

# THE DIALECTICAL MATERIALIST THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE APPLIED

## — An Internal Document

This has been both a good and difficult period for our organization--we've made advances in summing up our line, taking it to a higher level of development as we test it in practice and grasp the tasks at hand, uniting Marxist-Leninists and winning the advanced to communism as we hammer out the party's basic line and program of action, the key link in the chain of the party building motion. All our work is taking on the characteristics of professional revolutionary activity. By "our work," we mean the work of all genuine communists in this country.

The fruits of our patient perseverance in struggle is bearing results, concrete results, as the welding of a core of all genuine Marxist-Leninists is coming into being, along solid principles, as we win more advanced elements to communism.

The following is a summation of our particular contribution to this motion, as well as the lessons we've drawn from the valuable experience of other communist organizations. In short, from drawing lessons from the class struggle and the struggle between the two lines.

The CC has done a summation of our work and has analyzed and led the resolution of a two-line struggle on party building. During this time we united that in fact the key link to party building was political line. We had struggled against and defeated the merger line and also had struggled out and united that factory nuclei was the "basic form" of organization of all communist organizations and the party when we build it, but not the key link. We drew lessons that in fact both the merger line and the line which held factory nuclei as the key link were lines outstripping the period that we were in, both stemming from voluntarism, leading to an ultra-leftist position on party building by placing the form of organization over the content of the political line unities that had to be reached in struggle.

(e.g. Lukif times)

There was still another line to struggle and defeat. This was the line that held that ideology was the key link to party building, a retrograde, right opportunist line which negated the advances of the old period, made no distinction between the sham and genuine wings. It was, in fact, a centrist position, calling for the party to be built out of the "unity" of Bolsheviki and Mensheviki.



As comrades recall, this struggle led to the purging of this line and opportunist elements within our organization, who after repeated struggle on the basis of unity-struggle-unity refused to accept that political line was the key link to party building. They presented no new data but refused to subordinate their minority position to the majority decision and the line of the organization. They attempted to factionalize within our ranks. Some leading members, including CC members who refused to subordinate themselves to the discipline of the organization, resigned from the CC, attacked the CC, and went to the lower ranks to try to create a split in the organization.

One of the major differences that this struggle led to was the analysis of the communist movement. Centrism was reflected most clearly in the line that we had to build a party of Mensheviks and Bolsheviks and compromise on matters of principle with the sham wing of the communist movement.

On the ideological front, the two-line struggle was the struggle against the worship of spontaneity and to reaffirm that in the dialectical relationship between theory and practice during the pre-party period, theory has been and is playing the principal role. It will continue to play the principal role as long as we are in the period that Lenin described--"without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement."

The broader question for us, however, was the hammering out of the line on party building in struggle against opportunist lines that had tried to rise and gain control in the organization--both right and left opportunist lines. The left opportunist line became the strongest line that we were combatting, resulting in left deviations in our work; but as we refuted the false, we retained the truth and moved forward, suffering some tactical losses. But we moved forward as we struggled against opportunism; and therefore we made strategic gains. This showed us once again that it is not quantity, the numbers in our organization, but the quality of the comrades in the organization that is the essential question for us: total devotion to the cause of the proletariat for its total emancipation; total commitment to the education and organization of the proletariat and for its party; total commitment to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat; toward completion of our historic class mission--the complete abolition of classes.

*Re sponte!*

We have been guided in our struggle by the torch illuminating our path, the serious study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought. We have enriched our understanding by applying our theoretical grasp to moving forward the revolution in our country. We have always, in the twists and turns, understood that theory serves our practice and that practice is the criterion of truth.

We have understood this in our development from a perceptual to a rational level and then to revolutionary practice, the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge. Chairman Mao Tse Tung puts it this way:

"Thus it can be seen that the first step in the process of cognition is contact with the objects of the external world; this belongs to the stage of perception. The second step is to synthesize the data of perception by arranging and reconstructing them; this belongs to the stage of conception, judgement and inference. It is only when the data of perception are very rich (not fragmentary) and correspond to reality (are not illusory) that they can be the basis for forming correct concepts and theories." (On Practice)



Hence, this has been confirmed by the experience of the international proletariat. Hence, this has been confirmed by the experience of our movement.

In our own rich experience we had a perceptual understanding of a universal truth--where there is no party, the task, the central task is to build the highest form of organization of the proletariat. Obviously, this must be in conformity to the concrete conditions of the given country. At our Congress in 1972, we had only a perceptual understanding. In our Congress documents, we outlined it as the primary task facing all communists. We proceeded to synthesize our data. We tried to rearrange and reconstruct our thinking. We initiated a form to unite Marxist-Leninists, the National Liason Committee. (Refer to pamphlet, In the U.S. Pregnant With Revisionism: The Struggle For Proletarian Revolution Moves Ahead, history of PRRWO in section on party building.)

However, our data of perception was not very rich, but in fact was fragmentary. It did not correspond totally to reality, but in fact was illusory; and therefore we formed incorrect concepts and theories. Objectively, this was a process of development; subjectively, the belittling of theory left us open to be diverted by internal as well as external opportunists as we deviated therefore from our central task. And by belittling the role of consciousness, we lagged in changing our objective reality, by not deepening our perceptual understanding.

*Seems  
oversimplified  
artificial* [ Our experience in this period cannot be denied however. We could not have had the rational understanding, the knowledge that we have today had we not gone through a perceptual understanding. To deny this stage is pure idealism; and this thinking belongs to the school of the "rationalists" of whom Chairman Mao says:

"In the history of philosophy there is the 'rationalist' school that admits the reality only of reason and not of experience, believing that reason alone is reliable while perceptual experience is not; this school errs by turning things upside down." (On Practice)

All the arguments of the opportunists in our ranks tried to turn things upside down, always blatantly putting down our organization, tempered and steeled in years of struggle, with a rich history and experience--coming out of the national movement, the revolutionary workers movement, and the revolutionary student-youth movement in the main.

In fact, our experience helped us in drawing lessons today of why Lenin's definition of the advanced holds true and is applicable, our direct as well as our indirect experience--e.g., We were not in Detroit, but we know that the League of Revolutionary Black Workers was an inspiration to the development of HRUM and the YLP, and many other communists, advanced elements, and the revolutionary workers movement, drawing mainly from the indirect experience laid down by the summed up experience of the labor movement--Marxist-Leninist theory--as we continue to learn from the glorious examples of our comrades in China, Albania, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and throughout the world. This has reaffirmed once again that we get most of our knowledge from indirect experience.

But the idealists would not analyze our situation correctly. They distorted our history (by "our" we mean the history of development of the communist, workers, and national movements in the main). The renegade, Pablo "Yoruba"



Guzman, for instance, was famous for trying to get us to compete with PSP, saying that we had reached a "make it or break it point" in 1973, because we were not recruiting as many people into our ranks as PSP, being more concerned with the numbers game that is played by all the hegemonists, rather than struggling against opportunism, the opportunism of PSP on questions of ideological, political and organizational principles.

Their idealist conception of history drove them to distort reality more and more. And as the fight for the party intensified, they would try to wiggle out one by one, as our understanding, our grasp of dialectical and historical materialism went to higher levels, struggling against falsehood, not in a closet, but as we sunk roots, planting the seeds in the soil of the class struggle, taking to heart what Chairman Mao said--"Communists are like seeds, the people the soil. Wherever we go we must blossom amongst them." These two components--our ties with the masses and our tireless struggle against opportunism and for the grasp of Marxism-Leninism--is what makes our organization and all genuine Marxist-Leninists capable of confronting head-on our tasks today.



We continue to learn from the glorious examples of our comrades in China, Albania, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and throughout the world.

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Steps

Our advances today, therefore, have come from real everyday practice and higher levels of theoretical grasp of Marxism-Leninism in the heat of the class struggle; and in the struggle against metaphysics and idealism which was reflected in the line that we were struggling against. We have deepened our knowledge from a lower level of perceptual understanding to the level of being able to form concepts, make judgements. Our data is very rich, corresponding to objective reality. We have raised our practical experience and have laid the basis, in the main, to form correct concepts and theories as to what period we're in, what is the key link in this period of party building, what are the tactics--Marxist-Leninists Unite and Win the Advanced to Communism--and what tasks do we confront in fusing the communist and workers movements to move to the actual formation of the party.

However, this is one side of our motion, the leading aspect; but we must not become complacent. Many comrades still despise theory, and therefore have a narrow, partial view of the objective process. Some comrades are confused and lack clear orientation in their work. Some comrades lack so much orientation that they go from day to day with no plan or break whatever plan is made at the drop of a hat. Some comrades want to be a direct observer or participant in every single event, not making time for study or completing assignments long overdue. In fact, some comrades look for any excuse that will throw them into the tray of the spontaneous movement, or leading comrades who participate in this by not paying sufficient attention to the important question of cadre training. We must train Bolshevik cadres to build a Bolshevik party based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought.

There is still the problem on all the levels of our organization, and in fact many of the above-mentioned are most clearly crystallized on our leading bodies who at times come to meetings with a grasp of their particular area of work only, raising their own personal experience above the indirect experience gained in all our work and all the work of the entire communist movement and the struggle of the masses. In fact, they have only a grasp of the phenomena of their particular area of work. They therefore fail to grasp the essence of the laws governing even that particular movement.

Many comrades fall into blaming and turning fingers at other comrades. They say "the problem is not sufficient communication with the leading bodies," or "the problem is not enough specific guidance, or "the problem is that I work all day and don't have the time." All this, as they turn their noses up at the conscientious study and application of Marxism-Leninism to solve problems.

This is not to deny that, in fact, we must get down to more specific guidance, or that comrades who work full-time on a salaried job don't have problems, or that the problems we have raising our children aren't real, etc., etc. These are real phenomenas, but the essence of the problem is sheer narrow empiricism for many of our comrades.

It mainly stems from not grasping the dialectics of knowledge.

Marxism-Leninism teaches us that knowledge goes from a lower to a higher level of development. Perceptual knowledge must be deepened. The perceptual stage must be developed to a rational stage.

"To think that knowledge can stop at a lower level, perceptual stage,



and that perceptual knowledge alone is reliable while rational knowledge is not, would be to repeat the historical error of empiricism." (On Practice)

Many of our comrades get intoxicated by glimpses of the truth, e.g., the phenomenas of the "budget crisis," layoffs, harassment on the job, etc. They want to act on these phenomenas, important to the general analysis; but in basing an analysis on the phenomenas and not studying hard the laws of capitalist development, the crisis of imperialism, they fail to get to the essential questions and either tail from the right or from the left, failing to arm the advanced in the struggles with a broader picture of the situation, many times failing in their analysis of who is the advanced--therefore relying on the more intermediate or backward stratas who constantly see only the phenomenas at play.

When the struggle fails, these comrades become pessimistic. Again drawing only from their own experience, they deny the general experience of the communist movement and our own organization. They can't see the forward motion. Their view is lacking in the long-range perspective of the revolution; and they fall into lacking faith in the masses, either worshipping individual heroes or finally wanting to "drop out" of the struggle, not seeing themselves as part of the organization, the movement, or the party, etc.

They despise theory and are unable to win the advanced to communism. The advanced cannot be won by phrasemongering or by repeating phenomenas to them that they already know, "100 people will be laid off on Thursday." The advanced must be armed as to why this is so. That's why calling a sick-out at a particular area of work because layoffs were coming a week later, without the necessary struggle to raise the consciousness of the advanced to the whys--and then they would, with orientation and communist leadership, act accordingly, winning over the masses to the side of the struggle. Not doing this is to take the road of least resistance, to blur over the fundamental contradictions, to tail behind the movement. Instead, we must sum up the experiences of the advanced who speak and act in the interests of the majority, draw lessons from direct and indirect experience, go to the essential, discard the dross, eliminate the false, retain the truth, proceed from the one to the other, and from the outside to the inside. In order to form a system of concepts and theories, it is necessary to make a leap from perceptual to rational knowledge.

If we had been content with the perceptual understanding of party building as the central task, we would have stood still, and finally would have gone backward. We would not have deepened that understanding by examining closely the struggles of yesterday to learn from them, to select the essential, the need to struggle to reaffirm and clarify the fundamental question in party building--that the party must be firmly based on the ideology of the proletariat. If we had not struggled against falsehood--eclecticism and economism, the worship of spontaneity--we could not have retained the truth that the worship of spontaneity is the ideological basis of all opportunism. We could not have gone from the one, e.g., YLP--a revolutionary organization, to the other, PRRWO--a communist organization; and we could not have understood that we had to proceed from the outside, reflecting upon the external world, to the inside and consciousness, in order to form a system of concepts and theories.

In fact, during our deviation into the CL sham party building motion,



we erred in not deepening our understanding and jumped into the arms of the "left" opportunists. At the same time, and the leadership given to the organization was crucial in this, we were studying Marxist-Leninist philosophy, the essential way to overcome empiricism; and therefore we were able to break with that sham motion and move on. We heightened our struggle against opportunism internally, enabling us to take a stance on the two-line struggle in BWC. We drew lessons and moved to draw more correct concepts and theories to guide us in party building and in all our work, flowing from our central task.

In relation to BWC, we should have written up our position on the split. In the genuine wing, our movement has not gathered and synthesized the most valuable lessons from the split. This has led to the erroneous idea of the part of some comrades that by studying the line of each grouping springing up from BWC, we will get an analysis of the split itself. Each grouping, WC, RWC, MLOC, and the comrades of the Revolutionary Bloc represent today higher degrees of development of the lines they represented in the struggle in BWC. We will correct this error by putting out our analysis on the split in the BWC as soon as possible for circulation in the communist movement and to advanced elements.

#### IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO JUST UNDERSTAND THE WORLD

In reaching a rational understanding of party building, we cannot stop here. Marxism-Leninism teaches us that it is not enough to understand the world, but in fact we must apply the knowledge of the laws actively to change the world.

We must go from understanding that we must build our party to the actual revolutionary practice of changing our situation and building our party. This is the period we're in and as such we have a corresponding plan of action to fulfill the tasks we've outlined. Generally speaking, says Chairman Mao, men's original ideas, theories, plans or programs are seldom realized without alteration. This is because there might be unforeseen circumstances that we'll grasp in the course of our practice. The point here is that we must test our line, as we have been doing, in practice. If our line corresponds to reality, we will enhance the laws governing party building that much more, grasp firmer hold of the theory guiding our work, back to serve practice, and reap the fruits of the living soul of Marxism-Leninism.

"As man's practice which changes objective reality in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans, or programmes, advances further and further, his knowledge of objective reality likewise becomes deeper and deeper." (On Practice)

The results are beginning to be seen as the genuine wing struggles for unity that the key link is political line. We have also tested the correctness of the line in struggle against opportunist and erroneous lines on party building. We have raised our practical experience to a theoretical plane and are moving decisively to test it in practice. All our work is bearing testimony to this fact. The forums on party building which we just completed were highly significant. With a concrete analysis of concrete conditions we summed up the reflections in the minds of all genuine communists who have been consciously moving forward in the struggle to build the party.



Pointing to the essence of the struggles that took place in the last period opened up new vistas and horizons for all genuine Marxist-Leninists as to what period we're in and our corresponding tasks. The recently-held revolutionary student-youth conference, for example, was successful in our raising our practical experience in giving leadership to the student-youth movement to its theoretical plane, back to the practice of uniting Marxist-Leninists and winning advanced elements to this understanding and the corresponding tasks needed to be carried out to build the revolutionary student-youth movement.

Our work in the plants is bearing results, as we win advanced elements to communism, as we give the movement a planned, conscious character. It is a great experience to see an advanced worker get up at a forum and speak to the issue of the advanced, raising that not holding to Lenin's definition is an opportunist error, as well as elaborating on other questions. When the science is gripped by the masses, it becomes a material force; how true this concept continues to prove itself in real life.

Once again, we must build on our advances, grasp what's coming into being as we raise our theoretical understanding of the laws governing the revolution. In order that we may consolidate our advances, we must actively struggle against empiricism--that philosophical error which is laying the basis for setbacks and has already created setbacks in our work. Empiricism, a manifestation of formalism and subjectivism, has laid the basis for errors, such as assigning unnecessary numbers of cadres to speak at demonstrations about their own personal experiences in their areas of work, rather than seeing that propaganda is the chief form of activity and that the cadres must be trained to do political exposures, to expose the state, and get to the essential questions. Training the cadres in this way releases their revolutionary zeal and initiative as we have done in many cases--the cadres therefore giving principled and exemplary leadership to the masses as we struggle to take hold of our tasks in this period of party building.

We have struggled against empiricism and narrowness, thus setting the basis for the analysis of all our work to flow in correspondence to how we are carrying out the central task. From this, we summed up our understanding of the two wings in the communist movement, how we would proceed to unite the genuine wing and draw firmer and more definite lines of demarcation with the opportunist wing of our movement. Since then, the RCP was formed, a circumstance we were well aware of in RU's final turn towards total consolidation of revisionism. Outside of the communist movement, RCP is a dying, going-out-of-being force which we must tactically deal with seriously.

Inside the communist movement, OL has come forward as the successor of RU, posing the main danger within the ranks of the communist movement. This we did not foresee as clearly; and we have learned from our comrades in the WVO in their tireless struggle against these sham marsh forces. OL also covered itself behind centrism and therefore wiggled like a snake, agreeing consistently with the opportunist line of the RU, pretending to uphold Marxism-Leninism. They see the genuine wing of the communist movement as "neo-trotskyite," but have been too cowardly to polemicize with the genuine wing--instead falling into slander, especially against our comrades from Workers Viewpoint.



"An example of such a group of ideological agents of the ruling circle is one called Workers Viewpoint. Despite their pretentious name, Workers Viewpoint is in reality spreading the viewpoint of the bourgeoisie and is an ideological enemy of the working class and of Marxism-Leninism." (Class Struggle, OL journal, #2)

In this period, we will intensify our struggle against OL's line, as will all genuine Marxist-Leninists, advanced elements, and honest forces.

Our starting point is the uniting of Marxist-Leninists and the winning of the advanced to communism as we struggle to carry out our tasks, giving leadership by example, showing in the real world the two opposing lines on party building and how they manifest themselves on all the burning questions of the day. For our organization this means the intense study of Marxism-Leninism, especially those works which speak to the tasks of the communist movement, the problems of our organization in carrying out the tasks, and the method of rectifying our errors.

#### THE SIMULTANEOUS TACTICS OF PARTY BUILDING

There has been some idealist thinking regarding party building, as if the party was a separate entity from the masses, as if the party cadre were not being trained right now and historically in the heat of the class struggle and the struggle between the two lines.

In fact, the Bolsheviks in our country, coming forward to build the party and take our international responsibility to a higher level, are some very fine, devoted men and women, tempered in years of struggle--interlocking with advanced workers, youth, revolutionary intellectuals, nurturing the very features of the party, indeed giving shape and soul to the general staff of the proletariat. This is why it is crucial to grasp firm hold of the two integral tactics of party building. Unite Marxist-Leninists and Win the Advanced to Communism; the simultaneity of both is essential to the fusion of the communist and workers movements. There have been two deviations on this question. One tendency has been to see Marxist-Leninists Unite as principal due to arguments such as: If Marxist-Leninists unite, the work of winning the advanced to communism is further enhanced. The other is to see Winning the Advanced to Communism as principal, arguing that the unity of Marxist-Leninists is tested as the advanced are won to communism.

What's wrong with both of these positions is that both negate the dialectics of Marxist-Leninists Unite and Win the Advanced to Communism as tactical tasks to achieve our objective of fusing the communist and workers movements. Both arguments fail to grasp that political line is the key link to party building because it is by hammering out the party's line on the burning questions of our movement that we unite Marxist-Leninists and win the advanced to communism in the fight for the party itself. The simultaneity of the two tactics is undeniably bound up as an integral whole, for without the fusion of the communist and workers, and to a great extent the national movement, the subjective and objective conditions to build the party will not be sufficiently mature, and in fact are not sufficiently mature today.



This is the period we are in. For our organization, proud to be part of the genuine wing of the U.S. communist movement, this means that our struggle against sluggishness on the study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought, on the study of the objective process, on struggling to take our perceptual understanding of the subjective and objective factors of our revolution to a rational understanding must be intensified.

We must without further delay take a qualitative leap if we are to be worthy of the glorious title of Bolsheviks. If we are to continue to carry forth our work as we have, we must consolidate our ranks in the face of the harsh repression which we will be facing in the coming months.

We close this part of our pamphlet with the following words of wisdom of comrade Enver Hoxha. He says:

"Dear Comrades: We must put an end to these lax methods of work once and for all. We can never tolerate within the ranks of our Party people who think the Party of Lenin and Stalin is like the 2nd International, who consider it a refugium peccatorum (refuge of sinners), a place of refuge for loafers and sluggards, intriguers, careerists, cowardly elements with a petty bourgeois spirit, with no spirit of sacrifice, and elements who regard our Party as a republic of comrades, a place where discipline and security are abandoned...

"Resolute party comrades, at these critical moments, any laxity in our work, any evasion of work is a dagger in the heart of the Party, any negligence, any breach of discipline is a bullet in the heart of the Party, it is a dagger and a bullet in your own hearts, for you are the party...

"Resolute party comrades, comrades who are ready at any moment to shed your blood as true soldiers of Stalin, close your ranks, protect the Party and your comrades, be vigilant towards the enemies and traitors and show them no mercy, maintain the tightest security, because our work and struggle are not a subject for prattle and bragging but a terrible battle against a savage enemy; show no mercy to provocateurs, loafers, cowards, careerists and other opportunist elements who try in a thousand and one ways to hinder and damage the work within the Party.

"Dear Comrades, the Party has faith in you, for this is its strength. It has faith and is sure that you will set to work zealously, with discipline and self-sacrifice, and that, in this way, our Party will assuredly lead our people towards certain victory."

(Enver Hoxha, Selected Works, Vol. 1, "Circular to the Party Organizations of the Tirana Region on the Strengthening of the Party and the Revolutionary Spirit," November 1942)