

Draft

Nov '74

RU's Errors: "Leftism"

In 1974, discussions, articles, and forums in the new Communist movement have devoted a lot of attention to the errors of two organizations: CL and RU.

Although CL for a time had a certain predominance in party-building when a number of organizations joined the CL-dominated Continuations Committee, their dogmatic, idealist, ultra-"Left" line has been rapidly exposed, the majority of the forces that joined the Continuations Committee withdrew or were expelled, and CL and its remaining allies have been able to form only another sect: the "Communist Labor Party: USNA." Struggle against the line of the CLP must continue, but this is widely recognized in the rest of the new communist movement (OL, Guardian, EWC, PREMO, ATM, other groups, and RU). There is considerable agreement on what the errors of CL are and that CL is "Left" opportunist, ultra-"Left."

There is no such agreement on the errors of the RU.

EWC, PREMO, ATM, those who publish Workers Viewpoint, and others characterize RU as Right opportunist, Economist. The OL describes RU as ultra-"Left." The OL is the only major organization to put forward this view. (The small but influential Guardian appears to follow this position as well, however.) Their view should be given careful consideration, though, both because of their relative size and because, unlike EWC, PREMO, and others, OL had no illusions about the 'democracy' of the Continuations Committee or the line of CL and did not join the Continuations Committee.

Expand and clarify or eliminate

(Whatever EWC or other groups may say about the "I told you so crowd," entering the CC as an organization to try to achieve unity with CL and its close allies was a mistake, and OL deserves credit for having sufficient ideological clarity to stay clear of the CC.)

Deciding whether RU's line has been and is basically Rightist or "Leftist" is important to the development of the new communist movement. If RU's line has been Rightist, then probably OL has strong Right tendencies and Rightism is the main danger in the developing communist movement. If RU's line has been ultra-"Left," then probably BWC, PRRWO, ATM and others have some ultra-"Left" tendencies, and "Leftism" is the principal danger.

Re-write this, change focus.

Metaphorical presentation

If agreement can be reached on the nature of RU's errors, then there is a good chance for unity among the groups mentioned and a great step toward the building of a new communist party will have been taken.

non. seq.

If disagreement on RU and the main danger continues, then our movement will remain fragmented at a time of increasing crisis for monopoly capital, and we will be unable to make much use of the opportunity to make or deepen our connections with the proletariat and other working people as they begin to respond to the attacks of capital on them.

ignores importance of developing a position on key areas thru investigation

The problem of characterizing RU correctly is complicated by the fact that both sides (OL-Guardian on the one hand, BWC-ATM, PRRWO on the other) note RU has made both "Left" and Right errors. But OL's view is that RU has been basically ultra-"Left" and sometimes openly Right, while BWC-PRRWO-ATM say that RU's basically Rightist, tailist line sometimes acquires a "Left" cover.

For example, when RU privately pushed party building in the National Liaison Committee and decided to "smash or absorb" IWK, was this "simply" "an unprincipled method of party building . . . that amounted to bourgeois politicking" (as Workers Viewpoint describes it in Vol. I, No. 2, p. 17)? Was it sectarian activity from a Rightist perspective, Right sectarianism? (Sectarianism is usually associated with "Left" errors.) Or was it an ex-

ample of RU's ultra-"Left" practice on party-building?

(I think the latter view is correct, but that on this question in particular OL's view of the RU doesn't taken into account the increasing emergence of "Left" tendencies in the RU. This will be taken up again shortly.)

That RU, or any of the new organizations, should make both Right and "Left" mistakes shouldn't surprise us. As three ex-RUers put it in a recent paper ("Critical Remarks About the Revolutionary Union"), "most of us are inexperienced enough that it's difficult to avoid making right as well as left mistakes."

But it's not just a question of experience. As already mentioned, Liu Shao-chi is said to have struggled desperately against Chairman Mao's line from positions that were sometimes "Left" in form but Right in essence and sometimes openly Right.

This raises the question, for example, of whether, as RU becomes isolated from the rest of the communist movement, RU's increasing "militancy" (its "visit" to the offices of the Guardian, its physical attacks on members of other groups) and its increasingly shrill sectarian language (BWC-PRWO are "Bundist," OL is now "scum") are again a "Left" flip-flop or cover for its essentially Rightist position or, on the other hand, good examples of RU's essential ultra-"Left" line which is now becoming more and more exposed in RU's practice.

How are we to decide?

As Yu Fan points out in Peking Review, "There are objective standards and class criteria for judging what is Left, what is ultra-"Left" and what is Right deviation." (Peking Review, No. 42, p 11, Oct. 18, 1974)

This is now
in first
paper

Lenin wrote his pamphlet 'The Infantile Disease of "Leftism".' Why did Lenin write just this pamphlet? Because the danger of leftism at that time was the most serious menace. I am certain that if Lenin were alive, he would now have written a pamphlet on 'The Senile Disease of Rightism,' for now, during the period of tranquility, when the illusions of compromise should be on the rise, the danger of rightism is the most serious menace." (The Party of Labor of Albania in Battle With Modern Revisionism, pages 353-54)

As this quote from Stalin suggests, if the workers' movement has been and is in a period of tranquility, then the main danger is probably rightism. If the workers' movement is on the rise, then the main danger is probably leftism. But not just the workers' movement is involved. "Revolutionary illusions" arise when the bourgeoisie is in trouble, when all or most sectors of society are in ferment.

If we apply these criteria to the U.S., it is clear that the workers' movement is now on the rise and has been for at least two years. Some might say the ferment among workers goes back to 1970 when economic problems became sharper. The society as a whole has been "troubled" and many sectors in ferment since the mid-60's, largely on account of the Vietnam war. However we might evaluate the years before 1972, since that time the workers' movement and the communist movement have been developing at an increased pace, and based on what Stalin says here, Leftism may be the main danger in the new communist movement.

Here, too, on the question of recent communist history, there is disagreement between, for example, OL and Workers Viewpoint.

OL's views are set forth in their pamphlet, "Party Building in the U.S.," Part Two, "The Struggle Against Ultra-'Leftism.'" In very brief form OL traces the development of the Provisional Organizing Committee

This needs expansion

and the Progressive Labor Party after the consolidation of revisionism in the CPUSA following the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU in 1956.

OL says, in part:

The past decade has witnessed the failure of every group (up until now) which broke organizationally from the rightism of the CPUSA to keep away the influences of "ultra-leftism." These groups include the Provisional Organizing Committee (POC) which split from the CP in the late '50's and the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) which began in the early '60's. . .

. . . both POC and PLP failed to establish strong ties to the mass movement of the workers and minorities. Both soon liquidated the national question and under the guise of fighting the "class struggle" launched an attack on the movement for the national rights of the Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican peoples. Finally, both failed to merge with the developing international movement led by the Communist parties of China and Albania and instead dropped their Maoist disguises and attacked Mao Tsetung and China for supposedly "abandoning the revolution" and "sealing out."

OL then goes into the class basis--largely petty-bourgeois ex-students and intellectuals--of the movement in the late 60's and of the new communist movement. (Although OL doesn't discuss RU here, it is widely known, and RU sometimes admits, the great majority of its members are of the petty-bourgeoisie, in particular white "middle class" ex-students and students.) This is followed by Stalin's description of the class basis of "anarchist, semi-anarchist, and 'ultra-left' groups"; namely, "newcomers from non-proletarian classes--from the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, or the intelligentsia."

too general & criticism
- Tim

Workers Viewpoint, on the other hand, says:

. . . in our opinion, to understand our state of development and to chart our future course, an analysis still has to be made of the history of the CP, including after they turned revisionist, the role of the POC, PLP and other tendencies, and the reasons they failed, the social basis for

their deviations, and their relation to the mass movement, etc. Without these sum-ups, the movement is without a compass and cannot gain its bearings in the stormy seas." (Workers Viewpoint, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 26)

WV then contradicts itself by stating that "One thing revealed by the failures of the POC and the PLP is the serious theoretical weakness of the U.S. communist movement." Since opportunist lines are characterized by a breach between theory and practice, how, short of the analysis WV says has yet to be made, can WV conclude that POC and PLP suffered mainly from theoretical weakness? (WV doesn't use the word "mainly" here but this is the thrust of their analysis on this point and throughout the article.)

But this pt. doesn't strike hard.

WV does have a point, though. A more complete analysis of POC and PLP does need to be published, as well as an account of the decline of the CPUSA in the post-1942 period and an analysis of developments on the Left in the middle and late 60's.

While OL makes a good case in its brief account (and I think OL's perspective on POC, PL, and the danger of "Leftism" in the newcommunist movement is basically correct), its pamphlet essentially presents conclusions, and doesn't provide an extended analysis on these subjects from which others could draw their own conclusions. While OL may have the correct position, here, as on other questions, it has not published very much to substantiate those positions. OL has in fact slighted somewhat the importance of theory in this period of our movement.

This is now in first paper, I think.

But this should be seen in the context of OL's trying to avoid isolation from the working class and other "Left" deviations: it sees in our recent history. OL has been successful and has avoided the gross errors

of CL and RU, both of which have seemingly devoted more attention to theory: CL in Proletariat and by repeated public stress on theory and RU in all those wasted columns of Red Papers. OL has avoided serious errors by realizing the unity of theory and practice and that theory is based on practice and can be developed, generally speaking, only out of the problems posed by practice, as Lenin noted in "What the 'Friends of the People' Are." Still, on subjects like the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, one of the pillars of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung thought, OL has relied on articles from the Chinese press while even RU--that belittler of theory--has put together the most helpful theoretical document on the subject to come out of our movement.

This matter has been gone into at such length because it represents a major difference between OL-Guardian on the one hand and EWC-ATM-PRRWO on the other, while bearing on the class basis of the RU and the conditions under which RU and the other organizations have begun. To sum up the main points on these two subjects: both the petty-bourgeois class base of RU and other groups and the historical conditions under which the new communist movement is developing--a period of rising workers' struggle and a period in which the revisionism of the CPUSA is trying to be overcome--suggest that ultra-"Leftism" may be the main danger in the new communist movement.

Or, as OL sums it up:

However, while modern revisionism, or right opportunism, is the main ideological enemy which confronts the world revolutionary movement, within the newly emerging communist movement here the main danger is "leftism" and sectarianism. Without a staunch struggle against sectarianism, dogmatism and ultra-"leftism" in general, all the cries for a new party won't mean a thing. ("Party Building in the U.S." p. 11)

Characterization of RU's Line

In general, I believe the view of RU's line as ultra-"Left" given in the September, October, and November issues of the Call is correct. Their arguments about the RU will not be repeated in detail here, but they will be summed up.

The main difference I have with OL's account of RU's line is that I think OL neglects the former openly Right aspects of RU's line and practice, especially on the question of party-building. I think the last two years, especially the last few months, show not only an exposure of RU's line as being essentially ultra-"Left," but that RU has increasingly taken ultra-"Left" positions and its practice has been increasingly ultra-"Left." (While OL cadre may agree with these latter views, they have not been expressed explicitly in the pages of the Call.)

only "former"?

This opinion--about RU's becoming more "Left"-- is shared by at least one of the three ex-RUers, a founding member of the RU, who wrote "Critical Remarks About the Revolutionary Union." However, that article also doesn't make this point explicitly, though it does sum up RU's mistakes as "left subjectivity or left sectarianism."

The RU's ultra-"Leftism" has been revealed most openly and consistently on the questions of trade union work, the women's movement, and the national question. RU's line on party-building is now ultra-"Left," but in my opinion the dominant aspect of this line was for some time an openly Right error. On a fifth matter, the United Front Against Imperialism, RU has recently displayed signs of the ultra-"Leftism" that are generally characteristic of its entire line.

On the Trade Unions

In RU's analysis of the labor movement, the trade unions are now reactionary organizations, the union leaders are completely sold out, agents of the bourgeoisie, so communists must rely totally on the rank and file.

"L"

"L"

"L"

This analysis leads the RU to the policies of "jamming the unions," attacking reform leaders with progressive aspects like Arnold Miller of the UMW, and building separate support committees, as with the UFW.

"L"

"L"

"L"

But, since RU also views the working class as backward, ^{True?} as unable to grasp Marxism-Leninism--though RU would never come out and say this--and views its own cadre as the only reliable revolutionary force, this leads the RU to try to build separate, "pure" workers organizations like MIWM (May First Workers Movement) which they can control. It also causes them, generally, to participate in rank-and-file newsheets only when they can control the contents.

Is this "L" bowing to spontaneity? RU now does bring more M-L to workers

"L"

Amid all this left sectarianism, there is a Rightist aspect: RU withholds Marxism-Leninism from the advanced workers and from the working class as a whole. Its "anti-imperialist workers papers" like the Bay Area Worker rarely go beyond anti-imperialism to questions of socialism and communism (China under the dictatorship of the proletariat for example) and focus instead on "linking up" struggles.

not necessarily. could be "left" bowing

Their "single spark" method, revising Mao Tse-tung, is designed to "link up" struggles, to broaden the political consciousness of workers in an anti-imperialist way. This also has the same Right aspect--withholding Marxism-Leninism from the working class--but it is part of RU's "I am the Center" left sectarian mentality:

leeching, just activity, "L" in form

vague, in-complete

Without actually getting deeply involved in the local struggles of workers, as at Farah, RU piggybacks on the great battles of workers like the Farah strikers, builds student-based independent support committees, and then wants to take much of the credit for the victories of the workers. But this is "Left" opportunism, parasitism, Trotskyist activity.

There is another "Left" error not-so-hidden in RU's analysis: they stress over and over that in the U.S. there is a single multi-national working class. This insistence leads them to errors in many **areas**. On this question they formulate slogans like "A United Working Class Can Never Be Defeated" and in practice don't raise any demands-- such as preferential hiring or special seniority rights for national minorities--which they feel would "divide the class." The same applies to the struggles of women to gain entrance to better-paying jobs, jobs outside the service industries. Supporting special seniority rights for women would "divide the class." RU overlooks the "special" oppression of minorities and women which has brought about the situation in which proposals favoring them have to be acted on.

] Not an error in itself

This is "L" failure to make distinctions, ignores class struggle for demo. rights under capitalism

How? { In the last two years RU has come down on a slogan it once put forward, "Black Workers Take the Lead," a descriptive slogan used also at times by BWC and OL. RU claims that BWC and OL mean this slogan as a principle, that Black workers should always take the lead. This is nothing but RU's usual sophistry and reduction of the opponent's position to what RU conceives of as its "logical" conclusion. But in fact RU objects to the slogan, even as descriptive, on the grounds that it

tends to divide the working class.

The effects of RU's analysis and slogans in practice have been to isolate RU from working people. In seven years of trying, RU has managed to recruit very few working class people and is still overwhelmingly of petty-bourgeois class composition.

RU's line on the reform movement leaders and on the character of the unions brings them to dual unionism, in effect. They feel workers will desert the unions in future years. These views drive the masses of workers into the arms of the labor bureaucrats ^{and} isolate RU (and, through RU's bad example, other forces identified by workers as "communist").

RU's line on the single multi-national working class (there is only one but RU over-emphasizes its present unity) isolates them from national minority workers and also from progressive working women.

Overall, RU's line is heading toward Trotskyism on the trade union question as it strips the single working class of its allies, skips the stage of fighting for oppressed sections of the working class, and leaves the labor movement under the control of the labor aristocrats, all the while overestimating the current unity of the working class and idealistically pitting the working class, heroic and alone, against the bourgeoisie.

On the Women's Movement

RU says somewhere in Red Papers 123 that the woman question is essentially a proletarian question. In a sense it is, but what RU means is that there is, to repeat, only one working class in the U.S. Anything that divides the class, interferes with its unity, is wrong.

Hence, the Equal Rights Amendment is not progressive on the face of

it, for RU, because men will see its passage as an attack on them.

RU argues that the ERA will mean protective labor legislation will be wiped off the books and both men and women will suffer. However, the states have been doing that anyway, as in Illinois and California, without the ERA, under Title VII.

The correct position is to fight for the ERA and for protective legislation, for the ERA will be a great step forward in getting women into the basic industries where they will be in a position to fight for protective labor legislation. To be against the ERA is to try to skip stages and be against the only real opportunity there now is to get women in positions near or at the point of production where they will be able to exert some real leverage on society.

RU also says that the ERA will benefit mainly "middle-class" women. Certainly it will benefit them, but the interest of communists is primarily to aid the struggle of working class women, and the ERA will greatly benefit them (whether more or less than "middle-class" women isn't really the issue).

RU does support certain women's demands: for day care, the right to abortion, equal work at home by men, free birth control, etc. (Some of these are, or should be, demands of men also, but they are given in this form in Red Papers 123, p. 47)

Overall, RU's meager work for the rights of women and RU's line, especially on the ERA, will fail to win them the support of women of all classes, especially working women, ~~though their lukewarm stands may still enable them to attract some non-working women.~~

As on the question of trade unions, RU's analysis skips a necessary stage (ERA, entry of women into the proletariat, for example) and tries to build an imaginary unity between working class women and the rest of the working class.

On the Afro-American National Question

By now, RU's views on the national question as it relates to Afro-Americans are well-known, and notorious. RU claims Black people in the U.S. form a "nation of a new type."

To use RU's style of argument, RU would have been better off saying a "notion of a new type," for their analysis throws out Stalin's criteria for a nation and liquidates the national question, saying that the right to self-determination is not at the heart of the Black national question.

RU holds that this "nation of a new type" is "proletarian." In their agitation they discount--attack--the classes and strata other than Black workers, which has the effect of depriving the Black proletariat of its allies in the Black United Front. This line would make it impossible for Black communists to win over these numerically small but influential and relatively powerful strategic and tactical Black allies.

RU holds that this "nation of a new type" is in a "third period" of the national question, a period in which the question is once again an "internal" one; that is, one internal to the U.S. As is well pointed out in the November Call, this position would cut off the Black movement from the international movement of the Third World and fails to see the driving force against colonialism and imperialism that the struggle of Black people

in the U.S. has been and is, a fact Mao Tse-tung made a point of in his 1968 statement on the Afro-American struggle.

RU holds that this "nation of a new type" is "dispersed." This throws out Stalin's criteria for a nation by claiming that a nation need not have a specific territory--the nation is supposedly wherever the people are. If put into effect, this line, as the Call also points out, would strengthen the Black bourgeois forces who put forward the idea of "community control" under "Black capitalism."

But, though RU often writes the formula, "nation of a new type," in practice RU acts as though Blacks are a national minority, part of the single multi-national working class. Though Black people suffer "dual" oppression, as Blacks and as workers, according to the RU, their membership in the one working class means that RU doesn't even consistently raise the call for the democratic rights for Black people.

This has been most flagrantly demonstrated in the Boston bussing situation, where RU's white chauvinist line has had them failing to take up the struggle for equal rights of Black people, siding with the forces physically attacking Black people, and objectively and in the flesh marching with the Ku Klux Klan. To defend Black people and their rights would "divide the working class"!

RU's line deprives Afro-American people of their allies--progressive whites--and strengthens the hand of Black bourgeois forces and also of the CPUSA, which has come out "smelling like roses" in Boston, according to one observer. Furthermore, it discredits communists by RU's despicable unity with white racists.

Overall, RU's analysis skips stages on the Afro-American national question, claiming national oppression has been transformed and the basis of

nationhood in the Black Belt South destroyed by the development of capitalism. Since the basis of nationhood has been destroyed in the South, the nation is everywhere and self-determination is not the heart of the question. But then, the fight for democratic rights of the "nation of a new type" is not at the heart of the question either, because it "divides the class." RU liquidates the national question.

Other aspects of this are that RU idealistically paints a picture of Black-white working class unity, overlooking the white chauvinism and racism that form a significant part of attitudes of the new communist movement and of white people in the U.S. Blinded by its own white chauvinism, RU goes on to charge that ^{Marxist} "Black nationalism" is "the main danger" in the developing communist movement.

In practice, RU's line isolates itself from national minorities, deprives minorities of allies among the Anglo people, and deprives the minority proletariat of its allies among other minority classes.

RU's ultra-"Left" position that sets the Black proletariat, for example, against the white bourgeoisie, without its allies, liquidates the national question and indicates RU may be headed down the road of PL towards Trotskyism with surprising speed.

On Party-Building

It is on this question that RU has been most openly Rightist, mainly from 1968 to late 1972 or early 1973, but since the creation of the National Liaison Committee, ultra-"Left" aspects have been on the rise and now characterize RU's line.

The Rightism showed itself in two ways: not seeing party-building as the central task of communists and the related error of withholding Marxism-Leninism from the working class. These mistakes are Rightist because they deprive the proletariat of its vanguard and capitulate to the bourgeoisie. Without a communist party, communists cannot unite with the advanced and win over the middle forces. (Failure to unite with the advanced and win over the middle forces is characteristic of both "Left" and Right deviations; here the errors take an openly Right form.)

As the Albanians have pointed^{ed} out (see "The Party of Labor of Albania in Struggle with Modern Revisionism," for example), the attempt to do without a genuine communist party, the effort to destroy genuine ones, is a characteristic of revisionism, as is the belittling of the role of the subjective forces, the conscious, organized forces in the revolution.

At times RU has fallen into these errors, on party-building and also in trade union work. The question is, Are these mistakes the dominant aspects of RU's line, as EWC and others hold, or are they secondary aspects?

In the three areas so far discussed--trade union work, the women's movement, the national question--the ultra-"Left" aspects of RU's line and practice are ^{and have been} primary, in my opinion. The following discussion holds that this is now true with regard to party-building as well.

In its early stages, RU's plan for party-building called for the creation of collectives and the exchange of experiences among them. The collectives were to provide a form through which developing communists, largely ex-students, could develop ties with the masses of working people. Later RU criticized itself for underestimating the necessity of ideological struggle at this time and Red Papers 1 tends to belittle the theoretical development of cadre and the need for theory at this stage of the revolutionary process.

Collectives did form and some of them united to form the RU. After that RU tended strongly to place building the united front against imperialism above party-building as the central task. This can be seen throughout Red Papers 123 where we have:

We certainly have a long way to go. The present united front is fragile, the proletariat is not united and cannot lead it, and has not developed its representative Communist Party. We must develop the united front, foster revolutionary working class unity and leadership in struggle, and build a Communist Party based on Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought. And we must set about all three of these tasks simultaneously. How to begin? We believe that our present best course is to link together the present main spearheads of anti-imperialist struggle, to raise them to higher levels through courageous and persevering work, and to develop the fighters in each spearhead into fighters for all. (RP 123, p 41)

Here we see the downgrading of party-building as a task and also RU's eclectic formulations, lack of clear priorities. (It is this eclecticism--possibly a form of pragmatism, as Workers Viewpoint claims)--that makes RU's errors harder to pin down ^{than} those stemming from CL's idealist dialectics. RU generally tries to take the advice common in the Army: "cover your ass")

This view of the relationship between party-building and the united front was based in part on RU's analysis that the communist movement needed

to form a base among working people. This was, and is, certainly true, but RU tended to do united front work, largely with others from the same class background, and to downplay the necessity of forming factory nuclei which worked side-by-side with advanced and other workers, on the job and in struggles, introducing Marxist-Leninist theory and recruiting members.

The downplaying of theory makes up a second aspect of RU's Rightist tendency on party-building. But this criticism must be clearly put. It's not that RU neglects the creation or publication of "theory"--they publish more "theory" than anyone else. But RU fails to integrate theory and practice, so their theories are incorrect.

Also, the main point of criticism of RU on this subject has been that they withhold Marxism-Leninism from working people, who can learn about it only if communists consciously--and with awareness of the difficulties of doing so--introduce it to them. RU has certainly committed and continues to commit this error.

With the creation of the National Liaison Committee of RU, *BWC*, *PRWO*, and *IWK*, on *PRWO*'s initiative, RU's "I am the center" sectarianism began to emerge. Publicly RU said party building was not the central task. (In fact, two months after *IWK* in practice separated itself from the NLC, in September 1973, "leading member" Avakian proclaimed that RU's line was "diametrically opposed" to that of those who said party-building had been and was the central task.) But privately RU was hardly committing the Rightist error of sitting back, holding back the development of a party. RU was actively trying to create the core of a new communist party, a position *IWK* disagreed with, and for this reason and others RU decided it should

either "smash or absorb" IWK (IWK Journal, August 1974, p. 14).

This was not "bourgeois politicking," an extension of RU's Right opportunism, as Workers Viewpoint argues, but a strong indication of RU's underlying "Left" sectarian tendencies which were then emerging.

RU's line and practice swung even more sharply to the "Left" in May 1974, when CL was making some headway with the Continuations Committee and every other organization calling itself Marxist-Leninist besides RU had identified party-building as the central task.

In the May Revolution RU claimed we had entered a "new period" and that now party-building had finally, but only for a brief period, become the central task. The emptiness of RU's "analysis" has been well described elsewhere (in the Guardian and Workers Viewpoint, for example) and the arguments used against RU won't be repeated here.

From this point on RU has seen itself as the center of the party-building effort. Why? Every other organization, RU claims, has an incorrect theoretical line: Red Papers must become your Bible. The pages of Revolution now say a great deal more about the need to build a genuine Marxist-Leninist party in the U.S., around the RU's suggested points of agreement, of course. RU has completed a nationwide speaking tour aimed at party-building, and as RU has found itself out in the cold, it has stepped up its sectarian attacks on CL, OL, EWC, and PRRMO.

In the last two years RU has not been committing the Rightist errors of downplaying the need for a new communist party, or trying to form a mass socialist party without ideological unity. Instead, its line and practice have isolated it from the rest of the communist movement fairly quickly as it tries to build a party, refuses to engage in genuine self-

criticism, and holds to its past and present policies and theories dogmatically.

It cannot be said that RU any longer completely underestimates the conscious forces for revolution. Its error, definitely a "Left" one, is to identify itself with those forces: RU is the vanguard. True, RU in fact really does underestimate the subjective forces for revolution--the masses and other groups in the new communist movement. But it doesn't do this from the passive position of Rightists, or from the revisionist stance of the CPUSA, which says, "We already have a communist party," or from the viewpoint of the social-democrats, who say, "Who needs a communist party?"

To sum up RU's line on party-building over the last two years:

Its analysis of conditions skips the stage of doing patient work among the working people (not in RU-based coalitions composed mainly of RU cadre), of bringing Marxism-Leninism to advanced workers, and of struggling with and uniting with other communist forces in a principled way.

Its slogans and practice have demonstrated a very strong "Left" sectarian trend in RU which has exposed itself in verbal and physical attacks on other communist organizations, in attempts to destroy other organizations. This is seen also in RU's increasing super-militancy, its super-revolutionary slogans and actions.

If we look at the effect of RU's line in practice, we can see that it has committed the "Left" error of isolating itself from the masses and from other sections of the anti-revisionist communist movement, not the Rightist error of simply merging with (or trying to) the masses in an unprincipled way (for example, by playing on friendship and neglecting the task of party-building).

On the United Front Against Imperialism

The United Front Against Imperialism has two aspects: the UFAI within the U.S. and the UFAI internationally.

In both areas the RU has started to show evidence of the "Left" positions which generally characterize its line. The "Leftism" is not yet as pronounced as it is in other areas.

Domestically, the RU appears to be dropping or downgrading united front work. There has been no explanation in print (I think) for this, but it probably comes from RU's analysis that party-building is the central task in this "brief period."

When RU has participated in coalition work to build the united front, it has often strongly criticized the points of unity around which the coalition has been organized. This is a long-term tendency of the RU, but it seems to be sharpening. An example is the Chicago coalition formed to prepare for International Women's Day this year where RU withdrew because it wouldn't be allowed to criticize the points of unity, which included a call for the passing of the ERA. RU also withdrew from the Boston coalition formed to protect the rights of national minorities and to combat white racism. And RU didn't even bother to participate in the coalitions formed to support the demand for the independence of Puerto Rico.

RU's firmly held position on the present unity of the single working class in the U.S. prevents it from supporting special demands of sectors that compose the class, and so makes successful united front work for RU impossible.

This line quickly isolates the communists, prevents them from uniting with the advanced and winning over the middle forces, and allows bourgeois elements in the united front unlimited sway.

Internationally also, in recent years, RU has tended to downplay the significance of the struggles of all Third World countries (which includes Iran) against the two superpowers and to stress reliance solely on the working class in Third World countries in the battle to bring down imperialism. Thus, RU will criticize Echeverria, the Shah of Iran,^{2nd} the governments of the Arab countries, because they are bourgeois, and will fail to note, or only weakly suggest, the vital role Third World countries (from Vietnam to Iran) can play and are playing in the downfall of the two superpowers and the overthrow of all systems of oppression.

This can be seen very clearly by comparing recent issues of Revolution with RU's pamphlet, "China's Foreign Policy: a Leninist Policy," printed in 1972. In Revolution there is hardly any mention, never mind a featuring, of the role of the Third World in combatting the superpowers.

When Iran (one of the most difficult cases) is mentioned, for example, the Iranian Student Association's views on the extremely repressive nature of the Shah's regime are given, but the impression left is one-sided, because Revolution fails to point out how Iran's stand in OPEC thwarts the Soviet Union's plans and also creates problems for U.S. imperialism.

By contrast, RU's pamphlet quotes the Organization of Revolutionary Communists (M-L) of Iran in support of China's foreign policy of peaceful coexistence with reactionary government's like the Shah's in order to make use of all contradictions in the fight against imperialism.

U.S. revolutionary organizations are not in the same position as the government of China, but they have a duty to point out the role Third World countries have in the present period, that their standing up to the two superpowers can be objectively revolutionary even when their governments are bourgeois--as Stalin pointed out about the Emir of Afghanistan. RU neglects this.

(In my opinion, U.S. revolutionary organizations not only can but should also point out that the governments and domestic policies of countries like Iran are extremely repressive. OL tends to downplay this aspect, though the Call has run at least one article on the attempt by Iran of "fascist deportations" of dissident Iranian students in the U.S.)

Here, too, on the international United Front Against Imperialism, RU is tending towards a Trotskyist position: reducing all revolutionary struggles to the "pure" class struggle of proletariat and bourgeoisie, ignoring intermediate classes and forces and skipping over the stages during which policies that will win over the middle forces and isolate the die-hards must be adopted. RU's line fails to make use of all contradictions in order to defeat the enemy.

Whether, like some Trotskyist groups (SWP), RU eventually takes on a reformist covering, whether, like the Spartacist League it becomes a "super-revolutionary" group, RU's "Leftism" is leading it toward Trotskyism, which is a serious blow to the tiny new communist movement. Added to the failures of the POC, PL, and CL, the development of RU's line is further evidence that ultra-"Leftism," not Rightism, is the main danger in the new communist movement.