

Position Paper #2

The Struggle Against Revisionism

Among the views our trend inherited from the New Communist Movement was the Maoist version of anti-revisionism. Passing itself off as a militant critique of opportunism, this version was actually quite shallow. It thoroughly confused anti-revisionism and anti-Sovietism, equating opposition to revisionism with hostility to Soviet society and the Soviet role in world affairs. This bankrupt perspective led Maoism to abandon principled line struggle within the international communist movement and to pursue open collaboration with U.S. imperialism, justifying each of its steps under the "left" cover of anti-revisionism.

The break with Maoism allows our trend to shed this negative legacy and break the equation of anti-revisionism and anti-Sovietism. It forces us to place our critique of revisionism on a more rigorous, scientific foundation. As we take up this task, two seemingly contradictory points stand out in sharp relief. First, deepening our trend's demarcation with revisionism is as crucial to the trend's further progress as consolidating our break with Maoism. Second, the trend's demarcation with revisionism is of a qualitatively different character than its demarcation with Maoism.

Concerning the first point, deepening the demarcation with revisionism is essential precisely because revisionism projects before the world proletariat a series of propositions and lines that are qualitatively incapable of leading the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. Revisionism distorts Marxism-Leninism and conciliates imperialism. Among revisionism's qualitative errors are its view that the center of gravity of the world revolutionary process lies in those countries where the proletariat already holds power rather than in those countries where the proletariat is still striving for power; its failure to firmly consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in those countries where revisionist parties hold state power; the strategy of the non-capitalist road of development in the oppressed countries; and the strategy of the anti-monopoly coalition in the advanced capitalist countries. At the root of these crucial "shades of difference" from Marxism-Leninism lies a pragmatic world outlook that focuses on immediate, palpable results at the expense of the long range interests of the international proletariat.

These various revisionist lines owe their continued legitimacy in the international communist movement to the propositions advanced at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956. In the U.S. in particular, that organization which stands as the main representative of the international movement, the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) is thoroughly under the sway of revisionism. The concentrated political expression of the CPUSA's revisionism is its anti-monopoly coalition strategy. As well, revisionism has sapped the ideological fiber of the party to the point where any semblance of its functioning as an organization of professional revolutionaries, as the embodiment of the conscious element, has been lost. Indeed, the CPUSA is so fully consolidated around a revisionist line that even the last decade or so of intensifying class struggle, which has apparently sparked some important re-examination and line alteration in a number of parties in the international movement (most notably the CPSU) has left the CPUSA unmoved. The CPUSA is completely unable to meet the challenges posed by the new period of mass struggle that is undoubtedly before us. This is a concrete verification, in the real world of class struggle, that the communist movement can never function as a revolutionary vanguard force unless the most thoroughgoing struggle against revisionism is conducted within its ranks, and revisionism is replaced by Marxism-Leninism as its guiding orientation. For our emerging Marxist-Leninist trend, this lesson is a crucial one to grasp, and it must propel

us to make every effort to deepen our critique of and demarcation with revisionism.

At the same time, our trend must avoid all tendencies to simplistically equate the demarcation with revisionism with our demarcation with Maoism. Maoism has betrayed the proletariat and sided with the bourgeoisie on the main political question of this era - the struggle against imperialism. Thus Maoism has removed itself from the ranks of the international communist movement. A similar potential for class collaboration exists within the revisionist deviation. But with the notable exception of some Eurocommunist parties, we cannot say that most revisionist parties have crossed the class barricades to all-sided collaboration with imperialism. Thus, the struggle against revisionism remains a struggle against opportunism within the ranks of the international communist movement.

Within the anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend, there is considerable confusion and vacillation in properly taking up the struggle against revisionism. Some forces, retaining the Maoist version of anti-revisionism, continue to confuse anti-revisionism and anti-Sovietism and vacillate on the recognition that there is a single international communist movement which includes the revisionist trend. Others, having broken with anti-Sovietism, find no firm Marxist-Leninist moorings beneath them, and vacillate on whether there still is such a thing as revisionism, whether the CPUSA is a revisionist party, whether a struggle against revisionism is needed, and whether there is any real political basis for an anti-revisionist trend.

Our trend must reject such vacillations. It is indeed a crucial necessity to shed all remnants of Maoism, including Maoism's infantile splittist notion that the revisionist trend does not still remain a part of the international communist movement. At the same time, our trend must confront with more forthrightness, not less, the reality that revisionism still dominates the U.S. and international communist movement and will not cease to do so without sharp and protracted struggle.

Facing this reality is quite sobering, but our trend has reached a point in its development where it is seriously possible to conceive of contributing to altering it. The trend is no longer merely a scattered collection of forces who agree only on what they are against. Rather, the break with Maoism, the reaffirmation of the reality of a single international movement, the re-orientation of our critique of revisionism, the development of the United Front Against War and Racism proposal as an alternative to the anti-monopoly coalition, and the progress made in functioning in a Leninist manner has transformed the trend into a positively defined, emerging Marxist-Leninist trend. The challenge before us is to progress further in that direction, and meeting that challenge requires the most thoroughgoing and consistent demarcation with revisionism. Only in this manner can Marxism-Leninism once again become the main representative of communism in the U.S.

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References:

"The International Communist Movement: A Reappraisal" in Line of March #9

"Poland - Where We Stand" , LOM #4, and "Turning Point in Poland" , LOM #10

"Toward a Critique of the General Line of the CPUSA" in Line of March #2

"The Italian Communist Party: The Degeneration of Eurocommunism" in Line of March #11
(available in May)