



FOR THE STRUGGLE OF THE
NATIONAL COMRADES
FOR THE STRUGGLE

VIVA LAS
BASES
DE APOYO

VIVA EL
MARXISMO.
LENINISMO.
MAOISMO



**Documents of the U.S.
Maoist Conference
For Line Struggle**

Table of Contents

Publishers note	04
Foreword.....	05
Red Guards Kansas City	
Postmodernism in the Imperialist Country.....	08
Red Guards Charlotte	
On Proletarian Feminism.....	36
Red Guards Austin	
Presentation and Brief Summary on the Chicano National Question.....	84
Red Guards Los Angeles	
On the Universality of Protracted People's War.....	109
Red Guards Austin	
The New Line of Red Guards Kansas City.....	133
Red Guards Kansas City	
Toward the Sea of Armed Masses.....	151
Red Guards Austin	
Maoist Analysis of Gentrification in Boyle Heights and Los Angeles.....	203
Red Guards Los Angeles	

Note from the Publisher

This collection of never before published documents highlights the ongoing line struggle in the various Maoist Collectives across the U.S. As a result of the conference some positions have been united on and others continue to be the basis of organized two-line struggle in the Maoist tradition. Fourth Sword Publications has chosen to make this Conference available in one volume. We do not endorse or unite with all of the positions taken here but consider them valuable to the continuation of ideological struggle.

Some of the groups present at the Conference chose not to include their speeches in the book for various reasons; including potential security risks from making private speeches available to the public. Documentation of the contending lines is not included as these matters must be resolved between the collectives present. Overall we consider the Maoist Conference for Line Struggle to have been a success and we are honored to have been given permission by the attending speakers to make these documents available in print.

Foreword

We are excited to announce that the inaugural Maoist Conference for Line Struggle was a historic success. The conference took place in Kansas City, Missouri, in January of 2018, and had representatives from nine different major cities. The goal of the conference was to facilitate greater unity among various Maoist collectives toward the effort to build the Maoist Communist Party via principled line struggle and political discussion.

This is a collection of documents that were presented and struggled over during the course of the two-day conference. Each collective had the opportunity to submit topics for presentation at the conference. Each presentation was given at least a one-hour time-slot, followed by an hour of structured line struggle and discussion.

According to our research, this was the first Marxism-Leninism-Maoism conference ever held in the United States. This was the first of what should be a series of conferences that will serve as precursors to an eventual congress and the formation of a Party Liaison Committee. If we are serious about building a Party that can one day attain power and emancipate our class, then we have to continue organizing conferences and forums where Maoist cadre can gather in person to exchange ideas and formulate a serious political line and program for the Party.

The MCLS took months of preparation and couldn't have happened without the firm dedication and hard work of Maoist cadres all over the country. The nine cities represented at the conference were:

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Austin, Texas

Charlotte, North Carolina

Chicago, Illinois

Houston, Texas

Kansas City, Missouri

Los Angeles, California

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

St. Louis, Missouri

All of the organizations and collectives in attendance left the conference with a strengthened and solidified basis for unity. Already one collective has formed post-MCLS, with the announcement of Red Path Collective in St. Louis, and we hope that we'll soon see collectives announced in Chicago and in Michigan. We also hope that we'll see more collectives at the next conference formed by people who weren't in attendance at the first conference. If you're trying to get something organized in your area, do not hesitate to reach

out to a collective that's aligned with the Party-building effort for guidance, resources, and leadership.

Revolution is a serious prospect that could cost us everything, but as the bourgeois world continues to decay around us and fascism continues to fester, our class has little hope without the success of a revolutionary Communist Party. It is our belief that there were attendees at the MCLS who will, one day, whether sooner or later, be instrumental in building the Communist Party that will ultimately lead an earth-shattering revolution that will topple the imperialist center.

Red salute to all who fight for the future of our class!

—Red Guards Kansas City, 2018

Postmodernism in the Imperialist Country

Red Guards Charlotte

In our mass work, postmodernists have pushed back on our use of the term “postmodernism.” They haven’t yet been convinced of its danger, and currently argue for its use by claiming that the term is too “vague” and is a mislabeling of other issues.

It is true that we could benefit from having a concrete definition of postmodernism and its manifestations, so that we can oppose it more sharply. Criticism is a gift. Even if the “criticism” is wrong, it helps us sharpen ourselves in opposing it. This is how we will win.

Maoism is not armed identity politics, and Maoism is not postmodernism. So how are they different then? Maoism says that within the U.S. the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is primary. Between proletariat and bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie is the primary aspect, which means concretely the U.S. is a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. This is where postmodernism first departs from Maoism. Postmodernists in practice don’t recognize that class is the primary contradiction within this society, let alone recognize who has the upper hand in that.

The biggest threat that postmodernism poses is dissolving proletarian revolutionary organizations. The question of political power is the reason for this. Maoism, understanding the primary contradiction in society, seeks political power for the proletariat.

Postmodernism, because it doesn't recognize power as something yielded in service to a class, seeks political power for none. It removes class character from power. It criticizes "power" in general instead of the political power of the current ruling class. Foucault is one of the top postmodernists in this sense. Power is recognized, but as dissipated from a lot of different sources instead of as something wielded by a class over another class.

Therefore, objectively, postmodernism is a ruling-class ideology: in not choosing a side on the question of power, it has objectively chosen the side of the oppressor. This failure to assign class character also shows up in handling the question of violence. According to many postmodernists, both power and violence are bad no matter which class they are in service to. Why? Because they are being viewed only as flat and abstract ideas, not material things that exist, and that can therefore take on a new shape, in our world.

Since classes are not principal to postmodernism, it centers the secondary contradictions in society as if they were primary. And even in doing this it does not coherently prioritize any contradiction over any other, because it rejects the idea that there can be a hierarchy of contradictions. But even with this theoretical rejection of priorities, it has already prioritized the superstructure as primary,

barely recognizing the base if at all. Every contradiction in society, every manifestation of oppression, is front and center all at once, and then sometimes one usurps another in oppression Olympics.

Stemming from its idealism, postmodernism values the gains of the individual over the gains of the class. Take patriarchy, a “secondary” contradiction in society, as an example. For the postmodernist, more women CEOs are a fine substitute for the masses of working women gaining political power. Even when further “left” postmodernists criticize this, they end up supporting the same thing in another form.

Here form and essence form a contradiction because in form, the changes are good. Representation is progressive. But, in essence, the changes actually ensure the unchallenged rule of the bourgeoisie.

This example stems from both liberal and postmodern trends: what does having more CEO women do to free proletarian women from their exploitation? Nothing. What about the women and girls who are bought and sold through institutionalized rape? Women ascending to the status of the bourgeoisie does not help them.

But what it does do is temporarily satisfy the demands of some who call themselves feminists, by meeting their demands. With such a concession feminism doesn't become revolutionary in its day-to-day application. This is the limitation. Postmodernism seeks individualization in the face of totalization, and, therefore, disunity in the face of unity.

* * *

We must tackle the questions of patriarchy and oppressed nations. Long-term, this is the best way to prevent postmodern analyses from filling the void.

Within the imperialist country Charlotte is no exception to having to confront postmodernism daily. RGC is not the first to attempt to theorize this and in fact our understanding and development on this issue is largely due to comrades in other cities, and then other countries, whose work we look up to and follow. We are not immune to postmodernism internally and have had to oppose it within our own ranks, and must continue to.

“Postmodernism Today: A Brief Introduction” by Siraj

This piece is useful. It laid solid foundations as to how postmodernism is expressed. It was written to go into postmodernism itself very deeply, and to touch on its shortcomings, giving us more of a full picture. In writing this we heavily referred to it and have by and large defended its claims.

In our opinion, the piece may have been written specifically to win over a more academic crowd, but this could be wrong. Our main criticism is that it did not necessarily identify the main contradiction and use that throughout the piece. Perhaps as an introduction it did not aim to do so. Since postmodernism is not in stasis, and because the piece was written around fifteen years ago or more, we need to

take what it gave us and develop it further. Before the problem can be solved fully it needs to be understood fully.

The Party-building effort does depend on the Maoist movement's ability to attack postmodernism thoroughly, as ruling-class ideology is one of our biggest obstacles, both internally and externally. It will continue to be. We must wage a protracted struggle against it and overthrow its dominance.

Good Questions, Bad Answers

The contradiction concerning power is primary, and the other contradictions within postmodernism build off of this one. Below are some of the common manifestations of postmodernism in today's conditions. The list should be elaborated so that it comes to reflect reality. The forms listed should not be considered in vacuums separate from each other, but as a whole—a historical trend that is inherently political.

1. Rejects historical materialism

Again, in analyzing the world postmodernism stays within the realm of ideas, and this is how its rejection of historical materialism manifests. The analysis of whatever is coming into question is not rooted in its history. Postmodernists regard history abstractly and not as a moving thing. Their analysis does not pose history of the development of production as directly related to the ideas prominent in society.

This is why, when postmodernism rears its ugly head while calling itself “Maoist,” it reduces Maoism just to a set of principles, a checklist of empty platitudes, but in actual analysis substitutes the easier set of politics already popular on the left.

One good example of this is postmodernists pretending that “sex work” is not oppressive. What is commonly referred to as “sex work” results from patriarchy. Primary within what is called “sex work” are prostitutes—and strippers, “cam girls,” and so on are a secondary manifestation.

In this case postmodernists do not bother to examine the history of prostitution and its objective situation in patriarchy. They view prostitution in a kind of vacuum where participation in it can somehow shape the reality of misogyny for the better, instead of viewing it in its totality, where it already objectively helped the bourgeoisie through patriarchy. Postmodernism’s rejection of historical materialism can be expressed in one phrase: treating the old as if it were new.

2. Changes in language become the force of social change

Postmodernists may not always say this word for word, but it is what they put into practice. Their language changes may appear radical, but do not get to the root of the issue.

For example, misogyny is renamed “femmephobia” (which describes something smaller than the totality of misogyny). Talking about how femininity is specifically hated is good, but it is not divorced from misogyny. In practice “femme-

phobia,” because it does not have a historical materialist definition, becomes subject to redefinition by an individual at any given time. In the absence of historical materialism, this is how oppression is confronted.

3. Microaggressions as the source of oppression

Because language is so important, the ways things are said means more than what is represented by the words. Racism and misogyny do manifest in one-on-one interactions. But in practice postmodernist activists spend much more time and put much more importance on these individual-level interactions than they do on collective material liberation—worse, privilege-checking becomes liberation. Even when postmodernists organize together this does not mean that their individualized ideology has changed.

To understand the difference between totalized oppression and microaggressions we can look to the words of the PCR-RCP: “The oppression of women is not the deed of the identitarian free will of individuals. It imposed itself to every woman, and did so independently of the subjective perception each woman had of herself. The oppression of women is universal, and so will be their liberation.”

4. Identity politics

“One of the main forms postmodernism takes in leftist circles is identity politics. As we use it here, the term ‘identity politics’ refers to a method for analyzing the world that puts identity as principal over political line. That is, it treats the opinions expressed by individuals who face oppression

as the indisputable truth. It should go without saying that this method of analysis denies reliable access to the truth by throwing out the possibility that the opinion of the individual or group in question could be contradicted by a scientific analysis of capitalism-imperialism, as informed by a deep and broad examination of the facts of history. “(Red Guards Austin, “On Identity Opportunism”)

Idealism is the reason for the phenomenon identified here by RGA. In practice it says the identity forms the truth, rather than the truth forming the oppression experienced by the individual with the identity—that the asserted moral framework is more important than political line.

In general identity politics are very alien to working-class people. Postmodernists need to learn from the masses in this way. In mass work we ourselves have had to, when the Points of Unity of a local mass organization were criticized by a community member for being written “for y’all not for us”—in a style and content that was too insular to the left. He was right, and that set of Points of Unity had a lot of postmodernism in it. We ended up rupturing with the leftover postmodernism represented there, and changing the Points of Unity.

Individualism is a petty-bourgeois sickness. Because of capitalism, ideas like individualism are widespread and deeply rooted, and this cannot be ignored. But in spite of this, the working class does yearn for unity among its oppressed sections. The working class, though aware of its exploitation to some extent, is unfamiliar with individualism in the form of identity politics, and when confronted with it, rejects it.

This is because identity politics don't get to the root of exploitation, and the masses can smell it. Activist communities cannot say the same, and this is because their class stand is petty-bourgeois.

Similarities and differences among the working class form a contradiction, and for proletarian unity to be achieved, the masses must turn the similarities into the dominant force in that relationship. Today's left, in all its postmodern glory, has made it out to seem like differences among the working class are dominant, and in general this does not reflect reality.

Postmodernism is partially a response to the contradictions of patriarchy, white supremacy, and other ways exploitation manifests. In the face of these contradictions, postmodernism sought answers that would emphasize the dominated aspects (in patriarchy, women; in white supremacy, oppressed nations). This is not bad, because the dominated people must be free. But postmodernism overcorrected for the white-chauvinist and male-chauvinist errors by becoming their mechanical opposite, taking away the full picture that describes the reality of exploitation, and instead saying that it is all represented by listening to the right voices: those of the dominated sections in society. This is a subjectivist error: the totality of the contradiction is not identified, and so no concrete plan for action can be made. In the face of this many radical postmodern activists either drop out of politics or take one of the "plans for action" available—electoral politics and/or NGOs. And so, liberalism is currently taking the form of postmodernism in many ways.

5. Class is ignored

Class oppression is turned into “classism,” just another oppression on a level playing field with other oppressions. And even then it’s about whether a person is poor or not and not about relation to the means of production.

It is true that secondary contradictions should not be ignored, and to do so is a subjectivist error.

Take women’s liberation and capitalism, for example: the two are not equal as determining factors in society. The contradiction between proletarian women and proletarian men is secondary to the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Postmodernism however would have us not prioritize one over the other. But what they have really done is insist that we not take a starting point to transforming society. The radical feminists chose a primary contradiction but got it wrong and said that the primary contradiction in society was between women and men. This is absurd because putting women in positions of power under capitalism does not then lead to the ability to end capitalism or resolve the other contradictions of society. Ending capitalism is what allows proletarian women, now free from the base of their oppression, to complete the revolution against patriarchy through continued class struggle.

This does not mean that eradicating patriarchy must “wait” until we have taken down capitalism, and this mechanical approach is similar to insurrectionism as it does not appreciate the protracted nature of struggle. First of all, a revolution is not possible without the participation of

proletarian women. But even if we were to “wait” until after socialism to begin proletarian feminist organizations, we would be dooming the project of ending patriarchy by asking that a section of the proletariat embark on something they do not yet have any experience in, divorcing it from the class struggle.

Unity is temporary. In the fight against capitalism, proletarian men and proletarian women have temporary unity for the cause of socialism. This does not mean that the contradiction between them has ceased, but it is not in the spotlight. It begins being resolved in the course of the class struggle, in PPW. Their unity strengthens through the process of overthrowing capitalism. When the political power of the proletariat has become dominant over that of the bourgeoisie, the contradiction between proletarian men and proletarian women reemerges now that the proletariat as a whole is the primary aspect of the bigger contradiction, class.

What liberal feminism today does is takes the dialectic between bourgeois men and bourgeois women and puts it as the primary contradiction of gender, since the bourgeoisie is currently the primary aspect. Some of the postmodernist trends, in response to this, don't really accept this contradiction between men and women as primary to gender at all, and so mechanically negate it, or at least disregard it. But even liberal feminism and postmodernist feminism, though different, are close together in essence and fade in and out of each other.

Siraj said that postmodernism is an “unremitting war of all against all,” and dialectical materialists reject this as really a call to not do anything lest it be problematic or somehow harm someone else.

6. Intersectionality

We do not deny that exploitation overlaps with oppression in a way that intersectionality attempts to describe. Intersectionality answers the right questions with ultimately wrong conclusions.

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw developed the term “intersectionality” in the 1980s as a result of a case in which a Black woman, Emma, claimed she was not hired because of being a Black woman. But when she sued the employer, her case was dismissed because it was said that the company hired Black people (men) and also hired women (white). According to Crenshaw there was no place for her to describe that she was suffering the effects of both. When speaking on what gave rise to the term she says,

“Many years later I had come to recognize that the problem that Emma was facing was a framing problem. The frame that the court was using to see gender discrimination, or to see race discrimination, was partial, and it was distorting. For me, the challenge that I faced was trying to figure out if there was an alternative narrative, a prism that would allow us to see Emma’s dilemma, a prism that would allow us to rescue her from the cracks in the log, that would allow judges to see her story.”

What are the limitations and kernels of truth in this? In this example the truth is in the fact that Black women face a double oppression. Here, one person is being talked about in job discrimination, but there's no class analysis. In a class analysis, proletarian Black women face a triple oppression. This does not mean unity is not possible; instead, principled unity is achievable during the class struggle, with a material commitment to rupturing with misogynist and racist practice.

From its outset intersectionality was meant to help the current system adapt. What intersectionality wanted to describe had the potential to help us acknowledge that oppressions cannot be separated from each other, but in practice this has been turned into its opposite, into a constant separation.

Now let's examine something different from intersectionality, feminist standpoint epistemology. "Epistemology" is defined as "the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge especially with reference to its limits and validity." This theory insisted that "starting off research from women's lives will generate less partial and distorted accounts not only of women's lives but also of men's lives and of the whole social order" (Sandra Harding). This claim has a dual nature. On the one hand its claims should be taken to acknowledge that women hold up half the sky, and their collective oppression must be addressed using proletarian feminism.

But what is the problem with standpoint epistemology? It misused the universality of the proletariat as the class to end all classes to individualize a "standpoint." What it is trying

to correctly address must never be taken out of the context of the whole of proletarian women, understanding that even individual leaders in proletarian feminist organizations represent proletarian women as a section of a class. Standpoint epistemology in practice says that a person who faces more oppression has a better grasp of reality. This is wrong.

Even standpoint epistemology itself claimed that it “extended and reframed the idea of the standpoint of the proletariat to mark out the logical space for a feminist standpoint.”

The “standpoint of the proletariat” was written about by Lukacs. It said that the proletariat is the class that can best describe reality. Knowing that Maoism is all-powerful because it is true, we can see where this idea originally came from Marxism. But Marxism is something meant to shape the world, not leave it in the realm of ideas, and the leap from the standpoint of the proletariat to feminist standpoint theory represents pretty well how Marxist ideas are taken by academia and nullified by removing the practice from them. This is more dangerous than if they did not take Marxist ideas at all because now the bourgeoisie can claim it understands Marxism, and control how it is defined, and confine it to universities.

Why is this different from revolutionary communism? Because it is idealism. Where standpoint epistemology really went wrong was it accepted dialectics but favored dialectical idealism over dialectical materialism. The “standpoint” of the dominated in society (women) is only ever meant to be a point of research and observation. It is not meant to in-

form a revolutionary practice. The other thing is, a common misinterpretation is that a good “standpoint” of an individual equals a good analysis.

This just doesn't seem to be true among the working class and seems to apply only to academia. Women can have incorrect ideas that stem from their social experience, for example, “we need more police presence” is something we commonly hear from working-class women in mass work, and not nearly as much from men. It's because they genuinely experience a lot of violence in their communities due to the war on drugs and intra-community violence stemming from the drug trade. In this case women yearned for peace for their families, which is an important part of the picture, but did not arrive at correct ideas. If we use materialism, we can conclude that this is because the system that exists around these observations doesn't offer any alternatives.

Standpoint epistemology does come under fire from hardcore postmodernists as “too universalizing” on the experiences of women as a whole. It is true that aspects of women's oppression are universal. But just because a theory has been criticized by postmodernism does not mean it has not made concessions to it in practice. Indeed, revisionists sometimes receive anti-Communism, yet they have in practice gone against genuine Communists. Feminist standpoint theory has really done the same under capitalism. For proletarian feminism we should investigate and universalize the aspects of women's oppression that are universal.

“Feminist standpoint theories, then, involve a commitment to the view that all attempts to know are socially situated. The social situation of an epistemic agent—her gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and physical capacities—plays a role in forming what we know and limiting what we are able to know.” This is not untrue in that factors shape experience and therefore knowledge. Where the real misinterpretations come about is with “all attempts to know are socially situated.” Experience is socially situated, but this confuses the objective and subjective. Is this implying that it would be impossible for someone with a petty-bourgeois class background to grasp the truth of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and use that to transform their own life? Can a cis man comrade know the ways women are oppressed day to day? A cis man can know these things (perceptual knowledge) without experiencing them; subjectively he does not know the full weight of experiencing that but he can still grasp it. To an extent he can also gain rational knowledge through seeing his woman or woman-read comrades experiencing misogyny in front of him. Still there is a contradiction Communists must resolve—how can the rational knowledge of women’s oppression be transferred to those who do not experience it? Through proletarian feminist organizations who theorize and propagate, but never divorced from the larger class struggle.

Admittedly we do not have the right answer to this yet. Are all attempts to know socially situated? How is this different from ,saying as the identitarians do, “You can’t understand this because you don’t have this social situation”?

We should take the true kernels from this and apply them but only using Marxism. This took an idea that was originally "Marxist" and made it into something more dead than living.

7. Decolonization

When postmodernists refer to decolonization they talk about colonial structures as built up in one's head, informing their worldview. But worldview does not fall from the sky. Just like all things, it has a material basis. So, to truly "decolonize," we must actively destroy capitalism because colonization created capitalism and they cannot be separated.

The logical conclusion of decolonization is similar to the cultural nationalism that took over the Black liberation movement in the 1960s and '70s, answering people's righteous revolutionary potential with another ideology that is limited to the superstructure and will not go back to turn the base on its head.

"Decolonization" does not create a more generalized idea of where national oppression comes from—instead it individualizes it. Everything is measured in relation to the most oppressed identity, so a Black person having lighter skin and different texture of hair is seen as less oppressed. Oddly enough postmodernism can start to define race according to race science.

Decolonization would have one believe that doing everything but destroying white supremacy will destroy it.

Line struggles involving postmodernism in Charlotte

Postmodernism has shown up in a local mass organization in various line struggles. The following description of line struggles are not being written to embarrass comrades who have pushed postmodernist lines. Indeed, all of us have made errors of caving to postmodernism in the past, and none of us are immune from it. Postmodernism is not a flat thing and takes different forms in revolutionary political spaces. We are grateful that comrades have line struggled, because it makes the revolutionary movement stronger.

One line that has resurfaced multiple times is a tendency to label generalizations, generalizations based on class, as “assumptions.” One instance of this was when there was a small fundraiser held outside of a bar and restaurant. The fundraiser is for a local woman who we met through a local mass organization. She was loyal in participating in servings and other events. She had been unfairly evicted a couple of years back, and it was affecting her ability to sign a lease— income aside, having an eviction on your record means few landlords, if any, will accept your application. Therefore, our fundraising efforts are going to be combined with pushing the debt collector to accept a lower amount of money than expected to settle the debt, to cancel it. We chose to hold the fundraiser outside of this bar because the owner of it was sympathetic to ideas of socialism.

The logistics team of the mass organization was later debriefing the fundraiser. One of the comrades who had been

there (A) commented that the area surrounding the bar is one of the centers of gentrification in Charlotte, and so the class character and class stand of people who tend to frequent the bar is more petty-bourgeois than it is proletarian. The comrade commented that we should keep this in mind when fundraising for the proletarian cause from the gentrified area, that it was different from fundraising in a proletarian neighborhood. He was not necessarily specific in how. Throughout its history this mass org has grappled with the fact that we often fundraise from activist "communities" to serve a more working-class community, and how to handle this contradiction correctly.

Another comrade (B) rejected much of this, saying that people were either going to give a dollar in solidarity or they were not, and that asking people to donate is not the same as asking that person their politics on the housing issue. They asked more about gentrification and what constitutes gentrification, which is valid and good to do. However, they rejected the generalization about petty-bourgeois class character and class stand based on hanging out in a gentrified area. They said that assumptions about individuals should not be made in this way.

In the face of this comrade (A) pretty much retracted their statement, conceding that comrade (B) had been correct, and that the issue needed more nuance before any generalizations could be made.

Another comrade (C) who had also been there aligned with (A)'s original statement, said that they had been wrong to retract. Comrade (C) said that class is a good starting point

for generalizations, and to individualize “politics” is a post-modernist error. They said that the politics one is sympathetic to can vary from person to person, yes, but in general class is more important than the whims of the individual, and that class informs an area’s political climate. They said that (B) was right in the sense that concrete investigation is necessary, but if we are not able to make such generalizations in the first place we will not be able to develop them further. For example in a gentrified area, fascism is more prevalent than in thoroughly proletarian areas. All comrades who participated in the struggle were thanked for their participation. However, this did not mean concession on the issue of generalizations.

Another confrontation with postmodernism in the mass org was after the first political orientation class. The turnout for the event had been pretty low in terms of numbers. However the mass org gained one new committed member, who had grown up around Arbor Glen, as a result of the orientation.

Line “A” emerged saying that the mass organization was stagnating (evidenced in consistently low turnout) and the proposed way to correct this was to have purposely “de-politicized” events. The comrade proposed having “kickbacks” and other party-type events so that more people would be attracted and could be brought in. They said that the mass org should intentionally unite with the community more, and on this last part they were correct.

Line “B” said line “A” was a panicked reaction to low turnout. They said that though unity with the community is nec-

essary, even in a mass organization quality is more important than quantity. A proposal to take out the politics is in essence a proposal to hollow out the organization of any meaning in the face of challenges.

Line "B" also said that line "A" was imposing a petty-bourgeois method of friendship as the basis for political relationships. They criticized line "A" for wanting to take the method popular with activists and make that the primary method for attracting new community members into the mass org. This was the postmodernism in line "A," and was not the first time this friendship-over-politics line had reared its head in Charlotte.

Line "B" did however concede then and there that line "A" was right, that more intentional effort should be made to unite with the community in a real way. They said we should be in the "non-political" spaces that community members are already in, uniting with them there instead of creating "non-political" spaces to bring people into.

In synthesis this meant to add different methods to outreach, still including door-knocking and canvassing, but prioritizing our contacts and assigning each volunteer of the mass org to 1-2 community contacts who were especially interested in the mass org, and requiring that volunteers of the mass org meet up with contacts to actually get to know them and their lives as they already existed. The goal here was to figure out a person's internal contradictions and what was standing in the way of them becoming a revolutionary. Getting working-class people to set aside time is difficult. So far only a couple of volunteers have been able to meet

up with their contacts one-on-one, and we will be excited to analyze this method after we have given it more time. Another good thing that partially came out of this line struggle was a talent show fundraiser that was held in the community. Politics were not taken out of command, but were combined with a cultural event.

Another line struggle in the mass org that involved postmodernism was on the question of new members. Line "A" said we are stagnating because a couple people have dropped off since the organization formed, and we have not gained many new members to replace them. Therefore, we should not cut off new volunteers from the activist "community" who are attracted to our work.

Line "B" said that we should not try to isolate people who support us in the activist community, and should allow them to support from a distance in ways that we need. But, for making people into full volunteers, right now we should really focus on people who come to our servings because they live in the neighborhood—mass contacts, or people who we do not know through the activist community.

Bringing in more activists would undoubtedly mean bringing in more postmodernism. It is bad to try to mix postmodernism and mass work early on, especially if its lines haven't been combatted thoroughly: postmodernism can take over quickly. Instead comrades should be won away from postmodernism to an extent, then come in, and the struggle continues there. This does not mean anyone should be kicked out due to line struggles unless they become completely antagonistic.

Another line struggle that included the fight against postmodernism concerned the mass line. This one applied in a couple different places. When we formed we started serving hot food. A couple months in, a comrade gave a criticism, saying we should stop serving it because it was not something the community had asked for initially. They also said it was too expensive, and they were right on this point. We stopped serving hot food as a result of this criticism. Throughout the months that we stopped and instead only focused on clothes and diapers, a few community members have either asked why we stopped, or suggested we do hot food again. Either way the masses are not a bargaining chip in line struggles and can have both correct and incorrect ideas, so we should analyze this contradiction fully.

The postmodernist line saw the mass line as something very close to identity politics. It saw the mass line only as a way to do exactly what people from the community say they need. It therefore negated the need for synthesis. It's like identity politics because it waits for a member of an oppressed group (in this case, community members) to say something outright before determining it as truth or something worthy of carrying out. In response to this the competing line (only much later) said this is dogmatic and could be morphed to justify the masses not needing a revolution simply because people do not yet commonly say "we need a revolution."

Even with criticisms that take the form of postmodernism, there are still occasionally some correct aspects. Where was the postmodernist line partially correct? It did aim to address actual needs of the community more, which was something we still don't have the perfect answer to. The root of this

problem was how we went about our initial social investigation/class analysis. We asked, "What is the biggest issue in the community?" This was a great start and we uphold this decision. However, where we went wrong was only really collecting people's answers to this, such as, "housing," "no rec centers for the kids," "not enough groceries" etc., without recording the deeper reasons people saw these as problems. Even when we had longer conversations with people about where they saw the issue as coming from, we were more concerned with writing down the symptom of the problem than the essence of it. This error came from seeing the mass line as more of a numbered checklist than a way to identify the root of the problems and address them. In the future we will focus more on really asking deeper questions and listening to community members. Hopefully this will help us identify class enemies, and start campaigns against them, seeking to really solve the problem with class struggle. The comrade who brought up this concern had a valid aspect to his point, and the answer lies in getting to the root rather than relying on postmodernist methods.

With our study group, postmodernism has been very prevalent, sometimes more prevalent than in the other organizations. This is because the study group exists in the realm of ideas and doesn't have political action attached to it. It is a study group held once a week. Many attracted to it are students, academics, activists, and friends of activists. The study group disproportionately represents people steeped in postmodernism in a way that the masses are not. It has use because it's a way to attract people to Maoism, and for everyone present to study alongside comrades. This can only be overcome by identifying the main contradiction in

the study group and especially by engaging postmodernist ideas head-on. We are working on reconstituting the organization so that it is more of a mass org and less of a left org.

In the antifascist coalition the biggest manifestation of postmodernism is the insistence on decentralization. This manifested in the planning leading up to D28, specifically in the line struggle over propagating a date and a time for the action. Eventually the line to organize a demo did win out, but we procrastinated and threw our hands up in the air.

Though a fight against power, antifascism in the U.S. does not yet represent a fight for power. It is the job of Communists to overcome this using temporary unity against fascism to win comrades over to the cause for PPW. This must be done by applying dialectical materialism to the question of centralization vs. decentralization in street actions. It also means uniting with anarchist comrades on tactics where they clearly have more experience fighting fascists than we do.

In the future we are going to create more temporary coalitions for specific actions, winning people over a few at a time. In this way we can face the problem of ultra-democracy early on, and in more successive steps.

In our experiences confronting postmodernism in antifascism, we really learned not to blame our own shortcomings as a collective on external contradictions, but on internal contradictions. In the case of planning leading up to D28 we cannot blame our shortcomings on the postmodernist line coming from comrades outside our collective. Instead

we must take it upon ourselves to commit to the line for more organized resistance and concretely this means taking initiative for an action, instead of waiting for everyone to agree before doing it. This is the way comrades have been won over in the past.

Against postmodernism, against reformism!

Objectively postmodernism allows the bourgeoisie to continue to inflict violence on the working class. All the contradictions within lead back to the main question of power. Correct criticisms of postmodernism will help the working class seize power. With the ideas described in this piece the left has effectively been pacified into accepting bourgeois rule.

It is true that postmodernism is still changing and adapting and despite its staleness is very much a living thing. We must take this threat seriously and defeat this weapon, sharpening our own. It is crucial that this is done both internally and externally, and especially internally because as we saw in Canada it can overtake even a revolutionary Communist organization.

Similar to what "Condemned to Win" states about revisionism, there are two types of postmodernists. The first type is the hardcore leaders, who will not be won over and should be opposed ruthlessly, such as Christopher Winston and Martin McAlpine. And then there are future comrades, who have become

attracted to postmodernism in the absence of a Party to lead them to a New Power in Protracted People's War.

In either case, postmodernism should not be approached softly. Even with the case of future comrades who can and will be won over, they cannot be won over without seeing Communists concretely oppose postmodernism. This necessitates identifying postmodernist leadership and isolating them without remorse, winning over the second type by defeating and isolating the first.

This means we should stop overemphasizing patience as a way to negate line struggle, and instead enter into line struggle with postmodernists enthusiastically, wherever it is. We should also do away with respectability politics that keep us from entering line struggle in this way. We should not uncritically inherit things that are popular on the left today, because in doing so we really just put the struggle against postmodernism off until later. We have learned through trial and error that this does not work.

In dealing with our past encounters with postmodernists, particularly the rape apologists, we would have been much better off using the direct and confrontational method. We were right in opposing them, and in the future we will be even better at confronting it head on.

Postmodernists allow equal status to all elements and therefore reject hierarchies and power. In this climate, politically bad leadership seeks to opportunistically "replace" actual Communist leadership as long as the replacement panders to identity politics, even trying to mix communism with

postmodernism. Even in finding the right answers to patriarchy and national oppression we should not mix them with postmodernism. We should not oppose postmodernism shallowly but then cease the struggle against it, and we must not be centrists on the issue.

Attack postmodernism at its root!

Fight for political power for the proletariat!

—Red Guards Charlotte, January 2018

Further reading

1. Siraj, “Post-modernism Today: A Brief Introduction,”
<http://www.bannedthought.net/India/PeoplesMarch/PM1999-2006/publications/post-modernism/contents.htm>

2. Red Guards Austin, “On Identity Opportunism,”
<https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/04/10/on-identity-opportunism/>

3. “On the PFF and the Oppression of Women,”
<https://bit.ly/2GeVdnr>

4. Feminist Standpoint Theory” (used in the section on “intersectionality”),
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/fem-stan/#SH7a>

On Proletarian Feminism

Red Guards Austin

What I aim to talk to you about today is how as Communists, and therefore as Marxist-Leninist-Maoists, principally Maoists (MLMs), we must approach the question of women's emancipation and, more broadly, of ending all patriarchal oppression.

A quick note on word choice: As I use the term "woman," whom I'm mostly referring to are the people who face a certain type of oppression. Not everyone I'll be talking about when I say "woman" identifies as a woman, and not everyone who identifies as a woman faces what I'm talking about. Not everyone who faces it is assigned female at birth (AFAB), and some AFAB people don't face it. I am going to use the term "woman" to discuss neither anatomy nor identity, but what oppression someone faces.

The origin of patriarchy

So first I'm going to talk about the origin of patriarchy, because understanding this is essential to understanding everything else.

The initial situation

Before the rise of class society, there was a nonhierarchical,

non-oppressive division of labor based more or less around reproductive anatomy, where those who could bear children collected food near the settlement and looked after the children at home, while those who could not went hunting and collected food that was further away from the settlement.

There were very few restrictions on sexual partners. You were “born married” to a specific group of people, and there were no restrictions or prohibitions on having romantic/sexual relationships with anyone in that group you were married to.

Only the mother of a child was certain, and anyone whom the woman was allowed to have a sexual relationship with was considered a child’s father, and children were considered to be members of the mother’s family group, not the father’s family group. Women lived with their extended families, including their brothers. This fact meant that women had equal power to any man in romantic relationships, because although sometimes a man would move into a woman’s home, if he didn’t pull his weight around the house or if he otherwise caused problems, the woman would be able to kick him out with the help of her brothers and the rest of her family.

Because production was at subsistence level with no meaningful surplus, everyone had to work, and no possibility of exploitation existed, and so no division into classes was possible. There was violence between tribes and periodic capture of slaves after battles, but slaves were not particularly useful because the productive infrastructure didn’t exist that allowed people to produce surplus meaningfully beyond

that which was necessary for their own reproduction, so they were at most incorporated into the tribe without much consequence one way or another.

At this point there was no private property. Certain things were owned and inherited, though: There were inherited ceremonial titles passed down by family. Also, land was allotted to individuals by the tribe to be worked, but it was fundamentally something the tribe had final say over, not the individual. And someone could own a set of tools to accomplish some task that they were relatively specialized in, and when they died, that individual's family would inherit their possessions. But a man's possessions at this point were never inherited by his own biological children. Those who would inherit from a man were his brothers and sisters, his sister's children, and the children of his aunts.

Changes

In time, gradual changes occurred. Probably the most profound change was that the family structure began to narrow. That is to say, the set of people whom an individual was permitted by morals and customs to have romantic/sexual relationships began to shrink. This narrowing of options occurred through the emergence of a series of increasingly restrictive incest taboos.

First, children were forbidden from sexual relationships directly with their parents (that is, sons with their mothers, fathers with their daughters, and really any relationships "across" generations). Later, children from the same mother were forbidden to have sexual relationships with each

other, and then, later, extending from there, relationships were forbidden between first and then second cousins. It should be said that these changes disproportionately restricted women's choice of partner, because men were never barred from taking enslaved concubines from wars with other tribes.

When it comes to what force drove this process of change, that's a very important question. Engels agrees with the U.S. anthropologist Lewis Morgan, whose work Marx and Engels drew on to write *Origin of the Family*, that this was a question of genetic natural selection.

Engels writes that "the tribes among whom inbreeding was restricted . . . were bound to develop more quickly and more fully than those among whom marriage between brothers and sisters remained the rule and the law." It's very important to draw out a more universal principle from what he's saying here: all things being equal, there are certain cultural policies a tribe can adopt that increase the "fitness" of the tribe, or its power to compete for resources, and tribes that adopt these policies will tend to outcompete and destroy tribes that do not adopt them. Thus, with time, it will be more and more true that the remaining existing tribes and societies are ones that have adopted these policies. However, Engels is also very clear that once incest (in all the senses that we understand that term today) was no longer occurring, natural selection according to genetic fitness was no longer a force for changing the family structure, and it was not incest taboos that drove the further changes in the family structure that were still to come.

Other changes were occurring during this time as well. As new productive methods were developed (e.g., cattle-breeding, metalworking, weaving, and agriculture), a few things happened. People began to specialize more in certain specific types of production, increasing the cultural attention paid to inheritance and the continuity of specific economic tasks from one generation to the next.

Most importantly, these new productive methods allowed each hour of labor to be much more efficient. This meant that any captured slaves could begin to contribute to the accumulation of surplus for the individual who controlled them. This meant that after battles, the victors began to intentionally keep and enslave those they had captured instead of, as had often happened before, just killing them.

All the most productive new methods (for instance, cattle-driven plowing) were on the men's side of the division of labor. And since it was possible to make slaves produce surplus, there was much more concern that the slaves who were captured through warfare should go under the control of the specific man who had captured them rather than simply being incorporated into the tribe.

And finally, because land could now be used to produce a surplus, the question of who was allowed to use and control which land became more important, and having an incontestable right to use it became a more urgent concern.

Political-economic effects of those changes

Because of the uneven control over slave power (and control of other resources such as cattle and land) from one man to the next, a differentiation of wealth among individuals steadily arose. Since the surplus was all being accumulated through men's activities, and that surplus was therefore under men's control, women began to have less and less say in the issues that were the main concern of the tribe, namely, the handling and consequences of the growing surplus in some individuals' hands.

At this point, a man's immediate children still could not inherit any of the surplus he controlled—it still went to his family through his mother. However, it had also become much easier because of the narrowed partner options to tell which specific man was the father of which children.

At this point, there was one more “jump” to a new family type left to occur—to what Engels calls the “modern” or “monogamous” family, where the only acceptable sex occurs in a marriage between one man and one woman, a marriage that only the man can dissolve, and in which it is at last a man's own biological children who inherit the surplus he controls. The explanation from Engels for why this jump to the monogamous family occurred is that it resulted from men wanting to favor their own children. This undoubtedly played a part in it, but this doesn't seem to offer a fully historical-materialist explanation. Engels never says it, but there's an implication overall in *Origin of* another explanation that is more fully historical-materialist.

As Alexandra Kollontai puts it, the adoption of the monogamous family, "prevent[ed] the wealth that had been accumulated from being scattered amongst a vast number of 'heirs'" ("Prostitution"). This change meant that compared to tribes that didn't adopt this family type, tribes that did adopt it had individuals whose wealth was much more concentrated. And this in turn meant that the tribes that adopted it had production that was more centralized, and therefore more efficient and specialized. These tribes that adopted it could also therefore wage war in a more sophisticated way, with a larger number of better-armed and more specialized soldiers.

Therefore, in the same way that, all things being equal, adopting incest taboos conferred a competitive advantage on whichever tribes adopted them, so too did adopting the monogamous family confer a competitive advantage on any tribe that did so. This is not to say that the adoption of this family type was good for the well-being of most of the individuals in the tribe, but rather that tribes who adopted this family model would tend to outcompete and destroy tribes that had not. Thus, a type of "natural selection," based on the advantages some tribes had of more concentrated wealth and therefore more centralized production and other competitive advantages, eventually led to a situation where most remaining existing tribes and societies had adopted the monogamous family.

Now, the way that this natural selection operated is through the explanation Engels offered: all things being equal, the tribes that happened to have a culture of strong concern with paternity and special attention to men's biological chil-

dren would tend to adopt this family model, and therefore gain these advantages in production and warfare, and thereby outcompete tribes that had not. What this meant in essence is that there was a selective advantage for tribes to adopt cultures where men were raised to be more and more concerned about paternity, and in which it was normal and customary for a man to seek to maintain an all-around control over his wife, in order to make sure that she was not having any partners other than him, so that all the children she had were without a doubt his.

As Engels puts it, the monogamous family “is based on the supremacy of the man, the express purpose being to produce children of undisputed paternity; such paternity is demanded because these children are later to come into their father’s property as his natural heirs.” Engels says that this marked “the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took control in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude. She became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children.”

The origin of the family and private property

The adoption of the monogamous family, then, marks a qualitative rupture with all previous society. It is the origin of the private family as we know it today, of private property, and in that same moment the qualitative emergence of patriarchy. And we see that this process occurred because it meant that power and wealth were not being dispersed after each generation, but instead could accumulate more and more in the hands of single individuals and families with each generation, and therefore, again, the tribes that

adopted this family type became more powerful than the tribes that did not.

There are just a couple of other points in Engels that are worth noting to underline this point. He writes, "For the knight or baron, as for the prince of the land himself, marriage is a political act, an opportunity to increase power by new alliances; the interest of the house must be decisive, not the wishes of an individual" (Origin, emphasis added). And, "Among all . . . ruling classes[,] matrimony remained . . . a matter of convenience which was arranged by the parents" (Origin).

It should be emphasized that this political character to the ruling-class understanding of marriage has not diminished in any significant degree in capitalism. When someone who is born to a bourgeois family takes a romantic partner, their family almost without exception pays very close attention, exerting pressure, positive or negative, based on their perception of the suitability of the person as a potential spouse for incorporation into the family and therefore to join in controlling the family's political power and inheritance. This is especially acute when the potential partner is not bourgeois, or when the person choosing a spouse is a bourgeois woman, because she is expected to marry a man, whom the custom of marriage grants primary power in their marriage.

Bearing this in mind, we arrive here at what Marxism, Mariategui, and the Women's Movement (MMWM) calls the "fundamental thesis of Marxism about the woman question":

“The condition of women is sustained in property relations, in the form of ownership exercised over the means of production and in the productive relations arising from them . . . The oppression attached to the female condition has as its roots the formation, appearance and development of the right to ownership over the means of production.”

In other words: The fundamental reason patriarchy exists at any given time is because private property exists. Private property depends on patriarchy, and therefore sustains it. And furthermore, the specific form that patriarchy takes at any given time is based on the specific form that private property takes—that is, whether it is the slave, feudal, or capitalist, mode of production, as well as on what specific demands are at that time being placed on that mode of production (for instance, the customs governing acceptable forms of the family were significantly altered in the U.S while the country was mobilized to produce for and fight in World War II).

From this we can draw out a crucial principle that has continued to apply long after the founding moment of private property, and which will in fact apply until the very end of class society: Because the social-economic unit of the private family is a prerequisite for private property, and because therefore private property’s stability depends on the private family’s stability, wherever there are political-economic forces seeking to stabilize class society (including those that continually reproduce liberal/bourgeois democracy) or to renew or strengthen it (as in fascist movements or in the counterrevolutionary coups that restored capitalism in the Soviet Union and China), those forces al-

ways manifest in part in the form of patriarchal ideas and movements. That is, patriarchy is not simply an incidental, conditional phenomenon in class society—not a useful-but-inessential holdover from the founding moments of private property—but instead an intrinsic component of private property that it continually breeds and which we will never find it without.

This is fundamental to understand. MMWM points out that an alternative view that is pushed by some people who call themselves Marxists is that the fundamental reason patriarchy exists is to get women to undertake reproductive labor. This theory would imply that we can solve patriarchy simply by reforming culture, because it doesn't understand the problem to be built into private property.

Patriarchy under capitalism

In every mode of production we find patriarchy accomplishing at least that one, same, most fundamental task: ensuring that the private family exists in order for there to be a political-economic unit in which a ruling-class family's wealth and power can be stored and passed along indefinitely.

We also always find it accomplishing other tasks. But we find it accomplishing those tasks using the tools that developed in order to accomplish that original, fundamental task.

In capitalism, besides that fundamental task, patriarchy also accomplishes these other tasks:

- It helps reproduce the working class as cheaply as possible because women (and people perceived to be feminine) are made to do unpaid reproductive labor in the home (and various other places).

- It allows women (and to some extent people perceived to be feminine) to be extra-exploited as an extra-oppressed section of the population. Women and people perceived to be feminine are driven toward extra-exploited waged reproductive labor and also toward the more menial end of productive/distributive labor.

- It also exploits the labor of LGBT people by making it hard for them to find work, housing, and so on, and therefore more desperate and willing to work at lower wages and in worse conditions.

- And it politically weakens the masses, sustaining a contradiction among the masses that not infrequently turns into an antagonistic contradiction.

[In the interests of keeping things short, an explanation about the overall structure of patriarchal oppression, including LGBT oppression, was removed from this point. But the basic analysis that was to be put forward was identical to the one put forward by Stonewall Militant Front—ATX in their pieces “2018: A New Year, a New Us” and “Omissions and Corrections to the Stonewall Militant Front Announcement.”]

Only communism can solve this problem

Having said all that, what, then, is the Communist method of destroying women's oppression, and by extension all patriarchal oppression? The essence of the problem is that private property cannot exist without the private family, and the existence of the private family requires the subjugation of women, which in capitalism further entails all other patriarchal oppression as well. So we see that in order to completely end patriarchal oppression, we must completely abolish private ownership of the means of production. Our analysis is therefore that private property is the fundamental problem, and patriarchy is a subordinate aspect that sustains private property.

This is not in the least to say that the answer is therefore "ignore women's oppression until after the revolution." We are dialectical materialists—we understand that in order to abolish private property, we will at every point also have to combat patriarchy. But it does mean that fundamentally, our strategy for addressing patriarchy must be subordinate to our strategy for abolishing private property. We will not accomplish either task unless our strategy is guided by this understanding of the relationship between the two.

As Anuradha Ghandy discussed, all previous philosophical trends in feminism have failed to understand this question. The first schools of feminist thought did not seriously consider class difference among women, and overall assumed that all women had common interests. We must be utterly clear: bourgeois women and working-class wom-

en have opposing and irreconcilable interests. What promotes the interests of bourgeois women directly harms the interests of working-class women. And by that same token, there is no way for an oppressed-nation woman's interests to be met if she joins up with a "feminist" project that advances the goals of imperialism. Proletarian feminism means staunchly insisting that what promotes the interests of working-class women is struggling for a proletarian dictatorship over bourgeois men and women, to use revolutionary violence to destroy the bourgeoisie as a political force and destroy the political-economic soil it grows out of. To be clear, this means the only true feminism requires revolutionary proletarian class violence against bourgeois women.

To speak on a much more practical and concrete level, we know that ending private property requires the strategy of Protracted People's War, both here and everywhere on earth. Therefore, the type of feminism we will uphold, defend, and apply must be what maximally supports the construction of the Maoist Party, whose central task will then be the preparation for and initiation of Protracted People's War (PPW).

We recognize that as women are an oppressed group within the masses, we cannot simply treat the question of mobilizing women exactly the same as that of mobilizing men. So even more concretely, the question before us is, what special policies must guide our work in the process of mobilizing the women of the masses, and especially working-class women, to take up this task?

Parvati, who was a member of the central committee of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) during their PPW, underlines the importance of this question, saying, “Wherever the PW [People’s War] is flourishing . . . women’s issues have been given due importance” (Interview to People’s March [hereafter IPM]).

In order to answer this question, first it will be useful to take a very close look at women’s oppression and what effects it has on women.

The character of women’s oppression

To get into this, first, some quotes. First, I want to return to a quote from Engels, because what he says here is crucial. He says that with the beginning of patriarchy, “Woman . . . became the slave of [man’s] lust and a mere instrument for the production of children. This degraded position of the woman . . . has gradually been palliated and glozed over, and sometimes clothed in a milder form; in no sense has it been abolished” (Origin, emphasis added).

This is crucial. He says (a) that women’s position is like that of a slave, or an instrument (something that is in the complete possession of someone and under their control in an absolute way), and he says that (b) the character of women’s position at its most fundamental has not changed. Let me put forward a few other quotes.

Marx:

- "The family, where wife and children are the slaves of the husband." (German Ideology, emphasis added)

- "The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed domestic slavery of the wife, and modern society is a mass composed of these individual families as its molecules." (Origin, emphasis added)

- "In order to make certain of the wife's fidelity and therefore of the paternity of the children, she is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband; if he kills her, he is only exercising his rights." (Origin, emphasis added)

In 1919, Lenin wrote that woman "continues to be a domestic slave, because petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery." ("A Great Beginning," emphasis added)

Now, this is not to say that women's oppression is always literally the same thing as slavery, but it's also important to not take lightly what these great Marxists are saying, because they always chose their words carefully.

First, let's focus again on the central reason patriarchy exists: to control women in order to ensure that they go into the power not of some group of people in general but of one individual, and what is expected is that each woman will give birth and that it will indisputably be that man's child and no one else's. This means that the oppression over women is

not most fundamentally to accomplish some specific tasks, but actually to create a total power to restrict any and all of her activities. This is different from class or national oppression, which are about getting someone to produce surplus value. They are not about total control of a person's entire body, their entire life, in order to produce a political-economic unit, the family, that allows value to accumulate in the first place.

How is this goal of total control achieved? Through virtually every means of social control available.

At its deepest, the control is achieved ideologically. And in fact, where racist pseudoscience has been made relatively more unacceptable among most of the masses in the United States, pseudoscience about men and women continues to this day to have an incredibly wide circulation. And what's more, the pseudoscience is bound up with religion and ideas about morality. The ideology that oppresses women is very sophisticated, very elaborate and subtle. It has been being refined for more than ten thousand years.

What is the ideology? It says that according to science and the laws of nature, it is unnatural for women to have an interest in becoming physically strong, psychologically and emotionally ready and willing to wield violence, and trained to be able to do so. It further says that they are bad at these things even if they decide to go against nature and attempt to take them up. And it further says that what is natural for women is embodying a set of traits that work directly contrary to their ability to wield violence skillfully and effectively: it says that what is natural and morally correct

for women is that they are always patient (that is, that they refuse to engage in any aggression, even verbal), always sweet, always gentle, always accommodating, naturally interested in hobbies that are low-intensity and low-energy. It says that what they desire and what is natural for women is to submit to one man and only one man and to serve his interests and obey him. It says that most important for women is to be beautiful, that it is natural for them to focus heavily on the desirability of their bodies. And furthermore the beauty standards they are expected to conform to put them in clothing that cannot withstand any kind of physical exertion or rough-and-tumble activity. One way or another, it controls women's diets strictly and says what it is right for them to eat or not eat—and these demands are definitely not based on what might allow them to become strong. It says that women are naturally not good at problem-solving, or leadership, or more complex mental tasks. And, not to get too far into the the flip side of the coin, but it says that it is natural and good for men to want to control a woman utterly, and unnatural and pathetic for them to not want to, thereby enlisting half the human race into maintaining this control.

Most oppressed-nation women experience a variety of qualitatively more intense aspects of this experience, all of which again have the effect of reducing their ability or willingness to use violence. Some are more overtly coercive and dehumanizing (which is common for Black and indigenous women), where others are qualitatively more intense versions of the fetishization as naturally servile and desiring to please. Often it is some combination of these.

And on top of that, even if women decide to try to become able to skillfully and effectively wield violence, they meet a society and a State that works against them, threatens them, and uses brutality to try to discourage them. When they are not obviously already under the possession of a man, they are openly and degradingly solicited on the street by other men who want to possess them. If they push against the standards that demand they be powerless and servile, they are frequently rejected from social spaces, not welcome in support institutions like churches, and disproportionately cannot access resources from a sexist State, sexist employers, sexist landlords, sexist salespeople, and so on. And the more a sphere of society allows someone to wield violence effectively, the starker the patriarchal chauvinism and patriarchal violence is in those spaces.

This is slackened or relieved in some ways in many cases, but what I'm trying to point out is that this is the substance of the oppression, even if there is less of this substance for many people in many places. The fact is, virtually no woman on earth can avoid dealing with a significant amount of oppression of this type for long. Even bourgeois women face this substance of oppression, including the abuse, sexual violence, beauty standards, ideological conditioning, and countless other aspects of it—again, all having the effect of driving her fundamentally into the total control of one individual man, whose right to own her—and build a family upon her—society recognizes and upholds.

So the point, then, is that in almost every conceivable way, in almost every conceivable space, in almost every conceivable moment, the ability to wield violence effectively is stripped

from women, not just overtly but as subtly and thoroughly as it's possible to imagine. This is done so effectively that it seems to most people, even to countless women, to just be the nature of women. It is not only discouraged, but in fact small rewards are given to women who run as far away from wielding violence as possible. This is the character of women's oppression.

What proletarian feminism must be

I take the time to get into all this because if we acknowledge that this is the oppression women face because class society in any form demands it, then the type of feminism that seeks to completely undo class society must also seek to completely reverse the effects of every aspect of this oppression, not just eventually but immediately, and in an all-around way. And so—not to put too fine a point on it—we must see that a central aspect of proletarian feminism must be understanding the question of violence in the emancipation of women.

In addition to that, we inherit from previous Marxists that there are two dialectically related aspects to the struggle for women's emancipation. The first of these is politicization. As MMWM says, "For Marxism yesterday like today the politicization of women is the key issue in her emancipation." The second is carrying out certain economic transformations. Engels writes, "The first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry, and . . . this in turn demands the abolition of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society." (Origin)

So then, in turn, I'll address these aspects of women's emancipation and discuss the role of violence in each. To start, let's consider the question of politicization and how violence fits into this.

Politicization

Let me say directly: we can make a major start in making proletarian feminism what it truly needs to be by upholding the principle of promoting women reclaiming violence. This policy should be applied immediately and at all times.

What this policy means is seeking to psychologically and emotionally transform the women of the working class and the rest of the masses so that they become eager to acquire the ability to use violence effectively; to promote women becoming physically fit and strong, healthy, masters of their own bodies; to promote women learning and practicing martial arts, prepared to resist violence and carry it out against the enemies of the people; and to organize women into military or proto-military units in view of building toward Protracted People's War. And in this process, it also means turning the violence around, to understanding the central importance of violence or the threat of violence in dealing with abusers and all those who rob women of the willingness and ability to effectively wield violence.

How does this play into politicization? Well, we know that women's oppression is not just a type of control in order to produce this or that labor, but a more deep and total control: a type of control over bodies and over whole lives. We know that such a control can be obtained only by sub-

jugating almost every aspect of women's minds, right down to muscle memory, with violence and the threat of violence. And as part of the oppression they face, women are of course greatly discouraged from studying political and philosophical questions, and certainly from having uncompromising political analyses and stances. They are taught that they are ill-suited to it, and face negative reactions when they take it up anyway.

As Marxists, we know that it is only through struggle that people can be truly transformed, so we should conclude that people who have reclaimed violence, who feel strong in their bodies, who have literally used violence against fascists and violent patriarchal abusers, will also feel more capable of voicing bold thoughts, pushing against the current, and taking up vigorous struggle against incorrect lines—in short, more capable of “ruthless criticism of all that exists, ruthless both in the sense of not being afraid of the results it arrives at and in the sense of being just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be” (Marx).

In direct action, women are asserting themselves and moving beyond asking or hoping, to enter the stage as political actors directly intervening in history, to resist or seize through direct force. This is where the deepest psychological transformation takes place. Gonzalo writes that “war . . . steels people, permits us to imbue ourselves more deeply with our ideology, and forge iron-like cadre who dare to challenge death, to snatch the laurels of victory from the clutches of death” (“Interview”). Only such a policy of reclaiming and wielding violence against class and gender enemies can begin to substantially materially repeal the psycho-

logical effects of that violent indoctrination that suppresses women's politicization.

And beyond what our theory tells us, we also see this borne out in history, objectively, again and again. If we look at the People's Wars right now, and at all past armed struggles for communism, what do we see about the women in these historic struggles? We see women completely transformed. We know that the women we see in these struggles are women as they truly are, women who have begun to break the shackles of patriarchy on their lives and their minds, and shatter the lies about women's nature that patriarchy perpetuates.

To quote MMWM, "Parallel with the construction of a new society the new woman will be emerging who will be 'substantially different from the one formed by the now declining civilization.' These new women will be forged in the revolutionary crucible and will place the old type of woman deformed by the old exploitative system in the back room of history."

To further underline this point, I'll quote Parvati. She actually wrote a great deal about women's participation in the PPW in Nepal. What she has to say bears out this argument:

"The PLA [People's Liberation Army] has not only transformed women in essence but also in form. Basically, it has given meaning, value, respect, and dignity not only to their lives but to their deaths as well. For too long they have been taken for granted. For too long they have been bearing private and public violence silently. Today hooligans, goondas,

and womanisers can't dare to come near Maoist women, unless accompanied by armed reactionary forces. It has turned insecure women to insurgents. In form it has totally [transformed their clothing from] feudal frills to functional unisex dress. Today she is not only conscious of her ideological development but also her physical development. . . . The PLA has not only helped her break the four walls of her house, but it has also stretched her reach to the four corners of the country. It has transformed her from anonymous domestic slave to a very visible rebellious professional fighter. Earlier she had no idea of time, slogging from dawn to dusk (even past midnight); today she is recording time while planting time bombs. . . . From a god-fearing woman she has transformed into a fierce woman! In the past her ears burned for gossip, today, she is craning her neck to hear local FM, national, and international news in the radio. . . .”

“Fighting on the strength of ideology and using warfare skills, her body language has changed into that of a very confident, smart, dignified woman. From an illiterate woman she has become literate with an enriched vocabulary of ideological and military terminologies. Today she has become philosophical about life and death as the two sides of the same coin, defining them in terms of necessity and chance and so on. She understands dialectics in terms of seeing positive in negative, and vice versa. She understands the laws of contradiction in terms of identifying principal (enemies) and secondary (enemies), she knows how to judge things relatively, in contradiction, and in leaps and bounds. . . .”

“Thus the PLA has enabled village women to be more confident, conscious, and composed women than educated urban women! Indeed, women in the PLA are found to be more forward than women in the United Front organizations of the Party. The rate of transformation in the PLA is so fast that women hesitate to leave this field when their health problems or reproductive functions [necessitate for them to be] transferred to other fields. It has expanded her sphere of activity from uterus to universality. It has steeled her physically as well as mentally, making her more objective-minded and detached for fulfilling the rigorous life of combat. From an ignored woman she has become an authority. All these remind one of Com. Lenin’s saying that war brings transformation in 10 days what usually takes 10 years in normal time.” (“Women’s Participation in People’s Army” [hereafter WPPA])

She also writes, “Marriage [at a certain point was] a patriarchal left institution for producing good efficient wives for the male communist leaders at the cost of losing women cadres in the communist movement. . . . You would get fresh groups of women repeatedly coming and then vanishing. This vicious cycle got asunder with the initiation of People’s War in the year 1996. It unleashed the fury of women so far locked in legal and trivial struggle” (IPM).

On the other hand, after the People’s War in Nepal collapsed short of victory due to the betrayal of its leadership, we can read that women’s participation in political life also stagnated and declined:

“Women are politically and ideologically quite strong, but maybe they are not so active now as they were in the People’s War, as this is a transitional period. . . . In the past the party has made concrete plans to increase the number of women in the central leadership. But these days it has not been making concrete efforts on this question. . . . We must admit that the party has not managed something concrete as in the past to bring women into the central leadership. It is a sad fact that some women whole-timer comrades have returned home, but not in a big number.” (“Interview with Comrade Jayapuri”)

There is no question, then, that this process of promoting women reclaiming violence is a critical aspect of promoting the politicization of women and in cultivating women leaders in all our organizations, including at the highest levels.

Economic transformation

To get into the economic aspect, we can turn again to Engels. In *Origin*, he writes that the Communist policy for abolishing women’s oppression is as follows: “Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public affair; society looks after all children alike, whether they are legitimate or not.”

Furthermore, as already referenced, Engels also says that “the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry.” An aspect that should be further highlighted here, however, is that it is not enough to simply incorporate women into some in-

dustry. The fact is, in the United States and countless other places, there has already been extensive incorporation of women into waged work. However, it is critical to observe that there are certain areas of waged work that are disproportionately inaccessible to women. Thus, we should add to Engels's formulation that we should also seek to ensure that women are incorporated into every single aspect of public industry to an equal degree as men.

Thus we see that the two aspects of these necessary economic transformation are the socialization (that is, spreading responsibility for the task out to all the rest of society) of all domestic labor and reproductive labor (including raising and caring for children), and the incorporation of all women equally into all industries without exception.

At this point it is critical to observe that if these policies are critical to the emancipation of women in communism, then rather than simply wait to apply them until after the whole world has entered the dictatorship of the proletariat, we must begin to implement them immediately!

The question remains about what role violence, and especially promoting women's reclamation of violence, plays in the process of these economic transformations. We find the answer to this question if we turn to the universal law of revolutionary violence. As the Military Line of the Communist Party of Peru explains, "violence is the midwife of history," and "without revolutionary violence one class cannot replace another, an old order cannot be overthrown to create a new one." We are talking about policies that require deep changes to the relations of production even now, be-

fore People's War has been initiated—changes that involve the dislocation of the ruling class's order everywhere red power extends. For this reason, we should expect violence to confront this project at more or less every turn.

We can in fact expect two different kinds of violence here: The primary type that we should expect to encounter is bourgeois violence against the project, and for several reasons. For one, women's private, unwaged performance of reproductive labor is an essential part of maximizing the profits of the bourgeoisie. When this process inevitably begins to cut into their profits, we can expect retaliatory violence. Another reason the bourgeoisie will retaliate, of course, is simply that they are deeply, unalterably sexist. While some members of the bourgeoisie are happy to put on a façade of feminism in the form of bourgeois feminism, when we seek to fully incorporate women into every part of public industry and destroy unwaged reproductive labor, we can expect to come face to face with other members of the bourgeoisie who will not be reluctant to use whatever patriarchal violence they can think of in hopes of restoring the status quo.

The secondary type of violence that we should expect to encounter is from other members of the masses, of course especially men. Although patriarchy stands directly against the interests of the working class, that does not change the fact that we find patriarchal chauvinism spread broadly and deeply throughout the masses. Even now, while there is no pressure, stress, and conflict resulting from these necessary large-scale economic transformations, the contradiction between working-class men and women can and not uncom-

monly does turn antagonistic. Policies that include women into the public sphere and help pull them out of the private family will remove any petty control men in these families may have over women. In an elaboration of a crucial component of what Engels calls making women “slaves of lust,” we observe the following in our position paper “Condemned to Win”: “Workers have no control over their own lives, but a deceptive feeling of actual power is sold to working-class men in the form of control over the conventional family and sometimes other women in their lives. This illusion gives ‘meaning’ to a meaningless existence, to a life they live in service to the capitalist class while having their labor stripped away from them. It is nothing but a poisoned carrot on a stick controlled by the class enemy. Women are treated like dogs, awarded to men the way a pet is given to an unruly child, reproducing class relationships in a microcosm.”

For this reason, we can expect that these policies (both the politicization aspect and the economic transformation aspect) that remove men’s ability to turn to this poisoned reward will inevitably see retaliation against the women who are being relieved of this form of oppression, in an attempt to return them to their subordinate position.

We should also expect to see violence from working-class men in previously male-dominated economic spheres against the women who enter into them—and also as we wage campaigns to get men to abandon their chauvinism and take up an ever more even share of the unwaged reproductive labor, especially in the home.

And this is certainly a far from complete list of all the ways that such violence will emerge in response to these policies of economic transformation.

The benefits for politicization resulting from these economic transformations should be fairly clear: since women at present are spending such an immense amount of their time undertaking unwaged reproductive labor, socializing this secluded labor plays a critical role in giving women more energy and enough free hours in the day to take up all the tasks necessary for their politicization. It will also, of course, have a directly politicizing effect on women as they take up forms of work that have been previously denied to them, changing their consciousness as all changes to social being inevitably do.

On the flip side, we should also see that the changes that result from politicization will also be crucial in this task, in emboldening women to take up this profound struggle of seeking, in every way we can find, an equal standing with proletarian men in the relations of production. And within this context, it will be priceless to promote the policy of women reclaiming violence in order to allow each individual woman to more effectively resist both the types of violence that they will face as they embark on this struggle, as well as to promote collective preparation for and responses to this violence on the part of teams of militarized women.

We also hear from Parvati that promoting women's reclamation of violence advances our theoretical understanding of women's oppression generally, which will inevitably allow us to more deftly handle these economic transformations:

“The people’s army is one arena where there is a fast rate of transformation. The rate of changes in tactics, mobility and flexibility makes it the centre of contradiction, possibilities and transformation. In fact, most of the contradictions related to gender relations and women’s development get quickly reflected in the PLA. Solving these contradictions will in the long run solve contradictions in other fields too.”
(WPPA)

Other important aspects of women’s reclamation of violence

Before moving on to talk about how other specific, more immediate questions should be handled when it comes to mobilizing women to build the Maoist Party, I’d like to just draw on Parvati’s writings a little bit more to drive home the central importance of promoting women’s reclamation of violence for the purposes of revolution. Though much of what she is describing here is the value of women’s incorporation into the PLA, we should expect the same effects from incorporating women into the embryo of the People’s Army we are concentrically building around the embryo of the Party.

For one, it enhances mass work, which must be undertaken mainly through the People’s Army:

“Strategic participation of women in the PLA has not only made it wholesome, but it has also lent a more mass character to the army by making it multi-functional, multi-character, thus making it truly the people’s army in appearance as

well as in essence. The infusion of women in the PLA has made it easier to expand its activities from fighting to organizing and engaging in productive activities. It has brought gentleness and compassionate feelings to rigorous combatant life. Above all, it has smashed the masculine image of the fighting force. [Women's] input has facilitated the PLA to swim smoothly in the sea of the masses by acting as a barometer to check the temperature of the water so that the PLA can sail through smoothly." (WPPA)

It also has all kinds of benefits for, and solves all kinds of problems in, the People's Army:

"Women's participation has made the fighting force more tenacious, disciplined, and high-cultured and more focused. In the field it has been generally found that where men combatants gave up, women continued to fight, and where men left their weapons, women combatants clutched their guns even in the most adverse circumstances, and where men faltered in the face of the enemy's torture, women resisted even at the cost of torture and death. It was also found that where men hesitated to go on offensive assault, women were found to go for it without looking for excuses. They seldom refused the task given; they would always give it a try. Also, during setbacks, it was women who showed more patience and sense of composure, while men tended to feel restless and irritated. Their sense of commitments and hard work have helped in shedding the go-easy attitude amongst the men combatants. Their involvement has also had a self-cleansing effect on the PLA, as drinking, gambling, cheap entertainments, and womanizing cannot go hand in hand with men's participation in war. It also boosts

men's morale in the PLA while it demoralizes the enemy's army. Lastly, [women's] infusion into the PLA makes the PLA a more gender-friendly and class-conscious force. This gets further reinforced when their women combatants are brutally tortured, raped, and killed by the reactionary force.” (WPPA)

It also promotes a more deep and thoroughgoing militarization of the masses, thereby strengthening and accelerating the People's War. And for that reason and others it also strengthens cultural revolution to more fiercely attack and prevent capitalist restoration once socialism is won:

“[Militarizing the masses can help prevent] the revolutionary state [and] the revolutionary people's army [from becoming] degenerated, bureaucratized, and alienated from the masses. . . . It is here that women combatants' input becomes strategic. With women being the largest oppressed, all-encompassing, all-permeating group and social engineer of all households, they can facilitate militarizing the masses, as they have better connectivity with the people. And because they are the last oppressed group to be liberated, they will always actively fight to make continuous revolution till their own liberation is realized and guaranteed. Hence, their input in the PLA will not only hasten revolution, but it will also hasten the process of continuous revolution.” (WPPA)

Promoting this conception of proletarian feminism

As we promote this understanding of proletarian feminism,

we should do so in conjunction with deep criticisms of all other conceptions of women and all other tendencies of feminism.

One of the foremost points to make is to insist that communism alone has offered us scientific information on the way forward for women. Because it isn't just that our theory tells us that what MMWM calls the "theory of deficient femininity" is false—it's also that the historical experiences of the People's Wars prove that there is nothing to the claims about the inherent weakness of women, or the idea that women are by nature unsuited to taking up and wielding violence. In fact it is only by spreading lies about past and current People's Wars, or by concealing them entirely, that anyone can deny the truth about women. We have to study, learn from, and uphold the facts from historical and ongoing People's Wars repeatedly and loudly until the truth they show is undeniable.

I'm not going to retread all the ground in Ghandy's "Philosophical Trends," but one of the most important points she makes is how every single other trend in feminism seeks to, as MMWM puts it, separate "the feminine masses from [proletarian leadership] and . . . oppose the development of the women's movement under the leadership and guide of the working class." But something can also be added to Ghandy's analysis of these other trends by more deeply examining them in the particular light of where they stand on promoting women reclaiming violence.

With some of these tendencies, their failure is more obvious—but the truth is, not one of them is serious about this

question. The closest that we see is a lifestylist feminism that is more interested in the question of how individual women studying martial arts or taking up physical activity can help their own personal bourgeois success. But ultimately, we need to emphasize the question of power.

When we talk about power, we must reject conventional ideas of some kind of woman-specific power, “feminine wiles” being used to manipulate people. We must assert that we mean real power, power that does not leave the question open for dispute—power that settles the question decisively, power that an abusive man can do nothing about, so that patriarchal abuse is practically impossible to carry out and terrifying to think of the consequences of. We have to relentlessly denounce how disgusting and hateful the feminism of the bourgeoisie is, which calls on women to dull their oppression by getting rich walking on the backs of working-class women, all while lying to those women that this aggressive selfishness will help them someday. We have to insist on how poisonous the countless variants of the feminism of the petty bourgeoisie are, telling women they should be ashamed and embarrassed for wanting to retaliate against abuse with decisive organized violence, or glorifying and even worshipping the submission that has been imposed on them, or setting off an identity-reductionist rat race that tends toward dividing each oppressed person against every other. We have to stress how, by offering women anything other than power, these other forms of feminism are treasonous.

We should observe that anarchist feminism, because anarchism seeks “worker control” instead of socialization

of the means of production, does not break with private ownership of the means of production, and therefore can never uproot patriarchy. What's more, whether they do so wittingly or not, we find anarchists everywhere promoting bourgeois lies about revolutionary Communist history, discouraging people from more closely studying the history of the People's Wars, which are the historic apexes of feminist struggle. The economic base of this ideology is the petty bourgeoisie, and like everything else petty-bourgeois, it maintains an idealist and individualistic perspective on the world that is wholly incapable of a dialectical materialist analysis of patriarchy, and can never organize anyone for a revolution that can truly destroy global capitalism and therefore patriarchy.

It must also be said that proletarian feminism can be taken up only by those who have broken with "October Road" insurrectionism, which seeks to wait until some special moment to take up in earnest even the first steps of militarization and violent struggle. By forever putting off advancing the struggle for a moment that will never come, the insurrectionist theory perpetually stagnates the movement as a whole by denying the possibility and necessity of learning how to wage violent class struggle by waging violent class struggle. And it therefore also leaves women in particular no way to take up these violent struggles that are wholly necessary to advance women's transformation and emancipation.

Cultivating women's leadership

Parvati has more than a few helpful grounding principles in cultivating women's leadership that we should study. The most basic principle here is that "the question of developing women communist leaders cannot be left to chance, they need to be consciously nurtured, cultivated and safeguarded." ("The Question of Women's Leadership in People's War in Nepal")

She also says that there are two ways of understanding proletarian feminism within the overall struggle: some people want to uphold and implement proletarian feminism only tactically, but she argues we must uphold and implement it strategically. She writes,

"Let me tell you one example of how to understand the attitude of communists toward women in the communist movement. One section considers their participation as having strategic importance and women as constituting a basic revolutionary class. They are willing to accept and guarantee special rights for women and hence strive to transform the structure of the Party, the women, and gender relations based on this principle. There is another section that may agree with this in principle, but in practice they see women as a secondary force, relegating them to a mere practical necessity when it comes to mobilizing the masses. With such people, any changes that they try to bring to the organisational structure, to women, or to gender relations will be only cosmetic, formal, and skin-deep." (IPM)

Parvati's works are excellent in describing more of the specifics of their context, much of which can be creatively applied to ours. One example of applying the principle of being strategic rather than tactical about the inclusion of women would be to allocate additional time devoted solely to politicizing and training women in particular, above and beyond the time allotted for general political education and training.

Making the Communist movement an easier place for women to enter and thrive in

Obviously combatting patriarchal chauvinism will be a continuous necessity, including paying attention to who is taking up which types of tasks to ensure that (all things being equal) certain tasks aren't disproportionately falling on (or being denied to) women, ensuring women are not being spoken over, and so on. We live in a patriarchal society that has affected us all in profound ways, and so we should expect this to be an ongoing task. And we should also expect that it is likely that sooner or later more pronounced problems will arise that will require special, more intensive rectification campaigns.

Investigating abuse

Mackivism and abuse within our organizations are some of the more acute manifestations of patriarchy that we'll encounter, and we must be ready and willing to carry out principled investigations of accusations of abuse, and then act on the conclusions of these investigations in a princi-

pled way. Although of course every situation has its own difficulties and complexities, we can put forward certain general principles:

In order to provide leadership when an investigation becomes necessary, we should not simply leave things entirely in the hands of mass members but instead address the question within our collective to struggle out details about how best to handle the investigation, in order to provide guidance to those carrying it out. At the same time, the primary organization that a person is a member of should be the organization taking point on the investigation. At first only the leadership of any organization that is involved or affected needs to know about it. And a person who is accused should immediately be suspended from all work until the investigation can be completed.

Such an investigation should be carried out by getting all the facts possible, and also weighing them in the context of a person's history, especially if they've had similar problems in their romantic/sexual relationships in the past. We should consider whether their trajectory is one of them getting worse, or simply of them repeating an existing error. Also possible, if someone commits egregious abuse that is starkly inconsistent with their known past behavior, we should be especially concerned, because at that point there is a real question of whether a person has been hiding deeper malicious tendencies.

Ideally, a more permanent committee should be developed consisting of people who have great practice in this regard, who are patient and understanding, and who are also highly

skilled at looking at each and every angle, digging things up, and really getting all the details.

When we conclude that someone has in fact been abusive, the way that we move forward from that point depends on a few factors, including whether it was overtly violent or not and whether it was malicious or not. Beyond that, the perpetrator's response to a conclusion that abuse occurred will also play a role—whether or not they are truly willing to voluntarily submit to the judgment and demands of the adjudicating organization plays a role in how the case can be handled.

And one final principle is that the extent to which our movement is capable of bringing violence to bear on someone determines how we can move forward—the more power we have, the more severe the cases we will be able to seek rectification for. At other times, sometimes the best we will be able to accomplish is to protect our organizations and the masses from abusers.

On prostitution

Finally, we must have a position on prostitution that fully accords with and promotes our efforts to mobilize the masses of women to build the Maoist Party.

The patriarchal nature of the problem

We know that those we find in prostitution are disproportionately barred from political-economic resources in soci-

ety, such as good jobs and housing, and people who face a higher likelihood of being kicked out of their families and communities—specifically, women and LGBT people, and of course disproportionately oppressed-nation people. According to Kollontai, the other factor is that women (and men) have “been conditioned by centuries of education to expect [that it is acceptable for men to trade] material favours . . . in return for sexual favours [from women]” (“Prostitution”). Prostitution is therefore of course a specific problem of women’s oppression and patriarchy generally.

Political-economic analysis of prostitution

To quote the Revolutionary Communist Party (Canada) (PCR-RCP):

“Prostitution is not the ordinary sale of labor power; it is not about labor exploitation of a person, but the absolute exploitation of a person. Prostitution is not the sale and consumption of sexual services: what is sold and consumed, it is the direct domination over a person. It is this domination that is the use value of the commodity ‘prostitute,’ while for wage labor in general, dominance is rather a condition that allows the exploitation of the labor force. What the sex industry showcases and brings to the market is not only the sexual body, but also, and especially sexist violence: Prostitution being the most complete expression of this violence. (Annex 2, “A Struggle for the Safeguard of Revolutionary Proletarian Feminism” [hereafter Annex 2])

Thus we say that in class terms there are no proletarian prostitutes. Prostitutes are either slaves or semiproletarians.

Prostitutes in the condition of sex slavery, which is the relationship between a pimp and his victim, cannot change pimps just because they want to without facing the potential of a violent attack. Those who are semiproletarian are those who are principally proletarian who are forced by lack of access to proletarian work to supplement their incomes.

We also analyze that there is a large overlap between prostitutes and the lumpenproletariat. Prostitutes are often not only compelled by violence but also by drug addiction, which has made them unemployable elsewhere, sometimes exactly because of pimps addicting women to drugs.

Thus we conclude that there is no such thing as a “sex worker.”

By way of elaborating, we point out that there is a difference prostitutes and petty sex capitalists (who are petty-bourgeois). People in this situation have ownership over the means of production (for instance the camera), have the ability to set their own rates, choose their customers, set their own conditions of work, and so on. These are the conditions that some people in the sex trade experience, such as many porn stars, cam girls, and so on. This class position should be understood as at least part of the material base for the “sex work is work” postmodernist arguments so often heard.

Regarding these arguments, we should point out that they are a liberal viewpoint found almost solely in imperialist-country “leftist” movements. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) in “Prostitution Is Sexual Violence” document

how legalization intensifies the global trade in sex slaves. Not only is it simply incorrect from a political-economic perspective to refer to prostitutes as “sex workers,” but it is actively reactionary: doing so clouds our understanding of the reality of the sex industry and conflates the terror and brutality inflicted on the majority of these individuals in the United States and worldwide as being “no different from any other type of work.”

Prostitution reproduces patriarchy

It should further be pointed out that the ongoing existence of prostitution also constantly reproduces patriarchal ideology. As Kollontai writes, “a man who buys the favours of a woman does not see her as a comrade or as a person with equal rights. He sees the woman as dependent upon himself and as an unequal creature of a lower order who is of less worth to the workers’ state. The contempt he has for the prostitute, whose favours he has bought, affects his attitude to all women” (“Prostitution”).

Policies that follow

From this we draw out the following positions: The policies of unionization or struggling for legalization or “regulation” are counterrevolutionary. Our policy must be to organize in order to help people exit from prostitution. We affirm this for the following reasons:

- As the majority of prostitutes are in a condition of slavery, it is absurd to simply seek to change some aspects of their enslaved condition.

- It is necessary as part of properly mobilizing women for PPW. It is economically necessary as part of bringing women into proletarian public industry, as prostitution is not proletarian. It is necessary for revolutionary politicization as well, because prostitution forces women into material experiences of submission and subservience, thus working directly against the psychological process of reclaiming violence in an all-around way. Parvati describes the effects of escaping prostitution in the context of PPW: "The PW has given them the powerful alternative to live for humanity. Rather than killing themselves every night, they now have the opportunity to show that they too can be socially useful, responsible and live a dignified life and have a dignified death." (IPM)

- As PCR-RCP write, any "sex worker unions" and "abolitionist" organizations operating in our context seek to impose "a liberal political leadership on the proletarian women, as well as . . . reformist political hegemony" (Annex 2).

- Finally, the fact that so many prostitutes are lumpenproletarian also compromises any union organizing strategy. No union could manage to organize even actual workers when many are hardcore addicted to drugs without first getting them clean. Ignoring this fact necessarily also leads to a gross neglect for the security of the revolutionary forces.

Our policy must also include the following:

- To attack and drive out pimps, traffickers, and johns.
- To conduct agitprop against the specific aspects of class

and patriarchal relations that drive people into prostitution.

- To oppose what is legally called regulation. So-called regulation in an imperialist world only deepens the oppression of women and young children worldwide. It is our duty as anti-imperialists to work against this outcome.

- We would also be open to supporting certain policies that do not act as “regulation” but nevertheless thwart the bourgeoisie’s worst attacks on the people, for instance opposing prison time (which is hardly rehabilitative) as a legal sentence for prostitution.

Immediate tasks

As a way of concluding, I’ll propose some important tasks for the near future:

- To organize study within our collectives on proletarian feminism—especially of Parvati’s work on women’s participation in Protracted People’s War and Party life—and then struggle toward unity on the question and release a more refined theoretical document on this question. After we’ve done so, to produce and spread popular statements of the theory.

- To form revolutionary women’s organizations to focus on both politicization and economic transformation for women, including by facilitating and women reclaiming violence. The work of such organizations would also include attacking the bourgeoisie’s efforts to promote sexual objec-

tification and all other aspects of patriarchal thinking (e.g., beauty contests, pornography); cultural campaigns against sexism among the masses; and protracted struggle to break apart or win leadership within all other women's organizations in order to conquer hegemony—and related to that, seeking to reclaim International Working Women's Day and other women's cultural institutions for genuine proletarian feminism. Critically, we must understand that this organization also works to ensure that women are being fully incorporated into all other possible areas of struggle.

- Within our collectives, we should also consider forming what Parvati calls "women's departments . . . directly under the [leading body]. . . . This department is basically a think-tank. . . . It acts as a bridge between the front and the Party" (IPM). In essence its task is to see to the strategic incorporation of women into the revolution at every level.

Some words on whom it makes sense for revolutionary women's organizations/departments/caucuses (as opposed to more general revolutionary feminist organizations) to allow as members: It would be deeply incorrect to say that these organizations should open membership only to any and all people who are AFAB, and no one else, as not all AFAB people face women's oppression. However, it would also be a mistake to open it to any and all people who identify as women, or to exclude any and all people who identify as some gender other than woman—this must be our position because as materialists we know that identity as a woman does not automatically lead to oppression as a woman, and oppression as a woman cannot be thwarted by someone's identity alone. How to draw more decisive poli-

cies within these boundaries is a difficult question that will have to be sorted out by such an organization itself. A good working principle might be to ask not whether an individual always faces women's distinct oppression nor whether they have faced it ever but whether they currently face it regularly, even if they do not face it a majority of the time. Such regular experience may be enough to allow for the unique social consciousness that would make a person's participation in the democratic life of such a grouping coherent. What constitutes regularity and how to be the judge of whether or not someone is actually experiencing distinctly women's oppression is something such an organization will have to sort out through ongoing practice and struggle. It may be helpful, before any such revolutionary organization exclusively for women is founded, for the women cadres across our movement to discuss these questions at length with the intention of struggling for unity around a set of coherent and workable principles and guidelines on which such organizations can be founded, with the understanding that they will be improved through the living operation and struggle of such organizations so long as MLM continues to guide their practice.

- Promote the study of women's experiences in current and historical Protracted People's Wars to prove beyond any question that the ruling ideology's ideas about women are dogshit and that all other feminisms are inadequate and, wittingly or not, treasonous. The fact is, anti-Communism is anti-woman. As part of this task, we should release and promote popular propaganda on the objective and historic truths of these experiences when it comes to women's emancipation.

- Finally, to form LGBT organizations along the lines of Stonewall Militant Front—ATX. As part of this, emphasize the mutual support that must exist between the LGBT struggle and the struggle for women's emancipation, with the former struggle being overall subordinated to the latter struggle. Also as part of this task, emphasize the total, existential danger that the ongoing worldwide rise of fascism poses to LGBT people, putting into popular language the lessons of history about the high point of LGBT struggle in Germany in the 1930s being utterly liquidated, and how we see that only a People's Army and Protracted People's War can ensure these horrors aren't repeated.

—Red Guards Austin, January 2018

Presentation and Brief Summary on the Chicano National Question

Red Guards Los Angeles

I. Recent additions, self-criticisms, and criticisms

With the presentation of the following position paper on the Chicano Nation, we received criticism, most good and united with.

For that we are indebted to the Maoists in the country who tirelessly sharpen our analyses and the analyses of other pre-Party formations.

The end result of two-line struggle is for the mastery of guidance for People's War by the genuine proletarian line. We understand that under the capitalist mode of production and the rampant and treacherous revisionist hegemony in the U.S. Communist movement, we must engage ruthlessly in line struggle. Nothing short of the future of the Party, the People's Army, and the United Front is at stake.

One particular point we must self-criticize for was our erroneous theorization and claim that contemporary colonialism lives on mostly in the superstructure of society instead of in the economic base. We arrived at this conclusion due

to the fact that in comparing Chicano national oppression from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s—with the public lynching of people of Mexican descent, including Chicanos of course, the restrictive anti-Mexican/Chicano laws, the regional (but actually national) and repressive relegation to second-class citizenship—the settler-colonialism of that era looked distinct from present-day colonialism. While true things have changed, as all things do, we made the mistake of not studying the different forms of colonialism.

There is no such thing as one monolithic colonialism. Spanish, Dutch, British and French colonialism were global conquests of foreign territory for the expansion of the respective kingdoms (focused on the exterior). But settler-colonialism was more about the permanent moving in and supplantation of the native populations, the colonization of the native population and conquering of native territory (this can be thought of as focused on the interior). European settlers were principally motivated for the conquering of the so-called New World, not for enriching their respective empires, but for making a new home and kingdom of their own. South Africa, Israel, New Zealand, and Australia are examples of present-day settler-colonial countries.

The U.S. became the new superpower principally because of the enslavement of Africans and the genocide of the native nations and groups, including the Chicano Nation, for the primitive accumulation needed for building capitalism. The blood of Africans and the bones of the natives laid the foundation for the construction of White Nation settler-colonial capitalism.

Therefore, we say now that, no, colonialism does in fact still exist, but specifically settler-colonialism, which means the country's internal colonies are fully colonized and not, as we have erroneously theorized earlier, semi-colonies.

Another point of agreement that we now self-criticize for is on the naming of the Chicano Nation and the over-usage of the term "Chicanx" to be interchangeable with Chicano for the mere sake of inclusion of Chicano trans people. This was an error principally for the reason that in this position paper and the larger book we did not offer a single Chicano trans case study or analysis of trans Chicanos. For that, we self-criticize twice for opportunistically presenting an inclusive naming of the paper and book without actually having the substance to qualify it and for not taking the research of Chicano trans people and Chicano revolutionaries seriously. We aim to better our analysis by dedicating time and energy in this pursuit.

However, we maintain two positions. One of them is our position of the Chicano Nation moving toward national liberation prior to socialist integration into a countrywide dictatorship of the proletariat, instead of afterward.

We were accused of equating nationalism with Marxism when in fact we were clear and precise in saying national liberation, not nationalism, and Marxism are compatible, as Lenin, Stalin, Ibrahim Kapakayya, the Filipinos, the Indians, the Manipurans, the Kurdish, the Turkish, the native Maoists and Chicano Maoists would agree. We do not idealistically wish for a Communist Party of the Chicano Nation or Aztlán. We say that the fundamental and antagonistic

contradiction of national oppression exists and continues to rack up national casualties, deaths, imprisonments, deportations, and economic and political repression. It is not that the Chicano Nation cannot wait for the countrywide revolution—it is that we are convinced it will not wait. It is moving in that direction. We ignore it at a mortal cost.

Furthermore, we were accused of, at best, not correctly expressing support for self-determination of oppressed nations, and, at worst, bordering on being chauvinistic toward the Chicano Nation.

But RGLA operates in the Chicano Nation. We understand our national context. We are part of the Chicano Nation's up-and-coming leading Maoist revolutionary organizations. We have consistently maintained Chicano leadership in the organization and in all mass projects and organizations. There is a growing Maoist presence and leadership. Our theorizations are not separate from the Chicano Nation. Our political line of Chicano national liberation to be led by a Maoist vanguard is the counterweight, the alternative, to the already-existing Chicano nationalist line. Inside our nation there exists intense line struggle, with nationalism representing the capitalist line and Maoism representing the proletarian line.

Have we not learned some of the lessons of the Kurdish national liberation movement and the liquidation of proletarian theory and leadership (at the time Marxism-Leninism) and the capitulating to petty-bourgeois leadership by the PKK (which now calls for democratic confederalism)? What are our comrades' thoughts on Manipur in relation

to expansionist India? Whereas the Communist Party of India (Maoist) is the leading revolutionary force in India, in the client state of the northeastern oppressed nation of Manipur, there exists another Communist Party, the Maoist Communist Party of Manipur. There exist dozens of nationalist forces in Manipur, each with their nuanced nationalist ideology, some more revolutionary and others more backward. Surely, our Manipur comrades are not wrong in taking this route, so why would Chicano Maoists be wrong in the creation of a similar project within the context of the settler-colonial U.S. prisonhouse of nations?

RGLA had the honor in hosting a solidarity event in Boyle Heights in support of their Party to raise awareness of the Indian and Manipur State repression facing their oppressed nation. The Maoists in Manipur are young but courageous.

Do our comrades not also see the New Afrikan, native, and Chicano nationalist leadership in the respective nations? We are not suggesting to inject ourselves into their national movement. We are the national movement! We are here. We are Chicanos. Even if we are New Afrikan or other nationalities, we are principally residents in the Chicano Nation. Our worldview is shaped by this reality. We are Maoists. Nationalism poses a reactionary threat to the democratic national liberation movement of the Chicano Nation. The nationalists would lead the nation through a bourgeois national liberation movement. As the Communist Party of China led China's national liberation movement, so too must the Communist Party in the Chicano Nation.

To capitulate to Chicano nationalist leadership, where they are absent in the anti-gentrification and housing and other democratic struggles, would be tailism and unforgivable.

We are experiencing a growing hegemony of the Maoist movement in the country, but principally in the Chicano Nation with RGLA and Red Guards Austin, the latter being the principally Maoist leading pre-Party force. We must seize the time.

The other point of disagreement is on our position that the Chicano Nation's capitalism is distinct from the rest of the country's capitalism, whereas the Chicano Nation is exploited and oppressed by stunted, corrupted State and non-State capitalism; there are strong aspects to bureaucratic capitalism, as theorized initially by Mao and later on by other Marxist-Leninist and Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thinkers, but principally by Chairman Gonzalo and the Communist Party of Peru, as part of the Maoist theory of New Democracy as applied in the semi-feudal and semi-colonial nations. It is true that the Chicano Nation is not semi-colonial or semi-feudal, although it once had a feudal mode of production. The Chicano Nation no longer has a peasantry and its proletariat is big, from the West Coast to the middle of Texas and the border of the Black Nation. We cannot convincingly claim the Chicano Nation has or does not have bureaucratic capitalism at this time. For that we offer a second self-criticism in not having more thoroughly studied the concept. We must and will carefully study bureaucratic capitalism's role and existence in oppressed nations where semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism

continue to exist but also focus on countries like China that arguably operate with aspects of bureaucratic capitalism.

II. The U.S. oppressed nations

The following is a condensed summation on RGLA's upcoming book on the Chicano national question, "Colonization and Vengeance: Toward a Maoist Position on the Chicano."

The United States of America is a country housing several oppressed nations within it like a multinational prison—similarly to Tsarist Russia as Lenin described it.

These oppressed nations are:

- I. The Black Nation, or what some theoreticians refer to as New Afrika
- II. Puerto Rico, or Borinquen
- III. The continental indigenous nations
- IV. The indigenous nations outside of the continental U.S.:
 - A. Guam
 - B. Virgin Islands
 - C. Hawaii

D. Mariana Islands

E. American Samoa

V. The Chicano Nation of the Southwest, or what some theoreticians refer to as Aztlán

A general self-criticism is in order. We do not have a position on every single oppressed nation within the U.S. This is only forgivable if there is a genuine effort in the near future for the general U.S. Maoist movement to take up the task of theorizing on the oppressed nations in the U.S. We will dedicate more study and discipline in developing a position and analysis on more oppressed nations, beginning with the continental indigenous nations and groups, with the hopes of differentiating between the two and have our positions guide our future political work.

Nonetheless, our position on the U.S. overall is that the fundamental contradiction in the U.S. is the private character of the aggregation of wealth with its public character of production, generally.

However, the existence of oppressed nations within the U.S. is also a fundamental contradiction: between oppressor nation (principally the U.S.'s Euro-American Nation, or White Nation) and the oppressed nations—which is similar to the international, or global, contradiction between imperialist nations and oppressed nations.

So, then, the two fundamental contradictions facing the

Chicano Nation are capitalism and national oppression, with the latter being generally primary although in certain specific moments—prolonged or brief—capitalism can be the primary contradiction and national oppression can become secondary.

III. The Chicano Nation as an oppressed nation

The Chicano Nation developed during the mid-1800s throughout the early 1900s with the Mexican-American War. The main factors for the U.S.'s pursuing a war with Mexico was to gain access to the western ports, as well as securing the resource-rich lands of the northern part of Mexico, specifically Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. It was a historical necessary step along the march toward developing American capitalism. In fact, it took only one year after the end of the war and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo for settlers en masse to move to different parts of the newly acquired territory for the Gold Rush, but mainly in central and northern California. It is not happenstance that this also marks one of the darkest and bloodiest eras of anti-Mexican and anti-Chicano oppression. The lynching of Mexicans and Chicanos is a historical reality that has been largely forgotten and buried. But thousands were hanged, brutalized, mutilated, and killed. Laws were passed legally displacing or discriminating against the original nations of the region—particularly the indigenous Mexicans/Chicanos—laws like California's Indentured Servant Act of 1820, which formally recognized the legality of enslaving natives, including native children, into forced

labor and auctions. Or like the Anti-Vagrancy Act of 1855, known as the Greaser Act, which literally made it illegal for Mexicans and Chicanos to move around California. Or state mining taxes of 1850 on foreigners and Mexicans, taxing non-white miners \$20 per month, effectively excluding all non-whites from the early mining capital.

These examples of the legality of national oppression will have to suffice—for the sake of time and patience.

IV. Chicano Nation mode of production

The Chicano Nation has undergone a transition from feudalism to capitalism. Big landowners had Mexican and Chicano peasants working in the agriculture and farming industry, living on the property as temporary tenants. This was, however, prior to the literal dividing up of the countryside by the U.S. railroad companies—a manifestation of growing and expanding capitalism, forcing the peasantry and weaker petty bourgeoisie to move into urban centers and factories and mines to become proletarian. This was co-facilitated by the State when many of the most repressive anti-Chicano/Mexican laws were repealed, officially facilitating a proletarianization of natives, Chicanos and Mexicans.

Medium to big landlords attempted to survive as a class—feudalism flailing to survive as a mode of production as the unforgiving march of history went on—through mass rebellions, such as the insurrectionary independence move-

ment in the mid-1800s in Texas led by Juan Cortina, a cattle rancher and family landowner who lost big chunks of land after the 1848 treaty. Cortina and his followers wanted to establish a Chicano republic, a Republic of the Rio Grande in Texas.

The minority position of the emerging Chicano proletariat meant that they were not yet able to act as a class. In their place, the landlords and bourgeoisie fought for their class and national interest. Therefore, most Chicano rebellions of the 1800s till the early 1900s remained bourgeois to petty-bourgeois in nature.

But eventually capitalism reigned supreme as the dominant mode of production, although forever stunted in its development by white national aggression, with pockets of semi-feudalism surviving in the countryside of the Chicano Nation, lasting largely until approximately the 1940s. But the economic boom from the Second World War further proletarianized large sectors and classes of the Chicano Nation, integrating former peasants and petty bourgeoisie into the proletarian rank and file.

Therefore, contemporarily the dominant mode of production in the Chicano Nation is capitalism, but specifically stunted State and non-State collaborationist capitalism.

V. Do Chicanos constitute an oppressed nation?

In order for a group of people to constitute a nation they

need to meet the Marxist criteria of nationhood developed by Stalin; namely, do they have a common language, a common economic way of life, a common culture, and a shared territory. This, as we see it, is not an isolated ahistorical Stalin interpretation of nationhood but rather a thoroughly investigated and lasting Marxist comprehension of nationhood. We stand by the criteria not because Stalin developed it (for that would be dogmatism) but because it is the most advanced and soundest method of analyzing nationhood to date—a method and criteria still widely used by revolutionaries and academics alike, by the capitalist State and the international anti-revisionist and Maoist Communist movement.

We can say confidently that, yes, Chicanos do in fact constitute a nation, an oppressed nation at that, where Chicanos have a common language, economy, culture or psychological world outlook and territory or land. This is in direct opposition to the revisionists claim that Chicanos only make up a “national minority” and not a nation. The arch-revisionist Communist Party USA are the originators of this line within the Marxist camp since 1939. Most Trotskyites and Marcyites hold similar lines, give or take some opportunistic posturing or phrasemongering like the Party for Socialism and Liberation and both Freedom Road Socialist Organizations (Fight Back and freedomroad.org).

Not only is the Chicano Nation an oppressed nation, but it is also an internal colony of the U.S. It differs from a colony because it is not completely dominated by the U.S. It retains limited freedom, specifically political and cultural freedom. However, the capital extracted from the Chicano Nation,

the means of production within the Chicano Nation and the land within the Chicano Nation are all under the direct control of the White Nation of the U.S. In this way, then, the Chicano Nation is an internal colony.

Generally, there are three lines on the Chicano Nation:

A. The socialist reunification of Mexico line

B. The national minority line, or the Chicano Nation liquidationist line

C. The Chicano national liberation line

A. The socialist reunification of Mexico line

A political line developed during the early 1900s and then rehashed during the height of the New Communist Movement is the idea of returning the territory ceded to, or rather stolen by, the U.S. after the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848 at the end of the Mexican-American War—although the line goes as far back as the 1850s with roving so-called bandit and insurrectionary Tiburcio Vasquez. Originally, it was proposed by Mexican and Chicano nationalist and other insurrectionaries. But it received its theoretical development and concretization in the 1970s by groups such as Union del Barrio, Centro de Acción Social Autónoma – Hermandad General de Trabajadores (CASA-HGT), and Movimiento de Liberación Nacional. Today, it is not as popular as it once was. But Union del Barrio and a minority of others still uphold the line.

It is a thoroughly revisionist and even racist position, despite its militant posturing. It is revisionist because it liquidates the Marxist conception and position on nationhood. The Southwest region, regardless of one's thoughts or opinions, is a vastly different area culturally, politically, economically, and linguistically from Mexico—and even from the rest of the U.S. Union del Barrio and the other pan-nationalists claim the Chicano Nation belongs to Mexico, that it is undeserving of independent nationhood, for they make an ultimately flat analysis that all of Latin America, including the U.S. in it—which they dub Nuestra America—is one, vaguely, ignorantly, and proudly.

A reunification of the Chicano Nation with Mexico would be disastrous. There is nothing at all progressive of integrating into a narco-fascist corrupt capitalist empire. How would this reunification strengthen or advance the proletarian struggle? It wouldn't. It would devastate the Southwest, sending it backward, not forward.

Even the socialist part of their reunification line is inconceivable. They advocate for a reverse national liberation revolution while also simultaneously defeating capitalism and establishing a pan-American socialist republic. Why not just launch a Global People's War to build immediate communism too while they're at it?

Two contradictions cannot exist at the same time occupying the same exact place; one has to overcome the other; one is primary, the other secondary. So, which is it? Does the Chicano Nation need to be returned to Mexico first? Or does it and the rest of Mexico need to launch a socialist revolution

first? To advocate for both at the same time is, at best, an idealist death wish, or, at worst, a treacherous death wish.

B. The national minority line

A popular line, perhaps the hegemonic position, on the Chicano Nation is that it simply does not exist. These proponents say: it is a made-up nationalist conception meant to divide the multinational working class in the U.S. (because it's already enjoying some unity?) They say: Chicanos, like all "people of color," are minorities who suffer from racial oppression and discrimination. But not from national or colonial oppression. That's all.

The revisionists (as closeted anti-Marxists) and those who are boldly anti-Marxist share unity in their hatred of Chicano nationhood. They detest the idea of a liberated socialist nation at war with its surroundings, advancing the proletarian struggle in the U.S. and internationally. Wouldn't a national liberation struggle, and the construction of an independent socialist republic, weaken the world's leading imperialist power? They don't see it this way. For them, it complicates their perfect vision of an Americanized socialist republic. How can we build socialism, they ask, if natives and Black and Chicano nationals scream they are not free and have the arrogance to demand national liberation prior to socialist integration? These revisionists forgive settler-colonialism. They don't want to end settler-colonialism—they want to make it "socialist." They don't want to end the United States as it currently exists, but rather dress it up in red and give it an empty slogan for a name. They'd keep the blood-drenched imperialist flag if a revisionist Soviet

Union was hoisted by its side! But we know Marxism and national liberation are not simply compatible; they cannot be separated—and it is a revisionist and chauvinist project to attempt to do so.

In the end, proponents of the national minority line are proponents of—either ignorantly or consciously—the continued settler-colonialism by the U.S. over its colonized subjects and nations.

C. The national liberation line

If theoreticians subscribe to and defend the argument that Chicanos constitute a nation, and that it is an oppressed nation within the U.S. prisonhouse of nations, then what must subsequently follow is the question, is the characteristic of the particular national liberation struggle progressive or reactionary?

By progressive in this context we mean, will it advance the proletariat's struggle toward socialism. By reactionary in this context we mean, will it reverse the proletariat's course, away from socialism and into something reactionary. We say the former, not the latter. Chicano national liberation is generally progressive.

As mentioned earlier, in order for the Chicano Nation to exist, it must have a common language, a common economy, a common culture or psychology, and most importantly a common connection to a shared landbase or territory.

So, then, let's unpack this briefly. In our Chicano Nation position book we spell out the following in far more detail so if there are questions or comments, which we are sure there will be, please bring them to our attention:

1. Language

While Spanish remains the main language spoken by most Chicanos and people of Mexican descent, English is also common. Since the 1930s and '40s, during great repression against the Chicano Nation, the Chicano proletariat was inventing its own language, borrowing from Spanish, English, and New Afrikan culture. This produced Caló, a Pachuco, proletariat-developed language still spoken today—even by newly arrived Mexican immigrants, and most sectors and classes. Although we cannot definitively qualify with hard data to what extent it is used nationally.

Nonetheless, even prior to the 1930s and '40s, most Chicanos spoke English and Spanish but probably more Spanish. However, today, many researchers and institutions, like the Pew Research Center, suggest that English will become dominant in the entirety of the so-called "Hispanic" population in the U.S.—including the Southwest. The jury is still out. Whether the national language is Spanish or English matters little to none in the respect of its validity of existence.

Therefore, we would argue that the national language would now, today, primarily be a mixture of both languages, English and Spanish, with English being the dominant language in the near future.

2. Economy

As mentioned above, settler-colonialism and stunted, corrupted, collaborationist State and non-State capitalism make up the main system or common economic way of life that ties in all Chicanos—of all classes, from the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. Although the nation is not semi-feudal or semi-colonial, the capitalism existing today within the Chicano Nation has strong similarities to the bureaucratic capitalism of semi-colonial nations.

3. Culture

A national Chicano culture exists. This is perhaps the easiest of the nationhood criteria to prove. There are distinctly Chicano music, fashion, and world outlook, a common psychology. It can be characterized as having aspects of traditional Mexican culture, borrowed aspects of New Afrikan culture, indigenous culture, and U.S.-exclusive characteristics. Interestingly, we see another common aspect that nuances all aspects of Chicano culture: a normalized mistrust of government and bourgeois politics generally. Even newer Mexican and Central American immigrants that assimilate into the Chicano Nation share this position.

4. The territory, or land, question

One of the most important questions for an oppressed nation is the question of land—another easily identifiable national characteristic of the Chicano Nation.

We can say rather confidently that this applies coherently to the Chicano Nation—a nation thrust atop the U.S. so-called Southwest, occupying the complete or partial territories of ten states: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Kansas. All stolen by the U.S. after the war. These are the borders of the Chicano Nation. This is the expansive territory inhabited by Mexicans and then Chicanos for hundreds—and in some cases thousands—of years. Their way of life was violently and totally altered by the switching from Mexican citizenship to U.S. citizenship, a second-class status, a colonized second-class status. This reality remains unchanged.

VI. An internal colony

A colony/internal colony is a completely dominated and dependent oppressed nation. It is politically and economically dominated by an imperialist country. The only freedom the colony and the colonized have is of cultural expression, and even that is limited, for instance by the anti-Spanish language regulations in schools popular in the early 1900s—with similar impulses becoming more popular today due to the rise of fascism—and anti-Chicano history education, such as the banning of ethnic studies (which included native and Chicano studies) in Tucson, Arizona,

Again—and it bears repeating—the specific type or dominant characteristic of capitalism in the Chicano Nation is State and non-State collaborationist capitalism. That is, an

underdeveloped capitalism dependent on the oppressor nation—in our specific case the imperialist Euro-American Nation. While no longer feudal or semi-feudal, the Chicano Nation has backward characteristics of corrupt state and city officials profiteering through semi-secret dealings with big landowners, multi-millionaire investors, and other private capitalists. We see this as a combination of State and non-State capitalism. Brown, or Chicano, capitalism is riddled with cronyism, nepotism, and political corruption.

The relationship between the Chicano workforce and the largely Euro-American owners of the means of production shows not only the exploitative aspect of capitalism but also the national oppression and settler-colonialism faced by the Chicano proletariat. But the relationship between the Chicano workforce and its white counterpart also shows a vast discrimination totally, and particularly in wages. It is sometimes described as colonial labor. It is more in line with how colonial masters dominate their subjects, but with pay. This served, and serves, to benefit capitalism—but disproportionately for the White Nation.

VII. Chicano genocide—ongoing State repression and cultural war of ideological annihilation

In a way similar to the “kill the indian, save the man” campaign from approximately 1879 to the mid- to late 1970s that coerced assimilation of native children into the U.S. White Nation as continued genocide through boarding and vocational schools, Chicanos have also had their

(our) history ripped away from us, hidden from us, erased even within us—with many Chicanos claiming to be Hispanic, Latino, Latinx, etc.

This is not entirely the fault of the Chicano intelligentsia or even the whole of the Chicano Movement capitulating into petty-bourgeois cultural nationalism or civic reformism. It is more so the crime of the educational system under the ideological apparatus of the State. Public education—from elementary to high school, with one or two schools nationally being the exception—is devoid of Chicano culture and most importantly Chicano history. Chicano has been regulated to irrelevance as a relic of the '60s and '70s. Chicano has become—or, more correctly stated, has been turned into—a costume that can be put on or taken off. In other words, the white-supremacist capitalist State is all-around destroying the Chicano Nation.

What is this if not an aspect of a campaign, whether stated clearly or implicit, of genocide? But of course ideology is one thing, just one—albeit fundamental—component of genocide and national oppression.

What of the police killing of Chicano youth and Mexican and Central American immigrants in the Chicano Nation? The millions who were deported, and will continue to be deported? The ICE raids? The increasing homelessness of our people? The permanence of unemployment? The displacement occurring in the urban centers of the nation? The close to 300,000 Latinos—with a majority of them being of Mexican descent—incarcerated? So-called Hispanics make up approximately 19 percent of the inmate

population—not including immigration detention centers—while only composing approximately 16 to 17 percent of the country's population.

While our bodies are no longer swinging from tree branches, we remain a brutalized and colonized population, an oppressed nation.

VIII. Proposed thesis on the Indigenous Republic of the Southwest

Due to the fact that multiple indigenous nations and groups also call the territory of the Chicano Nation home, we propose an Indigenous Republic of the Southwest through the joint dictatorship of the proletariat of the Chicano and indigenous nations—with special emphasis on proletarian immigrants from Mexico and Central America. This would solve the land question in the region (nation). The Chicano proletariat would be a leading administrative force. The proletariat of the Yaqui, Apache, Comanche, Navajo, and Pueblo Indians and the organized and sizeable indigenous nations who have a historical connection to their land in the Southwest would be another fundamental component.

The native nations and groups not listed would be left untouched by regional and governmental changes; their relationship to their homeland would still be honored—nor would anything be done to allow for their displacement. Socialist development is not antagonistic to native existence. In fact, there can be no socialist development in or outside of the Chicano Nation with this.

The reason for their inclusion in the joint dictatorship of the proletariat of the Chicano and indigenous nations is principally in order to resolve one of the fundamental contradictions facing internal colonies, the oppressed-oppressor nation contradiction. The oppressed nations yearn for all-around independence and national freedom, from the Chicano Nation to the non-Chicano indigenous nations. This dispossession of indigenous nations and groups must be resolved. This is one of the most fundamental problems in the U.S., and the only way of resolving this antagonistic contradiction is through war.

And the most efficient governmental structure we propose to govern these nations is the centralized and hierarchical republic model. Thus we aim to unite the people, especially the proletariat and oppressed indigenous nations, and not separate them.

This is why we are against the traditionally anarchist federation model—although many indigenous nations like the Iroquois also structured themselves around a federation or confederation—giving separate nations or tribes complete autonomy without a centralized body of leadership. We advocate for a republic not for dominating native nations and groups but rather for arming them—us—with the weaponry to sustain the revolution and defend it against counterrevolutionary forces.

The liberated Chicano Nation—the Indigenous Republic of the Southwest—would act as a national Base Area for the countrywide Protracted People's War. As with Manipur and India, the two—and perhaps more national Communist

parties in the U.S. (of the Black Nation and/or other continental indigenous nations)—would strategically, politically, and militarily work closely together.

Ultimately, the goal is for the abolition of nations, but not before the exercising of all-around national self-determination by the internal colonies. Additionally, the goal is for the unification of all genuine Maoist Communist forces and national Communist parties—if the other oppressed nations chose to take on a similar path—in the U.S. marching forward toward the destruction of the U.S. and the annihilation of our shared enemies.

The ironclad authority and power of the joint dictatorship of the proletariat of the Chicano and indigenous nations, combined with the mastery of two-line struggle and cultural revolution, is unmatched with any force on earth. Maoism is political power, and it belongs in the hands of the oppressed and the proletariat.

Thank you all for being patient and attentive, and for putting forth the necessary energy in struggling over these issues. We reaffirm the Maoist position that rupture is the basis for fundamental change and for unity. We struggle for the correct line for the sake of our class and our nation's liberation.

We will not rest until we have won the establishment of communism throughout the country, throughout Turtle Island.

Every breath, every step, every theorization must move the Maoist closer to the coming Protracted People's War. The White Nation capitalist State has already been waging a war against its internal colonies and the countrywide proletariat. It is past time we organize and fight back with revolutionary vengeance.

¡Que viva la liberación de la Nación Chicano!

Long live the liberation of the Chicano Nation!

¡Que viva el Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo!

Long live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

¡Abajo el imperialismo Americano!

Down with U.S. imperialism!

—Red Guards Los Angeles, January 2018

On the Universality of Protracted People's War

Red Guards Austin

Introduction

When I first declared myself a Maoist, I had no clue what I was talking about. What I meant was that I really liked Mao's style of leadership, I admired the Chinese revolution, and I felt like it offered valuable lessons for the way forward for the development of communism. Like many of my comrades, I started to take politics seriously at the height of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. I became a Communist when I saw the inefficiencies and backwardness of so many other schools of thought. And when I saw the reaction of revisionism and its impeccable ability to blame, tail, and corral the masses, I decided I was a Maoist. I knew that I saw people calling themselves Maoist in this country whom I really looked up to. People who really seemed to be embracing the wave of rebellion that BLM was defined by at the time. So I started to study, and I started to really understand what made Maoism the only anti-revisionist communism of today.

And in this journey I learned about the three instruments of revolution that were the invaluable weapons for victory in the Chinese revolution. And I learned that these were actually not a "use once and destroy" type of thing but instead are universally applicable in defeating the enemy

everywhere. I started to understand that in fact Mao contributed many universal lessons to each component part of Marxism. And in reading the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM)'s documents and discovering the different line struggles that played out within RIM, I began to realize that there were two trends: Maoists like those of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) who understood that it was Mao's contributions to the three component parts of Marxism that qualified it as a continuation of Marxism-Leninism, and those who called themselves Maoists because it seemed like the hip thing to do, and it was a great cover to sneak in horseshit ideology like "New Synthesis" nonsense. It didn't take long for my comrades and I to realize that what we had in the U.S. was the latter of the two. We had the task to struggle against people who called themselves "Maoists" in order for a genuine Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line to emerge in the U.S. MLM movement. For this we'd have to break with our own liberalism, shake off the chains of unprincipled peace and friendship, and struggle against some of the people we had once thought were the first germinations of the struggle to build a Party. We were not willing to build a house on sand. A Party can only emerge and be fortified through struggle: the struggle for unity and the struggle for correct political lines and ideological consolidation.

One of the most important political lines that must be tackled if we are to build a Maoist Party in the U.S. is the military line. We cannot neglect this question lest we give up the lessons the comrades before us have killed and died for.

Without further ado, I'd like to go ahead and dive right in and start off with this quote from one of my favorite texts: the General Political Line (GPL) of the Communist Party of Peru.

On the People's War in Peru

[Extract] Chairman Gonzalo, reaffirming himself on the universal law of revolutionary violence, takes up the highest military theory of the proletariat established by Chairman Mao: People's war, which is universally valid and is applicable in all types of countries, in accordance with the conditions of each revolution. The world People's War is the principal form of struggle that the proletariat and the oppressed peoples of the world should launch to oppose imperialist world war. His point of departure is that People's War is a war of the masses and can only be accomplished by mobilizing the masses and relying on them. He says: "The masses give us everything, from the crusts of bread that are taken from their own mouths to their precious blood which stirs jointly with that of the combatants and militants, which nourishes the road of the People's War for the New Power."

As Communists, specifically Marxist-Leninist-Maoists, principally Maoists, we must be able to understand and defend the universality of Protracted People's War, and in fact we should cease to call ourselves Maoists if we do not.

Before I dive into the military strategy of the proletariat proper, it's extremely important that I discuss the top-

ic of the proletarian military, which is referred to as an “army of a new type.”

This army of a new type was an improvement on the Soviet model. When the Bolsheviks seized power in November 1917, their only military force was the Red Guards. These Red Guards were made up mainly of untrained, undisciplined armed industrial workers and former soldiers. In 1918 the Red Guards, having accumulated more forces and being more officially organized along socialist lines, became the Red Army. Realizing that they required a larger, more professional standing army, Leon Trotsky (who had been elected war commissar of the newly formed Red Army) conscripted thousands of ex-officers and former NCOs (non-commissioned officers) from the now-defunct imperial army. His justification was that the new country had no time to train and educate new officers—it needed the experience and expertise of military specialists immediately, regardless of their origins. These tsarist officers, Trotsky claimed, would be “squeezed like lemons, then thrown away.”

While this accomplished the task of creating more discipline and professionalism within the Red Army’s ranks, this created a contradiction within the political make-up of the group. With the recruitment of many former tsarist soldiers who had no political allegiance or affection for the Bolsheviks, the risks of desertion, defection to the Whites, and worst of all anti-Bolshevik espionage increased. The method that was used to try to resolve this contradiction was to assign Party commissars to be attached to every military unit to help politicize soldiers as well and report on

the soldiers who showed signs of betraying the Bolsheviks. With this new strategy, there were far fewer instances of the aforementioned offenses. And most importantly, it gave us a model to improve upon and learn from for building a proletarian military.

An army of a new type

“Without a people’s army the people have nothing.” This was the correct conclusion by Mao, which the movement has taken from the Chinese experience. The Chinese Communist Party (CPC)’s Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies under Mao’s command were able to grow at an amazing rate while not compromising the integrity of their politics. How were these forces able to accomplish this? By becoming a People’s Army that wholeheartedly served the interests of the people. This army of a new type performs three major tasks: fighting, mass work, and production. It is under the complete leadership of the Communist Party. This means it also carries out the policies and political lines of the Communist Party through mass work and production. This army has a high degree of class-conscious discipline and carries out the task of propagating the righteousness and necessity of the war and inspiring a fighting spirit in the people. This army requires unity between cadre and soldiers, high-ranking and low-ranking soldiers, the various different departments, and the various fraternal army units. It also must have unity with the people.

This means that the army must serve the people in every way that it can. Everywhere it goes, it must do propaganda work among the masses, organize and arm them, and help them set up revolutionary political power. This army becomes a part of the masses. This army of a new type can be fully utilized and carry out its three primary tasks only through the military strategy of Protracted People's War.

What is Protracted People's War?

Protracted People's War is a war that an inferior army with the proletariat at its heart can wage to overcome a far superior army, without the necessity of external aid. This is a war that progresses through three stages: strategic defensive, strategic stalemate/equilibrium, and strategic offensive. The first stage, while being strategically defensive, still carries out tactically offensive campaigns. Its defensiveness is defined by its mobility. This is a major time for accumulation of forces and arms. The second stage, strategic equilibrium, is characterized by the enemy having switched from the offensive position to one of protecting its strongholds. The Communist Party at this point has influence over many parts of the country, having spent its time setting up Base Areas where the enemy is the weakest. This is a time of great peril when the forces between revolution and reaction are balanced at a seeming impasse. And the last stage, strategic offensive, is the stage at which the enemy has largely retreated and the final encirclement and annihilation campaigns can be carried out.

Our enemy is always the same no matter the level of de-

velopment of capitalism of the country we're in. Through fighting this enemy, the international proletariat has discerned the weakness and strengths of this enemy and has used these objective facts to formulate a strategy that can be creatively applied to our conditions and ensure our success against this enemy. The enemy relies on capital, technology, and foreign aid, but it is not capital, technology, and foreign aid that make history. Communists understand this well, which is why we rely on the most important resource of all: the people.

Maoism contains many truths; at the core of them all is the truth that it is right to rebel. We could examine what this means a little more closely, as is it a heavy commitment as well as our greatest gift—the right to rebel as a unity of opposites. What is rebellion? The simplest definition is rising in opposition or arms against the reactionary established class order. This is the truth Mao places at the core of all Marxism.

From this we can understand the need for the military line being centered within our political line. There is no possible way to avoid the question of military strategy. Without a military strategy and more precisely the military strategy of the proletariat, our political line defaults into revisionism. Clausewitz understood strategy like this: "Strategy is the employment of the battle to gain the end of the war; it must therefore give an aim to the whole military action, which must be in accordance with the object of the war; in other words, strategy forms the plan of the war, and to the said aim it links the series of acts which are to lead to the same, that is to say, it makes the plans for the separate cam-

paigns, and regulates the combats to be fought in each. As these are all things which to a great extent can only be determined on conjectures, some of which turn out incorrect, while a number of other arrangements pertaining to details cannot be made at all beforehand, it follows, as a matter of course, that strategy must go with the army to the field in order to arrange particulars on the spot, and to make the modifications in the general plan which incessantly become necessary in war. Strategy can therefore never take its hand from the work for a moment.”

This thesis, in spite of it not being a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thesis, is correctly in accord with the laws of war and follows dialectical materialism in the way in which he stresses bringing the strategy to the battlefield and hence changing both the battlefield itself as well as the strategy brought. War cannot be won by dogmatists any more that it can be won by those foolishly shooting in the dark with no military strategy. We can say that Clausewitz is correct and that the laws of Marxism apply to war.

While we cannot predict the fine details of the coming war, using this fact to advocate against formulating a military strategy is subjectivism, as it rejects the objective conditions that make war a necessity in resolving irreconcilable contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This is a particularly alluring subjectivism, as it appears to issue sober decrees from a position of “common sense” and moral concerns about needless loss in guarding against adventurism. We would do well to recall that “common sense” and “moral concern” all have a distinct class character. They serve a class faithfully, and what we come to with

this subjectivism is the common sense of the bourgeoisie, who always try to convince us that they cannot be overthrown. We get the moral concern of the petty bourgeoisie that eschews self-sacrifice and maintains that seeking comfort over struggle is the compassionate way forward. In the crazed imagination of these classes, the strategy is to fight only for reforms to seek a more comfortable servitude, because after all class is not in motion but in stasis, and this is “human nature”—just an unchanging fact of life.

Our subjectivists maintain that this is not their position, and they may very well dream of an ideal, largely bloodless insurrection, no doubt inspired by their historically illiterate conception of the Great October Revolution, which again due to their subjectivism zooms in only on the moment of storming the Winter Palace—which was in its part largely bloodless. Mao Zedong concretely understood by centering the correctness of rebellion in the heart of all Marxism that he was centering war as the principal method for solving class contradictions.

The insurrectionist dreams of mass defection from the imperialist military over to the side of the revolution as if the superstructure can just cease to exist or can be made ineffective due to changes in the forces of production (a common thread in almost all revisionist thinking).

We should understand the dance moves of this opponent. While it is correct that there can be mass defection from the enemy camp in moments of great crisis, it is wrong to think they will always, without error, defect to the revolutionary camp. The history of fascism demonstrates

that defection has a class character, and that large swaths of the bourgeoisie's democratic military is prone to defect not to the left but to the right, constituting the hard core of reaction in fascism.

What our opponents are trying to say is that the role of the masses is inconsequential to military affairs, which leaves military affairs to-be-decided, not by the masses with the proletariat at their core but by the bourgeoisie, the class enemy.

Comrade Mao had one virtue that stood above his countless qualities, and that was that he always without fail cherished the role of the masses, whom he loved with revolutionary fervor. Mao taught that in war, like everything else, mass participation is key. Mao said, "Reading is learning, but applying is also learning and the more important kind of learning at that. Our chief method is to learn warfare through warfare. A person who has had no opportunity to go to school can also learn warfare—he can learn through fighting in war. A revolutionary war is a mass undertaking, it is often not a matter of first learning and then doing, but of doing and then learning, for doing is itself learning. There is a gap between the ordinary civilian and the soldier, but it is no Great Wall, and it can be quickly closed, and the way to close it is to take part in revolution in war. By saying that it is not easy to learn and to apply, we mean that it is hard to learn thoroughly and to apply skillfully. By saying that civilians can very quickly become soldiers, we mean that it is not difficult to cross the threshold. To put the two statements together we may cite the Chinese adage, 'Nothing in the world is difficult for one who sets his mind to it.'

To cross the threshold is not difficult and mastery, too, is possible provided one sets one's mind to the task and is good at learning."

Mao describes the process in which we go from having nothing in terms of war to having everything. We understand that the proletariat has no soldiers—so it must get soldiers. We understand that the proletariat now has no power and that it must get power through means of war. Just as it was described in that formulation by Clausewitz, the war itself is not only a means of change but a changing means. PPW is like this—our mass work from its inception must be geared toward the initiation of the People's War—which brings about a qualitative change in our practice. This change has an effect on our mass work, which is carried out primarily by means of war. Changing the mass work and changing the war—People's War grows from small to large in the process of the three stages laid out by Mao. It is through reliance on the masses and converting the masses into red soldiers that the People's War grows.

Mass support is earned through war against the class enemies—this is the most uncomfortable fact for the revisionists, who eagerly attempt to slander us with the charges of "focoism." Even if they claim to uphold the universality of People's War, they imagine it as the subjectivists do, of being initiated only once a large army is already under the command of the Party—ignoring the fact that the People's Army is developed and built in, and through, the People's War.

The revisionists will say that “no mass base exists to support armed struggle.” Well, this is partially true and partially false, yet what the revisionist opportunists pathologically forget to tell you is that no mass base will ever exist to support armed struggle if armed struggle is always put off to a distant future by fake Communists. In reality, armed struggle is required to generate support for itself: it must reproduce itself and grow in People’s War. To accomplish this, the Communist party must be at the helm and the masses must be educated in revolutionary violence. “Upholding, defending, and applying Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, Chairman Gonzalo has established the military line of the Party. In the First Expanded National Conference of November, 1979, it was agreed upon as being central to the general political line and it is now being developed through the People’s War.” (GPL)

PPW in the USA?

So can Protracted People’s War happen in the United States? Obviously, we know where I stand. Yes, not only can we do it, but we must do it.

To come to such a conclusion we must look at the overall imperialist character of the United States and its geography, as well as its economic and social life, its history of class struggle, and its composition of class forces. To begin we know that the proletariat in the U.S. has been acting a very long time without its political organization—the Communist Party. We can understand that in spite of its size and strength, without a head, a creature

is bound to be oppressed without change. It is bound to sway back and forth from progressive to reactionary, and to stumble without leadership.

Is it the proletarian masses we can blame for not having a Party to guide it? No, we cannot, we can blame only two things: first we blame the history of revisionism, from the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) all the way to the rat traitors the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP-USA); and secondly, we blame ourselves for having not kept pace with the material conditions that are ideal for the formation of the Party.

Geographically the U.S. is huge and wide, with a diverse terrain from coast to coast and top to bottom. It has many cities spread throughout and no real countryside. We can understand that geographically there are depressed and oppressed regions where the masses face acute forms of oppression—this can be both political oppression as well as environmental oppression, and the latter is always exacerbated by the former. We have oppressed nations within the U.S. as well, which produces a compounded oppression on their proletariat and a national form of oppression on their bourgeoisie. We can look at and consider these facts to understand that the contradictions are most sharp regionally and that they often will flare up in one region while being less prevalent in another. This understanding helps to dispel the idea that “conditions will be right” spontaneously on a countrywide scale, ever. For this reason we look at the Sunbelt region as an area most prone to popping off in organic mass rebellion. We can also understand that the Rust Belt

is another area like Appalachia that has suffered a specific kind of depression from deindustrialization.

Deindustrialization is directly linked to U.S. imperialism and what some call “neoliberalism,” which is really just imperialism trying to mask itself as an optional policy in order to conceal what it truly is: the inevitable development of capitalism and a falling world rate of profit. We often talk of what imperialism does to the people of the Third World, how it forms the principal contradiction in the world today—that between imperialists and the oppressed nations. We should understand first that this contradiction expresses itself here in two ways. The first is that we have oppressed nations in the U.S. that are underdeveloped by imperialism, and this is most evident in the existence of the Black nation, historically rooted in the U.S. Deep South and forced into diaspora throughout the country. Second, we must understand the effect this has on the entire U.S. proletariat, with the loss of jobs as the monopoly capitalist class seeks cheaper labor. What follows is the deindustrialization of all major and medium-sized U.S. cities.

The urban industrial proletariat becomes dispensable as a class in the process of declassing the urban industrial landscape. These changes produce what we commonly call gentrification, but which is more correctly understood as a shifting class landscape. The proletariat in the cities are no longer mainly workers in large factories who must keep rigid hours at the mercy of production quotas but are more locked into the aspect of production away from the point of manufacture, into the points of distribution, communication, and reproduction. Service industry jobs are the main

jobs available in mid-sized cities like Austin, and almost the only industrial jobs are in construction. Due to this, large quantities of workers are no longer needed to be kept in or near the city centers, and the process of relocating them has been going on since the 1970s.

It is the “success” of imperialism that has so many bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie seeing our cities as playgrounds to throw money around in—necessitating the demand for service industry workers who can be bussed in from the suburbs but who are too dangerous or rebellious to have dwelling in the city proper.

The city becomes the place of leisure for the vampire class who can afford it. And what follows is that ugly factories are removed or repurposed. Active factories are pushed to the semirural areas (as with auto manufacturing in the U.S. South) and the proletariat is to follow this trend and is pushed further and further into the suburbs and rural areas—into rings of slums that begin to literally encircle the cities. We have seen this already come to fruition in Paris, where the banlieue are punctuated with endless housing projects that house workers and stretch as far as the eye can see. Hosting over 80 percent of “Paris,” these zones are not part of Paris proper, but it is the only place you will find Parisian and immigrant workers living. In this condition, Comrade Pierre of PCM (Maoist Communist Party of France) became one of the first to theorize Protracted People’s War in an imperialist country.

The banlieue are a glimpse into the future of all major and mid-sized U.S. cities as the proletariat gets pushed into ring-like formations around the cities—the servants' quarters on the master's plantation, and the hot spot for rebellions against the master.

Lima, Peru, which is larger than any U.S. city, demonstrates the exact same phenomenon: it is surrounded by rings of slums and ghettos, and the city itself is host to the country's most elite, who suck the blood from the countryside and slums. This factored into the People's War in Peru and understanding how that occurred is of utmost importance to us here. The shantytowns of Lima, the banlieue of Paris, and the popular neighborhoods of Austin will all come to surround the city, and this is the geographic base for the coming People's War. It is physically where the deepest and most profound sections of the masses live and breathe the class struggle. These can come to form constricting belts around the cities and can choke them economically and impact the infrastructure.

In this context, the mass work must be understood only as the trembling first steps toward a torrent of revolutionary violence. We must, as Mao says, preserve our forces and destroy the enemy forces. The early stages of People's War will not be a romantic struggle against tanks and planes or any other fantasy.

It will more or less be small guerrilla bands operating in the slums, ghettos, and other depressed areas forming a steel belt around the city. All our mass work should be to create these networks and solidify them and temper them in class

struggle toward initiation. It will be characterized by small mobile assaults on police substations, defensive actions, and assaults on infrastructure combined with armed propaganda actions like assassinations and bombings.

The Maoists in India have produced a document that even in their semi-feudal conditions expressed the need to develop and improve their urban strategy, and they looked exactly to the work being conducted in Lima's slums by the PCP. The Indian comrades stated, "The largest mega city, Mumbai, has 49% of its population in the slums. Our Party has so far paid limited attention to the organizing of this section. Other revolutionary parties, particularly the Peru Communist Party (PCP) have been particularly successful in this respect. In fact the shantytowns of Lima have been the strongholds of the revolutionaries for a long period. We too should work at creating such strongholds in India's major cities."

If a Maoist Party in a country such as India with 70 percent of its population living in the countryside is forced by the trends of urbanization and ghettoization to consider focusing its energy onto developing urban Base Areas, then we absolutely must devote serious consideration to this need.

The fact remains that "gentrification" does not exist in a bubble. We cannot only look to the short-term preservation of our communities but more importantly should look to the trajectory of relocation and understand that if an area is gentrified, those workers are relocated somewhere else in a process of ghettoization of proletarian suburbs. This is a particular type of urbanization—a suburbanization. These

popular suburbs will face more and more economic degeneration, as they are the places where the crisis of imperialism will be felt most sharply in the imperialist countries.

The urban strategy, Base Areas, and revisionism

Understanding the need to establish dual power presents another concern for the subjectivist revisionists. They want dual power but do not want to fight for it. They do not want to conquer bases, and see dual power as they see most things: as a long march through institutions, or the hobby-like pursuits of activists.

Many feel they can just walk into a neighborhood without having conquered turf and set up shop—peacefully converting it into a “base area” or peacefully transitioning to “dual power.” Understanding that the law of revolutionary violence is universal, we know that this is a daydream. A New Power can never emerge without destroying the Old Power.

There are a multitude of forces controlling the popular neighborhoods in the absence of the Party of the proletariat. The first major force is usually the police, the second is the churches/NGOs and other non-governmental class actors, and the third is the drug gangs and other lumpen-proletariat. To meaningfully develop these neighborhood

trenches means fighting for space—this cannot be a non-violent fight as the crypto-pacifists imagine. For capitalists, control means profit. Whether they are on the black market or not, these types will fight violently for their profits in the popular neighborhood. Serving the people means fighting to establish control over the community—it means the establishment of people’s committees (three-in-ones), which form the basis of the New State.

First and foremost, the demarcation of PPW or no PPW poses itself in the question of approaching revisionists—especially in areas where revisionists hold influence or marginal power. The revolutionary line is to battle them tooth and nail, politically always and physically when conditions permit. This is essential to clear the table of the rotting filth before you serve the masses.

This uncomfortable truth panics those red-tinted liberals who insist on unprincipled peace and “left unity,” which is always a call to tail revisionism and stifle revolutionary forces (a call to rob the proletariat of its Party, People’s Army, and United Front). They want a soft-touch relationship with revisionism. They want to allow those would-be butchers to continue misdirecting the masses. We should not allow for such thinking in our ranks. The organized revisionist must be the first to go in our political struggles; it is them we must make the first political demarcation against. We should hit them repeatedly until they break.

What follows in the cultivation of Base Areas in the interest of initiation of People’s War is battling with NGOs and the police. One is simply the ideological wing while the

other is its enforcement wing. We should rid our streets of both and infiltrate the ranks of the former to split and confuse them, to hasten their discredit. The second we must mobilize and organize against in the most aggressive way. This is how we till the soil in preparation for initiation of armed struggle in the context of service to the people programs. The dialectical relationship is formed between insurgency and community service: this relationship must be given attention and respect.

The importance of the military strategy of the proletariat is not just crucial to our mass work, but to our Party-building as well. We must center PPW in our political line, especially in conditions like our own where we are beset on all sides by revisionism and reaction.

The way People's War shapes and builds the Party and its cadres is illustrated by Chairman Gonzalo in his 1988 interview:

[Extract] Obviously war forges in a different way. It steels people, permits us to imbue ourselves more deeply with our ideology, and forge iron-like cadre who dare to challenge death, to snatch the laurels of victory from the clutches of death. Another change in the Party that we could point to, but on a different plane, has to do with the world revolution. The People's War has enabled the Party to demonstrate clearly how, by grasping Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, we can develop a People's War without being subordinate to any power, be it a superpower or any other power—how it's possible to rely on our own strength to carry forward People's War. All this has given the Party prestige on an inter-

national level that it never had before, and this is not vanity, far from it, it's just a simple fact, and it has also allowed us to serve the development of the world revolution as never before. In this way the Party, through the People's War, is fulfilling its role as the Communist Party of Peru.

In this thesis, Gonzalo has demonstrated his mastery of MLM, stressing both solidarity as part of world revolution as well as the independence of the proletarian forces from world powers and superpowers, a self-determined internationalism that is self-reliant. Has there ever been a greater master of MLM than the great leader Chairman Gonzalo? No, there has not been.

Conclusion

There are those who are better at hiding under rocks than at making revolution.

Some organizations are better at avoiding the question of PPW and substituting for it what they may call an "objective scientific approach." How, in fact, could you call yourself a Maoist while ignoring and avoiding the question? They treat their work today as merely a time to gather the affection of the masses, and their military strategy is simply to develop to a point when the masses are of course so impressed by our service programs and mass organizations that they are ready to lay down their lives for us. What they fail to understand is that the war begins the moment you form the Party.

The establishment of the Party sends a battle cry to the

bourgeoisie. The Party from its inception is locked into a battle, an antagonistic contradiction that can only be resolved through means of war. This war starts from the first step the Party takes. The revisionists conceive of war only at the point of bloodshed. They fail to understand that the enemy has ready a strategy and a plethora of tactics to try to crush our forces even before blood is shed. We would be foolish to enter into a Party with those who oppose military strategy. They have no interest in preparing their forces for battle. They have no strategy to defeat the enemy today or tomorrow. They are political procrastinators. They do not seek to learn war by making war—they seek to wait until war is already being made by some other poor bastard and enter if it looks like they will win. Like the intellectuals of the Kasama Project, they measure successes only in quantity, declaring PPW to be a failure in Peru because it did not seize State power. They lack a very basic principle that prevails in our movements: “Dare to struggle, dare to win.” It’s lucky for us that they often do not enter struggles where the stakes are high, or where they are expected to show force and bravery. And at the point where we find ourselves in the company of such people, we should analyze the quality of our work and look for places where these people have managed to find themselves comfortably existing within our ranks.

Organizations such as Mass Proletariat are dogshit. Their politics are so muddled it’s hard to discern whether they’re a cadre org or a mass org. They espouse revisionism at every corner where the rest of us have been forced to mature. While Mass Proletariat has decided there is no need to fight fascism since “fascism isn’t in power,” they seem to also be

lackluster on the question of fighting capitalism though it is in power. Their military line is to call upon the masses and Communists alike to do nothing, and in some magical future manifest an insurrection. Materially, what they practice is the peaceful road to socialism while giving lip service to armed struggle. As their recent disaster of a theoretical paper states, they do not believe in the universality of PPW. They aren't even creative with their revisionism. They regurgitate all the same half-cocked nonsense leveled at real Marxist-Leninist-Maoists over the decades—shit like, “We don't have a peasantry or countryside in the United States so we can't have a PPW” and “Mao said it wasn't universal!” Both of these arguments rely on book worship and dogmatism.

So much has already been written to dispel this type of dogmatic revisionism that it doesn't concern me terribly today to repeat what so many comrades have already said. What is our concern today is how to orient toward these types of revisionists in our movement. Some have suggested that in building the Party with people who have not yet come to correct ideas we can win them over. To this I ask, what type of Party are we trying to build? The Communist Party is the vanguard of the proletariat. It is the most advanced, organizationally and theoretically. We must stand above the confusion and reaction of revisionism. We do not need to give them power and legitimacy in our ranks to win them over. They will be won over by People's War or they will continue to serve reaction and fall with the enemy.

So let's build the Party in the foundation of unity around People's War and beat revisionism back into the hand of the bourgeoisie where they will march together to the same grave.

—Red Guards Austin, January 2018

The New Line of Red Guards Kansas City

Red Guards Kansas City

Form the cadre organization

“Whenever I find myself in a difficult situation I strive to look for its positive aspect or for what potential for development may still exist within that situation, because nothing is completely black, nor is anything completely red. Even if there were to be a big defeat, even though we have not had one yet, there would always be a positive aspect. The point is to draw out the lessons, and continue to do our work based on the positive aspect. You will always find someone to support you, to lend their ardent enthusiasm and assistance to the struggle, because communism unites people”.
(Chairman Gonzalo)

Historically all revolutionary movements started from mass struggles and mass organizations as well as struggles against a rightist line. We can trace this historically with the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks in the lead-up to the October Socialist Revolution; the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) led by Charu Mazumdar, out of the Naxalbari uprising and from a split with the Communist Party of India (Marxist); the reconstitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines brought forth from the struggle against the Lava-Taruc revisionists and from the First Quarter Storm; and the Revolutionary Union/

Revolutionary Communist Party from SDS here in the U.S.; and of course the reconstitution of the Communist Party of Peru led by Chairman Gonzalo against the revisionist-reformists led by Saturnino Paredes.

At some point the Red Line had to formally consolidate and form a revolution Party and from this Party generate organizations that could be the vehicles for mass struggle. The explosion of mass activity necessitates a clarification and consolidation to sustain this momentum to a critical mass. At the same time the revolutionary line must contend with a revisionist one as well as a reformist counterrevolutionary line that also emerges from mass uprisings. At all levels the cadreification of mass members should be the goal, replacing our numbers inside the mass org with mass members and eliminating the contradiction between cadre and the mass organization. Our past work aimed to win hearts and minds with political transformation as secondary. Our conception calls for concentric construction on a miniature scale. It is that everything flows from cadre and without initiation of this cadre there cannot be a true Maoist pole.

1. Start your Maoist collective with three to five members

If you already have a consolidated core there is no reason why you cannot have a cadre organization. This necessitates democratic centralism in the formal sense as opposed to the informal sense. The cadre in the mass orgs should capture leadership in the mass organization by seeking to form a maximum and minimum number of three cadre who will

form a cell within the mass organizations, while still upholding that the Maoist organization must be composed of three to five members initially. This cell forces the cadre organization to replace our ranks with mass members with as little overlap as possible. This cell must present written reports at cadre meetings to inform the cadre of political work that is occurring in the mass organizations. The cell should be assigned to the mass organizations and their criteria as the most active members of this organization. They must also be initiators of all mass work within the organization and take a role of leadership.

A cell implies a unit with direct orders from the large cadre organization that operates through formal democratic centralism. The dangers of not replacing mass members with cadre is that cadre work, in turn, becomes secondary at best or at worst, and all work is done through the mass organizations. Thus, frontism becomes the practice of the Maoist organization in relation to its mass organization. When all cadre belong to the mass organizations there are no free hands available to carry about Party-building and the cadre work. Here overlap has seriously hampered the Party-building and ideological development and consolidation that should be the tasks of all Maoist collectives.

2. Generated organism and structure

“Their [the three instruments of revolution] construction is guided by the principle that a just and correct ideological line decides everything, and it is on this ideological-political basis that the organizational construction is simultaneously

developed in the midst of the struggle between the proletarian line and the bourgeois line and within the storm of the class struggle.” (Communist Party of Peru, “On Marxism-Leninism-Maoism”)

Once the cadre have been united in a stable organization, and have committed to carrying out mass work, the construction of a mass organization should begin immediately. The mass organization thus becomes a “generated organism” meaning that it is initiated by cadre. This serves the basic twofold task of organizing the masses to bring them into open conflict with the class enemy and training the masses in administration. Through generated organisms we organize the disorganized masses for the struggle against the organized power of the ruling class.

The cadre cell generating the organization ensures that the correct ideological line forms the basis for the organization. Viewing the mass organization as a primarily multi-tendency organization that had an informal Maoist hegemony is a mistake. This forms a tenuous situation, which rests more so on the numerous Maoists inside the organization exerting pressure on members to transform politically rather than Maoism being the political orientation of the organization in general. The result of this is not only that oppositional political trends can grow and gain a significant foothold in the organization without violating any organizational documents or discipline, but also that it undermines the work of cadre in creating new Communists by fostering non-revolutionary and eclectic political orientations that seek to combat Maoism internally. This is an especially dangerous situation in the initial stages of the organization, for if the

Maoists do not gain a foothold and conquer ideological hegemony, which is merely informal, then the organization rests on an incorrect ideological line and its political work will necessarily suffer.

The generated organization resolves that issue by establishing the ideological-political basis of the organization as Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in a formal manner, stamping out the eclecticism of the multi-tendency approach and replacing it with a formal Maoist-oriented mass organization. This is of the utmost necessity for our work, which takes conquering power as its primary aim, as the question of proletarian political power is of fundamental importance in Maoism. If we are serious in our work of building toward that goal then we must develop the masses politically to that goal through Maoism. This cannot be accomplished through wading through the mire of ideological-political eclecticism, and we should be open and honest in our desire to steel and develop the masses through these generated organisms in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

It would be a mistake to give one inch to consensus democracy as the basis for the structure of the organization. This is a rightist conception of an organization that is to be a fighting organization of the masses, and a practice that is foreign to Maoism, but right at home in the movementist left in its various anarchist, social-democratic, and revisionist formations. In promoting this one succumbs to ultra-democracy (where individuals are free to subvert organizational discipline, and this in turn actually negates the democracy that it seeks to promote) and horizontalism in that one's Maoist core is actually negated on several cases because centralism

is not present from the beginning. This can hamper one's ability to carry out tasks and actually increase the amount of time wasted on meetings and deliberation rather than expediting them. In essence, one is not only negating democracy but also centralism as well. Ultra-democracy and horizontalism negate leadership, in theory as being an "authoritarian" imposition, and in practice by bogging the organization down through a lack of fidelity to discipline and collectivism to where even informal leadership becomes ineffective.

In the storm of the class struggle, leaders and leadership are produced. As Communists we understand this not as an evil to be combatted but a necessity that we should not shy away from recognizing, steeling, and developing. To negate the necessity for leadership erases all pretenses of democratic centralism, and negates genuine proletarian leadership, and thus the necessity for the Communist Party itself. A weak leadership, even from the beginning, means an ineffective organization. The corrective is to implement democratic centralism in the mass organization, so the lower bodies (general membership) are subordinate to the higher bodies (secretariat). The formulation of democratic centralism should not mistakenly understand democracy as being primary (and indeed this was our previous error) but rather understand centralism as primary. Democracy is merely the base, or the road, by which we arrive at centralism.

Numbers do not negate democratic centralism. Even when the organization is under ten members the organization should operate along democratic centralist lines both to establish a proper Maoist culture and discipline, and also to foster effective leadership and participation from gener-

al membership. During this stage the cell should formally assume the role of the secretariat of the organization. The secretariat should never be more or fewer than three positions (chairperson, general-secretary, and education officer) no matter how large the organization grows. The work of leading and maintaining an organization should be able to be carried out by three individuals as long as the secretariat initiates committees and/or tasks mass members to carry out tasks, which are binding, and the cell is vocal in pushing a revolutionary line of action and ideas openly. In the event that the organization grows but then regresses to ten or fewer members, the cell must again assume all leadership.

The cell should work to overcome specialization in organizational work. We should not discourage an individual from doing a lot of tasks, but we should not let that person become overburdened or allow other cell members to shirk their responsibilities. Leadership is collective, not individual.

3. Identify a fixed site of struggle to recruit from

We initially recruited from a local university (a fixed site of struggle) among a club within that university (a fixed community) who were already familiar with radical political ideas. They formed a consistent core within our mass work early on. We also recruited from students studying in the humanities, as they too were also familiar with progressive and radical ideas. We challenged these sections to put their ideas into practice.

By focusing on a fixed site of struggle with a substantial, stable, and consistent concentration of people we were assuring that our presence as a group was established and strengthened. This allowed for a concentrated organizing base area as opposed to a more diffuse area of organizing in the city in general. By focusing on a fixed community within a fixed site of struggle and propagating revolutionary politics to sympathetic people, but also by challenging them to put ideas into practice, we were able to form ourselves as well as integrate ourselves into struggle on campus, as the club's members also interact with members from the student body in general.

4. Identify the "leaders"

It is important to identify and win over the leaders in the particular community you are working in. The revolutionaries must take advantage of recruiting from fixed sites of struggle from fixed communities by winning over their leaders, who will in turn recruit and mobilize from within those same communities. This is a universal truth in many People's Wars in which a village is won over by winning over the village elder or tribal leader. By winning over the leaders we switch from recruitment on an individual basis to recruiting on a more mass basis.

5. Organizational procedure

All meetings must be purposive. It is not productive to hold meetings for the sake of holding meetings if no real work is being accomplished. Members should also be expected to

be familiar with organizational documents, as new member orientations should cover all relevant documents, and members are expected to remain familiar with these and uphold them as long as they retain membership in the organization. In the beginning points of unity are sufficient as they unite and draw in a broad base of people from the recruiting site/section, but once the organization grows and develops over ten people the immediate goal is to develop a political line for the organization to replace them.

Points of unity reflect a lower level of political development and only loosely bind members ideologically around broad core principles (anti-imperialism, anti-racism, socialism, etc.). This is unfitting if an organization seeks to reach the masses on a large scale as these will be seen as idealistic fantasies in the absence of a political line. Depending on the organization the political line may differ but it should be borne out of the mass work the organization is conducting, from its own investigation and its own political experiences.

The cells should report, in a written fashion, to the cadre formation their political work inside the mass organization and any relevant updates at each meeting. This keeps all cadre informed as to the goings-on of the mass organization, and can also help identify mass members politically and ideologically developed enough to be moved up to cadre.

6. Hold regular collective studies and collect mandatory dues

Regular collective studies are a mandatory part of the mass

org. Since mass orgs are initiated by the Maoist political line, mass org members must undergo the political transformation of learning the thought behind its existence and applying this line in their political work. Regular studies ensure a measurable standard to grow the organization ideologically.

Monthly dues are mandatory and must be seen as a necessary part of maintaining the printing of flyers as well as other materials necessary for outreach or propaganda. Dues should be a fixed minimum amount and members should be allowed to give more but not less. If a member is unable to contribute the minimum amount, assign them one or two additional tasks per month, but only on a case by case scenario. The treasurer should keep track of who is paying, and discipline should be applied by the secretariat in the case of members neglecting this duty.

The collection of dues in a democratic organization also ensures a sort of personal investment in the organization. Dues used to be voluntary due to concerns about alienating members that are not able to pay. However, we abolished the voluntary dues line because it was liberal. Mandatory dues encourage a higher level of investment within membership. We also uphold this line because we value quality over quantity and believe that truly dedicated members will contribute to the material needs of their organization.

True believers in revolution have been willing to become martyrs for liberation; a few dollars would be nothing for them if they were truly invested in proletarian revolution.

In revolutionary collective studies we demarcate against liberal ideology and tactics with militant ones, with the latter meant to raise the overall ideological level among mass members and the population they organize with. Education is centralized within the secretariat so that liberal and erroneous ideas do not take a hold in the mass organization, and when they are encountered they must be struggled with through a process of criticism and tying back to the political line of the mass org.

7. Build up an authentic Maoist culture

Authentic Maoist culture fosters a strictly political culture as well as a normalization and regular practice of principled criticism and self-criticism. We must foster a culture of solidarity, serving the people, and serving comrades, but politics must be in command.

Here we must also utilize a stance that there can be no "long breaks" for cadre and mass members in our organization, so long as they wish to remain inside the organization. We must also follow organizational discipline and always outwardly promote the Maoist political line within the mass org. Every member must feel free to express their criticisms, taking caution never to blunt criticism, but to also engage in a principled manner with the essence of the criticism taking precedence.

Revisionism and liberalism should be openly challenged right then and there, not allowed to fester, as nonantagonistic contradictions will otherwise deepen and erupt antago-

nistically. Belonging to a political organization should take precedence over liberal notions of friendship over politics.

8. Stay organized

It is important to establish a calendar and always take notes in meetings and to review them. Encourage members to do this and enforce it if need be. Every printed agenda should contain events for that month with important dates at the end. Establishing some discipline is good in the organization. After events, summarize them as soon as possible, typically the next regular meeting or if you can immediately after.

Leadership cannot be expected to know everything just off the top of their head. By forming a calendar it allows one to plan events ahead. By keeping in mind important dates (or as the Filipino Revolutionaries call them “Red Letter Dates”) such as May Day, International Working Women’s Day, organization anniversaries, and so on a month or a few months ahead of time, the organization is not caught planning things as they come. Similarly, by expecting members to also keep calendars, take notes, and so on, it prepares them to also take up roles of leadership when the time comes.

9. Do not orient toward “the left”

Left unity does not build a Maoist movement, but instead dilutes the possibility for more militant organizing. We have observed this in our own work, whether working with anarchist “organizations” like Food Not Bombs, IWW, or the

Democratic Socialists of America. For instance, when we contacted other organizations to show up en masse for the protest to the fascist anti-sharia law march, DSA and other liberal organizations split off to occupy another portion of the park to give speeches, testimonials, and talk to the media, whereas our mass organizations stayed put and directed our attention directly at the fascists, rather than “ignoring them.”

The splitting represents an ideological antagonism, as it is an appeasement to the crushing brutality of fascism, for the sake of peace and “being the bigger person.” Such left unity falls into the error of tailing and opportunism, an anti-Communist idea. We can see this error in our own work, as left unity incentivizes ideological concessions for the hope that such favors will be returned in the future and we build mass support via uncritical tailing of the “masses.” When it was rumored ICE was going to be doing raids in Kansas City, a call was made by Kansas/Missouri DREAM Alliance to bring out people to do patrols. The call was made at midnight and participants were to report to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce at 6 am. Forty people volunteered that day with over half composed of our mass organization members. Those who did not always agree with us repeatedly remarked positively about the showing up, consistency, and discipline of mass members.

Although we composed over half of the individuals who had responded to the call, and although we were among the few willing to forcibly stop any detainment observed, our tailing of organizations like KSMODA did not result in favors being returned, but in fact limited our own work.

When we attempted to organize a sit-in at a local community college in response to raising rates for undocumented students, KSMODA dropped out of attendance a few days prior, citing they were uneasy with our methods, as they were too “militant.”

When criticized for breaking their commitment, they took principled criticism as a personal attack and responded hostilely, severing all communications, although our members had been integral in volunteering for their DACA clinics, even when their own members could or would not. This again exposes a set of inherent contradictions—namely, how does an organization with the intent of creating Maoists organize alongside organizations who actively reject Maoist principles. Why take up faulty alliances that dilute our political line when we still serve as the most devoted to the work, and how can a “unified left” agitate the masses, when such approaches are antagonistic to one another? The end point of left unity then falls into the logical conclusion of tailing: opportunism and revisionism. The highest example of this was our “membership” in the Kansas City Grass Roots Network, an assortment of garden-variety leftists led chiefly by the DSA, the KC Green Party, and local anarchists, in preparation for the ACT for America—sponsored white supremacist rallies on 9/9. Again, our resolve for membership was rightist in form, as it put concessionary alliances for broad left support over Maoist politics in command for mass support. All preparations for the event, including propaganda, flyering, and even bodies on the ground ready to confront the fascists fell solely on our shoulders, although the KC-GRN sought to take credit for the action.

Our reliance on their goodwill led only to missed opportunities to fully commit ourselves to agitating among the working class of Kansas City. Such alliances as the KC-GRN even harbored known wreckers and abusers, with no means to discipline or rectify their behavior, due to their garden-variety ideologies and their inherent horizontalism. To forge such alliances with anti-Maoist elements is to allow liberalism and revisionism to permeate into our work. For these reasons, we denounce left unity, and will forge no alliances nor work alongside any organization that opposes our political line. We welcome those who support our political line, and forge alliances only with those who actively take up that political line. As Maoists, we must win over the masses. We cannot be won over by the “left.”

10. Do not engage in unprincipled attacks and squabbles

Principled criticisms are encouraged over petty and personal disagreements. In our attempts to remain above the bullshit, we sometimes erred on the side of allowing incorrect lines to go unchallenged to avoid arguments. We attempted to ignore and run from contradictions that arose both from within and from our relationships with other organizations, in the hope that they would resolve themselves.

In our handling both of the postmodern clique and of the divide between us and the STL revisionists, we chose unprincipled peace over struggle. But failure to resolve these contradictions was inevitable due to our approach. We must remain principled in our debates so that we can be under-

stood, but we should not shy away from open struggle. Reactionary ideas will continue to thrive unless we attack them directly. We should not mistake valid criticism for unnecessary squabbling, and the essence of an argument takes precedence over its form or “perceived” form. With a political criticism we can make no concession in seeing out two-line struggle until the end.

11. Build the national organizing committee

“As we see in the world, Maoism is marching unstoppably to lead the new wave of world proletarian revolution. Listen well and understand! Those who have ears, use them. Those who have understanding—and we all have it—use it! Enough of this nonsense. Enough of these obscurities! Let us understand that! What is unfolding in the world? What do we need? We need Maoism to be incarnated, and it is being incarnated, and by generating Communist Parties to drive and lead this new great wave of the world proletarian revolution that is coming. Everything they told us, the empty and silly chatter of the famous “new age of peace.” Where is it now?” (Chairman Gonzalo)

All existing and new Maoist political collectives must place the question of the Party as primary and incorporate mass work into the creation of this Party through a formal process via the pre-Party formation. After the collapse of the LC, many collectives, including our own, advocated for the autonomous Maoist collective model, pushing the thought of Party-building to an undetermined future time. The LC’s bad political lines and the backward culture it curated un-

derstandably left a bad taste in the mouth of U.S. Maoists. Subsequently, many collectives took up the task of “building up” locally instead of a true Party-building effort. This position has hindered collectives’ ability to unite wholly, and our unity is based only on our commitment to Maoism, but this approach lacks any way to facilitate true line struggle.

Individuals and collectives have no real accountability to each other, and in the past this has turned attempts at line struggle into personal conflict and outright ridicule. As the U.S. MLM movement grows, potential new collectives could be forced to choose which of the existing collectives to align with should these current alliances dissolve, and this could fracture the modern MLM movement much like the “Communist” movements in the U.S. before it. This position also leaves these collectives susceptible to collapse, as they have no larger system of support to help them weather the ebbs and flows of revolutionary work, regardless of their political line. This pre-Party formation would assist in helping new MLM collectives to form, and would provide a pole that autonomous MLM collectives that spring up can gravitate toward. It would seek to consolidate those collectives through ideological struggle, set some standards at what constitutes mass work, coordinate where to concentrate resources to work, generate mass organizations and help existing mass organizations consolidate (the STPs for example), initiate resources and concentration to penetrate the labor movement, and so on.

To further our unity and advance the revolutionary situation in the U.S., now more than ever it is necessary to take up the task of building a Maoist Party, beginning with furthering

the principled unity that we've established with collectives of dedicated Maoists across the U.S. We cannot begin to seriously discuss People's War or how to take advantage of the impending capitalist wars without the formation of a Party, which is why we fully support the beginning of the construction of a Maoist pre-Party formation. We've continued this process with the MCLS 2018 as we all seek to develop ideologically and further unite the U.S. Maoist movement. A pre-Party formation could unite the political lines of the current MLM movement, guide new collectives in their formation, and create a nationally united MLM movement as we build toward revolution in the U.S.

We are at a point in history where it is very likely that a World War could happen within the next five to ten years, the international bourgeoisie has expanded rapaciously across the globe with the dissolution of phony Communism, and the imperialist powers that have emerged are in competition for global influence and markets. What exists now in the United States is a situation that can be called cold civil war that could very well become hot. What separates us from the other revisionist parties is the question of People's War; this is how we will resist the Empire. ALL mass work that is conducted and initiated by the Party will be tailored to constructing the capacity to wage People's War. This is possible only through the construction of the Party with the current Maoist collectives congealing and forming a pole.

As always,

Dare to struggle! Dare to win!

—Red Guards Kansas City, January 2018

Toward the Sea of Armed Masses

Red Guards Austin

The class struggle produces the Party. The Party must militarize. The working-class struggle has been drenched in blood. This has only produced and nurtured our invincible ideology, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Our history has armed us with the lessons of five great events: the Paris Commune, the October Revolution, the Chinese Revolution, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), and the People's War in Peru.

The workers rose up and held power for three short months from March to May in Paris 1871. For the first time in history, our class, with gun in hand, wrested power from the bourgeoisie and took control of the State administrative machinery. The bourgeoisie spared no horror in crushing the Commune, killing 30,000 communards and arresting 45,000 more, many of whom were executed.

Initially Marx opposed any idea of insurrection in Paris on the basis that the German army still surrounded it. Even after having this foresight and offering his advice, he still threw full support behind the Commune once the workers made their move, and without hesitation began summarizing its lessons for the international proletariat.

While the Commune has reached historic significance as the first time the workers would exercise State power, its principal contribution is as a negative example. The need for a single, centralized Party, and the need to smash the existing State machinery, were lessons the proletariat would not forget. Their noble and brave efforts were not in vain, and their flag would be raised again and again in the march of time toward communism—for it is our red flag.

* * *

The second historic proletarian revolution would play out in Russia, its apex being the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917. We understand October to be far more than a brief insurrection followed by a bloody civil war. As dialectical materialists and loyal students of Marx, we see an untheorized protracted war, with its opening shots fired in 1905, when the revolutionary forces of Lenin and Stalin still lacked the organization to conquer power. This war would continue through 1917 and on through the Russian Civil War. In this process Lenin theorized the Communist Party, which serves as a vanguard of the proletariat. With this elevated understanding built upon the teachings of Marx and the lessons of the class struggle, Lenin and Stalin led the establishment of the first socialist State. This monumental victory is shared to this day by all who toil. It stomps out, eliminating forever, the age of bourgeois revolution and ushers in the age of proletarian revolution as the standard of the world revolution. To accomplish this, iron discipline

and high moral integrity were needed. These were realized and expressed in the vanguard Party, a militant Party of professional revolutionaries.

Upon Lenin's death Comrade Stalin took the reins of the world proletarian revolution, mastering and continuing Lenin's work. He led the construction of socialism by ending the New Economic Program, theorized the national question, and defeated the worst threat the world has ever known by crushing the fascist menace. The flag of this revolution is carried on: it is our red flag, this time marked with the hammer and sickle.

* * *

Mao Zedong solved the question of revolution in the semi-colonial, semi-feudal world (the majority of the world) by developing Protracted People's War—the most modern and scientific way the proletariat can wage armed struggle and the only way to conquer State power for communism. For Comrade Mao the particular application meant surrounding the city from the countryside. Mao's life, like those of Marx and Lenin, enriched the lives of every worker in the world. He developed lessons from the experiences and shortcomings of all past revolutions. He has left us with the understanding of three indispensable instruments of revolution: the Party, the People's Army, and the United Front.

Mao Zedong Thought became the sharpest weapon in the

hands of the Chinese people. As his theories spread, the Chinese masses clamored for rebellion. Mao led the greatest of rebellions against the capitalists inside of his own Party—the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Innumerable lessons were learned in this period of great chaos and upheaval that constitute the very core of Maoism. But at last, like the Commune in Paris and socialism in the USSR, it too was defeated and drowned in blood. The working class did not remain in power. Upon Mao's death, rightists who had lacked control over the Party seized the offensive and used their influence and hegemony over the People's Liberation Army to turn it into its very opposite. Divisions had grown up between the three instruments of revolution: as can be seen in the Wuhan Incident, the army itself became prone to siding against the revolution.

Wielded in the interests of a counterrevolutionary coup, the army was used to capture Mao's four closest leading comrades, all tested leaders in the GPCR. Jiang Qing and Zhang Chunqiao stood above all others in the Party and more than anyone represented Mao's revolutionary line. The GPCR was ended, its lessons were tossed out, and in short order capitalism was fully restored. But what are we to do with this failure but transform it into success? The GPCR and specifically the Shanghai Commune were to this day the very pinnacle of class struggle. In an all-around way, it stormed the heavens, bringing our red flag to new heights.

* * *

Two great milestones, the antifascist war led by Stalin and the cultural revolution led by Mao, have demanded development in how we view the Communist Party. We must stand for a militarized Party and a militarized people.

By the end of the 1970s, black clouds had gathered above the world Communist movement. The bastions of human dignity in China and the Soviet Union were snuffed out. The revolutionary nationalist movements of the Third World had reached their climax, resulting either in defeat or in bitter victory in the form of despotic and right-wing regimes becoming new-type colonialists. The people's revolutionary movements in India and the Philippines were barely surviving, in fractured or deviating movements. In India the adherents of Mao Zedong Thought could not establish principled unity. In the Philippines, after a series of both left and right deviations, the Communist Party was begging for arms from the revisionist and social-imperialist Soviet Union. This was the condition of these parties as a result of confused ideology.

The revisionists had consolidated their capitalism and discredited revolution. The U.S. imperialists rejoiced, for they believed communism was defeated. They contended with a Chinese sweatshop nation whom they enjoyed steady relations with and a Soviet Union that was rapidly losing as a contending imperialist power. U.S. imperialism was jubilant and foaming at the mouth to gorge itself on the bodies of the workers and peasants of Latin America.

Just then the storm clouds broke above Peru and there arose a blinding light. The Communist Party of Peru had been reconstituted, and from the Andes roared a promise of a new era! This era would come to be guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Armed with ideology, bravery, dedication, farming tools, and dynamite, the comrades, who were mostly women and Andean Indians, let out the first shots of what was to be the People's War in Peru. With no outside support, our comrades burned ballots and snatched guns from the enemies' hands in a mighty declaration: **It is revisionism and reaction that will march into the grave. Communism is not dead.**

This People's War stood head and shoulders above the rest in terms of both ideology and tenacity. The Communist Party of Peru and its Chairman Gonzalo would make immortal contributions to the world revolution. They developed and synthesized MLM, and chief among these breakthroughs are the **universality of Protracted People's War, militarization of the Communist Party, and concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution.** It is this that we must contend with today for our new movement. It is how we will regard these contributions that will seal our fate and decide our place in history. We must be consigned only to the victory of the world proletarian revolution, for our flag is emblazoned not simply with the hammer and sickle but specifically with its Peruvian variant. We must excel in every way to honor this symbol of their People's War.

On Party militarization and concentric construction—why they are universally applicable and a matter of life and death for the U.S. Maoist movement

Maoism emerged first and foremost in the historical battle against revisionism, and it was synthesized in the Peruvian People's War as MLM. The military line being central within the political line means the necessity to decisively crush revisionism. Power and the conquest of power are at the center of Maoism. This question is solved through People's War. We must construct our armed forces, mainly the People's Army, secondly the people's militias, as a concrete step **toward the sea of armed masses**. Revolutionary violence is universal and principal to MLM. Protracted People's War is contingent upon this, as it relies on the people themselves, organizing the masses into the People's Army.

All of us here understand that it is internal struggle that sweeps away revisionism and consolidates us to the red line. This is our internal war, which is an ongoing sequence throughout the life the Party, and without it, the Party would die. Two-line struggle is what sustains us. We understand combat, war, and struggle as dialectical materialists—between preserving ourselves and annihilation of the enemy. The proletarian red line and the bourgeois white line are locked in such a life-and-death battle. We have seen many rightists proclaim themselves MLM in this country.

We have seen them stacked up and knocked down. And we have seen them converge at the bottom in unholy alliance with open revisionists.

Our objective, our reason for existence, is to build the Party that will be capable of leading Protracted People's War. We have no interest in the Party form without the Party's essence. To grasp militarization and concentric construction, we must grasp the Party and People's War. The development of people's militias is a concrete step toward the construction of the People's Army. All of this helps to solve the inevitable problem of capitalist restoration—the answer being the sea of armed masses.

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Our class creates its own organizations in its own image, and chief among them is the Communist Party—it is the most advanced organized expression of the class, its vanguard. Its purpose for existence is taking power. Its means of taking power is revolutionary violence. The proletariat cannot act as a class for itself unless it constitutes for itself such a political Party.

This Party is different from, *and opposed to*, the political parties of all other classes, and this includes the revisionist parties. This proletarian Party is totally useless unless it develops, or is in the process of developing, the means to use and guide the use of revolutionary violence, the means to defend itself and guide the masses to arms.

The Party develops appendages, and of the Party's appendages the army is its principal form of organization, its main force. The United Front is the third instrument, and all three are required for the proletariat to conquer power, defend its power, and prevent restoration.

The proletariat on its own does not have the organic or military means to seize power. This is enough for many to concede to abandoning revolution in essence—but for us it simply means that we must crush revisionism to get the tools we need. Here we must be revolutionary optimists.

It was Lenin who explained the need for clandestine organizations of professional revolutionaries, building upon Marx and the Commune. The fact that revolution requires the destruction of the old legalist parties was not lost on Lenin. For us this means fervent anti-revisionist struggles—in *practice* and not simply as a matter of theoretical disagreement that cannot leave the pages of a polemic.

Lenin held that the Party of the proletariat must take on the example of a modern military, with its own discipline and its own will—in 1917 the Party was already like an army in this way, already on a trajectory toward the formulation that a militarized Party is necessary, with the two other instruments concentrically constructed around it. Lenin embarked upon a course for world revolution, Mao took things further, Gonzalo continued along this path, and this is the juncture in the road at which we find ourselves today.

Contrary to what the revisionists who claim to be Maoists insist, militarization and concentric construction were not formulated by the PCP as part of *Gonzalo Thought*, but as

core values of MLM. Gonzalo Thought is the application of the universal to the specific in Peru—yet without any doubt, militarization is explicitly proclaimed (within the first documents that established MLM) as universally applicable to every country in the world.

The process of practice is summed up by Mao as a process of *fight and failure*, only to return to this sequence with correction until victory; this is the history of all Communist practice that has ever contributed anything worthwhile to the stream of revolutionary thought.

History has proven that the Party, the People's Army, and the United Front are all component parts of a whole, but they are not equal parts. Divisions and walls have formed between them, and this is the contradiction that revisionists make use of in their devilish quest to return the world to the old order, the sad, dead, and dying order of the bourgeoisie, a class so stale that it lacks even the most basic glimmer of hope. The bourgeoisie is the embodiment of decrepitude, and the revisionist worships at the altar of that decrepitude. Like a cadaver dog the revisionist is drawn toward the foulness of decomposing capitalism.

The militarization of the Party combined with the concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution is the means that can prevent these divisions and walls from forming, and our future is contingent on understanding this.

Our Party will at first be built through our mass work, carried out by cadres and the advanced and intermediate masses.

Communists have only one method of leadership—the mass line, but the mass line leads only to *People's War*, and it is the People's War that continues to build our Party in its furnace.

The militarization of the Party, as explained masterfully by Comrade Gonzalo, consists of **the set of transformations, changes, and readjustments it needs to lead the People's War as the main form of struggle that will generate the New State.** Militarization is a reiterative process like the mass line that should guide all levels of Communist activity. We would not allow our newness, inexperience, or lack of general body to offer us an excuse to abandon the mass line, and so these considerations must also not allow us to give up militarization.

Dialectical materialism is the philosophical framework we Communists rely on in comprehending the world in order to change it. We know that parties do not come readymade; they are not born war-ready. They are developed and conditioned and tempered by the concrete conditions of class struggle. Like any organism, the Party is born in a more fragile and nascent form and is sculpted by the struggle of contradictions internal to itself and between it and things external, in the world. Look around the room, comrades. I wish to show you now the Party of the proletariat in its embryonic State.

In Austin we have begun the process of militarizing our collective and we have already shared some of this experience with you all. From this step toward a militarized collective we have established the first armed unit connected

to the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist movement in the U.S. and at its disposal: the partisan unit, the purpose of which is the defense of the United Front, which is composed of friendly organizations and mass organizations. All three instruments exist *in embryo*, and what will become the People's Army and the United Front are to be constructed concentrically around our collective. It is small now, but through its interaction with the world, its class struggles, and two-line struggle, it will become the force capable of meeting our goals and objectives.

Construction of the Party means that we must *simultaneously* develop these three instruments. Not only does our survival depend on this, but our long-term political line depends on it as well. Without a strong and militarized Party to lead this construction, we face an immediate loss. Militarization has been proven a necessity in states like Texas, where the right is prepared to eliminate any manifestation of revolutionary communism.

Without a United Front, we fail to mobilize the masses and fail to draw in new blood, expand the Communist effort, and link it firmly with the struggles of the people. Most importantly, without a People's Army we have nothing—no way of defending the mass work, no way of protecting and serving the people. Were we to let walls form between these three, we would sink into the dead and stale dogmatism that clings only to the past and rejects the ongoing developments birthed in advanced class struggle.

* * *

We start from forms of struggle that demand forms of organization with the understanding that People's War is the military strategy of the proletariat. The fluidity of class struggle, in view of the necessity of People's War, leads to the line of first *accumulating forces*. Once forces have been accumulated, and permitting certain objective conditions, we then move into the strategic defensive, which is characterized by many *mobile tactical offensives*. From there we develop Base Areas that serve as the basis for *dual power*, or what is called the strategic equilibrium. Finally, we move on to the strategic offensive as the final stage. This means nothing short of eradication of the enemy militarily and politically. This opens socialist construction and cultural revolution, which propels socialism through ongoing class struggle toward communism; all this is summed up in the slogan **revolution until communism**—or, internationally, **People's War until communism!**

MLM is the most advanced ideology of the proletariat, and our basis in all things. It is the highest ideology in human existence, and it is invincible because it is true. It is the only scientific and infallible ideology. It is the basis for guiding our future Party's program, which in turn will guide our work and our class to conquer power. This is a part of the world revolution.

All Communist parties of the world should militarize for three reasons

1) We live in the age in which imperialism as a world system has stagnated. It can go no further. And so reaction, specifically in the form of *fascism*, is increasingly militarized. Imperialism's limitations have thrust it into decay, which objectively places it at the greatest vulnerability to communism. This contradiction imposes a crisis: such a crisis was responsible for the eruption of fascism in the past, and the current crisis is responsible for the rise of fascism in the present. All over the imperialist centers and even within oppressed nations, fascism has been on the rise. Since proletarian revolution is the only solution, World People's War to oppose imperialist world war is the main trend defining world revolution.

2) We have seen capitalist restoration in all socialist countries, and this is a serious threat that we must oppose from the very beginning, ideologically, politically, and organizationally in all our formations. Restoration must be prevented. When the bourgeoisie loses power, it emerges within the Party, corresponding to both a social base and an economic base. The economic base inevitably produces capitalists due to the inequalities that necessarily persist within the socialist system. The capitalist headquarters pushes revisionism all the way. They seek to use the army to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat, taking power in order to fully restore capitalism. We must make all militants into Communists, steeling them in class struggle and People's War.

We must empower armed organizations of the masses to engulf and surround the army. We must be trained and alert to any signs of restoration.

3) By militarizing the Party we take a step toward the *militarization of society*—which is strategic to guarantee the success of the dictatorship of the proletariat. With this we actually concretely strengthen the people and the dictatorship of the proletariat against revisionism and for the suppression of the bourgeoisie. Gonzalo has expanded upon the work of Zhang Chunqiao on this question. Militarization guarantees the conquest of power and defends power once it is conquered. Gonzalo has provided us with a remarkable historic example of a militarized society in the lesson of the Yan'an Base Area during the People's War led by Mao. The Yan'an Base Area was often an example given during the Cultural Revolution, where the usual divisions between the people and the People's Army were withered and restricted. The division between officers and men was also restricted, and bourgeois right was consciously scaled back.

When we consider the necessity to march always toward communism, Party militarization is truly a MLM advance upon the ideas of the Cultural Revolution. It is the very lesson synthesized from the GPCR's failure to prevent restoration. It is the final answer on the matter—militarization toward a sea of armed masses. This is the red line. It is in opposition to the *many* various contending white lines that assess the GPCR's historic consequences.

Party militarization is key in MLM, distinguishing it with honors from the dead and revisionist ideologies whose pro-

ponents persist in trying to get them confused with Maoism. When we are met with the inevitable consequences of class struggle, we are able to scale back all non-military work and strengthen ourselves to support military work. In times of war or combative self-defense, **all organs must undergo a level of militarization**, though the degree to which this happens might not always be the same, and a mass organization may not undergo the same level of militarization as a Party branch does.

The Party is the axis of everything—think of the Party as the brain of the class that leads the movement of the masses. The People's Army is built around the Party, and the State is built around both. Maoists conceive of the mass organizations of the people as forming the embryo of the New State.

Militarization must be undertaken, and it can be accomplished only through *concrete actions* of class struggle, and ultimately it must be carried out through the most advanced form of class struggle—PPW. Class struggle is always kept as the *key link*. New problems will develop, and in accordance with the Maoist theory of knowledge, we will solve them with the experience we gain through practice. Dialectical materialist truth holds firmly that it is the process of struggle between the old and the new that develops all things further. This includes the struggle between communism and revisionism and the two-line struggle within our organizations themselves.

War is understood as the highest form of struggle for solving contradictions; this understanding informs our life's

work. People must find solutions, and war enables them to do so, and it is militarization that allows us to initiate, guide, and develop the People's War—it is what allows us to defend our Party and its mass work. This means revolutionary violence must correspond to stages; the stage we are in currently is the stage of community self-defense / accumulation of forces. For all of these reasons, we see the universality of militarization and therefore its necessity for us.

The process of constructing the Party goes as follows:

1. Ideological construction on the basis of struggling for unity with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the ideology of the last class in history, which must be applied to the specifics of each country.

2. Political construction, which will be forged in our programs and statutes, centering the military line within the political line. Understanding that People's War is the fruit of all our mass work and that our mass work will then be carried out with People's War—politics remains firmly in command of this conception.

3. Organic construction. In democratic centralism it is *centralism* that is principal; between open and secret work it is *secret* work that is principal. Of the five necessary elements, it is (1) democratic centralism that is the most important—it allows for the other four principles of (2) clandestinity, (3) discipline, (4) vigilance, and (5) secrecy. Our ability to hide our structures and cadres in the inevitability of being forced underground depends on this. Those serious about PPW cannot dispense with these five necessities.

This necessarily brings us to the question of leadership. No class in history has ever established its rule without promoting its leadership. In a centralized structure, leadership comes in two forms: *collective* and *individual* leadership. Before his degeneration, Plekhanov, the first Russian Marxist, explained the matter of the individual as follows:

“When the consciousness of my lack of free will presents itself to me only in the form of the complete subjective and objective impossibility of acting differently from the way I am acting, and when, at the same time, my actions are to me the most desirable of all other possible actions, then, in my mind, necessity becomes identified with freedom and freedom with necessity; and then, I am unfree only in the sense that I cannot disturb this identity between freedom and necessity, I cannot oppose one to the other, I cannot feel the restraint of necessity. But such a lack of freedom is at the same time its fullest manifestation.”

Plekhanov here explains a unity of opposites in a dialectical whole. We apply this same consideration to our leadership. It is without question that class struggle inevitably produces individual leaders within our movement. In opposition to this reality is the metaphysics of anarchism, juvenile and existing only in the mind.

Great and effective leaders born in class struggle navigate through the intra-Party two-line struggles, and in this successful organization of two-line struggle these leaders, or more generally *a leader*, becomes the center of Party unity.

The two opposites have formed a unity—acting freely upon necessity, the masses make history, guided by the Party, and at the Party's center is its great leadership, emerged from two-line struggle and class struggle.

There are two principles of reaction that exist to destroy Party unity: the first is to annihilate its leadership; the second is to separate the militant from the masses, or the guerilla from the people. The annihilation of leadership is the main trend in both of these principles, because it is leadership that maintains the course.

We base ourselves on collective and individual leadership. We must be mindful of the role of leadership and understand that it is class struggle and Protracted People's War that will *renew leadership*, coalesce and temper leadership. While old leaders can succumb to revisionism, becoming jaded or demoralized, *leadership itself never dies*.

The motive force of Party development is this struggle between left and right lines. This propels the Party forward, and without it the Party would stagnate and lose its leadership. In the imperialist centers we have identified a *default right-opportunist* trend among the so-called left. Maoists know this as a fact of our existence—*the left must impose itself upon the right*. This is an active fight and not a passing fancy. Most importantly, we know that conciliation nourishes the right, allows it to grow and dominate. Like fascism it makes use of long histories of liberalism and conservatism among the people and among the people in the Party.

Rightism in many cases must therefore be forcefully uprooted. When it comes to the principles of holding our leaders accountable at all levels we rely on *criticism* and *self-criticism*, which should be practiced by militants, cadres, leaders, and even the masses. Two-line struggle exists in all things, and a central committee is no different. The class struggles within the central committee will be the sharpest—the PCP has referred to this as the vortex of the storm.

Revisionism is the principal danger to a Communist organization, and because of this, two-line struggle must be organized. This organization allows the Party to maintain its revolutionary leadership and lead the masses of people with revolution. It is the masses who make history, and the Party that leads the masses. All of the Party's mass work is for the **initiation and development of Protracted People's War**, which reacts back on all other work, hardening and expanding our control. In turn the People's War will develop the mass work itself by going directly to the **deepest and most profound masses to educate them in revolutionary violence.**

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Now we must discuss the People's Army, which is an army of a new type. It fulfills the political task of revolution as established by the Party. It has three tasks: (1) Fighting, which is its main task. (2) Mobilizing the masses—this is its main way of carrying out mass work. Lenin saw the need

to make all Red Army soldiers double as propagandists—politicizing and converting the masses. (3) Engaging in production in order to become self-reliant and prevent it from ever becoming a burden on the masses.

The proletariat deserves and requires its own army. Without it the people truly have nothing. Militias function as police in red areas; they carry out administrative functions with the intense participation of the masses, who form into squads and detachments. This is the process of **converting unorganized masses into armed and militarily organized masses**. With added mass support these people's militias grow, a process that demonstrates that the masses wish to fight. Even depoliticized and vaguely left-leaning militia-type organizations have rapidly spread across the U.S. If we do not organize such organizations along our political lines, the masses will themselves be drawn into these types of formations.

As reactionaries attack the mass movement in increasing numbers, resistance also sees a marked increase. This resistance leads to the formation of the People's Guerrilla Army (PGA), which is politically necessary to confront the enemy. Our stage now with our partisan units is only the opening of this road, defensive violence being the only form of violence we are capable of via armed groups. This development advances in correlation with our support from the people. Since our partisans were deployed the first time one year ago, mass support has increased. The masses have been inspired by this, making statements that it was only the Communists who had the courage to defend their children from the fascist threats.

Our partisans will guide the masses into forming militias for community self-defense. And when the conditions for People's War have been met, our partisans will transform with their actions into a People's Guerrilla Army. And by incorporating the people's militias, they will become capable of making attack initiatives and carrying out armed propaganda at a higher level. The PGA will develop the People's War. The PGA is not a regular army, as it engages in asymmetrical warfare, yet its characteristics are what allow it to develop into a regular army. Most importantly, the PGA serves the people, as do the partisans, which are its lower, embryonic form.

Once partisan units have developed and accumulated and have been united into a single force, we will be on the road to developing them into a PGA. These partisan units can carry out decentralized local action under centralized political command. It is concentric construction and militarization that allow this far superior form to exist and survive.

The formation of armies for Maoists is based principally on people and not on weapons, since the aim is to take weapons from the enemy. Our ideology insists and is clear that *politics are primary*. All of the militaries and all of their mass work and political work operate under the political line of the Party. This necessitates that at all levels of the army the Party is organized and that the Party carries out what Gonzalo and the PCP call a *double command*—that is to say, both a political and a military command.

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The basis of the United Front is not simply a matter of class allies having empathy for the plight of the working class. This alone will never unify anything, and can only be imagined on the basis of a liberal conception of unity. The basis for unity of the United Front is class interests. Overlapping class interests and nothing else are what make this unity of opposites possible. In our conditions, the proletariat shares with the petty bourgeoisie its interest against monopoly capitalism, and with the people of oppressed nations it shares its interests against the imperialism and monopoly capitalism of the oppressor nation.

While we reject any and all notions of a joint class dictatorship in our specific conditions, we must nonetheless win over to our cause sections of the petty bourgeoisie, sections of the oppressed nations' bourgeoisie, and certain sections of the declassed. We must unite everyone who can be united with against the monopoly capitalist class. This must be carried out through **people's assemblies**, which start in the ghettos, trailer parks, and slums and work their way through the proletarian neighborhoods and suburbs, forming a web. This is the administrative aspect of the urban Base Area. In all of this the Party will exist as the very backbone, giving it integrity and keeping it upright. We will develop the people's assemblies step by step through the creation of *people's mass organizations* and *revolutionary fronts*. This is our United Front in embryo.

People's committees are the materialization of the New State. These are all led by Communists, who are elected by the assemblies and subject to recall. These committees would be clandestine at first. Their leadership would

be composed of one-third workers, one-third Communists, and one-third progressives. The people's committees would be supported by the people's militias and the PGA, who would apply and enforce the people's dictatorship in the urban Base Areas. In embryo, this already means self-defense, tactical targeting of enemies with both violent and nonviolent means, basic jurisprudence, and conflict resolution.

The people's committees form a support base, the PGA conquers and develops bases, and the Party is like the spine in all of this. One of the major errors of Serve the People programming has been a tendency to undervalue the need to conquer a base and overvalue the need to develop a base that has not been conquered yet. This has caused some economist errors, limited mass participation, and demoralized good comrades and supporters.

These conquered areas begin to stand out in contrast to the Old State in the minds of the people and allow and encourage revolutionaries to promote fundamental change in the social lives of the people of a given community. On a more developed scale, this would mean changing production in the rebel-held areas. Because of this process of development, the three instruments have to be concentrically constructed as well as simultaneously constructed, from our smallest to largest formations.

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Party militarization is a development from Marxism-Leninism, which was embodied in Gonzalo's synthesis of MLM; he was building upon the lessons of the international Communist movement up to today. It is the most advanced and insightful of his many contributions.

Comrades, was it not Marx who synthesized the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat from the failings of our beloved Paris Commune? And was it not Lenin himself who synthesized the need for the vanguard Party on the basis of Marx's insights, with the call to form a Party of professional revolutionaries in his text *What Is to be Done?* It was none other than Lenin who expounded upon this in his masterpiece *The State and Revolution* with the need to smash the Old State in order to replace it with the new. Was it not Mao who correctly analyzed contradiction and two-line struggle? It was Mao who, through applying the universal of armed struggle to China's specific conditions, gave us the theoretical framework we used in coming to embrace People's War as universal. He showed us how the New State can exist in the liberated Base Areas. Its existence by virtue of dual power dialectically smashes the old while instituting the new. It was Comrade Mao, who to his dying day, asserted the need for cultural revolution—the sharpest expression of class struggle under socialism.

Armed with all of this history, class struggle produced another great leader in the person of Chairman Gonzalo, who synthesized MLM on this basis. It was these lessons that Gonzalo mastered when conceiving of Party militarization and concentric construction. He formulated MLM with integral component parts: the mass line, Protracted People's

War, and cultural revolution, which are all expressed in Party militarization. As I have insisted, militarization is the step we must take to lead things in the direction of *the sea of armed masses*, which is our best weapon against capitalist restoration. We must allow these lessons to be applied in sequence from stage to stage and from start to finish. **The theory of militarization is all-the-way Maoist.**

All groups who refuse to militarize and concentrically construct are trapped in the past and exist today like ghosts haunting us. They are practitioners of a foregone Mao Thought, like tadpoles who were too stubborn to become frogs with the changing season. These groups, even the ones who are to be defended, must be understood as living relics of the past. They will either undergo certain changes and reformulations necessary to win, or else they will eventually cease to exist. They are not yet all-the-way MLM but principally ML.

To make cultural revolutions triumph, we must consciously develop the sea of armed masses, and since it is the vanguard who must lead in all things, this vanguard must militarize itself to blaze the path. To tail the masses on this question is a horrible and unacceptable concession to rightist opportunism. To keep politics in command, we must necessarily militarize ourselves. Refusal to do so is suicidal rightist madness. This refusal is a clinging to dead science; it is nothing but historical reenactment.

Communists do not reconcile with rightism. Lenin states, **“The fight between two trends now flares up in a bright flame, and now dies down and smolders under the ash-**

es of imposing ‘truce resolutions.’” The imposing truce resolution, for us, is the default conciliatory nature of “left unity,” which is just a code phrase for unprincipled lack of ideological struggle and dogmatic eclecticism—rejection of and opposition to MLM.

Of course, there are the critics and denouncers of Gonzalo who constitute the core of “Maoist”-branded revisionism. These are like the people Lenin described as the children of the educated classes who for years have been steeped in the “criticism of Marxism” that seeks to turn revolutionary communism into social-democratic reformism. He taught us that these ideas do not develop in class struggle but are *readymade* to be transferred from the bourgeoisie to the left.

This explains the process in which rightism is reproduced and comes to be the default setting of the contemporary left in the imperialist countries. This import from the bourgeoisie can comprehend militarization only as *ultra-leftism*. Amounting to a modern-day Bernsteinian refusal of militant class struggle, it is a rejection of the spine—the faith of the jellyfish.

This cowardice rejects what is needed for armed struggle to take place, so of course it is a cloaked rejection of MLM. In short, the default rightism is scared of its own reflection, and as we become Communists this reflection causes it to panic within our ranks and to swing hard against militarization. The existence of two-line struggle leaves no room for doubt that this rejection will impose itself inside of the MLM movement, and that we must be prepared ideologically to deny it ground and roundly defeat it.

Lenin states poetically, using militaristic language, a firm warning for us today:

“We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding onto each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies and we have to advance under almost constant fire. We have combined voluntarily, precisely for the purpose of fighting the enemy and not to retreat into the adjacent marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle rather than the path of conciliation.”

I will repeat for the sake of clarity: “*precisely for the purpose of fighting the enemy.*” Lenin, with the greatest mastery of Marxism, has explained here our very reason for existing. We exist to fight the class enemy to the very finish. This is both our blessing and our burden. What else is the highest expression of fighting but war? Wars are in fact fought both politically and militarily, and none but the militarized Party is imbued with the certainty of success. This theory will certainly succeed even if we ourselves make tremendous error in its application. We stand in front of a very important decision: to live or to die, to make revolution or to fail to make revolution. We must come to agree with Lenin that

“we are free to fight not only the marsh, but all those who turn toward the marsh!”

Lenin spoke here of legalism as the marsh. And it is the same legalist mindset today that argues against militarization and invokes the fear of enemy repression as the wage

of militarization. In reality militarization is the main way we will survive repression, and these revisionists pay no mind to this reality because they have no plans to ever do anything that would get them repressed. Advocates of the militarized Party know full well that our work *already* earns us repression and fire, and that it is militarization that arms us against such enemy onslaught.

It is the enemy within who will argue that to develop a mass base we must engage in *strictly legal and aboveground activity*, that as long as we say revolutionary things we are not revisionists, ignoring the fact that their practice concretely *is identical to revisionist practice*. These rightists will even decry the need for organized self-defense as an ultra-left deviation from the mass line. They push away military questions to a far-off date with no fear that they are to be targeted. In essence they make the classical rightist argument of waiting on conditions to ripen, and no matter how urgent the threat of fascism is or how close we come to a revolutionary situation, they demand we wait to accumulate experience (a metaphysical accumulation that lacks practice) until it is too late.

Current conditions are not yet a revolutionary situation—my collective least of all denies this. Nonetheless we understand that conditions have created a marked increase in interest in both left ideology and far-right, fascist ideology, in a rise of opposites as described in our document “It Will Not Fall Unless You Hit It.”

Lenin also spoke of how the spread of Marxism in Russia was accompanied by a decline in theoretical understanding.

Due to Marxism's success and practicality, it attracted many who sought to issue their stamp of reformism upon it. Can we deny that this is as true today for us? We have seen post-modernists and identity opportunists flock to the title of MLM. These same opportunists are the main culprits of trying to gut MLM of militarization.

Many are simply politically and ideologically untrained, and due to the lack of veteran Maoists to lead them, they have assumed leadership roles or roles of influencing others even newer than they are. This is not unexplained in conditions of liberalism. It is only through action that the necessity of militarization makes us free to carry it out in practice. They use dogma masked as a concrete analysis of concrete conditions to blockade us from carrying out what we must. It is true that our movement in the U.S. lacks veteran Maoist leaders. The solution is to respect the process of leadership emerging in class struggle and to become veteran leaders ourselves. We must also understand that this shortcoming can be reduced by strong international bonds with Maoist parties and advanced organizations.

Both Lenin and Marx were mortally opposed to making concessions on questions of theory, because they were Communists—fully realized Communists without a shred of pragmatism in them.

In his stance against amateurishness Lenin asserts, **“The character of a party is naturally and inevitably determined by the content of its activity.”** We shall not allow our character to be determined by the activity of social democracy, reformism, and open and aboveground legal-

ism. We commit to a practice—to action that will build a Party for war. These two roads weigh heavy on us—to build the Party for war or to build the Party for legalism and protracted aboveground politicking with the bourgeoisie? In the U.S. we have seen so many “parties” that, through the content of their activity—protest-hopping and running candidates—have developed a character that is anything but revolutionary.

According to Lenin, a revolutionary organization, to be worthy of its name, must be composed primarily of people who make revolutionary activity their profession. The revolutionary organization **must not be too extensive**, and it **must be as secretive as possible**. Most importantly, he insists that this organization must eliminate distinctions among its membership, distinctions of trade and profession, of mental and manual labor. For us today this extends to obliterating the distinction between **politician and soldier among our cadres**.

Lenin’s teachings could not be clearer: if you start with an organization of strong revolutionaries, it can *guarantee* the survival of the movement as a whole in the interests of socialism. If you start with a broad “workers’ organization” as the refoundationalists, Marcyites, and others insist on (in order to be the most “accessible” to the masses), in reality it is only most accessible to the State and reactionaries.

Lenin asserted, “It is far more difficult to wipe out a dozen wise men than one hundred fools. And this position I shall defend, no matter how much you instigate the crowd against me for my ‘undemocratic views,’ etc.”

With this assertion Lenin defends the quality of professional revolutionary organizations over other organizations' emphasis on having many members of whatever quality. He stresses that these small organizations of professional revolutionaries are required to maintain deep roots among the masses. It was the connection to the masses, and *not the direct membership of the masses*, that defined the Bolsheviks and gave them strength of steel. The PCP grasped and applied this lesson correctly, and with their example at heart we must never seek the applause of one hundred fools.

According to the teachings of the master theorist Lenin, the Party itself must be made of the best of the best; it should be skilled and accomplished at fighting the police. Following this we understand that by building the Party around the gun we accomplish the fusion of soldier and politician, carried out by the Party and its organizations.

With the concentration of activity in the hands of professional revolutionaries we do not run the risk of the masses not being mobilized around the core leadership. Mao asserted this in the very document in which he theorized the mass line. The Party does not do the thinking for the masses but acts as its vanguard. Only a militarized Party is fit to accomplish this unity in our given conditions.

We must never reduce the rank of revolutionaries into amateurs but instead convert amateurs into revolutionaries. We have such little experience and so few revolutionaries who look upon revolution as their very life. Only by imposing and implementing militarization now can we accomplish the task at hand of developing such revolutionaries. Our

“dozen wise men” form our core—our hardest cadres who will in turn bring up our intermediate and win over or eliminate our backward.

This process can be expedited with military discipline inside of our pre-Party formations, allowing them to lead paramilitary-style antifascist actions. By default and by our own activity, the Communist movement has too long tailed the spontaneity of the masses, tailed anarchists or other liberals. These days must be committed to history and ended now.

While some still argue that such a centralized and militarized organization will rush prematurely into losing battles, we can reflect on a response Lenin provided over one hundred years ago. He stated that “every battle bears within it the abstract possibility of defeat, and there is no other way of reducing this possibility than by organized preparation for battle.” Lenin’s Bolsheviks held within them the germ of Party militarization. In the bloody century that followed, this germ produced an almighty force—the PCP. It is this tradition we honor with our special flag and with our undefeatable ideology, MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM.

* * *

U.S. Maoism has traveled through three periods, and in order to move forward and build upon this experience we must analyze and learn from their mistakes.

The first period saw the anti-revisionist Marxist-Leninist struggles that were catalyzed by the GPCR and the Great Debate as well as by the anti-imperialist struggles around the Vietnam War. This period produced a multitude of groups who claimed to support Mao. These groups never managed to unify around a concrete conception of Maoism. Even their variations of Mao Zedong Thought were unable to unify.

The second period imported the very same errors as the first, but Mao Thought had been elevated to MLM by the PCP. In spite of this, the only surviving Maoist organization failed to actually accept MLM in essence but adopted it *in name only*. It remained, in spite of its name and involvement in the founding of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, *principally ML*. This failure appeared innocent at first but showed itself over time to be nothing but a Trojan horse to smuggle in Avakianite revisionism. To have become MLM in essence when they took on the name would have obliterated the elements of Avakianism already incorporated into their Party. The Avakianite revisionism that would emerge would be the knife in the back of the RIM, and a setback to the world proletarian revolution. Within the U.S. the betrayal of the Avakianites left a stain on the name Maoism that is only beginning to lift.

We are now in the third period of U.S. Maoism. And we must take it as our sacred duty to ideologically **murder the remnants of the second period**. Our lines and programs today make or break us as Maoists, and if we are to not be broken we must allow the new to liquidate the old by becoming fully Maoist. We must build the real and genu-

ine vanguard Party. Unlike our predecessors who have succumbed to protest-hopping, we must grasp and apply the universal content of MLM.

The core of the mass line is that the masses are the makers of history, which necessitates the sea of armed masses. This must be led by the Party we are now building. We must struggle over the question of militarization.

According to the teachings of Stalin, the Party is a "military detachment of the working class, a part of it. But it is a vanguard detachment which goes ahead, which leads." Chairman Gonzalo sums all of this up further when he states, "The masses clamor for rebellion. Therefore, the Party, its leaders, cadres and militants have an urgent obligation and destiny to organize the disorganized force of the masses, and this will only be accomplished with arms in hands. The masses must be armed gradually, part by part, until the arming of the entire people and when this comes about there will be no more exploitation on earth."

And so at the second plenary session of the central committee of the PCP, he helped to pass the decision to militarize the Party through actions. As Communists the world over have paid dearly for our beliefs and our struggles, it comes as no surprise that the decision to militarize came about in the midst of extreme and heightened class struggle and repression. Militarization, like war and everything else, is learned mainly through doing.

* * *

Whether we are faced with antifascist work, self-defense, confronting a class enemy, confronting anti-organization elements, silencing the voices of informants, or enforcing a penalty or a ban, all such actions must be carried out with seriousness, discipline, and precision. This commitment permits neither cowardice nor betrayal.

The PCP taught us that in order to topple the walls we must fortify ourselves. This fortification serves to sweep away the rot of rightism in general. The key to militarization is our armed groups. Even militarized groups without arms can snatch them off of the enemy, utilizing the arms with clear ideas.

Gonzalo teaches us that what will be confronted tomorrow will be the child of the present. It might be even harder tomorrow, but we will be steeled in the struggles of today. Fascism's rise promises us a grim tomorrow. It has in its stores the very worst stock for us: shock and terror, blood to placate its imperialist masters and to try to drown the masses, and we Communists are to be its initial sacrifice. We fight this future, today, not with fear and anxiety but with optimism—not with self-deluded bourgeois optimism, but with the knowledge that the working class has the intrinsic power to end all classes. **Our optimism lies in our unwavering faith in the masses, and it is fortified in the light of MLM.**

Our Party will face the harshest conditions because it is centered right in the heart of imperialism itself, so it must be built firm.

The literal definition of militarization is this: “the process in which a society organizes itself for military conflict and violence.” Is there any doubt in your minds that the conditions of military conflict and of violence are barreling down upon us?

Some critics insist that we are nothing but “Gonzaloites.” Their attack on Comrade Gonzalo is nothing but a rejection of MLM itself. For those confused about this, it would help to recall that this inherent part of MLM that was synthesized by Gonzalo has made itself present outside of Peru—not only in the parties and organizations of Europe and Latin America who are moving toward or have already embraced militarization but also among other People’s Wars as well. Militarization and concentric construction are both directly mentioned in the basic principles of the Maoist Communist Party of Manipur and by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in several important documents.

CPN (Maoist) explained that after the experience of fascism, parties all over the world had to become more centralized and more militarized. These are parties capable of leading People’s War in a world where reaction has become more militarized. The police in our country have militarized against the masses of people, and the fascists also have a high degree of militarization. We should not consider them real tigers, but we must have an unmatched level of discipline if we wish to conquer and vanquish these enemies.

It is undeniable that the militarized Party has a highly unified and centralized structure. According to Bhattarai of the CPN (Maoist), “to talk of a party of a new type in the present context means principally to militarize the party.”

The level of Party discipline has to be high, and its underground structure and style of work must be topnotch. This does not allow for it to be sectarian, or bureaucratic. The militarized Party most importantly minimizes the traditional differences between the Party, the People’s Army, and the United Front—melding them into a unity, wielding them as one, militarizing the masses, and politicizing the entire army. All of this is for the sake of continual revolution toward communism. While Bhattarai and his former Party have long since capitulated and sold out, there is much to learn from any movement that led such a strong People’s War.

So then let us utilize the most conventional definition of the word concentric: “of or denoting circles, arcs, or other shapes that share the same center, the larger often completely surrounding the smaller.”

Of key importance to us here is “sharing the same center.” As established, in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism it is the Party that remains the center, and the center of the Party is leadership that emerges in organized two-line struggle.

This is in harmony with the correct Maoist conception of leadership as espoused by Mao in 1943: “The masses in any given place are generally composed of three parts, the relatively active, the intermediate and the relatively backward. The leaders must therefore be skilled in uniting the small number of active elements around the leadership and must

rely on them to raise the level of the intermediate element and to win over the backward elements. A leading group that is genuinely united and linked with the masses can be formed only gradually in the process of mass struggle, and not in isolation from it. In the process of a great struggle, the composition of the leading group in most cases should not and cannot remain entirely unchanged throughout the initial, middle and final stages; the activists who come forward in the course of the struggle must constantly be promoted to replace those original members of the leading group who are inferior by comparison or who have degenerated.”

Mao describes here the life cycle of leadership: how it comes about in class struggle and how it unites the most active masses *around it*—how this process repeats itself as old leaders become degenerated. But what is important for us today is the comprehension that one aspect, the core of leadership, is constant and indispensable—even if individuals themselves are built up and torn down. The core remains a core of leadership.

As I have made clear before, between democracy and centralism, centralism is principal. In the contradiction between underground and aboveground work, underground work is principal.

Lenin conceived of the matter sharply:

“All art of clandestine organization should consist of knowing how to use everything and everyone, to give work for everyone and at the same time maintain leadership of the entire movement, not by force of power, it must be under-

stood, *but by authority, energy, greater experience and a variety of knowledge and talent.*”

Lenin speaks of several key leadership qualities here that are prerequisites for Communist leaders, which I wish to emphasize:

Authority

Authority is perhaps the most struggled-against quality by the multitude of revisionist trends in the U.S. left, particularly liberalism and anarchism. Yet still within the so-called Communist and even so-called Maoist movement in the U.S. this “anti-authoritarianism” casts its vile and ugly shadow, most often in a recognizably anti-Communist form. The wreckers in the Portland Drug Club chastised our collective for “seeking hegemony and influence,” which was based on their assumption that their lack of experience was equal or superior in quality to our accumulated experience. In spite of us being open about our intentions to train leaders and push *our line* on Party-building, the wreckers took issue with the very real need Communists have to influence each other away from major mistakes. In essence what they rejected was first and foremost authority, which is not limited to organizational authority but in fact exists everywhere, as one can be an authority on any subject, as indicated by the other criteria outlined by Lenin. What they rejected was any Communist leadership at all, which would be anathema to their engrained liberalism and their inability to break with their anarchist individualism.

Similar complaints arrived from other sects of revisionists in Maoist garb. Due to the conditions it found itself in, our collective has had to go against the tide of the U.S. left in a big way, emerging as something of a storm center—again, not organizational leadership but a focal point. This means that we have necessarily come under acute attack by these sects—from the wreckers in STL to the opportunist rightists in Boston, each one seeking credibility by attacking what they see as authority of any type emerging in the Austin movement.

It is mainly the appearance of an authority that creates panic in them and forces them to intervene and embarrass themselves in polemical exchange. Smarter opportunists have waited to make attacks until we made mistakes, which they attempted to exploit in a “we told you so” fashion. We can also surmise from statements by our comrades in LA that the attacks and snitch-jacketing from FRSO escalated as class struggle advanced. At the very moment RGLA began to be seen as an authority in the movement, the key agenda for the revisionists and reactionaries, in accordance with the principles of all reactionaries stated earlier, was to attempt to destroy leadership—to separate the militants from the masses with slander campaigns. If we are Communists (and we are Communists!), we must mince no words when it comes to accepting authority of leadership emergent in class struggle and two-line struggle.

Engels explains authority like this:

“The necessity of authority, and of imperious authority at that, will nowhere be found more evident than on board

a ship on the high seas. There, in time of danger, the lives of all depend on the instantaneous and absolute obedience of all to the will of one."

He is clear that in a **centralized formation there emerges a single authority**. And in regard to the opponents of all authority, he concludes, "Either the anti-authoritarians don't know what they're talking about, in which case they are creating nothing but confusion; or they do know, and in that case they are betraying the movement of the proletariat. In either case they serve the reaction." This summary fits the character of our opposition, who have each in turn been knocked back down into their pits of ineptitude.

Energy

This essential quality can be understood as both the stamina to keep going through the low points as well as the daring required in bold action. **Leaders especially must instill this quality into their rank and file**. Without it we cannot dare to struggle or dare to win, cannot forsake comfort for struggle, and can't be bothered to take combat seriously. While the anarchists despise authority, they try to compensate for this with energy, which is the only reason their ranks ever replenish.

However their energy is consistently misdirected and more often than not fractured, resulting in demoralization and a return to the low-energy stumbling embodied by the rest of the institutional, legalist, and revisionist left. Protest-hoppers who only bring signs and exhausted chants to a slew

of demos (groups like PSL, RCP, etc.) are great examples of low-energy pseudo-revolutionaries. A flame whose accelerant is the energy of the people stands out in the starkest contrast to the business-as-usual types. Mao called the lack of energy embodied by these groups an employee mentality: “To work half-heartedly without a definite plan or direction; to work perfunctorily and muddle along.”

What must be stressed about the greater energy of leaders is that they are reference points for those they lead—examples who can be looked to. That energy is required to organize, navigate, and emerge from two-line struggle, and to unite the masses and the rank and file around the leadership that has emerged. When this energy is suffocated by opposition to the idea of authority or a refusal to recognize the other qualities of leadership, demoralization, corruption, and betrayal soon follow. Organizations that suffer from these errors become decapitated and confused, or devour themselves into nothingness. Leaders must be replicable when their energy is no more, when they are no longer moved or inspired by the masses. This dialectic must be understood.

Greater experience

We can see a practical example of the desire to negate this quality with, once again, the demand of absolute equalitarianism issued by the fake Maoists. The Boston rightists emerged not with a valuable summation of their greater experience but with a “course correction” that in fact obscured their limited to nonexistent experience.

In spite of the left's prattling on about the necessity of base-building, many often also inexplicably see any brand new entity calling itself a collective as equal in credibility to actual collectives that have begun to prove themselves in class struggle. They reject the criterion of greater experience Lenin provided because they reject leadership.

While Maoists do not favor experts in command, we do consistently value greater experience. The very basis of our philosophy and our theory of knowledge is that through the process of practice through which experience accumulates, a point is reached at which quantity transforms into quality. Those who possess no experience at all but fancy themselves on par with organized and disciplined Maoists are most aptly characterized as delusional at best or megalomaniacal at worst. Mao stated that "absolute equalitarianism beyond reason must be opposed because it is not required by the struggle; on the contrary, it hinders the struggle." Of course he was talking in terms of distribution of goods and I am speaking in terms of the credibility that leadership possesses by virtue of its greater experience.

Understanding the criterion of greater experience also convinces us to oppose ultra-democracy, which manifests in the form of "socialism from the bottom up" and other deviations from democratic centralism, including demands for "transparency" and "survivor self-determination," which in essence, in spite of meaning well, seek to cut out leadership and violate the structure of the Party or pre-Party organizations. Mao formulated ultra-democracy like this: "First, it should be pointed out that the danger of ultra-democracy lies in the fact that it damages or even completely wrecks

the party organization and weakens or even completely undermines the party's fighting capacity, rendering the party incapable of fulfilling its fighting tasks and thereby causing the defeat of the revolution. Next, it should be pointed out that the source of ultra-democracy consists in the petty bourgeoisie's individualistic aversion to discipline. When this characteristic is brought into the party, it develops into ultra-democratic ideas politically and organizationally. These ideas are utterly incompatible with the fighting tasks of the proletariat."

A variety of knowledge and talent

This comes down first to one's theoretical grasp, as Lenin elsewhere stressed—without revolutionary theory there can be no revolution. Gonzalo later formulated this as a Guiding Thought, produced by the application of the universal to the specific. A variety of knowledge and talent, mainly the talent required to apply the universal to the specific, is where revolutions gain their particular characteristics.

These are safeguarded and ensured by correct leadership. In China, the specific applications of the universal Marxism-Leninism to the particular conditions of China produced Mao Thought, which was the Guiding Thought behind the Chinese revolution. This would have been impossible had Mao not possessed the criteria of a variety of knowledge and talent. From the particulars of the Chinese experience, more universals were extracted, and Marxism-Leninism would later be developed to a higher stage, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, with the Peruvian ap-

plication of the universal to the specific. In this reiterative process, our theory comes to encompass a greater variety of knowledge, and this is imposed by our leadership, in its mastery of application.

On this same matter, the PCP asserts that “all revolutions, in their process of development, through the struggle of the proletariat as the leading class and, above all, the struggle of the Communist Party that raises their unrenounceable class interests, give rise to a group of leaders and principally one who represents and leads it, a leader with acknowledged authority and influence.”

The main ways revisionism will attack Maoism are by rejecting its history (its very emergence through the struggle against revisionism) and rejecting leadership. There can be begrudging acceptance of the need to militarize and concentrically construct, but like other aspects of MLM—the mass line, PPW, etc.—these cannot be parted out from the question of leadership. Revisionists seek this parting out: they will claim bits and pieces of Mao Thought or even MLM as their own but reject its anti-revisionist content. Even the Austin Social(fasc)ist Collective claims it adheres to the “mass line.”

In the recent issue of *Arsenal*, the theoretical journal of the now divided PCR-RCP, they have an article on “militarization of the party and concentric construction.” We feel that this article has made several mistakes. Its first mistake is to claim that these are just inevitabilities in the process of People’s War. What would follow this thesis is that every Party engaged in PPW must have *accomplished militarization*—this

is demonstrably false and is the same sort of error as concluding that Mao Thought and MLM are the same thing. We would agree that a militarized Party is indeed needed to ever develop People's War past the stage of the defensive, but we would be fools to agree that all who wage war are structured alike in this way.

The error is a false flattening of the contradictions within the ICM, and it does no one any favors to make this reductive analysis. The second error—once they have gutted militarization and concentric construction of its true value—is to then gut leadership with its attack on “jefatura,” which literally boils down to an attack on *leadership itself*. It is fashionable in imperialist centers to appeal to liberal and anarchist ideology by accepting such attacks on leadership as a virtuous position against the red totalitarian boogie man, a menace cooked up for us by the history of anti-Communism that has been indoctrinated via academia. This combined with the bourgeois “common sense” of revisionism is enough to mislead many comrades.

The arguments against leadership are just classical anti-Communist arguments dressed up as arguments against the “personality cult,” and so on, a term and a set of arguments with a historical connection to revisionist and other capitalist propaganda. What is undeniable and should be agreed upon is that leadership emerges in class struggle; it is tempered and sharpened there and particularly in two-line struggle within the Party.

Chairman Gonzalo defends the correct Communist conception of leadership when he says,

“We must remember how Lenin saw the relationship between the masses, classes, the Party and leaders. We believe that the revolution, the Party, our class, generate leaders, a group of leaders. It has been like this in every revolution. If we think, for instance, about the October Revolution, we have Lenin, Stalin, Sverdlov and a few others, a small group. Similarly, in the Chinese revolution there’s also a small group of leaders: Chairman Mao Zedong, and his comrades Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, among others. All revolutions are that way, including our own. We could not be an exception. Here it’s not true that there is an exception to every rule because what we’re talking about here is the **operation of certain laws**. All such processes have leaders, but they also have a leader who stands out above the rest or who leads the rest, in accordance with the conditions.”

And when it comes to charges of the “personality cult” he teaches us this:

“We have been acting in accordance with Lenin’s view, which is correct. The cult of personality is a revisionist formulation. Lenin had warned us of the problem of negating leadership just as he emphasized the need for our class, the Party and the revolution to promote our own leaders, and more than that, top leaders, and a Great Leadership [Jefatura]. There’s a difference here that is worth emphasizing. A leader is someone who occupies a certain position, whereas a top leader and Great Leadership [Jefatura], as we understand it, represent the acknowledgment of Party and revolutionary authority acquired and proven in the course of arduous struggle—those who in theory and practice have shown they are capable of leading and guiding us toward

victory and the attainment of the ideals of our class.”

Hesitancy to allow top leadership and great leadership to emerge in the class struggle is a defect of the past; it must be ideologically combatted and not united with. The question of leadership cannot be divorced from the question of militarization and concentric construction, just in the same way that MLM cannot be parted out and at the same time maintain its revolutionary character. In the rise of movement-hopping, postmodernism, and other deviant ideas, the very idea of the vanguard was neglected. These ideas have run their course and hit their rock bottom. We must understand firmly that building revolutionary communism today means a dedicated and staunch return to the foundations of Leninism that contain the correct Communist attitude toward top leadership and great leadership. You will not create a vanguard if you smuggle in anti-leadership sentiment. MLM represents this return to revolutionary communism as well as its continuation. It is both a revival and a birth.

Conclusion

Formulating the teachings of Chairman Mao, the leaders of the GPCR stressed,

“There is no construction without destruction. Destruction means criticism and repudiation; it means revolution. If you concentrate on destruction first you get construction as part of that process.”

MLM is the ideology that must eradicate all bourgeois ideology, in a continuous struggle between two lines, between the old and the new, between revisionism and revolution. Concentrating on destruction first is universal and correct. Even in quantum physics, each construction implies recent destruction, and correspondingly each destruction implies construction. Every decision big and small eliminates other decisions. Every decision we make to destroy something is a decision to create something else.

If we were to put construction first, we would only be giving respite to the rightists, giving them an ideological ceasefire. We would concede vulnerable ground to the losers of history, those from the second period of U.S. Maoism led by the RCP-USA, who have already been laughed off the stage. Our decision to place destruction first is a decision to murder this second period. Once this has truly been accomplished, decisively and completely, we will then at the same time continue the construction of the third period of U.S. Maoism—one broken with the old ideas of these living relics, one that embraces People's War as the only path to revolution, one that stands for Party militarization and the concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution. This is what is meant by development into a third and higher stage. Refusal to develop is revisionism.

Have you comrades ever thought to yourselves, "I have no choice"? Your freedom to choose appears limited by the necessity of action. In reality only together are either possible, and only by choosing to act are you at all free. Our agency is expressed best in rebellion, in armed struggle. Only the militarized Party will lead this struggle, and if we continue

to allow airflow to the old ideas of Avakian and the RCP, we will eliminate our chances of launching the People's War. We will follow in their footsteps right into their grave.

This sad fate would issue a boon to fascism, reaction, and revisionism, three heads of the same bourgeois monster. We must resolutely oppose the deviations of the Avakianites, the soft so-called Maoists, and other revisionists. We must ensure our victory by unifying around concepts crucial to MLM: this includes People's War, militarization of the Party, and the concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution. We must deny unity with those who refuse to accomplish this task. To unite with them would be to place strategic weak points in the chain we aim to pull tight around the throat of the old order.

This is a historic meeting, and I am not embellishing this fact. It is a meeting that all of our organizations have struggled for over years. Upon our meeting with Comrade Pierre of the PCM, we discussed many things, among them the question of militarization, a point we agreed on, although conditions are different here from those in France. Comrade Pierre was perhaps the first Communist in a Western imperialist country to assert the universality of People's War and to fight for it when all the former projects had degenerated into ineptitude.

He stressed to us then the need for the Party, the need to never let the moment pass, and he imparted such great knowledge and experience. What I wish to stress to you today at this historic meeting is that we are here seizing victory from defeat—we are assuming our place in history and

taking up our purpose of building not *a* party but THE Party—the Party that will concretely and decisively end U.S. imperialism and establish New Power. This Party must be capable of waging war. This matters right now. Failure to grasp this means going backward, disarming the masses, and robbing the proletariat of its primary weapon—the vanguard. In the long term it means refusal to apply the lessons of the GPCR and a promise of capitalist restoration—the end to all that we have fought tirelessly for. We must keep the promise we made to Comrade Pierre: we must build the Party without hesitation and without fear. Build the militarized Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, principally Maoist, Party!

Democratic centralism becomes possible with unity around militarization!

Concentric construction will fortify our revolution!

People's war until communism!

—Red Guards Austin, January 2018

Maoist Analysis of Gentrification in Boyle Heights and Los Angeles

Red Guards Los Angeles

The following was a presentation given at the first-ever Maoist Conference for Line Struggle in the country organized by the collective now called Red Guards Kansas City. The following document has been edited in response to the criticisms raised by our comrades throughout the country.

On behalf of Red Guards Los Angeles (RGLA) and the community-in-resistance of Boyle Heights, we bring salutations and express solidarity with everyone present here today. We are grateful to Red Guards Kansas City for taking the initiative and leadership in organizing the Maoist Conference for Line Struggle (MCLS).

While this convening is but one step closer to revolutionary unity in our prisonhouse of nations, we are confident we are that much closer to building revolution, a step closer to the realization of the great cleansing through Protracted People's War on the bloody soil of our country, and overall this convening is one step closer to the realization of the necessary Maoist Communist Party. For that, RGLA and the progressive masses and revolutionaries of Boyle Heights are

grateful for the extended invitation and we hope to make adequate use of our brief time here this weekend.

In the following presentation we aim to offer an analysis of gentrification in general in the U.S. from a Maoist position. It's the first analysis of its kind that our collective has undertaken as far as we are aware.

We argue gentrification as an acute manifestation of an aspect of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism, and in particular we will assert an analysis of how that is manifesting here in Boyle Heights. We aim to focus on the class character of the anti-gentrification fight, connecting the changing national economy with the changing geography and class character of the neighborhood, highlight some important political struggles and fundamental problems and developments in the movement, and offer a theorization of the future of the movement as part of a more revolutionary offensive strategy.

Our presentation will briefly go over the history of Boyle Heights while also presenting a class analysis of the community. Next, we will make some comments and address some contradictions found throughout the city and country, followed by a reaffirming of gentrification as a manifestation of capitalism and the de-proletarianization of communities due to the changing national, and global, economy. Lastly, we will go over some lessons in mass-line organizing in Boyle Heights and offer some theorization on what the future of the anti-gentrification movement will or should look like.

The local and historic situation: A social-economic and class analysis in Boyle Heights and Los Angeles

Boyle Heights is a relatively small (barely more than six square miles with a population of approximately 109,396) but highly militant neighborhood in the huge metropolitan corporate and entertainment city of Los Angeles, a contradiction in and of itself. The neighborhood is almost completely boxed in by Interstate 10 to the north, Interstate 5 and the Los Angeles River to the east, and the State Highway 60 to the south—separating downtown bourgeois Los Angeles from the proletarian-majority Eastside of the city—like a concrete man-made barricade.

Boyle Heights is a largely proletarian and semi-proletarian neighborhood—with a median income of \$38,614,¹ with approximately 80 percent renters.² The average median income of the entire city is \$52,024.³ More than 30 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

Boyle Heights was founded in 1899 by an Irish settler-bourgeoisie and big landlord, Edward Boyle. But prior to that the area that would be later known as Los Angeles and Boyle Heights in Southern California was captured by the Spanish in 1542 and then settled by Mexico in 1781.

Ever since its contemporary inception, Boyle Heights has always been a working-class community, made up of different nationalities. Early on, Eastern European immigrants such as Russians, Jews, Poles, and Serbians set-

tled in Boyle Heights and worked in close-by downtown Los Angeles and elsewhere in the city—mainly in the construction trades, especially the Serbians.

After the Great October Revolution of 1917, the world was shaken by the Bolshevik storm in Russia. Capitalist governments of the world quickly devised plans for repressing the subsequent tidal waves crashing onto their respective shores.

In the U.S., especially under the fascistic leadership and feverous anti-Communism of Attorney General Alexander Mitchell Palmer, immediately after the revolution, the government launched repressive programs and raids to round up, arrest, brutalize, and deport Communists, anarchists, unionists, and other leftist radicals.⁴ Approximately six to ten thousand people were arrested.⁵ Hundreds lost their jobs. About five hundred were deported. These were known as the Palmer Raids of 1919 and 1920. An ideological driving force behind the raids was the racist anti-immigrant sentiment, specifically targeting Eastern European proletarian immigrants. The First World War had ended just two years prior in 1918. The U.S. had entered the war on April 6, 1917, a few months before the Bolsheviks would seize power in Russia and almost immediately pull out from the imperialist war. Anti-German and anti-Eastern European including Russian sentiment (even though Russia had fought on the side of the Allied Forces prior to the Bolshevik Revolution) was prevalent in the American masses. Once the war was over, the U.S. State and reactionary factions of the

Euro-American (white) populace set their eyes on Mexicans, Chicanos, and New Afrikans—especially with the latter's Great Migration from the South into more urban centers, especially Los Angeles's manufacturing hub.

Oppressed nationalities and ethnic minorities were barred from purchasing homes in certain areas—through oppressive discriminatory housing practices—specifically restrictive covenants, or deed restrictions.⁶ These covenants were made to stop oppressed nationalities from living in predominantly white neighborhoods. Chicanos and New Afrikans were not allowed to buy homes in many areas. Or if they were allowed to purchase their homes, deed restrictions would not allow them to live inside the home.

Redlining was also a huge factor in the continued oppression in the housing industry for oppressed nationalities.⁸ If an oppressed nationality was lucky enough to have some saved-up capital but still needed a loan to purchase a home, they had to take out home loans from banks. But the banks were mostly not giving out home loans to Asians, New Afrikans, Chicanos, and some Eastern European immigrants because their neighborhoods were deemed too hazardous, colored red in the city zoning maps.

Banks were favoring homogeneous neighborhoods, all-white, or all-Black, etc. They would give out loans faster to a New Afrikan or Chicano family if they would self-segregate. But if they wanted to take out a loan to purchase a home in a more diverse neighborhood, they would be denied.

The local banks, but also the federal agencies created by FDR like the Federal Housing Administration and the Home Owners Loan Corporation, all favored segregated communities and added more obstacles for oppressed nationalities or ethnic minorities to move into predominantly white areas. This officially, legally, continued until the 1950s, but it lasted longer—and to a certain extent and in certain communities, it still exists.

Most whites moved out of now predominantly Black and Chicano neighborhoods and into the Westside and northern section of Los Angeles like the San Fernando Valley, where it was easier to take out loans. This was White Flight. Those left behind were largely oppressed-nationality and ethnic minority renters, with a smaller percentage being homeowners. Just look around the Westside of Los Angeles, not too far south of course: it remains largely white and affluent, while places like Boyle Heights and historic Watts were redlined, left without federal capital, left to rot.⁹

And after the Second World War, the white proletariat came back home, back to work. Oppressed nationalities faced rampant job loss, unemployment, and, for those who stayed on, denial of access to higher positions in trades or companies and denied membership into most unions. These factors kept the proletariat of the oppressed nations from becoming bigger and more powerful. It excluded them en masse. The proletariat of the Chicano and New Afrikan nations were denied their development, and so their specific capitalisms were stunted. What occurred was a large lumpenproletariat began to emerge around this time, approximately during the 1940s and '50s. Many of the bigger

and more dominant gangs of today can trace their origin to this era. We begin to see not only large-scale lumpenization of oppressed-nationality neighborhoods, but of internal oppressed nations—namely the Chicano and New Afrikan nations.

Simultaneously, white-supremacist terrorist organizations—most notably the KKK and Spook Hunters¹⁰—were regularly coming into oppressed-nation and ethnic minority neighborhoods to terrorize the masses, to ensure they wouldn't leave their enclaves: Chicanos and Japanese on the other side of downtown Los Angeles in the Eastside, and New Afrikans below Centra Avenue in South Central Los Angeles.¹¹ Most of these white vigilantes and KKK members came from the neighborhoods of Huntington Park, Bell, South Gate, Inglewood, Compton, Gardena, and West LA—literally surrounding oppressed-nationality neighborhoods. Of these, West LA is the only one that largely survived as predominantly white.

In response, many—maybe most—gangs in oppressed-nationality neighborhoods were formed around a sense of community defense against white-power violence. Others were formed more as cultural social clubs, typically for young men. But both initiatives overlapped.

With the launch of Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, mass movements were created to address issues of national oppression and discrimination in Los Angeles neighborhoods—trained by the organizers and leaders left over from the Community Service Organization of the 1940s and '50s—like Cesar Chavez; the Young Citizens for Communi-

ty Action, who would later turn into the Brown Berets; and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (where many of the Black Power and Black Panther inspirators would come from).

Boyle Heights gained national attention during this time period—so much so that during the 1960s and early '70s Boyle Heights was known as the Chicano cultural and political epicenter of the country.

The fire of the growing Chicano Movement was, arguably, sparked by the Chicano high school walkouts of 1968 known as the “blow-outs.” The high schools are located in Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles, and still stand today. Rebellious youth highlighted Chicano national oppression—primarily the legal aspects and other aspects addressable from a reformist perspective, such as in public education and access to higher education. The Brown Berets were one of the most important groups during this time. And then came the Chicano Moratorium with its climaxing march in August 29, 1970—which resulted in the pig-sheriff’s martyring of Chicano journalist Rubén Salazar, activists Gustav Montag and José Angel Diaz, and Brown Beret Lyn Ward.

And today Boyle Heights remains in the national spotlight—an almost uninterrupted history—of the housing projects and murals of Estrada Courts, the Chicano gangs like White Fence and Varrio Nueva Estrada, the mariachis at Mariachi Plaza hustling for work, the struggling Mexican vendors and Chicano shopkeepers, and the leftist nationalists and Communist Chicano students and activists.

Los Angeles in the 1970s was a place and decade of civil unrest, with the Chicano and New Afrikan proletariat experimenting with different forms of organization and ideology—with the bourgeois reformist movements for civic engagement and political representation on one end of the spectrum and the firebombing of local banks, universities, high schools, and government buildings on the other end (which groups like the Chicano Liberation Front and the Emiliano Zapata Unit were suspected of carrying out).

And although from the 1980s until recently the Chicano Movement has all but receded and been decimated, Boyle Heights has consistently remained a strong front for Chicano national identity.

When the national liberation struggle and the proletarian revolution advances, if there are ever to be Base Areas or support bases in the Southwest, the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles would have to be one of them. Resistance is written into its historical DNA.

The national situation: Gentrification and resistance all across the country

We are sure to contextualize anti-gentrification as part of a national movement—and in some cases, an international one (such as in the working-class neighborhoods of Istanbul)—where cadre-led initiatives and campaigns are part of a larger revolutionary strategy.

We see this in the Bay Area of California; Austin, Texas; the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago; Atlanta; four out of the five boroughs of New York City—perhaps most notably in Brooklyn and Manhattan's Harlem; and of course here in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles.

From October to November Serve the People – Los Angeles (STPLA) led an action against gentrifiers from a downtown Los Angeles alternative-opera for using the same Boyle Heights park that, at the time, we were using for our distribution. The series of confrontations climaxed in late November when local high school students on their own began fighting back against these gentrifiers when they were kicked out from their rehearsal space. The opera had hired a native security guard who, unbeknownst to the opera and their sellout supporters like comprador bourgeoisie Boyle Heights nonprofit Self-Help Graphics & Art, was aligned with us and would give us intel on the opera production team. He notified us about the high school students and we drove over within minutes and helped in confronting and kicking out the gentrifiers. From then STPLA met with community organizers, mainly from the immigrant rights movement, and cofounded the coalition that would go on to be called Defend Boyle Heights.

Collectives, coalitions, and other anti-gentrification formations are in regular contact with DBH, seeking advice, political guidance, and feedback. One specific example was the recent DBH-led tour of the East Coast—visiting Chicago and New York City, two historical areas fighting gentrification and displacement. All contacts shared their support and sought political guidance and leadership from DBH.

The coalition presented an analysis of the State and non-State capitalist collaboration in gentrification and the subsequent revolutionary militant resistance that is needed in combating it. RGLA proudly supports DBH and unites with their analysis.

Today, it appears that DBH is making the first steps toward building a more countrywide anti-gentrification movement where different groups and individuals can trade valuable experience, share and struggle over different political lines. We see this as part of the progressive movement from the middle stage into the end of the strategic defensive into strategic equilibrium within the war against gentrification.

In and outside of Los Angeles, we have seen a pattern of gentrification—which can be boiled down to, simply speaking, all classes warring with each other for either their basic survival or supremacy—but principally the proletariat versus the bourgeoisie.

The classes in power—the bourgeoisie, specifically of the White Nation, and petty bourgeoisie of both white and Chicano nations (at least for the Southwest) lead these gentrification efforts. It is, as we've mentioned before, a collaboration between State and non-State capitalists, between private developers and investors and corrupt city and State bureaucrats.

Resistance to this has been diverse: from militant and daring direct actions—individualistic ones as well as coordinated and strategically guided ones—to reformist capitulation. (We don't include in the category of resistance the

identity politic of oppressed nationality–driven gentrification masked as local or national progress, that is, gentrification or hoodification; this is squarely banished into the category of gentrification.)

Overall, gentrification must exist in the context of a national struggle and must not be left to be regulated as something small and local. It is capitalism, after all, and capitalism doesn't only exist in one or two cities.

Gentrification as a hyperfocalized point in capitalism

As mentioned, we see gentrification as the sharp manifestation of bureaucratic State and non-State capitalism, a merger or symbiotic relationship mostly between city officials and policymakers and private real estate agents and big investors: Here in Los Angeles, and specifically in Boyle Heights, these include the Los Angeles City Council, specifically its Department of Cultural Affairs and the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) committee, and private entities like transportation mega-monopoly Metro, Sheppard Mullins law firm, and dozens of real estate agencies/investors (like Adaptive Realty) and speculators.

It should be noted that city council member Jose Huizar, apart from being chair of the PLUM committee, also oversees Boyle Heights as part of his District 14. Huizar funnels in thousands, and even millions, of dollars into charities and nonprofits who align with his and the city's overall redevelopment plans for Boyle Heights and other parts of Los An-

geles. His accepting of approximately \$30,000 in campaign contributions from gentrifiers farther west in the city has also conveniently been ignored by his allies and supporters.¹³ Huizar is also preparing his wife to take the helm for his seat when his city council term is up.

This is a blatant and bold flexing of the nepotistic corruption of city politics and the reformism—and allows for a deeper analysis of the counterrevolutionary aspect of reformism—of the ideological apparatus of the nonprofits. In the final instance, the nonprofit sector, just like the city government it serves and benefits from, serves capitalism. It, like the bigger State, are beyond reconciliation.

Because gentrification is a mere development of capitalism, within it great white chauvinism remains a permanent aspect to this contradiction. Most redevelopment policies favor white supremacy over the proletarian, semi-proletarian, and petty-bourgeois oppressed-nationality neighborhoods. From mass evictions of Chicanos, Mexican and Central American immigrants, and New Afrikans in substitution for white proletarians and white bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie in their place, to the demolition of oppressed-nationality public and private housing projects and outpricing of oppressed-nationality small businesses and shops, gentrification, at least in the Southwest and parts of the Midwest and East Coast, retains a strong white-supremacist character.

But some anti-gentrification activists commit the error of prioritizing a secondary aspect of a contradiction, or a secondary contradiction altogether, instead of the actual primary contradiction.

An example of this in Boyle Heights is displacement where the contradiction between displacer and displaced—that is, between petty-bourgeois and bourgeois gentrifiers and low-income proletarians and semi-proletarians—is a secondary contradiction of our society's overall primary contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.¹⁴ The secondary contradiction, while important, is not the most important.¹⁵ It is not principal. It is a descriptor. So if a group focuses only on gentrification without contextualizing its order in the hierarchy of the contradictions of capitalism, the group is doomed to never resolve the contradiction.

Another example is when anti-gentrification individuals and groups focus on the racial, or national, contradiction, almost entirely leaving out a class analysis. Some go as far as equating gentrification with colonialism, because of the fact that many or most gentrifiers are white settlers and are displacing non-white people. But global Spanish, British, Dutch, or French colonialism no longer exists. In its place we have imperialism led by the settler-colonial U.S.

Countrywide, gentrification is a manifestation of the fundamental contradiction within capitalism. Although inside the oppressed nations, the fundamental contradiction may switch from capitalism to national oppression, it is capitalism that is the dominant contradiction generally.

Nonetheless, it is a harder contradiction to analyze only because gentrification taking place in an oppressed nation will naturally have a chauvinistic character or aspect. But no two aspects can coexist on an even basis; one must overcome the other. So which is it? Is the primary aspect the white oppressor versus the oppressed nationality or is it between the proletariat versus the bourgeoisie? In our analysis, generally it is the latter. But of course we know in certain moments in time, the secondary can become primary—especially as national oppression in the U.S. changes.

The correlation between leisure spaces and the de-proletarianization of centers of production

Boyle Heights is made up mainly by residential buildings—houses mixed with apartment buildings and three public housing projects, Ramona Gardens, Pico Gardens/Las Casitas (the place where RCPUSA member Damian Garcia was stabbed to death by gang members with alleged undercover pigwork in building for May Day), and Estrada Courts, and one private housing project, Wyvernwood Garden Apartments. But it also has a heavy industrial and commercial center, mainly in the south and southwest portion of the community, neighboring the City of Vernon—which has also consistently been a commercial and industrial hub. Many Boyle Heights proletarians work in the City of Vernon, in the rendering plants, Farmer John Meat Packing, metalwork, and manufacturing plants.

While it is good that Maoists are organizing proletarians and their allies, it is largely being done outside of the points of production. This must change. Maoists must begin integrating themselves better into proletarian jobs and organize en masse. We in Los Angeles will self-prescribe this monumental task to us in the not-so-distant future. In the future, local Maoists must focus on the proletariat at points of production. As of now, this is perhaps the U.S. MLM movement's weakest area of theorizing, organizing, and overall presence.

The industrial sector of Boyle Heights once flourished more than it does now. Fish canneries, meat-packing warehouses, textile factories, metalworks, and other centers of light and heavy production once occupied the warehouses and industrial buildings in Boyle Heights. Now, while some still remain, many have been turned into art galleries, artist live-in lofts, breweries, and cafes. Today, there are approximately twenty art galleries in Boyle Heights, most occupying buildings that have been boarded up, dilapidated, and empty for years since the companies moved out or went out of business.

The shift from a production-based economy to a service-based economy—with an imperialist finance-capital character—has turned proletarian centers into bourgeois and petty-bourgeois playgrounds where small to big bourgeois investors flip these commercial properties.

The economic effect is near-total. It is not confined in only the buildings themselves or their use. These new residents—a new demographic of petty-bourgeois artists and

“creative” or “cultural workers”—have moved in, bringing with them speculative investors building new businesses to cater to this new demographic. These new businesses, which Boyle Heights has not had before, include independent breweries, gourmet coffee shops, and mid- to high-end bar restaurants. It is a class domino effect, replacing the proletarian character of the neighborhood with a non-proletarian character. The more common proletarians who work in the art galleries are general production and carpentry workers—those who paint, build sets, and do framing, art props, and other elements for art installations, but they are a relative minority.

The industrial section is turning into a nightlife-centered scene of leisure, with little to no worthy commodities or means of sustenance coming out of the factory buildings and warehouses. The source of employment is insignificant. However, the profit being generated, and the finance capital invested into these galleries and businesses, is significant. It is in the multi-millions, perhaps nearing a billion or barely surpassing it. The buildings’ real estate market value is in the millions. Art pieces typically go for thousands. The art gallery owners, who are almost always curators, are real estate investors and venture capitalist millionaires or close to being millionaires—many coming from New York’s wealthy and pretentious art scene, such as Michelle Maccarone of Maccarone Gallery or Adam Lindemann of Venus Over Manhattan.

However, it is incorrect to see the gentrification in Boyle Heights as principally over artists or even art, white or not, moving into an oppressed nationality—majority neighborhood. It is more

correct to see this as a correlation to the fundamental contradiction of capitalism, that of being between the warring classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Although production jobs are still one of the most popular jobs—15.5 percent for men and 12.6 for women—the majority of residents work in the service and sales/office industries—19.1 percent of men work in service and 36.5 percent of women work in the sales/office industry.¹⁶ Up until the 1970s and '80s, many Chicanos, Japanese Americans, and others worked in the tire plants, aircraft factories, waste management factories, and auto assembly factories in or around East Los Angeles, Southeast Los Angeles, or downtown Los Angeles—some of the more notable ones were the Firestone-Florence Plant and the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Most if not all of these centers of production have ironically been turned into centers of consumption like mega shopping malls.¹⁷ This, of course, is not exclusive to the Eastside. The General Motors auto plant in the San Fernando Valley, once a center of generational sustenance, is now a shopping plaza. To add insult to injury, the plaza retained the name The Plant using a modified GM Pontiac emblem. Even a mural of GM-produced cars stands nearby. This is the changed economy. But the crisis of consumption and production is still subordinate to the principal contradiction, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

One area in the changed economy of Los Angeles is the involvement and contradiction between the public transportation companies and the auto industry. Initially, the auto industry was dominant and the economy was pushed

away from public transportation into encouraging Los Angeles residents to buy cars, economic cars to flashy cars, to embrace car culture—especially during the 1950s. But eventually with the decimation of the national auto industry the public transportation industry, now a monopoly under Metro, overcame the auto industry as the more dominant economic force, going beyond mere transportation and into landlording.

Today, Metro occupies one of the top tiers of the gentrification forces of Los Angeles City and County. RGLA has not done enough research into this contradiction to present a more complete summary and analysis. But we aim to flesh this out more thoroughly in the near future.

Mass-line organizing, the role of Maoists, and recent developments in the struggle

Maoists must be ready for defeat but only in the trajectory of a prolonged process toward victory. When one errs, it is tantamount to search for the reasons for the errors and lessons to draw upon the experience. In Los Angeles, Maoists are struggling to do so. We have often overemphasized a particular aspect of a secondary contradiction, forgetting the general primary contradiction as the main thing. Much of this has already been discussed earlier.

STPLA, as a mass-line organization, is one of the leading forces in Boyle Heights fighting gentrification and building community dual power (to be explained in the next section). RGLA is a proud supporter and guide to STPLA.

Maoists must be daring and masters in applying the mass line—especially in coalitions and other eclecticism-prone settings. Maoists must be calculated with their daringness too; for what is the mass line if not the correct environment where the acceptance and guidance of the application of revolutionary violence is developed? For RGLA, this was a point we had difficulty in grasping. Only recently have we begun a heavy and consisted campaign in propagating revolutionary violence in the context of anti-gentrification resistance. We aim to offer an analysis and summation in the near future on this campaign.

Additionally, Maoists ideally should be starting coalitions, initiatives, and projects, not simply joining them. This area is proto-United Front work, but obviously in the absence of a Maoist Party and People's Army. The Maoist United Front must have Maoists in positions of leadership—but organized and centralized in carrying out the Protracted People's War. But until then, we do not simply wait for the objective conditions to develop. We build up the subjective conditions. Maoist must begin, or continue, building the skeleton of the three instruments of Maoism. The Maoist collective must act as the head, as the Party. The mass programs or Serve the People projects must be where the seeds are planted in the creation of the People's Army. The broader coalitions, be they anti-gentrification or anti-police

brutality or focused on our country's national liberation struggles (this one would be ideal and be perhaps prioritized), should be the proto-United Front. And all three must move forward concentrically, militantly, carrying with them the sparks of Maoist dual power.

Future steps on the road in building community dual power

Maoists in Boyle Heights have defined and theorized the concept of community dual power as something to aspire to and build toward in the anti-gentrification movement. We define community dual power as the general exercise of self-determination geographically, politically, culturally, socially, and economically by a community facing gentrification. Specifically, this will look like the proletariat and their allies controlling what businesses move in, being vigilant over evictions and rent hikes—up to and including implementing retaliatory actions against landlords, property managers, and other antagonistic elements. Self-determination will not be complete, nor can we say with certainty that a Party, People's Army, or subordinate structure will be created by this time—a timeline we have yet to theorize, so we do not consider this self-determination to be an actual dual power. Instead, we modify the concept by making it a pre- or proto- version of actual Maoist wartime dual power, with community dual power instead.

The anti-gentrification movement is at an all-around strategic defensive, with legal to illegal direct actions and semi-legal mass mobilizations making up the majority of the work.

But allied groups have been mass-building for years, prior to RGLA or STPLA. However, this mass-building has suffered from economism, political stagnation, and tailism. All three errors are far from being dead and may resurface inside RGLA or STPLA if we are not careful and veer away from the revolutionary path.

STPLA has already begun a rectified version of their mass-building with its implementation of a tenants' outreach and organizing initiative. The short-term goal in the project is to popularize the political line of STPLA while simultaneously directly servicing tenants with either repair work, mediation between tenants, food and clothing, or legal resources—which we try to stay away from because of their inherent reformism/legalism—all the while advancing a class polarization within each building between the mainly proletarian tenants against the apartment manager and landlord bourgeoisie, pushing for more class-based independence away from property managers and landlords. We are aware that we must be careful in this regard that we don't fall into economism or right deviations—an ever-present threat. The only way to defeat economism within a mass-line organization is by wielding and popularizing revolutionary violence.

The mid- to long-term goal is setting up parallel proletarian leadership groups as People's Committees at each apartment building we organize. The People's Committees will function as mini-tenants' union locals, under the direct guidance of STPLA.

The long-term goal is in politically developing the committees into bases of support for a more advanced struggle toward community dual power in tenant rent strikes, occupations, direct actions against landlords, and so on—all the while principally adhering to developing revolutionary violence with the masses as the deliverer.

Red Guards Los Angeles again wishes to thank all the revolutionary collectives present here today, and especially Red Guards Kansas City for extending the invitation to us, for organizing the MCLS. We are emboldened, made almost arrogant, with the amount of revolutionary commitment and discipline exhibited by all the authentic and principally Maoist collectives in the country.

May this conference be the first, and not the only, one of its kind in the prolonged road toward building the Maoist Party, toward building the People's Army, toward building the United Front and unleashing the fury of the masses in Protracted People's War.

¡Abajo el revisionismo que envenena el pueblo!
Down with the revisionism that poisons the masses!

¡Que viva el Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo!
Long live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

¡Que viva Los Guardias Rojos!
Long live the Red Guards!

—Red Guards Los Angeles, January 2018