

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

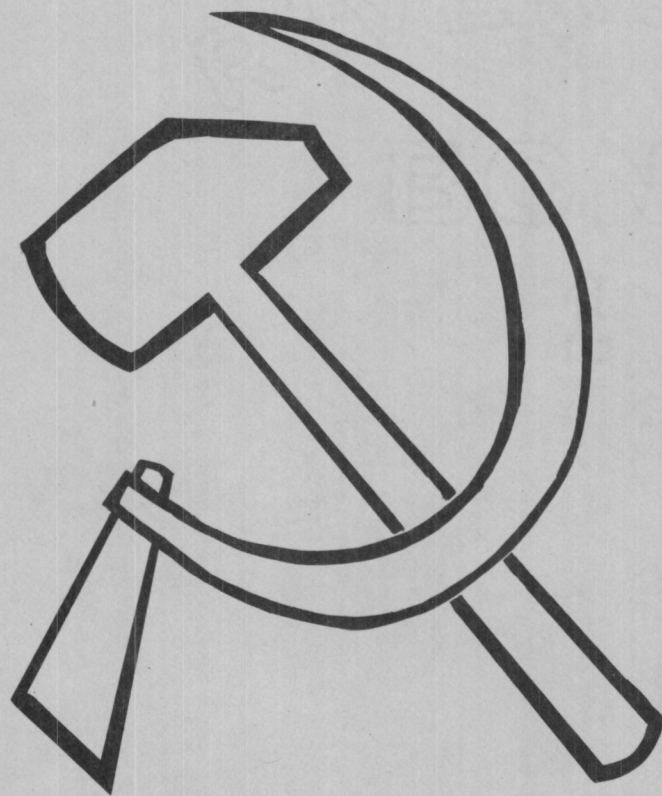
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FOLDER 2

**DIALECTICS OF THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE
COMMUNIST LEAGUE 1972**

Glenn 4/17/77

DIALECTICS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE



THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE ★ 1972

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DIALECTICS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

Marxists' analysis of all phenomena, as Engels said, is from the point of view of its:

"constant motion, change, transformation, development; and the internal connection that makes a continuous whole of all this movement and development."

We see the Communist League as an integral part and the result of the class struggle of the international proletariat. That struggle did not start in 1968. Therefore, it is necessary for us to trace the historical roots of the Communist League. It is only in this manner that we can understand our content and avoid the fatal errors of the past.

To understand our past - and therefore to face the future with the confidence of revolutionaries, we must understand the dialectics of our growth - concretize dialectics - or as it is stated, as applied dialectics.

First of all, we are going to have to grasp the essentials of the dialectical method of Marx and Engels. In his famous statement on dialectics in the "Poverty of Philosophy", Marx wrote:

"Where in does the movement of pure reason consist? In posing itself, opposing itself, composing itself; in formulating itself as thesis, antithesis, synthesis, or yet again, in affirming itself, negating itself and negating its negation."

In other words, Marx's dialectics, as Stalin writes:

"Does not regard the process of development as a simple process of growth, where quantitative changes do not lead to qualitative changes, but as a development which passes from insignificant and imperceptible quantitative changes to open fundamental changes, to qualitative changes; a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another; they occur not accidentally, but as the natural result of an accumulation of imperceptible and gradual quantitative changes."

"The dialectical method there holds that the process of development should be understood not as movements in a circle, but as an onward and upward movement, as a transition from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative state, as a development from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher."

We should search carefully and find out how and why the Marxist revolutionary movement posed itself, opposed itself and elevated itself as a composition to a higher level. Only in this manner can we understand the qualitative level and historical tasks of our Communist League.

Without getting lost in historical analysis, we can say that Imperialism arose as the negation of its opposite, free enterprise. It arose as the antithesis or the opposition but above all as the negation of the previous economic state of affairs. But imperialism is not simply an economic motion -

it is also a social motion; in the process of that motion it is bound to be negated as it negated its negative.

Imperialism, before the Bolshevik revolution, was in the process of becoming moribund. Its contradictions were all internal to that system. That is to say, the struggle was within the imperialist system. The struggle was between the workers in the imperialist countries and the capitalists, between the imperialist nations and the oppressed peoples, between the imperialists and the toiling masses in the colonies, between the toilers in the colonies and feudalistic and comprador bourgeoisie, and between the capitalists of the various imperialist states; the struggle was between the various monopolies and trusts and within the various elements of these monopolies.

What was historic about the Bolshevik revolution is that it ushered in the general crisis of world capitalism, a crisis from which it cannot recover. This crisis was concretized as the development of an external contradiction to imperialism. So we see that the process of the struggle against imperialism reached a nodal line and then crossed over, transforming itself into an external contradiction.

This dialectical process, was the theoretical base from which Lenin projected that Imperialism, moribund capitalism is the prelude to proletarian revolution. That proletarian revolution and socialism presents itself in history as the antithesis or opposition of imperialism. Therefore, we want to examine the dialectical development of the revolutionary movements that were generated by the emergence of U.S.N.A. imperialism as a social, economic and political force.

U.S.N.A. imperialism arose as a consequence of the gigantic accumulation of capital acquired during the long and expensive Civil War in the U.S. The opposition to the oppression of the pre-imperialist and early imperialist capitalists was the formation of a powerful trade union movement led by a variety of Communists, anarchists and syndicalists. But even more so, the principle political opposition to the Wall Street robber barons, was the gigantic Populist movement. This movement was a movement of the petite bourgeoisie. That is to say, of the small farmers, the small business men, the intellectuals and from time to time, labor played some role in this movement. As the Populist movement declined, the scattered intellectuals who knew or studied Marx and Marxism along with the mainly European revolutionaries from the defunct First International, came together to form the Socialist Labor Party. However, this Party really was a composition of the petite bourgeois militant democrats of the Populist and Free Silver struggles, uniting with the dogmatist groupings from the First International as well as the Lassalleian groups of revisionists. So we see that in history, the Communist movement could not and did not arise out of the struggles of the proletariat, but rather arose out of the morality of the middle classes, and their struggle against the insatiable monopolies.

In the United States of North America, as well as throughout the world, there arose two aspects of the struggle against capitalism. These aspects could be described as the objective and subjective aspects. The objective

aspect was the concrete class struggle which is an objective law of class society. Out of this objective struggle arises an antithetical aspect which is the subjective or intellectual understanding of that objective process. Thus, the first communists are hardly ever workers, but are highly theoretical intellectuals. The inevitable composition of this position and opposition is a synthesis that is the unity of the theory and practice of the class struggle and the proletarian revolution. The embodiment of this synthesis is the modern Marxist-Leninist Communist Party.

The Socialist Labor Party was based in the ideology of the German revisionists which said that the workers could gain their freedom through the ballot boxes and by peacefully seizing governmental power, could transfer economic power into the hands of the people. If at that moment the SLP was a thesis, the antithesis or opposition developed as the Revolutionary Socialist Labor Party and later as the International Working Peoples' Association. This grouping, led by the labor martyrs, Parsons and Spies (who were later hanged for the Haymarket affair) opposed using the ballot. The policy of the Association was one of direct action to overthrow the class government by any means. To the peaceful mass legal activity of the SLP was counterpoised the IWPA with their anarchist concepts against all class governments and the concept that a small and desperate group could overthrow the government, and added to it, was the syndicalist concept that the trade unions were an embryonic form of the future society. So, out of the revisionist concepts of mass democracy and legal activity grew its opposite which was united with it; the concept of illegal activity in opposition to the masses. This development of the mid 1880's was concrete proof of Marx's dialectical method. Marx wrote:

"But once it has managed to pose itself as a thesis, this thesis, this thought opposed to itself, splits up into two contradictory thoughts - the positive and the negative, the yes and the no. The struggle between these two antagonistic elements comprised in the antithesis constitutes the dialectical movement. The yes becoming no, the no becoming yes, the yes becoming both yes and no, the no becoming both no and yes, the contraries balance, neutralise, paralyse each other. The fusion of these two contradictory thoughts constitutes a new thought, which is the synthesis of them."

The struggle between the Socialist Labor Party and the International Working Peoples' Association became the framework for the internal struggle of the revolutionaries in the United States of North America, which has maintained itself down to this very day. That framework is: revisionist policies call forth anarcho-syndicalism. As we will see, that is a specific aspect of the political struggle in the U.S.N.A.

By the last decade of the 1800's, new quantitative aspects of the struggle of the revolutionaries began to develop. New personalities began to arrive on the scene. The brilliant Columbia law professor, Daniel De Leon,

joined the Socialist Labor Party and became the editor of the "Daily People." Big Bill Haywood and Vincent St. John emerged as the leaders of the Western Federation of Miners. Eugene V. Debs formed and led the American Railway Union.

Clearly a different type of revolutionary movement was developing with these new personalities as their spokesmen. Under the leadership of De Leon, the syndicalist concepts were systematized. During the struggle between Gompers of the AF of L and the SLP under De Leon, the separation between labor and the political movement was formalized.

The situation was briefly this. The U.S.N.A. imperialists were amassing a wealth that was unheard of a few decades before. They had plenty of money to carry out their political work within their antithesis - the revolutionary movement - and especially the trade union movement. The imperialists skillfully developed the tactic of dividing the working class by bribing the skilled sector - which of course was the sector closest to them. It is possible to divide the working class in many components, for example - the skilled or unskilled sector, the employed and unemployed sector, the native and foreign born, the Negro and Anglo-American, the national minorities and Anglo-American, etc. Imperialism, played upon each of these contradictions and to some extent under certain circumstances raised the level of the contradictions to the level of antagonism. Of course each of these divisions of the working class was reflected in divisions in the political groupings.

By 1900, the biggest labor grouping was the AF of L and through the opportunists under the leadership of Gompers, it was fully committed to support the capitalist two-party system.

The Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance, founded by De Leon, naturally was politically represented by the revisionist SLP. The Peoples' Party (Populist) was supported by such organizations as the Mine Workers and the remnants of the Knights of Labor. This was an anti-monopoly coalition as opposed to the Democratic and Republican parties, which were outright imperialist parties.

It is obvious that the struggles of the revolutionary and working class movements from the 1850's to the early 1900's were a series of quantitative changes that were leading in the direction of an independent working class movement. However, at the turn of the century, the most advanced concrete activity was the anti-monopoly coalitions as represented by the Populist and Peoples' movements or the left sectarian movements under the direction of the SLP.

Led by such men as Morris Hillquit, a labor section of the SLP split off as a reaction against the petite bourgeois sectarian policies of De Leon. This split spelt the end of the SLP as an important Marxist organization. This Hillquit grouping joined the Social Democratic Party, founded and led by Debs and Victor Berger. By 1900, it was clear that a very important qualitative change had taken place in the labor movement in the United States of North America. The labor lieutenant theories of Gompers on the right, linked with

the anti-Marxist, revisionist, sectarian policies of De Leon on the left and the result was that to this very day the trade unions reject the concept of a party of the working class.

The capitalists understand the laws of the unity of opposites better than do the revolutionaries on the Left. The trade unions cannot move forward unless they unify their antithetical aspects; that is broad organizations of the working class - the trade unions, expressed by their opposite, a broad party of labor. This step has been attempted several times but the 'left' labor leaders have succeeded in blocking this move.

In 1901, the Socialist Party was formed from the rebels of the SLP and the sectarian grouping under Debs, (the SDP). The leaders of that Party were rabid white chauvinists. The socialist periodicals, the Social Democratic Review and the International Socialist Review, filled their pages with the "proof" of the inferiority of the Negro people and with open calls for the extermination of the Negro workers. Gene Debs was opposed to allowing Negroes in the Party.

In spite of it all, the instinct of the radicals for unity proceeded. In 1905, the radical workers came together as the Industrial Workers of the World, sixteen National and Local unions of the A.F. of L.; the Western Federation of Miners, the American Labor Union, the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance, United Metal Workers and the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees. Basically, the I.W.W. was created by the Left-wing of the Socialist Party and its founders were a cabal of revisionists and syndicalists - Debs, De Leon and Big Bill Haywood.

The more the Socialists turned to revisionism and reformism, the more the I.W.W. turned to syndicalism. Even when the big unions and the political organizations pulled out, the I.W.W. continued its drive toward the big strikes and the revolution by conspiracy. As the socialist movement moved to the right, the I.W.W. split, with William Z. Foster forming the Syndicalist League because of his recently discovered opposition to Dual Unionism. The Syndicalist League did not last through 1914, but William Z. Foster was now established as a leader of the Anarcho-Syndicalists. A position he held, even to his death.

The Socialist Party could not help but split. Although the C.P.U.S.A. tries to infer that the split was between Left Marxists and right opportunists, in fact the split was between revisionism and syndicalism. By 1909, the main leaders of syndicalism were kicked out or resigned from the Party. In 1912, an even more fundamental split took place with Bill Haywood being expelled from the Central Committee. Charles Ruthenberg, an Ohio carpenter, emerged as the principle leader of the Lefts in the Socialist Party.

It is obvious that there was a growing coalescence of the forces of syndicalism along with some primitive Marxism, that was bound to be part of a qualitative leap in the U.S.N.A. revolution. These forces, as we have seen, principally the Left-wing of the Socialist Party led by Ruthenberg, were a cabal of intellectuals and petite professionals, coupled with flamboyant, colorful syndicalists such as Big Bill Haywood of the Western Federation of

Miners. However, these elements did involve themselves in political life, ran candidates and, in general, what Marxism that was to develop had to be developed out of this grouping. The other elements were principally the remnants of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) where Foster still had influence, and the Syndicalist League that was openly led by William Z. Foster, who later became the long-time leader of the C.P.U.S.A.

The constant realignment and re-grouping of the Left was an indication of the political and theoretical instability that plagued the opportunists and the syndicalists. In 1915, Foster led the formation of the International Trade Union Education League. This syndicalist group differed from the rest only in that it advocated working in the established unions. By 1917, the ITUEL was dead; however, the leading members were to influence the labor and revolutionary movement for a long time. Foster and the syndicalist groups led by him organized the steel strike of 1919 and the meat packing strike of 1918. This strike was of special importance because it was one of the first industrial strikes in the big northern cities to involve a large number of Negroes who were doing a great amount of struggling, suffering, and dying in the class struggle, but were completely ignored by the chauvinist, so-called revolutionaries - Foster, Wagenknecht, and co. included.

The Soviet Revolution had a fundamental and profound impact throughout the world. The general crisis of world capitalism was ushered in, and the political realignments began to take place as a reflection of this great historic event. Many forces began to rally around the Soviet Revolution and the Communist International. These forces had only scanty knowledge of why they were fighting, and many thought that indeed the dreams of syndicalism were coming true. Proof of this is the great number of 'revolutionaries' who deserted the movement when the Bolsheviks constructed a state.

Nevertheless, the immediate political result of the Revolution was the split between the right and the left of the Socialist Party and the splitting amongst the various anarcho-syndicalist groups.

The split in the Socialist Party was fundamental. After a series of manouvers, Charles Ruthenberg led the left of the S.P. and issued a call for the formation of the Communist Party. This call was resisted by Alfred Wagenknecht and a number of others who were later to seize control of the future C.P.U.S.A.

When the Socialist Party convention was finally called in 1919, A. Wagenknecht and his side-kick John Reed were expelled. The expelled group immediately called themselves the Communist Labor Party, while the Michigan federation group led by Ruthenberg formed the Communist Party of America. The syndicalists, revisionists, and anarchists who were dazzled by the splendor of the Soviet Revolution and by the acknowledged brilliance of Lenin rushed to declare themselves Communists - but even in this heady moment of revolution they could not unite.

The struggle amongst the syndicalists of the Communist Party continued during its founding convention and finally the Michigan group was expelled. They formed the Proletarian Party. Ruthenberg remained the chairman of the Communist Party.

It should be noted that both parties ignored the Negro Question; and in the main only covered over their syndicalism by the demand now for a dictatorship of the proletariat. That was the extent of the program of Marxism in the U.S.N.A.

As unity negotiations went on into 1920, Ruthenberg split with the Communist Party and joined the C.L.P. as did the future theoretician, Alexander Bittlemann of the Jewish Federation. Finally in May, 1920, a formal unity was achieved under the heading of the United Communist Party of America, led by Charles Ruthenberg.

Under the prodding of the Communist International (to which both the C.P. and the C.L.P. were affiliated), a unity conference was held in May, 1921 at Woodstock, New York. Formal unity was achieved and Ruthenberg was elected as the leader of this grand federation of radicals, syndicalists, anarchists, dual unionists, language and national federations that were hang-overs from De Leon's sectarianism, Foster's syndicalism, John Reed's opportunism, Bittleman's skillful manouvering of the big Jewish sections, the I.W.W. and the Socialist Federations. Small wonder that Marxism-Leninism almost strangled in the morass. Negro leaders oscillated toward the new Communist Party. A. Phillip Randolph, Richard B. Moore, and Cyril Briggs, for example, are just as anti-communist today as they were then. But considering the fact that the Communist Party ignored the Negro Question in general and Negroes in particular it is no small wonder that the Negro labor militants drifted into anti-communism.

In the summer of 1921, Foster and the Trade Union Educational League joined the C.P. The cabal was complete. Syndicalism without dual unionism, opportunism under the Marxist slogans, sectarianism under the banner of revolution. Federationism under the slogan of unity. Such was the Communist Party of the recession of 1921.

We have seen thus far that the fundamental motion of the revolution in the United States of North America has been that each grouping represents a unity of opposites. This uniting of opposites is inevitably followed by the new entity splitting, to form again on at least a quantitatively higher level.

Despite its germs of destruction, the Communist Party began and for many years maintained a free wheeling militancy and unity in struggle that is an important heritage of the revolution of our time. The Communist Party formed many front organizations - the Trade Union Unity League, the Workers Party and many others that played a real role in the struggle to build a union movement and in many class struggles.

Internally, the struggle continued between the factions; and, it should be emphasized that the struggle was not one of Marxism and Revisionism, but between the various syndicalist and opportunist elements. However, by the end of 1924, the groupings had formalized behind Ruthenberg and Pepper on the one hand and Foster and Bittlemann on the other. As rotten as Pepper was, that group was more realistic than the syndicalist Foster.

In 1927, Ruthenberg died. Despite the unprincipled struggle inside the C.P., Ruthenberg remained the General Secretary and was respected by both factions. Ruthenberg was well known and respected in international Communist circles. He died of appendicitis, that despite warnings, he would not attend to. His death threw the struggle into the open and sealed the fate of the so-called C.P.U.S.A.

Under the prodding of the Communist International, The C.P.U.S.A. began to assume the form, but not the content, of a party of a New Type.

Every grouping that came together to form the Communist Party kept their identity in the form of factions. This situation was so bad that the Communist International called the principle leaders of the factions to Moscow in an unsuccessful attempt to unite the Party.

At this meeting of the Communist International, Stalin laid bare the syndicalism and liberalism of each of the factions. Whereas the Foster-Bittlemann group attempted to curry support from Stalin by calling themselves Stalinites, the Lovestone-Pepper group tried to curry favor by declaring themselves as super-supporters of the CI. However, Stalin ripped both groups apart with criticism that is as valid today as in 1929.

Stalin said:

"Both groups are guilty of the fundamental error of exaggerating the specific features of American capitalism. You know that this exaggeration lies at the root of every opportunist error committed both by the majority and the minority group."

Further at the second session, (May 14, 1929), Stalin summed up:

"...The extreme factionalism of the leaders of the majority has driven them into the path of insubordination, and hence of warfare against the Comintern."

"It is also not worth attempting to show that it is in fact the present leaders of the majority of the Communist Party of America who have violated, and continue to violate the basic decisions of the Congress of the Comintern and its executive organs on the question of liquidation of factionalism in the American Communist Party."

Stalin went on to speak a truth that stands to this very day:

"For it must after all be realized, comrades," Stalin warned, "that factionalism is the fundamental evil of the American Communist Party."

Stalin evaluated Foster in this manner:

"Did not Comrade Foster know that he should have held aloof

from the concealed Trotskyites that were in his group? Why, in spite of repeated warnings, did he not repudiate them at the time? Because he behaved first and foremost as a factionalist. Because in the factional fight against the Lovestone group even concealed Trotskyites might be useful to him. Because the blindness of factionalism dulls the Party sense in people and makes them indiscriminating as to the means they employ. It is true, such a policy is bad and irreconcilable with the interests of the Party. But factionalists as a rule are inclined to forget the interests of the Party - all they can think of is their own factional point of view."

Finally, Stalin issued the all too true warning to the C.P.U.S.A.:

"....factionalism, by weakening the will for unity in the Party and by undermining its iron discipline creates within the Party a peculiar factional regime. As a result of which the whole internal life of our Party is robbed of its conspirative protection in the face of the class enemy, and the Party itself runs the danger of being transformed into a plaything of the agents of the bourgeoisie."

After the 6th Congress of the CI, the Lovestone-Gitlow-Pepper clique split off from the Party and left the syndicalists under Foster and Bittlemann, the I.W.W.'s under Wagenknecht and Elizabeth Guerly Flynn and some remnants of the Socialist Party. Thus "unity" was achieved in the Party on the eve of the great Depression.

The C.P.U.S.A. likes to boast of its early recognition of the Negro National Question. In fact, the C.P.U.S.A. carried on the policy of the forerunners of the C.P. - the Syndicalist League, the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party and the I.W.W. That policy was to ignore the peonage of the Negro people, to turn their eyes from the horror of the lynch mob, to close their nostrils to the smell of burning flesh.

In 1920, the great Lenin, based on a gigantic accumulation of facts, said to the Congress of the CI. and to the C.P.U.S.A.:

"Second, it is necessary for the Communist Parties to render direct aid to the revolutionary movements in the dependent and subject nations, (for example, in Ireland, the Negroes in America, etc.) and in the colonies."

The C.P.U.S.A. continued to disregard the Negro question until the CI at the 6th Congress, in 1929, rammed the Negro resolution down the resisting throats of the C.P.U.S.A. The C.P.U.S.A. was formed from a base of 14,000 radicals in 1921, yet in 1929 at the Congress, the C.P.U.S.A. reported a total Negro membership of 200. After the Negro National resolution, by 1930, the C.P.U.S.A.'s Negro membership rose to almost 1,500.

The criticism of the CI developed a sharp struggle within the Party. Jay Lovestone and Pepper were isolated and expelled. Foster then turned on his chief henchman, Cannon, (who was a Trotskyite) and expelled him and his

followers from the Party. Then the remaining heads of factions came together to cleanse the Party. Robert Minor, Marx Bedacht, Winestone and Foster had firm control. The puny Professor Earl Browder in Peking University was invited to return home. Earl Browder began his grooming for the leadership of the Party because the factionalists couldn't possibly agree on a leader.

Lenin once said that it was easy to be a revolutionary in a revolution. And so it was with the C.P.U.S.A. As the economic crisis developed and deepened the C.P.U.S.A. launched a furious, if syndicalist struggle to organize and feed the starving millions.

It was during this period that the contradictions within the C.P.U.S.A. became very apparent. That contradiction posed itself as whether to do mass or revolutionary work - how to combine them, how to take democratic demands and make revolutionary demands of them. The very depression that gave the C.P.U.S.A. its opportunity also created the conditions for its destruction. For example, by 1934, 30% of the professionals were unemployed; 91,000 professionals were on relief and working on the Public Works Administration. These angry frustrated intellectuals along with a host of do-gooders, and adventurers, flocked to the standards of the Party. Small wonder that the sharp veer to the right was the result of the upsurge of the masses.

The world wide impact of the 7th World Congress was largely lost on the C.P.U.S.A. Their concepts of the United Front could be summed up as: In the labor movement, a left center coalition with the center in the leadership. Politically, develop an international and national struggle against fascism under the leadership of Roosevelt and the Democratic Party. When Roosevelt took Browder out of jail in 1941 and then invited him to the White House for dinner, the fate of the Communist Party was sealed. To this day the C.P.U.S.A. has not broken the style of work that makes them the tail of the liberal bourgeoisie.

During the depression period, the Communist Party was the spark plug for almost every progressive motion in the country. The courage of the individual members and the will to sacrifice should be studied by every revolutionary. On the battle field of the masses and in the struggle for liberal democracy, the Communists were outstanding. However, we must learn the lessons in full, and the other part of the lesson is that in the battle for an insurrectionary movement, in the battle to produce a steeled bolshevized Party, the C.P.U.S.A. never even got started. The anti-Marxist concepts of American Exceptionalism that Stalin warned against in 1929 and which were the basis for the expulsion of the Lovestone-Pepper gang, was never thrown out of the Party. Browder and Foster carried on the struggle. Browder developed his theories of exceptionalism in the guise of ultra-imperialism. Foster went even further and developed the absurd theory that the Negro question was the question of a "nation within a nation."

The major motion within the Party reached its climax in May of 1944. The special convention of the Party dissolved the C.P.U.S.A. and set up a political association in its place. Foster was demoted, but remained in the leadership of the Party. In 1945, Duclos, Secretary of the French Party wrote and published his famous letter. Dutifully, the Browderite majority removed Browder and replaced Foster. The fact is, that when the Party was reconstituted it was reconstituted with the same basic leadership that dissolved the C.P.U.S.A. a year before. Actually, Browder was the scapegoat who went too far, too fast. The policies of class collaboration remained.

Based on the enormous prestige of the Soviet Union, the C.P.U.S.A. expanded rapidly and in 1948, registered 98,000 members. Under these conditions the State moved against the Party and the result was the capitulation of the C.P.U.S.A.

Relying on the institutionalized white chauvinism of the Party, the new set of liquidators and revisionists attacked the Party at its weakest link. The Party in the South and in Puerto Rico were illegally dissolved in 1949. The broadly based and militant Negro Labor Councils were dissolved and a real purge was launched against the Negro members and workers in general. The Party's roles fell drastically. In the confused situation, a number of groupings came together. Factionalism again broke out as a legal style of work in the Party. Foster again emerged as the leader of the biggest group that had the gall to call themselves the consistent Left caucus, as against the openly liquidationist groupings around Gates, Dennis, etc. After the formation of the various groupings, a core of Marxists - Leninists arose that was quickly dubbed the ultra - left. This caucus had members from across the country and had a relatively firm grasp on Marxism.

At the 16th Convention of the C.P.U.S.A. in 1954, it was obvious that the Party was fractured beyond repair, but the politicking inside the Party continued. The 17th convention in 1958, came out fully for revisionism. Also by that time it was apparent that the revisionism of the C.P.U.S.A. was an adjunct of the Khrushchov revisionists in the U.S.S.R. Overwhelmed by national and international revisionism, the Marxists left the Party in droves. The organized caucuses disbanded or were expelled. The ultra-left caucus withdrew from the Party under its policy of disengagement and on Labor Day 1958 formed the Provisional Organizing Committee to reconstitute a Marxist - Leninist Communist Party in the United States. They issued a paper named the Vanguard which contained a statement of principles and set about organizing themselves. With the formation of the POC, the development of the revolutionary movement within the United States of North America reached a new qualitative level. Whereas the POC began as a Marxist caucus within the Party, the normal course of developments soon placed it in a position as opposing the revisionism of the Party - from the outside of the Party. Thus the struggle against revisionism ceased to be an internal phenomena and became external, thus allowing for a further development of the movement.

A few other groupings sprang up after the 17th Convention of the Party. Amongst these were "Hammer and Steel" and the phoney movement, the Progressive Labor Movement. Both of these groups moved quickly to the right and took a Trotskyite position.

The POC started out with about 400 members, the majority of these being professionals who were out of the Party apparatus and wanted back in. Mickey Lima and the whole West Coast organization quickly deserted the POC. The sailors and the East Coast Waterfront section soon followed. Left-wing errors in dealing with the struggle against revisionism reduced the Cleveland organization from 45 to 2 in a period of several months. By the summer of 1959, The POC was reduced to a hard core grouping of Puerto Rican and Negro Communists and a handful of Anglo-American Communists. The leadership was principally Armando Roman, former Queens County functionary and Harold Allen of Philadelphia, leader of the Pennsylvania District Negro Caucus. For a period of time, the POC did outstanding work in the defense of Leninism ,

especially in the field of reconstituting the Leninist concept of the National question. However, the POC could not but carry over some of the liberalism and revisionism of the C.P.U.S.A. This was clearly shown how while they took a clear position on the question of independence for Puerto Rico, the position on the Negro National Question was typical liberal democracy. The political slogan for the Negro question was the old slogan of Self-Determination for the Black Belt. Worse yet they covered this liberalism with more liberal rationale that the Negro people had not expressed a desire for independence. This basically anti-Leninist position on the Negro question along with a distortion of the policy of disengagement forced the POC into deeper sectarian and ultra-leftishness. For example, the well know Leninist thesis on the bribery of the working class, was translated to mean that the working class is the main pillar of fascism and imperialism and, that only the oppressed peoples are proletarians. Several efforts were made at expansion but they all failed principally because the bureaucratic structure of the POC along with a great deal of cronyism prevented the cadre in the outlying areas from developing any initiative.

This inability of the POC to completely rid itself of the scars of its birth from the Party are not difficult to understand. Nothing can step clean from its environment; like Minerva from the thigh of Zeus.

Marxism shows us how, in the development of thought, as well as in reality in the struggle that produces a synthesis, the negative is negated, it is not abolished. Thus it is impossible for anything to develop without bringing with it the legacy of its birth. Thus it was with the POC.

In 1963, a final effort at expansion was made. Comrades were sent to aid the Cleveland collective and to Los Angeles where a new collective was being formed under the leadership of Michael Laski and Arnold Hoffman.

It soon became apparent that there was a serious deviation from the proletariat in the L.A. area. From the beginning the L.A. group was torn with internal struggles. Laski had the backing of the national office under Roman and the struggle against the provocative and anti-working class antics of Laski and Hoffman proceeded with great difficulty.

During the historic uprising in Watts, Laski and Hoffman were thoroughly exposed as agents of intrigue and were expelled from the POC. Laski was able to pull the Frisco section out with him. This group under a Negro adventurer named Sherman, soon disappeared from view. Laski joined up with first one and then another group of adventurers of black nationalists, but was increasingly isolated from the movement. By 1969, he retired from politics, opened up a trucking firm and two apartment buildings in the Vermont area of Los Angeles.

By 1967, it was apparent, that the POC while appearing to take a turn to the left, was taking a serious turn to the right. They began a policy of searching for the roots of revisionism and like the PLP founde these roots to be with Stalin, Dimitrov, the 7th World Congress of the C.I. and then took steps to throw Mao in for good measure. These steps were resisted on the West Coast.

Contact between the POC and San Pedro group of Marxists was made. This group had a small but solid base among the militant and radicals in the San Pedro Area.

The Labor day 1968 POC Conference in New York, spelt the end of a period. By that time, the POC was narrowed down to a clique of ex-Puerto Rican nationalists, small groupings of Negro comrades and the immediate family ties of the comrades. By that time, the POC had completed the turn and now it was thoroughly disgusted with the Anglo-American working class; it held the Trotskyite position on the Soviet Revolution and it was increasingly steeped with hatred for the leadership of the Revolution, especially Mao, whom they labeled as the chief revisionist.

The California delegation could not resist, but did not join in the denunciation of Stalin and Mao. Armando Roman had completed the transformation into an outright scab. The New York Times gleefully reprinted pages from the Vanquard where Roman exposed the confidential discussions that had been held with certain U.N. delegations. The social degeneracy at the top of the organization was open and defended.

Registering some 42 members some ten years after disengagement from the Party, and clearly seeing that they were hopelessly isolated from the working class, the POC declared itself a Party and took the name, American Workers Communist Party. Armando Roman, as General Secretary and Harold Allen, who was now suffering from alcoholism was named Chairman.

Shortly after the California delegation returned to Los Angeles, Roman secretly withdrew the Puerto Rican comrades and without charges or a trial expelled the California group.

The small collective in Los Angeles struggled hard to hold itself together and to strike out on its own, dumping the Trotskyite and petite bourgeois nationalist orientation that had been imposed on it.

The collective called a small conference to evaluate the situation and to form the California Communist League. This basic collective was joined by the San Pedro grouping.

The CCL was thrown into immediate conflict with certain groups, especially the Bay Area Revolutionary Union. Out of these beginning struggles the line began to emerge. The basic question of building the mass movement or building a core of communist cadre was settled; the line on the Negro and National Question emerged with some difficult struggle within and around the organization.

Contact was made with a large grouping of mainly ex-SDS militants who were studying the Thought of Mao Tse Tung. Their leading group was recruited into the CCL. With this expanded base, May Day 1969 was held in conjunction with this grouping which called itself the Marxist-Leninist Workers Association. Out of the highly enthusiastic meeting came plans to merge the two groups. This merger took place in Feb. 1970. Now the CCL had the necessary base to start an aggressive program of expansion. As the financial and cadre demands have grown, the Communist League has sent organizers to the San

Francisco Bay area, the Chicago area and New York where collectives are stabilizing themselves.

Thus we see, that the formation of the California Communist League and its growth into the Communist League is part of the inevitable growth of the revolution in the U.S.N.A. The C.L. has the advantage of inheriting all that is positive in the history of the Communist movement. It has the weapon of understanding the past and the reasons for the failure of the past. This does not mean that the League is destined to become the Bolshevik Party in the U.S.N.A. We can do it; the path is clear; the doors are opened to us. Our success is, to a great extent dependent on whether we can hook the League into the general world-wide revolutionary movement, or fall into the subjectivity of American Exceptionalism.

The objective conditions - the environment is highly favorable to us. The question is now whether we will be able to supply history with the subjective factors that will allow for the outburst of a real movement in this country.

We are at that stage of our development when the universal and dialectical slogan of international Communism will determine our future. That slogan is:

"APPLY THE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS OF MARXISM-LENINISM TO THE SPECIFIC AND CONCRETE SITUATION WITHIN OUR COUNTRY."