Leninism in periods of ideological crisis when attacks against Leninism are being launched far and wide. Centrism seeks the compromising positions in order to subordinate the lefts to the rights. It was *impossible* for any gains to be made while stuck in the mud of the "anti-revisionist communist movement," especially when it had supposedly split into "two wings" and one took the cover of "revolutionary wing". The Lefts were belated in making the split, under constant fire for "ultra-leftism", many times falling into concessions which, due to waverings and vacillations led to conciliation with opportunism.

Many are only too eager to speak of this history as long as the purpose is to give a rightist interpretation of what happened in the "wing". Of all the forces that came out of this wing, the U.S. Leninist Core alone was able to rupture with "Mao Zedong Thought" the "three world theory". Some of its members have now joined the Committee of the U.S. Bolsheviks.

* See section on activities of agent provocateurs later in this article.

In fact at one time the lefts within the "wing" tried to group again without making a thorough split, and this is the reason for the fact that there existed the "Leninist Core of the Revolutionary Wing," and later the U.S. Leninist Core, which signified a still incomplete rupture. The basis of this erroneous concept lay in the fact that a rupture with centrism had not materialized, that the "three world theory" was still being defended and the revisionist Mao Zedong was being upheld as a great Marxist-Leninist, until Vol.8 No.5 of *Bolshevik*. It was necessary to make a rupture with the "three world theory", with the influence of the idealist school of thought led by Mao Zedong, and to take a step further to an analysis of the trends internationally to create the basis for a real and thorough split.

It was not until the covers were ripped off the "CPC" and Mao Zedong, that the basis for a split was created, and lines of demarcation began to be drawn. Based on Leninism, we have been able to make a Marxist-Leninist analysis of this shameful history, with the purpose of striking the main blow at centrism, learning from our mistakes, correcting a grave error in principle of directing the main blow at the open social chauvinists, while allowing deception to chain our brains which wound up in conciliation with the centrists. However, the split has occurred and it has made it possible for the Committee of U.S. Bolsheviks to sum up the history of the "Revolutionary Wing", the centrist trend, and the conciliatory attitude towards it. We would like to point out that while those who remained inside "cleansing" the ranks wound up conciliating to opportunism, those left forces who were not part of the internal life of the "Revolutionary wing" were also conciliating to centrism but in another way. It manifested itself by the lack of open polemics against centrism, and the fact that no distinction was drawn in relation to those positions, (although smothered by all those conditions we have above enumerated) which began to assert themselves in defense of a number of Leninist positions. Conciliation manifested itself in the assertion that the centrist wing was "ultra-leftists", which came into harmony with the claims of the open social chauvinists.

The erroneous concept and "struggle" against "ultra-leftism" served to facilitate the subordination of the Lefts to the rights. The basis for the conciliation both inside the "wing" and outside was the same, *i.e.*, the failure to make a fundamental break with economism, reformism and opportunism, all under the hegemony of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. It has been by lifting the burden of "Mao Zedong Thought" and dumping it in the museum of antiquities that the genuine forces have been able to come together to analyze and repudiate past mistakes, learning from them in order to engage in meaningful struggle to establish Leninist norms, by drawing lines of demarcation, and regrouping our forces in the Committee of U.S. Bolsheviks, which is learning from the lessons drawn in order to establish a genuine center capable of conducting the work necessary to build the Party.

"New" Circles—Basis for a New "Revolutionary Wing"

Among some of the circles who are claiming to be "new forces", e.g. Wichita Communist Cell (WCC), Kansas City Revolutionary Workers Collective (KCRWC), Red Dawn are the seeds of the rehabilitation of the so-called "revolutionary wing". Centrism seeks to come forward again and again—As Lenin taught: "We are convinced that the author of the leading article in the journal *Die Internationale*, was perfectly right in stating that the Kautskyan "center" is doing more harm to Marxism than avowed Social Chauvinism. And anyone who plays down differences, or, in the guise of Marxism, now teaches the workers that which Kautskyism is preaching, is in fact lulling the workers, and doing more harm than the Sudekums and Heines, who are putting the issue squarely and are compelling the workers to try to make up their own minds." (*Socialism and War*, LCW, Vol. 21, p. 326)

These circles, who demanded of the U.S. Leninist Core a summation of the "wing," pretended that they had nothing to do with this history other than to occasionally admit some association to RWL or WVO. Furthermore, these circles howl about "agent-provocateurs" activity without *ever* addressing the question head on, and reduce everything to "method of struggle," while remaining silent as a tomb on the question of line. Isn't it a fact that many assimilated "political line key link"; "organization key link"; "factory nuclei," or a variation of these liquidationist positions? Have they not gone back and forth, retreating constantly in the struggle against economism, reformism and right opportunism in general? Have they not taken up the defense of the outright opportunist elements that have been purged? Wichita Communist Cell (WCC), for example comes out in open support of the gang of four, as did one faction in the "wing" headed by Robert Johnson, ex-leader of RWL.

Haven't all these circles defended the distortions made by the social-chauvinists in regard to the struggle that broke out in the centrist wing? And why is it that they refused to come face to face with the U.S. Leninist Core, or today with the Committee of U.S. Bolsheviks to discuss it? Who is it that is hiding from the truth?

Two Rotten Eggs Laid by Mao Zedong: "Political Line is Key Link", and "Theory is Principal"

The influence of Mao's gang of four was most entrenched in the centrist forces we have above discussed. The gang's series of articles from 1972 to 1976 appearing in *Peking Review* and other pamphlets were meant to prop up the dying thoughts of Mao Zedong, in crisis due to the event of the collapse of another Mao lackey—Lin Piao.

Such gems as the "key link" fetishism and the revisionist trash on philosophy were aimed at consolidating the influence of Mao's gang internationally, through the application of "Chairman Mao's revolutionary line." Hence, the "U.S. movement" and its "revolutionary wing" were fertile ground for "poli-